Delta Forum

Hosted at IDSS, United International University

Website: www.deltaforum.uiu.ac.bd

Managing Delta towards Sustainable Development
Through Translation of Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100

Activity Plan for 2023 – 2024

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1. Introduction to IDSS

Institute of Development Studies and Sustainability (IDSS), which hasbeen set up in Fall 2017 at United International University (UIU), is committed to interdisciplinary hub for research, teaching, and collaborations for narrowing down the science-policy gap towards sustainable development.

IDSS promises to advance knowledge of Sustainable Development through its [Social Science] undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs, outreach programs for the broader community, and faculty research. IDSS is committed to manage and expand the interdisciplinary major in Development Studies and Sustainability by providing students with fellowships, scholarships, and research/study opportunities through collaborations with universities in Bangladesh and foreign countries, national and International NGOs, UN organizations and business organizations. Finally, the institute promises to contribute to UIU's vision of becoming the center of excellence in teaching, learning and research in the South Asian region.

1.1. Vision of IDSS

Knowledge based Peaceful, Green and Sustainable Society.

1.2. Mission of IDSS

Interdisciplinary Education and Research towards building strengthened human capital to lead sustainable development missions through collaboration and collective actions.

1.3. Objectives of IDSS

- To study political, social, economic, humanitarian and other challenges of Sustainable Development in Bangladesh and Asia;
- To promote and undertake research on current development issues, ethnic diversities, gender, migration, sociolinguistic and cultural studies of Bangladesh and other Asian countries;
- To run collaborative, empirical research to generate and share knowledge of sustainability and contribute in reducing science-policy gaps;
- To initiate and maintain international academic exchange, affiliation and coordination of research activities of Bangladeshi and Asian scholars;
- To organize national and international seminars, conferences and disseminate its research works in various publications.

1.4. Research Priority of IDSS

Like others, the UIU's IDSS believes that the 'world needs to do far more and do it faster'. National policymakers face the challenges of implementing the indivisible agenda for 17 SDGs and achieving progress across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Therefore, there is a need to address the scope and systemic nature of the 2030 Agenda and the urgency of the challenges. This requires a wide range of tools and science-based analysis to navigate the complexities and to realize the ambitions. IDSS's research priority is, at this moment, on SDGs 1, 6 and 7:



Other than the above mentioned top SDGs priority of research, the following areas are the priority areas of the UIU-IDSS's research:

- Study and assess the social response to development programs and its implications in terms of various policy options for sustainability;
- Examine complexities of development interventions versus local initiatives of sustainable livelihoods;
- Study climate change adaptation options, and policy research and advocacy for scaling up of good practices;
- Study Gender and Development;
- Study DRR and Sustainable Livelihoods;
- Study cultural diversities.

1.5. Approach of IDSS

Interdisciplinary Research and Education is the main approach of UIU-IDSS. IDSS understands that the challenges of policymakers are implementing the indivisible agenda for 17 SDGs and achieving progress across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development. This requires a wide range of tools and science-based analysis to navigate the complexities and to realize the ambitions. UIU-IDSS is committed to deliver high quality results and workable solutions to the policymakers and practitioners. IDSS would apply research-oriented and robust approaches, responding to on-the-ground realities. It would seek to enhance and foster knowledge sharing and exchange with other national and international institutions around home and the globe.

UIU-IDSS would generate knowledge through empirical research of its faculty and post graduate students as well as engaging in collaborative research projects in partnership with foreign and local universities. Teaching, publications, and national and international seminars would be the main means of sharing knowledge.

