



**SUMMARY REPORT ON**

**BROADBAND POLICY 2021 (PROPOSED) REVISION**

**NATIONAL WORKSHOP AND CONSULTATION MEETING**

**JULY 7TH 2021**

Dhaka, Bangladesh (Online)



**Introduction**.....  
 .....3

**Moderation and Attendance**.....  
 .....3

**Draft Preparation of Broadband Policy 2021 (Proposed)**.....4

**Background**.....  
 .....4

**Policy Perspectives**.....  
 .....4

**Definition of Broadband**.....  
 .....5

**Present Status of Broadband Connectivity of Bangladesh**.....5

**Action Line**.....  
 .....6

**Sources of Financing**.....  
 .....7



Challenges.....7

Areas to Focus.....8

Way Forward.....9

Conclusion.....9

Annex 1: Agenda.....10

Annex 2: Participants List.....11

Annex 3: Group Photo.....12

## Introduction

A4AI is working with key partners in Bangladesh to review the Broadband Policy 2009 with the view of developing a new and more inclusive broadband policy to achieve the national development targets. A High-Level Dialogue on Broadband Policy last year on the need to revise the existing national broadband policy was arranged and greatly supported by BTRC.

The Bangladesh Broadband Policy project commenced in May 2021 and with the leadership of the Ministry of Post, Telecom and IT (MoPT) and with support from Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) & Department of Telecommunication (DoT). A4AI is extending technical



support for implementation of the project. A team led by BTRC and experts from A4AI & a2i is currently assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current national broadband policy and reviewing the sectoral laws, regulations and policies.

A National Workshop and Consultation Meeting has been organized on the Broadband Policy of Bangladesh 2021 (Proposed) Revision on July 7, 2021 at 3 pm – 5 pm. The consultation meeting was organized virtually over Zoom platform and all relevant stakeholders were invited. **Honourable Minister Mustafa Jabbar**, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications Division, Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh kindly joined the meeting as the **Chief Guest**.

## Moderation & Attendance:

The meeting was moderated by Mr Shahid Uddin Akbar, A4AI-Bangladesh coalition’s National Coordinator.

In attendance from A4AI were Ms Eleanor Sarpong, Deputy Director and Policy lead, Mr Shahid Uddin Akbar, A4AI-Bangladesh National Coordinator, Ms Anju Mangal, Regional Head of Asia Pacific, Mr. David N. Townsends, Consultant, and Ms Nathalia Foditsch, Senior Policy and Regulatory Specialist of A4AI. Hon. Mustafa Jabbar, Honorable Minister, MoPTIT, joined as the Chief Guest of the National Workshop and Consultation Meeting. The high-level officers from different stakeholder organizations made their very significant presence in the workshop.

## Draft Preparation of Broadband Policy 2021 (Proposed):

The draft preparation of broadband policy 2021 (proposed) has been presented by Brig. Gen. Md. Nasim Parvez, ndc, afwc, psc, Director General (System & Services), BTRC. The summary of the presentation is described below.

### **Background:**

Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced Bangladesh’s vision to provide high speed internet connectivity, especially in all schools by 2030. This is an addition to ensuring all rural areas are connected under the “My Village – My Town” initiative. Bangladesh has also made a commitment to the UN Broadband Commission 2030 goals and has set itself a long-term vision



for 2041. Importance of “National Broadband Policy” to set time-bound targets and interventions for reducing broadband cost and increasing penetration, tend to have lower internet prices relative to average income. Broadband plan will provide opportunities for lower internet prices for consumers, through targeted public investment and greater market cooperation, along with greater internet affordability and device affordability. A high-level dialogue was organized by A4AI on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 in collaboration with a2i on the Bangladesh National Broadband Strategy and Roadmap.

### ***Policy Perspectives:***

Broadband Policy – 2009: The first broadband policy in Bangladesh

National Telecom Policy – 2018: Targets for telecom services short-term (2020), mid-term (2023) and long-term (2027), policy objectives and strategy

National ICT Policy – 2018: Targets set for providing ICT services short-term (2021), mid-term (2030) and long-term (2041) are considered

Vision – 2021: To become a middle-income country leveraging ICT. The vision is linked with establishing “Digital Bangladesh”.

Vision – 2031: Elimination of extreme poverty and to become a middle-income country

Vision – 2041: To become a developed country with per capita income \$12,500

### ***Definition of Broadband:***

Broadband provides high speed internet access via multiple types of technologies including fiber optics, wireless, cable, DSL and satellite. Speed of Broadband depends on various factors like network infrastructure, digital services, digital literacy, digital content, socio-economic condition, etc. of a country. The broadband internet speed for Bangladesh by 2023 to be minimum 30 Mbps download.

