

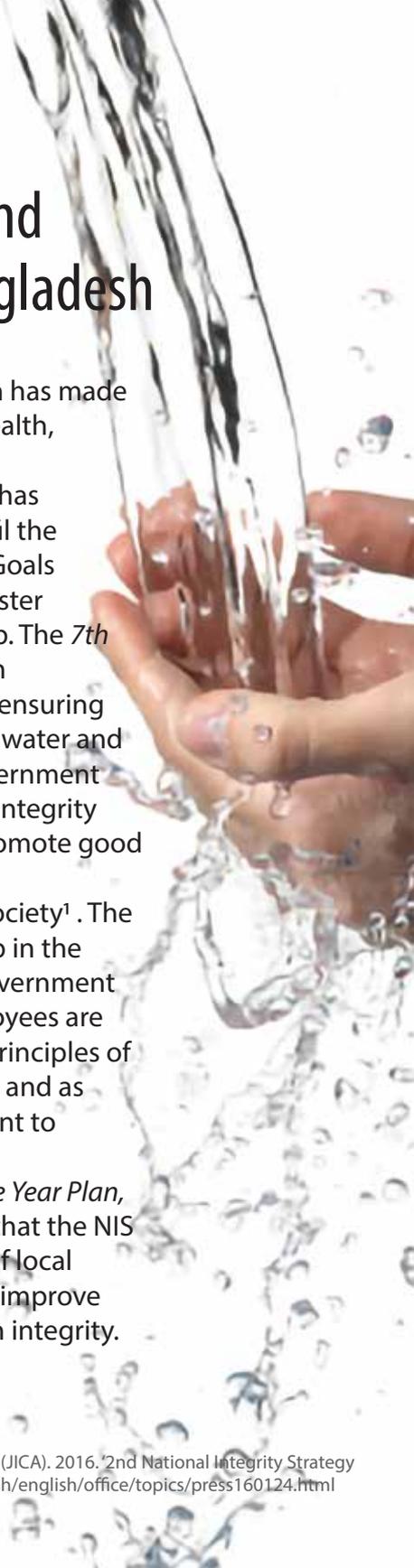
Strengthening Integrity Management at Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities in Bangladesh

Background

Infrastructure and Integrity in Bangladesh

In recent years, Bangladesh has made considerable progress in health, education, and livelihood opportunities. The country has ambitious intentions to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the Prime Minister exercising strong leadership. The *7th Five Year Plan* of Bangladesh (2015–2020) committed to ensuring access for all to sustainable water and sewerage systems. The government also formulated a National Integrity Strategy (NIS) in 2012 to promote good governance and achieve a corruption-free state and society¹. The NIS represents a strong step in the right direction. Under it, government institutions and their employees are mandated to practice the principles of integrity, both in their work and as individuals. This commitment to integrity has been further strengthened in the *8th Five Year Plan*, which specifically requires that the NIS be introduced at the level of local government institutions to improve governance and strengthen integrity.

¹ Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). 2016. '2nd National Integrity Strategy Training'. <https://www.jica.go.jp/bangladesh/english/office/topics/press160124.html>



The *8th Five Year Plan* also stipulates that critical urban services such as water supply, drainage, sanitation, and waste management will require intensive investment as well as structural reforms to enable the development of strong local government institutions. For Bangladesh to become a solidly middle-income country and an engine of growth in South Asia, however, requires more than investment in infrastructure: the country needs to invest in processes that strengthen integrity, improve work performance, and increase public trust. This crucial commitment will ensure the effective use of resources. Poor integrity damages the reputation and creditworthiness of entities in the water sector. Conversely, mitigating integrity risks can lead to substantial savings across the sector and secure the proper use of investment funds.



