



# Country Profile BANGLADESH



## Bangladesh National Context for SCP and Connection to the Global Agenda

With a population of 163 Million, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. In the past 20 years, the per capita income has grown considerably, and human development indicators, including longevity and education, have improved. While income has grown, there is large income equality and regional disparity, while more than 15% of Bangladesh's population live below the poverty line. Its governments' main strategy for development is to create employment in the manufacturing and service sector, upskilling the workforce and thereby reducing the economy's reliance on agricultural and informal activities. This progress comes at a high cost environmentally; Bangladesh's cities are among the most polluted in terms of water and air quality worldwide, and the biodiversity and environmental value of its rivers and wetlands, as well as coastal environments and arable lands have degraded, resulting in loss of ground water, deforestation and desertification.

The country seeks to further grow while safeguarding the environment. Challenges include low access to reliable and affordable power, poor transportation infrastructure, limited availability of serviced land, uncertain and complex business regulation, rapid urbanization and vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, among others. In addition, lack of environmental and workers' safety protection has garnered national and international attention, with the government and private sector working to improve both. While Bangladesh is known for its export industry, mainly in the textile sector, the relevance of its domestic consumers for its economy has grown. In terms of wealth, Bangladesh disposes of one of the most fertile agricultural grounds on earth and has substantial coal reserves and undeveloped gas grounds, especially the Bay of Bengal.

Climate change impacts are already visible in increased flooding and shifting of monsoon patterns today. Bangladesh's geography and high population density makes it particularly vulnerable and it is considered that Bangladesh's impacts mean a loss of 1-2 percent of GDP annually due to climate-related disasters.

Bangladesh has aimed at eradicating poverty and becoming a middle-income country, mentioning sustainable development as a crucial consideration. SCP therefore plays an important role in Bangladesh's national policies and strategies. Bangladesh's 8th Development Plan (2020-2030) is currently being prepared, integrating the direction set forward by the SDGs.

In its National Sustainable Development Strategy published in 2013, the Government of Bangladesh flags these issues as well as the impacts of climate change. With the strategy, the Government sought to contribute to international commitments to sustainability, while also reminding developed countries of their responsibility in enabling sustainability and countering climate change. Bangladesh presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the 2017 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), and repeated it in 2020 as part of its commitment to the global agenda on sustainable development. In the 2020 review on SDG 12, Bangladesh stated that consumption is of increasing concern regarding energy and power. Electric and electronic goods like air conditioners and cell phones have become increasingly popular. With current population growth and urbanisation trends, housing and building will become an even more important issue. Bangladesh stated that negative externalities need to be properly managed to make the country's development sustainable. Low awareness, large stakeholder groups connected with SDG 12, and lack of resource-efficient technologies as well as the need for more international support are mentioned as key challenges in the field.

In the previous decade, Bangladesh has already adopted a number of national policies aligned with SDG 12 and sustainable consumption and production. Bangladesh has acknowledged the stretch between economic growth and decoupling of resources. The National Industrial Policy (2016) aims to develop the country through rapid industrialization, an ambition combined with the national 3R Strategy for Waste Management (2011) which provides concepts to address the ever-increasing challenge of urban solid waste management (reduction, reuse, material recovery, recycling). Other, climate-relevant, action plans and policies include the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2015, and the Bangladesh Climate and the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP).

### CHALLENGES

- Being located on a flat river delta, the geographical location of Bangladesh as well as its land characteristics, multiplicity of rivers and the monsoon climate render it highly vulnerable to natural disasters, amplified by climate change. Therefore, Bangladesh faces severe risks for further land degradation from agricultural pressures, social conflict, and food security.
- Bangladesh's growing population affects progress on SCP as it directly impacts on resource consumption, waste generation and pollution levels (traffic congestion, water pollution, solid waste littering).
- Food security: widespread and multidimensional poverty and inequality causes a quarter of the population to be food insecure.
- The private sector is the key driver of economic development in Bangladesh but also consumes most of the resources for the production processes.