2. Introduction to Delta Forum

Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, a holistic, long-term, vision-based plan for the Bangladesh Delta, is in existence as a guide to achieve vision of '*Shonar Bangla'*. Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (BDP 2100), which is formulated by the General Economics Division of Bangladesh Planning Commission under the leadership of its Member Prof. Dr. Shamsul Alam, got approval of Bangladesh government on the 4th of September 2018 in the meeting of National Economic Council (NEC). The BDP2100 will be strategically focusing on six Hotspots: Coastal Zone, Barind and Drought-prone Areas, Major Rivers and Adjoining Areas, Haor Region, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Coast, and Urban Areas. The plan has been developed in a new and innovative manner, taking longer term development and climate change issues into account. A key element is to address uncertainty about the future.

A high-level body will be formed, led by the Prime Minister, to execute the BDP 2100, with the Planning Minister as its vice-president. This council will make decisions and give directives for the implementation of the BDP 2100. Besides, an 'operations committee', led by GED Member (Senior Secretary) Prof. Dr. Shamsul Alam will be constituted. The Secretaries (representatives) of the ministries related to the BDP 2100 will be Committee Members, who will advise on selection of projects and programs and they will monitor the implementation.

Some key concerns, especially in line of comply with UN SDGs, national visions, and political commitments, are important to take into account. As a dynamic country, Bangladesh is not free from uncertainty. Concerns are: Will the textile industry or garments industry still form the mainstay of the Bangladeshi economy in 2050? Will agriculture remain the dominant sector for our rural economy? Will climate change cause more droughts, more floods, and more cyclones and inundate one third area of Bangladesh? Will the population grow to 200 million or 250 million by 2050? Where will their food come from? Where will they live?

BDP 2100 embraces scenarios which outline possible futures for the country. To draw up an efficient and effective implementation plan, considerations need to be given on solid strategic approaches, which are to be construed in empirical knowledge. A large number of stakeholders, at all levels, will be involved in the BDP 2100 implementation. Capacities therefore need to be enhanced and important aspects of the plan need to be incorporated in the day to day working methods of various organizations at local to national level. To support exchange of experiences, sharing of knowledge, and jointly building capacities for the implementation of the BDP 2100, an 'above project level'-platform will be formed. This Delta Forum can, in an inclusive manner, provide the opportunity to

government, implementing organizations, knowledge institutions, NGOs and civil society organizations to share and exchange knowledge which will contribute to research answering societal questions and research results being better used in implementation, capacity building etc.

Vision of Delta Forum

Collectively build a sustainable Bangladesh.

Mission of Delta Forum

Delta Forum is an open and inclusive platform for stakeholders by sharing research knowledge and discuss experiences to strengthen policy-science-practice interface, towards helping efficient implementation of the Bangladesh Delta Plan2100.

Goal of Delta Forum

The main goal of Delta Forum is to establish a sustained platform where knowledge is shared to reach the policy discussions in order to stimulate the implementation of BDP2100. This will platform will focus on six* 'Hotspots' within the Bangladesh Delta.

2.1. Activities of Delta Forum

Key activities of Delta Forum can be identified as follows:

- *Quarterly Steering Committee Meetings* organized by and for the members of Delta Forum;
- *Quarterly Seminar* by the Delta Forum members open to all;
- Joining as Co-organizer of *annual international conferences* of Sustainable Development of IDSS, UIU;
- Organizing *dialogue, workshop, stakeholders' meeting and training;*
- Facilitating *knowledge-sharing events* by the forum members in respective hotspot areas;
- Facilitating *policy-science-practice interface dialogue* on BDP 2100 in respective hotspot areas;
- *Website and social media regulation* for sharing news update;
- *Collecting and dissemination of published articles* related to BDP 2100.

2.2. Governance

Delta Forum is a knowledge platform, not a civil society organization. The platform is an initiative of United International University (UIU) through its Institute of Development Studies and Sustainability (IDSS) led by Prof. Dr. Hamidul Huq. Delta Forum is an open membership platform. Any university, research organization, government organization, NGO, Private organizations can be a member of Delta Forum to contribute in knowledge generation, sharing and translation processes of Sustainable Development.