The Integrity Management Project

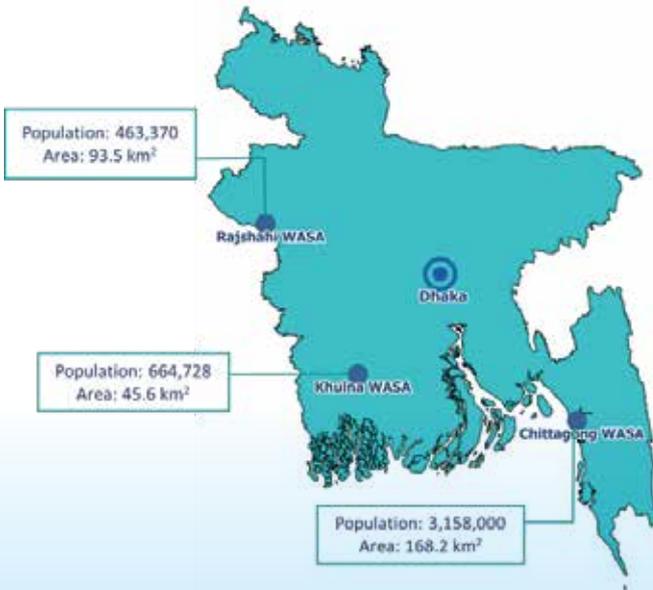
Since 2014, under the umbrella of the Bangladesh Water Integrity Network (BAWIN)², key partners of the Water Integrity Network, the **NGO Forum**, and **cewas**³ have been implementing an Integrity Management Project with the Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities of three cities: Khulna (KWASA), Chittagong (CWASA), and Rajshahi (RWASA). The project supports water institutions in Bangladesh in addressing integrity risks by using the integrity WASH (InWASH) approach, which is built on integrity assessment and management, with the goal of both strengthening integrity and improving performance. The project's ultimate objective is to bolster Bangladesh's efforts to achieve the SDG targets. The project also aligns with the country's National Integrity Strategy.

² BAWIN: The Bangladesh Water Integrity Network is a multi-stakeholder network of water sector institutions at national and sub-national levels as well as individuals committed to promoting integrity in the water sector of Bangladesh through research, campaign, and advocacy engaging various stakeholders.

³ From 2014 to 2017, the project was implemented with and Transparency International Bangladesh.

The Integrity Management Project Aims to

- Improve levels of integrity and performance at WASAs
- Contribute to raising awareness around water integrity in Bangladesh
- Support the building of stronger institutions
- Enhance the capacity of BAWIN members to facilitate integrity management projects
- Document good practices for other water utilities
- Promote the integrity management approach to other WASAs.
- Enhance customer relations through facilitating **Public Hearing** and emphasizing people's demand



Location and service coverage of Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities in Chittagong, Khulna, and Rajshahi⁴

⁴ Rajshahi WASA: <https://rajshahiwasa.org.bd/>; Khulna WASA: <https://www.kwasa.org.bd/>; Chittagong WASA: <http://ctg-wasa.org.bd/>.

The Integrity Management Toolbox

The project is grounded in the application of the Integrity Management (IM) Toolbox: an adaptable set of resources and workshop techniques for supporting integrity management in water sector organizations. The IM Toolbox facilitates enhancing performance, undertaking internal reforms to strengthen integrity, and improving customer relations. If applied well, the IM Toolbox helps improve operations and services; mitigate corruption risks; increase accountability to customers stakeholders, public authorities, and partners; and strengthen an organization's creditworthiness. Project partners work with trained local coaches to support the utilities from earliest stages through the implementation process.

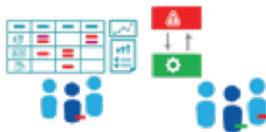
A central element is the integrity workshop, during which the organization identifies its most pressing integrity risks, selects an appropriate suite of tools to address them, and develops a roadmap for implementation that aligns with its business model. Integrity coaches, who are external to the utilities, support roadmap implementation and provide guidance as needed, without making decisions for them. The entire process depends solely on organizational management and employees and is supported by an appointed internal integrity agent.





Preparation (1 – 6 months)

- Interview with the utility to adapt the Toolbox
- Establishing team of Integrity Coaches and the internal Integrity Team



Workshop (3 – 5 days)

- Risk identification and selection of tools
- Developing roadmap and assigning responsibilities



Implementation (1 – 2 years)

- Implementing roadmap
- Monitoring, progress evaluation

The three phases of Integrity Management Toolbox application⁵

Key Achievements of the Project

At all three WASAs, phase 1 and phase 2 of the IM toolbox application have been completed. Currently, the integrity roadmap is being implemented under phase 3. Internal integrity teams were formed within WASAs, and their staffs have received training to apply the IM Toolbox with the support of external partners and coaches. Under the project, the WASAs engage actively with customers via public hearings and inform them about the progress of IM Project implementation. The utilities also engage actively with the media. The three WASAs participate in knowledge-exchange workshops to share their learning and experiences, and they carry out wider advocacy with government officials and ministers in collaboration with BAWIN and the NGO Forum.