### PRIORITIES

The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) defines five strategic priority areas which are relevant to SCP design and implementation in Bangladesh. They have partly been reiterated in more recent national strategies and its National Voluntary Review of the SDGs in 2020:

- Sustained economic growth to further alleviate poverty and reduce inequality, including the creation of jobs as one of the top priorities.
- Development of priority sectors (including agriculture and energy). For example, Bangladesh seeks to introduce different varieties and species of crops, adopt improved technologies for agriculture and implement long-term climate change adaptation and water resource management plans. This will positively support food security. Further, the country is not equipped with sufficient energy resources, and acknowledges that fossil energy is not only costly but their combustion contributes to the climate vulnerability of the country. Therefore, energy conservation has been defined a cross-cutting priority in Bangladesh, which was manifested in the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Master Plan (EECMP) up to 2030.
- To mitigate and minimize adverse environmental impacts resulting from economic growth ambitions and to increase the economy's climate change resilience, Bangladesh seeks to safeguard the environment, conserve natural resource and improve its disaster management.
- Existing policy and frameworks (e.g. Seventh Five Year Plan and Background Paper on 10-Year Framework that is being drafted by UNDP) need to be reviewed and updated to allow for SCP delivery, and to incorporate clear targets outlining what needs to be achieved by when, and how does SCP implementation contribute to achieving the SDGs, including gender issues.
- Sustainable public procurement should be adopted by the government to set market signals for sustainable producers, and to minimize the footprints caused by government consumption. A priority is laid at the housing sector as many buildings are commissioned for construction by the government.
- Governance: strengthen a more accountable local governance system.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- SWITCH-Asia can support the up-scaling and implementation of efforts aimed at SDG targets keeping in line with local and international regulations, policies, frameworks and action plans.
- Explore collaboration with other donor community on projects on sustainable development, resource efficiency and water and waste management, funded by donor agencies (e.g. UNDP, ADB, World Bank, GIZ) in Bangladesh.
- Further strengthen a multi-stakeholder approach to sustainable consumption and production by involving the government, private sector, development partners, sector associations, media and SMEs/MSMEs.
- Support implementing resource efficiency-focused concepts in the private sector, especially SMEs/MSMEs in the leather, re-rolling mill, agro-based, housing and light engineering industries, the SCP Facility could provide better options for implementation.
- SCP can be incorporated into the existing policy framework rather than formulating a new SCP policy. SWITCH-Asia can hold interdisciplinary dialogues in Bangladesh for line ministries as well as other stakeholders for understanding SCP as a concept and for integrating SCP (within the private sector, especially SMEs and MSMEs) through ministries and development partners.
- Identifying innovative finance and strengthening SMEs and MSMEs on access to finance.

## GRANT PROJECTS IN BANGLADESH



Completed

### METABUILD

Resource efficient supply chain for metal products in buildings sector in South Asia

Theme: Construction

 Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka



Completed

### TOMATO AND MANGO VALUE CHAIN

Improving consumer awareness and access to certified safe tomato and mango products in Bangladesh

Theme: Agri-food

 Indonesia



Completed

### RE-TIE BANGLADESH

Improving working conditions by implementing cleaner production

Theme: Textiles and Leather

 Bangladesh



Completed

### JUTE DIVERSIFIED PRODUCTS

Strengthening the value chain of jute diversified products in Bangladesh

Theme: Agri-food

 Bangladesh



Completed



Completed



Completed

### LEAD PAINT ELIMINATION

Market leaders eliminate lead paint in seven Asian countries

Theme: Multi-industry

 Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand



Completed

### SUSBUILD BANGLADESH

Promoting sustainable buildings in Bangladesh

Theme: Construction

 Bangladesh

### ECO-JUTE

Jute: An eco-friendly alternative for a sustainable future

Theme: Textiles and Leather

 Bangladesh, India

### ECOLEBAN

Environmental management systems and eco-labelling in SMEs of the leather sector in Bangladesh

Theme: Textiles and Leather

 Bangladesh

