

**Framework
of
National Integrity Strategy:
An Inclusive Approach to Fight Corruption**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Preamble: In 2007, the Government of Bangladesh acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and prepared a comprehensive report on the domestic institutions that could support implementation of the Convention. This report on UNCAC highlighted that corruption thrives on systemic weaknesses. In Bangladesh, just as in other countries, anti-corruption strategies can only be effective if they proactively address the need for prevention through the eradication of the causes of corruption as well as its detection and prosecution. Both public and private sectors have key roles to play here and the task of eliminating the causes of corruption will only be successful if a multi-disciplinary approach is undertaken. National Integrity Strategy (NIS) is a comprehensive set of goals, strategies and action plans aimed at increasing the level of independence to perform, accountability, efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of state and non-state institutions in a sustained manner over a period of time.

Government commitment: The Government of Bangladesh is committed to establish democracy, the rule of law, human rights, freedom of citizens as embodied in the Constitution, equality and justice in the country. The Government believes that it is necessary to create productive opportunities for citizens to lead better lives. The Government is also committed to ensuring that citizens have improved access to basic resources, education, health, food, housing, employment and fair distribution of income as well as providing an enabling environment for the active role of women in the development process.

Corruption as a major deterrent: The Government recognizes that corruption has emerged as a major deterrent against growth and development in the country, and is inhibiting the achievement of the commitment. In Bangladesh, low levels of transparency and accountability characterize the functioning of institutions in both the public and private sectors. The Government believes that the fight against corruption cannot be won by prosecution alone, an inclusive approach based on

values, morals, ethics and integrity is necessary. The NIS captures this approach to help prevent corruption and enhance transparency and accountability.

Institutions in the integrity system: The integrity system comprises both State and non-state institutions. In facilitating application of the NIS, the Government wishes to engage not only the State institutions such as Parliament, the Executive, the Judiciary, Public Services, Local Government, Attorney Services, Public Service Commission, Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, and Office of the Ombudsman but also the non-State institutions including civil society, political parties, NGOs, private sector, and the media. Furthermore, State and non-State educational and religious institutions will also be key players of NIS.

Bangladesh has established almost all of the required institutions for strengthening good governance and accountability and encouraged by experiences from other countries, the Government has opted for the NIS as a policy and strategy document that deals with a rational choice of vision-driven and goal-oriented strategies across institutions, making use of good practices tested elsewhere.

NIS Vision and Mission: The Government's vision for the country, as contained in the NIS, is '**A Bangladesh free from corruption**'. To that end, the Government is committed to implement the NIS to achieve the Mission that '**People and institutions embrace values and principles of integrity, and increasingly practise them as part of their individual and institutional activities**'.

How to attain the Vision and Mission: The Government envisages the following institution-specific broad measures to achieve the NIS goals:-

1. NIS foresees that the Parliament will emerge as a place for fair and rational debate for law-making and through the effective functioning of the Parliamentary Committee system demand greater accountability from the executive.

2. The Executive – will be transparent, responsive, and accountable to people and the Parliament. NIS requires that the public servants working under the political executive are impartial, efficient, effective, and accountable. At the local level, NIS demands that the local governments are people-oriented, accountable, transparent and independent.
3. NIS envisages that the Government will ensure by providing all necessary support that the Judiciary functions as an independent, transparent, efficient, and effective organ of the State.
4. The Public Service Commission, which recruits public servants, will be transformed into an efficient, modern, and professional institution. The Election Commission will be strengthened as a fully independent constitutional body capable of organizing free and fair elections. The Office of the Attorney General and the Attorney Services will offer objective and impartial advice to the Executive without political considerations. The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General will be strengthened as an effective institution ensuring financial accountability from all public institutions.
5. The Anti-Corruption Commission will be strengthened to be an effective agency to prevent corruption and prosecute those who are corrupt.
6. NIS envisages that the Office of the Ombudsman will be established and made operational as embodied in the constitution.
7. NIS ensures that civil society remains articulate, non-partisan, and an active campaigner for national integrity so that citizens can effectively demand transparency and accountability from public institutions. NIS will also strive to ensure that political parties be transformed into democratically-run institutions pursuing the interests of their constituencies. NIS also demands that NGOs strengthen their internal accountability, and have policies, systems, and procedures for effective service delivery for the extremely poor and disadvantaged groups. The Strategy will also enable the private sector to increase compliance with regulatory requirements for the sustained

improvement of the business environment. NIS will also support a media that is free, truthful, accountable, and impartial.

8. Finally, NIS will help improve the educational system at various levels, creating a conducive environment for individuals and families to realise opportunities within an ethical framework.

NIS implementation: The Cabinet Division will effect the implementation of NIS through relevant line ministries and in collaboration and concurrence with the constitutional bodies and other institutions. A policy-making body, the National Integrity Advisory Committee (NIAC), headed by the Prime Minister/Chief Advisor and comprising members from the Cabinet and major institutions of the national integrity system will provide policy guidance.

The Cabinet Division will also facilitate the establishment of an Ethics Committee composed of the heads of the institutions. Each institution will nominate an Ethics Focal Point to maintain liaison with the Cabinet Division and manage implementation of NIS activities within the institution.

The Government of Bangladesh believes that the issue of integrity should not stop at the top level of institutions. Rather, each institution is expected to find mechanisms to implement institution-specific strategies at different tiers. The idea is to let the obligations of integrity reach down to each individual of the institutions. In that respect, every citizen will be part of the NIS.

The Government will monitor and evaluate the outcomes and impact of the strategies periodically and invite suggestions for any possible change of strategies and institutional arrangements.

To ensure that NIS is implemented effectively across the country, an immediate action plan has been prepared which accompanies this document. A more detailed document that operationalizes the NIS is being prepared which will be discussed continuously with all stakeholders so that the NIS becomes a living document.

Immediate Action Plan for Implementation of Framework NIS

Serial	Action Points	Performance indicator	Time	Budget	Responsibility
1.	The Government approves the Framework NIS	Government approval is circulated.	October 2008	-	Cabinet Division
2.	The Government forms NIAC and Ethics Committees across institutions	Notify and inform Cabinet Division	March 2009	Good Governance Program	Cabinet Division
3.	Cabinet Division to communicate NIS to respective institutions and citizens	Institutions of National Integrity System and citizens know about NIS and how it is implemented	March 2009	GoB, ADB, DANIDA	Cabinet Division & respective institutions
4.	Cabinet Division develops and introduces a coordination, monitoring and reporting system	Guidelines for communication, monitoring tools and reporting formats are available for use	December 2008	GoB, ADB, DANIDA	Cabinet Division
5.	Cabinet Division maintains ongoing consultations with all institutions represented in the NIAC to review and update NIS	Action plan is continuously updated.	Continuous	GoB, ADB, DANIDA	Cabinet Division

Serial	Action Points	Performance indicator	Time	Budget	Responsibility
6.	Government to pass Right to Information Ordinance.	Gazette Notification	October 2008	GoB	Cabinet Division, Ministry of Information , Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
7.	Government to establish Local Government Commission	Preparatory activities commenced	November 2008	GoB	Local Government Division
8.	Capacity building support to Cabinet Division and respective Ethics Focal Points in different institutions	Cabinet Division and Ethics Focal Points have received skills, materials and equipment to manage NIS	December 2008	Good Governance Program	Cabinet Division