



SAFETY NET SYSTEMS FOR THE POOREST PROJECT

IMPROVING DELIVERY OF SAFETY NETS

BASIC INFORMATION

APPROVAL DATE:
**June 26
2013**

END DATE:
**June 30
2021**

TOTAL COMMITMENT:
\$745 million

IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:
**Department of Disaster Management;
Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics**

OVERVIEW

The Government of Bangladesh currently implements several public workfare and humanitarian assistance programs to support the poorest populations during periods of seasonal unemployment and to provide protection against disaster-induced shocks. These programs are the (i) Employment Generation Program for the Poorest, (ii) Food for Work / Work for Money, (iii) Test Relief, (iv) Vulnerable Group Feeding, and (v) Gratuitous Relief, which cover around twelve million beneficiaries with a total budget of BDT 70.19 billion in FY 2019.

The World Bank is supporting Bangladesh with the **Safety Net Systems for the Poorest Project** which aims to improve the equity, efficiency and transparency of these major safety net programs to benefit the poorest households. The Project provides the majority of its resources towards performance-based co-financing for the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest implemented by the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) under the Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief (MoDMR). The remainder of the financing is provided as technical assistance to DDM, as well as to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) under the Statistics & Informatics Division (SID) to support the establishment of the country's first universal social registry.



CHALLENGE

While Bangladesh has halved the number of poor people living in the country since 2000, nearly a quarter still live below the poverty line while more than one in ten live in extreme poverty. Safety net programs play a significant role in the country's poverty reduction efforts, and public expenditure on such programs is approximately 1.4% of GDP per fiscal year. Despite the range of interventions, only one-third of the poor are covered by safety nets primarily due to challenges in identifying households who may qualify for social assistance based on their vulnerability and poverty status, as well as in identifying inclusion errors in safety net programs. The programs implemented by DDM represent a significant share of the social protection budget and improvements to program targeting, as well as other aspects of service delivery, would help to ensure the right benefits reach the right people at the right time.

APPROACH

The Project co-finances a portion of Government expenditures on beneficiary wages under the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest. The co-financing uses a results-based disbursement modality based upon incremental improvements in the performance of the major safety net programs implemented by DDM. Results targets currently focus on improvements to (i) household targeting, (ii) administrative systems, and (iii) payment systems, aspects of these programs which address their equity, efficiency and transparency. These targets would be achieved by the (i) utilization of poverty data to identify potential recipients of social assistance, (ii) establishment of a common safety net program management information system (MIS) for better administration, and (iii) scale-up digital payments of cash benefits. In addition, the Project supports the establishment and operationalization of the National Household Database (NHD) to facilitate household targeting for safety net programs across different ministries and thus help harmonize a major process in the social protection service delivery system.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The Project will leverage improved delivery systems for safety net programs to support the development of the adaptive capacity of such programs in mitigating and responding to shocks. In this regard the use of the NHD across other government programs is a strategic priority.



EXPECTED RESULTS

Greater share of beneficiaries in, and benefits going towards, the bottom expenditure quintile

Reduced duplication of beneficiaries across programs

Improved access and security in the delivery of benefits