To build network infrastructure capable of delivering higher speed of broadband in a phased manner synchronizing with National Telecom Policy – 2018, ICT Policy – 2018, and Vision 2021 – 2041. The



broadband should be made available throughout the country which will enable government, business, and citizens become more digital based with high speed of connectivity.

**Vision of the Policy:** Connecting all areas with high-speed broadband internet and providing broadband for all with affordable internet and device.

**Aim of the Policy:** To design and implement the strategy for all stakeholders with a timebound roadmap to achieve the vision of Broadband For All.

### **Present Status of Broadband Connectivity of Bangladesh:**

- Total Population: 168.1 Million
- Mobile Broadband Subscriber: 107.50 Million (63.95%)
- Fixed Broadband Subscriber: 9.8 Million (5.83%)
- Total optical fiber network – 1,46,201 km, number of interconnections operator for data service (ILDC operators – 02 submarine cables, 06 ITC, 06 NTTN, 34 IIG, 09 NIX, 36 IPTSP, 1995 ISP) connecting up to the rural and remote areas, Bangabandhu Satellite – BS1
- A unique tariff for internet has been fixed for all throughout the country (one country one tariff) eliminating the digital divide between urban and rural people.
- BTRC issued license to private entities to establish IIG and NTTN network to develop optical fiber network throughout the country. A number of telecom infrastructure connecting projects have been taken for the growth of broadband services using SOF.
- BTRC issued IP TV, Video on Demand (VoD), and Value Added Services (VAS), etc.
- Current broadband user (both fixed and mobile) - 117.3 million (unique subscriber 58.8 M), Broadband penetration – 69.77% (unique subscriber – 34.97%).

### **Action Line:**

- Government information and services to citizen by digital means
- Develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure to provide government information, digital services, and make it accessible to the citizens
- Capacity development of the government employees, responsible for providing digital services to the citizens



- Establish information system architecture and interoperability with digital connectivity for easy and quick exchange of information between different government offices
- Digitization of all government offices including education, health, land, agriculture, national parliament, legislative department and law enforcement agencies, and capacity building of their manpower
- Ensure digital security of all government information system, digital services, and safe usage of internet
- Ensure privacy of personal information and data of all citizens
- Ensure safe use of social media platform and protecting women and children from undesirable and harmful content and prevention from digital crime
- Setup secured data center for data storage and data management
- Ensure social equity and universal access to all categories of citizens through ICT
- Ensure equal opportunities to urban and city dwellers by making best use of ICT
- Ensure delivery of both government and private digital services without discriminations
- Provision of broadband internet for all citizens including rural and remote areas at an affordable price
- Launching of 5G for providing of mobile broadband
- Provision of Bangla in all possible digital means
- Provision of ICT subject all tier of education
- Effective use of ICT administration and management of education system
- Provision if skill development and employment generation for required number of ICT professionals in line with national and international standards and market demands
- Provision of ICT training, certification courses for the citizens to increase their efficiency in IT/ITES
- Provision of using ICT industry, commerce and manufacturing field for increase of their production
- Promoting cost effective IT/ITES manufacturing industries by providing policy assistance and incentives



- Ensure support and priority in order to enhance the productivity in trade, commerce, and services by maximum use of digital technology
- Maximum use of digital technology for providing health services to citizens
- Use of digital technology for modernizing the agricultural system and ensuring food security for all
- Promote digital commerce, MFS and use of digital technology in the manufacturing industries in order to increase national productivity

### ***Sources of Financing:***

- International funding – WBG, MDB, ADB, UNDP, ITU, ESCAP, etc
- MNC and big private companies
- Private sector funding – backed up government bonds and loans
- Community broadband projects – steered by SOF
- Government owned broadband projects – setting up of an SPV
- Public run municipal/LGU network projects
- Development aid agencies – USAID, IDRC, CIDA
- Partnerships and collaboration – PPP, joint-build consortium

### ***Challenges:***

- Budget
- Digital divide (literacy, rural vs urban, gender discrimination, etc.)
- Remote areas
- Affordability for smart devices
- Rapid change of technology for broadband
- Infrastructure
- Inconsistence of regulatory rules, directives
- Lack of capacity building
- Shortages of local apps and contents
- High price bandwidth, transmission cost, and last mile connectivity