2.4. Steering Committee

All members, of initial first year from Delta Forum's launching, will be working as Steering Committee Members. Prof. Dr Hamidul Huq, Director, IDSS, UIU will work as the Convener of the Delta Forum.

3. Work Plan for the Period of 2022 to 2023

3.1. Sustained Collective Initiatives

Steering Committee Meeting of Delta Forum: Delta Forum has a Steering Committee, currently with 17 members, but We will invite universities, research organizations, Government Organizations, NGOs, Forum/networks, Development Partners from all the Six Hotspot Areas (geo-political areas are Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong, Sylhet, and Rajshahi Divisions and in Chittagong Hill Tracts) to be members of Delta Forum and thus Members of Steering Committee of Delta Forum will contribute in carrying out decision making and activities of Delta Forum. This Steering Committee will decide plans, programs and guidelines to carry out activities of Delta Forum. In order to facilitate collective initiatives and actions, this Steering Committee will sit in monthly meetings, which shall be hosted by Members of the Steering Committee by rotation in Dhaka as well as in Khulna, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Chittagong Hill Tracts. This practice will accelerate practice of shared role and responsibility towards sustained collective initiatives and actions in the processes of contributing in BDP 2100 implementation.

3.2. Online communications

3.2.1 With a notion of sharing Delta Forum activities, learning, knowledge and information on Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (BDP 2100), we have developed website of Delta Forum, in which will be keeping posting of news, information, key findings of Delta Forum activities as well as news of BDP 2100 implementation related activities.

3.2.2 We will publish quarterly Online Newsletter covering Delta Forum's activities and key news on BDP 2100 activities.

3.2.3. We will keep collecting published articles, books, and Working Papers (unpublished) on/related/relevant to Bangladesh Delta Plan to place on Delta Forum website to benefit the policy makers, implementing organizations, researchers, students, teachers, media and other stakeholders.

IDSS Research Associates and Interns from WUR will assist in accomplishing these activities.

3.3 Monthly Delta Forum Seminar

3.3.1 Quarterly **Steering Committee Meeting** will be followed by 'Delta Forum Monthly Seminar'. The host member organization among from Steering Committee Members (in respective Hotspot area) will come forward with a plan to host the monthly seminar, keeping in account that the seminar will be on 'knowledge sharing' of research, which is relevant to Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and Sustainable Development. The host member organization will search for empirical research work of universities, research organizations, individual researchers on 'Hotspots' areas and invite them as key presenters in the respective seminar.

3.3.2 **Specific objectives of 'Delta Forum quaterly Seminar'** are:

- Sharing key features of Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 with the local stakeholders of respective Hotspot area;
- Obtaining Stakeholder's opinions, observations, suggestions, criticism and ideas & options regarding Delta Plan implementation in respective Hotspots;
- Facilitating sharing of empirical knowledge that link/relevant to BDP 2100 implementation;
- Understanding potential areas of research towards contribute in BDP 2100 implementation;
- Mapping policy-science-practice gaps and interface options in line of BDP 2100 implementation.

Quarterly Steering Committee Meeting will take place for one hour before the quarterly seminar of 02 hours duration. Both the vents may take place in the same venue. First one hour of the seminar will be spent for sharing Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, focusing on the respective Hotspots of Seminar Venue (e.g., if the seminar takes place in Sylhet, presentation of BDP 2100 will focus on Haor Basin). The rest part of the seminar (01 hour) will be dedicated to share empirical knowledge, generated from research work in the respective Hotspot area, and discussions. All level of stakeholders (influential, primary and other stakeholders) will have the opportunity to participate in the seminars. The Delta Forum Quarterly Seminar will contribute in stakeholders' education and raising awareness on BDP 2100.

We (Researchers of IDSS at UIU) will keep the seminar findings documented and place it on the Delta Forum Website and share the key findings with the Delta Plan Implementation Office at GED, Bangladesh Planning Commission as well as with the 17 Focal Points of Delta Plan Implementation, and other stakeholders, e.g., SIBDP 2100, Development Partners, etc.