⁵ Water Integrity Network: www.waterintegritynetwork.net

As the pioneer among the three utilities, KWSA has completed all three phases of the IM Toolbox process and are now continuing to implement their roadmap, in the second stage of the project. During the first stage (2014–2017), KWSA identified a list of integrity risks related to management, engineering, and commercial issues. Key impacts in the first stage included improving the meter reading process and steps taken to reduce meter readings' falsification, and introducing online procurement processes. During the second stage (2017–2021), KWSA has participated in an integrity management assessment and generated baseline data for the IM project so that change can be measured by comparing with project endline data. In early 2020, KWSA developed a new roadmap to address low staff competence on public procurement rules (PPR), poor performance of contractors, inaccurate meter reading procedures, and an inefficient billing system. By the end of 2021, the utility plans to train 100 percent of its officers on PPR and electronic government procurement processes; achieve a satisfactory level of performance from contractors on tender specification; ensure accurate meter reading for 100 percent of KWSA customers; and increase revenue collection from existing customers by 40 percent. Significantly,



seeing the successes of the KWSA IM Toolbox pilot, both CWASA and RWASA were convinced of the power of IM projects to benefit them by tackling integrity issues and supporting performance improvement.

CWASA is one of the largest utilities in Bangladesh in terms of its size and population served. The organization began implementing an integrity roadmap in 2019, which has helped to strengthen accountability mechanisms in the field inspection process. Previously, field reports of CWASA staff were a routine task for them. The field inspection report could not play a proper role in improving the performance of the contractors which deteriorated the service quality. Now, the utility uses a reporting template with a mechanism to verify that staffs are in fact visiting sites, and senior officials monitor the inspections by closely reviewing reports. The management of utility adds this report with government Annual Performance Agreement policy and sends it to the concern ministry. CWASA has also improved the mechanism for customer complaints by moving to a digital system. CWASA's efforts caught the notice of the national government, which gave the utility its National Integrity Award in 2019.





In 2020, RWASA created an integrity team, with the managing director leading the process. As of 2021, implementation of the integrity roadmap has gotten underway. Critical goals outlined in the roadmap include standardizing procurement processes as per compliance guidelines, initiating direct interaction with customers, and improving the utility's cash handling policy.

The IM Project also conducted trainings around integrity tools that helped in building local capacities in integrity management, both within the partner organizations and of individual officers and staff of the utilities. As a result, Bangladesh has the advantage of a cadre of trained, experienced integrity management coaches and facilitators able to steer and lead integrity management projects. The IM Toolbox has also been adapted for the country context and translated into Bengali.

Future Perspectives

WIN and its partners continue to partner with the WASAs to strengthen integrity, with the objective of supporting achievement of Bangladesh's SDG targets as well as bolstering the National Integrity Strategy. The WASAs experience demonstrates the effectiveness of the IM Toolbox for strengthening institutional integrity. To support sustainability and scalability of integrity management in Bangladesh's water utilities, and potentially other water sector organizations and local municipalities, WIN, BAWIN, the NGO Forum, and other partners are dedicated to mobilizing further resources from sector partners, donors, and government agencies – which will enable expansion of the project to other WASAs and water sector organizations.

In a 2020 report⁶, the Asia Development Bank clarified the importance of *“mainstreaming integrity and transparency practices across water policies, water institutions, and water governance frameworks that are key for greater accountability and trust in decision-making, and effective implementation of water policies”* – this is the goal of BAWIN and its partners in the Bangladesh Integrity Management Project.

⁶ Asian Development Bank. 2020. Asia Water Development Outlook 2020 – Advancing Water Security across Asia and the Pacific.
<https://www.adb.org/publications/asian-water-development-outlook-2020>



Statement

Mr. Md. Abdullah, P Eng

Managing Director, Khulna WASA



Water integrity management offers a very systematic approach. When we first started the integrity management process at KWSA it was quite challenging, as we were unaware of how the approach would be accepted within the organization. But when the government introduced its National Integrity Strategy, KWSA received benefits for our efforts, and moving forwards we were able to align our work well with the government policy and strategy.

Engr. A. K. M. Fazlullah

Managing Director, Chittagong WASA



We are making progress in terms of integrity and ethics. In 2018, CWASA developed an integrity management roadmap through the application of the Integrity Management Toolbox for managing the integrity change process. This process has helped CWASA identify the integrity risks we faces and choose the best integrity tools to manage them.

S M A Rashid

Executive Director, NGO Forum for Public Health



We have perceived that the implication of Integrity Management Tool has boosted up the overall progress of the KWSA and CWASA authorities. We are elevating our learning curve on this management tool and would be eyeing to replicate the phenomenon and change the management practices in the other WASAs and municipalities. The outcome of going through the process of IMT in management is diverse and we believe this would be a huge step forward in the process of management for better service delivery.

Partners



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