## Remarks, Comments & Open Discussion:

After the very detailed presentation, Brief on A4AI's and Role in Making Broadband Policy Inclusive has been presented by Eleanor Sarpong, Deputy Director, A4AI and Anju Mangal, Head of Asia-Pacific region, A4AI. After their presentation other respected speakers of the workshop shared their valuable comments and remarks on the different specific aspects of the overall topic of the workshop. Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor of a2i presented the brief on A4AI and a2i partnership to foster meaningful broadband connectivity to achieve the vision of digital Bangladesh. Mr. Susanta Kumar Saha, Additional Secretary (PRL) Government of Bangladesh moderated the open discussion on "Making the Broadband Policy Inclusive and Aligned with the National Development Goals". Mr. Subrata Roy Maitra, Vice Chairman, BTRC, Mr. Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, President, AMTOB, Brig. Gen. S M Farhad (Retd.), Secretary General, AMTOB, Mr. Mohammad Enamul Kabir, BCC, Mr. Md. Abdul Moqaddem, ADG, DoT, Mr. AKM Haibur Rahman, Deputy Managing Director, BTCL, shared their very significant comments and thoughts in this open discussion. Brig. Gen. Md Nasim Parvez, ndc, afwc, psc, Director General, BTRC shared the recommendations and plan of action on consultation process & expert support. The Chief Guest of the meeting, Hon. Mustafa Jabbar, Honorable Minister, MoPTIT thanked all the present participants of the workshop for their important inputs and shared the achievements, future plans of Bangladesh government in this sector. The chair of the session, Mr. Shyam Sunder Sikder, Chairman, BTRC, gave his very insightful speech. Dr. Dewan Muhammad Humayun Kabir, Joint Secretary, E-Governance Branch, Cabinet Division, shared the ending remarks and vote of thanks.

## Areas to Focus:

From the overall presentations and discussions few areas came out to focus on specially.

- Only 27.53% of people in Bangladesh have access to 4G compatible speeds, and only 41.67% have access to smartphones, which are considered to be appropriate devices. Bangladesh meets the 1 for 2 affordability target – 1 GB of data costs no more than 2% of the monthly gross national income. However, for 40% of the population in Bangladesh, connectivity is not affordable, lowest income quintile spends 3.58% of their average monthly income on 1 GB of data.
- Total investments needed by 2030 is 16.3 bn for ICT skills and content, policy and regulations, fibre deployment, network operation and maintenance and mobile infrastructure.



- Women are missing out on digital opportunities. Only 16% women use mobile internet in the country against 33% of men according to GSMA (2020).

## Way Forward:

Alignment and commitment from the Minister, Ministry of PT, BTRC, DoT, a2i, and all agencies is needed to support the development of an overarching broadband policy. Assigning key contacts to form a working group to work with A4AI coalition is suggested as the way forward to develop the broadband policy, which will be led by BTRC and Ministry with relevant agencies. Suggested list of twelve different workshops and consultation sessions to be implemented.

## Conclusion:

The workshop ended with the conclusion note that, by ensuring the active participation of all the stakeholders together for implementing the proposed plan of broadband policy, the desired and citizen centric National Broadband Policy of Bangladesh can be achieved successfully.

Mr. Shahid Uddin Akbar expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to the Honourable Minister Mustafa Jabbar and all other respected guests for participating in the workshop.

## ***Annex 1: Agenda***



### Agenda for the Broadband Policy 2021 (Proposed) Revision Workshop and Consultation Meeting

Date and Time: July 7, 2020 (Wednesday), 3.00 pm – 4.50 pm (Bangladesh time)

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83263168990?pwd=NUM2TFINMnlYNEJUNk3JmRk1yMkxkQTQ9>