3.3.3 **Sharing of knowledge and information of research projects:**

Delta Forum will organize seminar twice a year to facilitate sharing of explored knowledge and information of research projects in Bangladesh, especially the research work under UDW program, on hotspots of Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100. This seminar will create space for different research organizations like Delta Alliance Bangladesh Wing (DABW), Partners of Urbanizing Deltas of the World (UDW), and organizations engaged in implementation processes of BDP 2100, e.g., Focal point of Planning Commission, Focal points of line ministries, Support to the Implementation of the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (SIBDP 2100) to learn from each other through sharing knowledge and information. Researchers of universities, especially from the respective hotspots areas, will be invited to present their research findings. We will mobilise the MSc, PhD and Post Doctoral scholars in the past and present research projects under NWO supports to share their research findings in these half yearly seminars.

Delta Forum will organise this half yearly seminars in 'hotspot areas' like in Dhaka and in the regional levels like Khulna, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Barisal. Member organisations of Delta Forum in respective regions will contribute in different forms, e.g., providing with list of potential participants, identifying suitable venues, arranging logistics, mobilising media, etc. in organising the Delta Forum Monthly Meetings. Proceedings of the monthly seminar along with presented paper/document, if available, to be circulated among the stakeholders of BDP 2100 on regular basis.

IDSS Research Associates and Research Interns from WUR will assist in organising the 'Delta Forum Half Yearly Seminar', collecting documents, preparing seminar proceedings, and distribution among stakeholders, especially the GED and SIBDP 2100. Key findings of these seminars will be published in Delta Forum Newsletter.

3.4. Delta Forum Annual Seminar

3.4.1. It is planned to organize 'Science-policy-practice' dialogue on six hotspots of Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 in the **'International Conference on Sustainable Development',** which is organized by IDSS at UIU in every February in Dhaka. This event is known as UIU-ICSD. This international conference creates scope and opportunities of sharing empirical knowledge of scientists, especially the young scientists of Bangladesh and other countries focusing on SDGs and key themes of sustainable development. We will ensure participation of all level stakeholders to facilitate scope of exchanging knowledge, ideas, experience, criticism/lessons learned, suggestions, and recommendations for enriching 'science-policy-practice' interface towards increasing knowledge-based enabling institutional capacity of efficient translation of the Delta Plan. Different organizations assosciated with with BDP2100 implementation will be invited share their knowledge and learning in the plenary of 6th UIU-ICSD 2023 (Feb 19-20).

3.4.2. Inter-Delta Knowledge Exchange

With a notion of enhance exchange and strengthen knolwdge base of stakeholders of bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, as well as to reflect on the Pathways to Implement BDP 2100 efficiently and effectively, knowldge of UDW/NWO supported research projects, e.g., Enabling sustainable industrial development in Vietnamese delta's: Reducing, recycling and multi-sourcing industrial water, Strategies for the subsiding and urbanising Mekong Delta (Vietnam) facing increasing salt water intrusion**,** which have been carried out in Mekong Delta to be shared in the UIU-ICSD at UIU, Dhaka. We will invite researchers of these project to Dhaka to present their research findings. We will also invite relevant scientists, academics and policymakers from Vietnam to Dhaka to share experiences of impacts of their [Adaptive] Delta Management projects, e.g., Mekong Delta Integrated Climate Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Project for Vietnam, in order stimulate the relevance and potential use in Delta Plan implementation in Bangladesh.

3.5. Short Course on BDP 2100

Delta Forum/IDSS at UIU will offer 12 weeks short course on Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 at IDSS, UIU. Contents of this short course focus on background of BDP 2100, Hotspots, and strategic options of implementation of BDP 2100 and adaptive delta management. We will use knowledge of Urbanizing Deltas of the World (UDW) in this short course. This short course will be suitable for government officials from line ministries of BDP 2100 implementation, knowledge institutions, international NGOs, Private Sector organizations, Media Sector, Civil Society Organizations, etc. Experts from SIBDP 2100, BWDB, GED of Bangladesh Planning Commission, IWFM of BUET, IWM, CEGIS may contribute in this short course as resource persons.

