



Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement (Sector) Project (UGIIP-2)

Creating Livable Secondary Cities for Balanced Urban Growth

Although the degree of urbanization in Bangladesh today is relatively low (27%), Bangladesh has one of the fastest rates of urban population growth in the world. Dhaka, the capital, with around 14 million people, is already now one of the ten largest cities in the world; its slum population has doubled in the last decade, from 1.5 to 3.4 million people. Within 30 years, 100 million people are expected to live in the cities of Bangladesh.

Urbanization is of course a sign of development. However, unplanned and uncontrolled urban growth becomes a hindrance to growth and development and multiplies environmental degradation. In Bangladesh, most migrants eventually arrive at one of its two big cities, Dhaka and Chittagong, because the *pourashavas* (secondary cities) offer few of the amenities associated with urban life. Thus, in order to promote balanced urban growth in Bangladesh and ease the pressure on the resources and infrastructure of the big cities, it is absolutely essential to develop the potential of the *pourashavas*, to make them dynamic, livable cities, where people can make a living, educate their children, find decent housing with running water, electricity, and sewers, and get high quality medical care.

The *pourashavas* currently lack basic infrastructure and are unable to provide essential services, particularly for poor people. However, experience has shown that it is not enough to simply construct roads, buildings, water pipes, drains, latrines, waste management facilities, schools, and health clinics. Cities do not consist of buildings and municipal works; cities are made of people, who have to be involved in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of urban infrastructure.

Time and again, well-meaning urban planners and development partners have used top-down approaches to construct public latrines that were completely clogged and unusable after several months or health facilities and markets that were then inaccessible to poor people or women. Or consider the state-of-the-art composting facility lying idle on the outskirts of the *pourashava* of Mymensingh, while its nearly 500,000 people dispose of 30 tons of (mostly organic) waste in open spaces, drainage canals, rivers, and ponds every day.

But the lessons have been learned: improvement of urban infrastructure and service delivery is only sustainable if it is linked to citizen participation and governance reform, as well as proper planning, tax enforcement, and private sector participation. The Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement (Sector) Project (UGIIP 2), a project of the Local Government and Engineering Department, jointly funded by the Government of Bangladesh, the Asian Development Bank, and KfW Entwicklungsbank, requires the *pourashavas* to meet certain governance improvement criteria, including financial accountability, tax collection, and participatory urban planning through the development of *pourashava* development plans (PDP), in order to access funds for infrastructure development.



The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, which is providing technical cooperation to UGIIP 2 in order to help develop the capacity of the pourashavas to plan and deliver urban services, will be assisting the pourashavas in the implementation of this participatory urban planning approach. A broad range of citizen groups, including women and the poor, will be represented in town level and ward level coordination committees and will be consulted in the formulation of the PDP. A poverty reduction action plan (PRAP) will be included in each PDP to identify and formulate the specific actions for poverty reduction in the pourashava; a slum improvement committee will be established in each slum to operationalize the PRAP.

GTZ brings with it 30 years of experience in capacity development and the absolute conviction that sustainability requires negotiation between and the active involvement of all stakeholders – in this case, the city administration, civil society, the business sector, and especially poor and marginalized groups. Together, these groups must identify their needs, priorities, and potentials and must then develop the measures to achieve these – with the involvement of private sector investors and the collection and use of local and national taxes.