Meeting ID: 832 6316 8990 Passcode: 025802

Time	Topic	Moderator / Speaker
3.00 pm – 3.05 pm	Opening Remarks Objectives of the Workshop & PoA	Shahid Uddin Akbar A4AI National Coordinator
3.05 pm – 3.10 pm	Brief on Progress of Draft Preparation of Broadband Policy 2021 (Proposed)	Brig. Gen. Md Nasim Farveez, ndc, ahwc, psc Director General, BTRC
3.10 pm – 3.15 pm	Remarks on Digital Bangladesh and Vision for Inclusive Connectivity	Md Azizur Rahman, Director General 2 & Additional Secretary, PMO
3.15 pm – 3.25 pm	Setting the Scene: Brief on A4AI's and Role in Making Broadband Policy Inclusive (Live or Pre-Recorded)	Eleanor Sarpong Deputy Director, A4AI and Anju Mangal, Head of Asia-Pacific region, A4AI
3.25 pm – 3.30 pm	Brief on A4AI and a2i partnership to foster Meaningful Broadband Connectivity to Achieve the Vision of Digital Bangladesh	Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor, a2i
3.30 pm – 3.55 pm	Open discussion on "Making the Broadband Policy Inclusive and Aligned with the National Development Goals" (BTRC, DoT, ICTD, BCC, AMTOB, ISAPB)	Mr. Susanta Kumar Saha, Additional Secretary (PRL) Government of Bangladesh (Session Moderator)
3.55 pm – 4.00 pm	Remarks on the last Mile Connectivity and Mobile Phone Network	Dr. Md. Rafiqul Matin Managing Director, BTCL
4.00 pm – 4.05 pm	Remarks on the Discussion and Ongoing Connectivity Initiatives of Government	Executive Director, BCC, ICT Division
4.05 pm – 4.10 pm	Recommendations and Plan of Action on Consultation Process & Expert Support	Brig. Gen. Md Nasim Farveez, ndc, ahwc, psc Director General, BTRC
4.10 pm – 4.20 pm	Speech by Special Guest	Mr. Afzal Hossain Secretary, PTD
4.20 pm – 4.35 pm	Speech by Chief Guest	Hon. Mustafa Jabbar Honorable Minister, MoPTIT
4.35 pm – 4.45 pm	Speech by Session Chair	Mr. Shyam Sunder Sikder Chairman, BTRC
4.45 pm – 4.50 pm	Vote of Thanks/Way forward	Project Director, a2i, ICT Division

For further inquiries, please contact Md Shahid Uddin Akbar, Country Coordinator, A4AI at 01819243935 and email at [shahid.akbar@biid.org.bd](mailto:shahid.akbar@biid.org.bd)

## Annex 2: Participant List

PARTICIPANTS LIST				
SL NO		NAME	DESIGNATION & ORGANISATION	E-MAIL ADDRESS
1	Chief Guest	Hon. Mustafa Jabbar	Honorable Minister, MoPTIT	
2	Chair	Mr. Shyam Sunder Sikder	Chairman, BTRC	
3	Special Speaker	Mr. Subrata Roy Maitra	Vice Chairman, BTRC	vice-chairman@btrc.gov.bd
4	Key Note	Brig. Gen. Md Nasim Parvez	ndc, afwc, psc, Director General, BTRC	dgss@btrc.gov.bd
5		Mr. Susanta Kumar Saha	Additional Secretary (PRL), Government of Bangladesh	adlpnd@ictd.gov.bd
6		Mr. Md. Moqaddem	ADG, DoT	dg.dot@telecomdept.gov.bd
7		Mr. Anir Chowdhury	Policy Advisor, a2i	anir.chowdhury@a2i.gov.bd
8		Mr. Mohammad Sajjad Hossain Sarwar	Policy Specialist, a2i	
9		Mr. Mahtab Uddin Ahmed	President, AMTOB	mahtab.uddin ahmed@robi.com.bd
10		BRIG GEN S M FARHAD (RETD.)	Secretary General, AMTOB	info@amtob.org.bd
11		Mr. M.A. Hakim	President, ISAPB	president@ispab.org
12		Mr. Md.Emdadul Hoque	Secretary General, ISAPB	gs@ispab.org
13		Mr. Manik Mahmud	a2i	
14		Mr. AKM Haibur Rahman	Deputy Managing Director, BTCL	md@btcl.com.bd
15		Dr. Dewan Muhammad Humayun Kabir	Joint Secretary, E-Governance Branch, Cabinet Division	dewan.kabir@a2i.gov.bd, js_eg@cabinet.gov.bd
16		Lt. Col. Reza	Director, BTRC	
17		Mr. Taskinur Rahman	ADG, DoT	
18		Mr. Mohammad Ashfaq Ahmed	Deputy Director, BTRC	
19		Mr. Tousif Shahriar	BTRC	
20		Mr. Nahidul Hasan	BTRC	
21		Mr. Mohammad Enamul Kabir	Bangladesh Computer Council	
22		Ms. Sajida Parvin	Director, BTRC	
23		Mr. Pran Kumar Saha	DPD, Info Sarker Project, ICT Division	
24		Mr. David N. Townsends	Consultant, Web Foundation	
25		Ms. Nathalia Foditsch	Web Foundation	
26		Ms. Eleanor Sarpong	Web Foundation	
27		Ms. Anju Mangal	Web Foundation	
28		Mr. Shahid Uddin Akbar	A4AI/ Web Foundation	
29		Ms. Sifath Rumana	BIID Foundation	
30		Ms. Farzana Amin	BIID Foundation	



**Annex 3: Group Photo**