3.6. Research

With a notion of reducing the gaps between 'science-policy-practice' in respect to proposed strategic options in BDP 2100, studies to be conducted in the different forms: policy research and empirical research to explore evidences of local practices along with options to scale up in two hotspots area (Haor Basin and River Char areas).

WEedevelop Policy Briefs for the GED of Bangladesh Planning Commission in line of BDP 2100 implementation. These policy briefs are expected to be useful both for the Bangladesh Government

and its Development Partners of BDP 2100 implementation. The policy briefs would also be useful for the academics and implementing organizations, both government and private. These two post doctoral researchers will also produce two 'Working Paper', one on 'Hotspot Haor Basin' and one on Southwest Coastal Region, in line of BDP 2100 implementation process.

This project will host four Masters Students, two from Bangladesh and two from the Netherlands every year, who will conduct empirical research in Haor and Southwest Coastal region to explore the local good practices in line of Delta Plan proposed strategic options and to explore strategic approaches to scale up of these good practices. The co-applicants of this project will guide in selection of the two postdoctoral researchers and four Masters Researchers' as well as guide their study work.

3.7. Monitoring

Monitoring of the project activities to be conducted collectively by the lead and co-applicants of this project. Quarterly video conference will be organized among the project partners. Professor Dr. Hamidul Huq of IDSS, UIU will report on project activities in the 'Delta Forum Steering Committee Monthly Meeting'. Project information to be shared through quarterly Newsletter of Delta Forum. Six monthly progress reports to be prepared and shared with Steering Committee Members, UDW and all partners.

Annual Review Meeting of all partners to be organized in Dhaka or Khulna or Sylhet. All the co-applicants, researchers, Delta Forum Advisory Committee Members will participate in this review meeting.

4. Expected Outputs of Two Years activities

4.1 **Network** of universities, research organizations, national and international NGOs, civil society groups, development partners, government organizations, local government institutions, and media house will be developed to collectively work to contribute in Delta Plan implementation and sustainable development.

4.2 Stakeholders' awareness and education on Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 shall be accelerated.

4.3 Knowledge portal of scientific research findings on Bangladesh Delta Plan and sustainable development would be created.

4.4 Policy Brief to be developed and supplied to the GED of strategic options on Hotspot specific.

4.5 Collection of published articles on Bangladesh Delta.

4.6 Collection of all forms of publications on Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100.

5. Operation Strategy

5.1 Institution of Development Studies and Sustainability (IDSS) at United International University is responsible to implement this project having a Team of Five Full Time Research Staffs. Prof. Dr. Hamidul Huq, Director of IDSS will be carrying out the responsibility of Lead Researcher/CEO of this project.

5.2 IDSS Team will mobilize the knowledge institutions, Government organizations, Development partner organizations, national and international NGOs, civil society organizations, local government institutions, consultancy organizations, media houses, people's organizations, professional organizations, young scientist, and youth

forums to participate in Delta Forum activities to contribute in strengthening capacity of institutional arrangements of Delta Plan implementation.

5.3 IDSS Team will organize Steering Committee Meeting of Delta Forum in every month, which will be hosted by Steering Committee members by rotation. IDSS team will provide the member organizations with necessary technical and financial supports from this project.

5.4 IDSS Team will maintain records of meetings and maintain book keeping of accounts of fund of this project.

5.5 IDSS Team will develop a 'working paper' on joint learning on BDP 2100.

5.6 Strengths/resources of co-applicants to be utilized as and when and whatever is possible.

5.7 The Co-applicants of this project will provide all possible technical and intellectual inputs in carrying out the project activities.



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November 2022

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