



Australia–Bangladesh Aid Program Strategy (2012–16)



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1 Summary

Bangladesh is on the path to become a middle-income country within a generation. However the country's strong economic performance is not benefiting the population equally. While progress against development indicators over the last 20 years in Bangladesh has been impressive, the World Bank reports poverty levels at 43 per cent of the population. Helping Bangladesh develop its human resources and overcome poverty will drive more inclusive economic and social progress in the country.

The Australia–Bangladesh Aid Program Strategy 2012–16 outlines how Australian aid will assist the government and people of Bangladesh to achieve the country's development goals. Our support will help reduce poverty and support equitable access to basic services underpinning the country's economic and social development. It will build upon the 40 years of Australian diplomatic relations with Bangladesh and reflect the development priorities set by the Government of Bangladesh, in its sixth Five Year Plan—*Accelerating Growth and Reducing Poverty (2011–2015)*.

Australia's aid program will focus on areas in which we have experience, credibility and the potential to make the greatest impact. These have been identified as some of the most critical areas affecting further development progress in Bangladesh. Our core sectors will be education and health. The challenges posed by climate change and seasonal weather events will be addressed through support for Bangladesh's adaptation activities.

While enrolment in primary school is high, one in three children do not finish grade five. Lifting completion rates and improving learning outcomes by providing quality schooling to children, including those living in extreme poverty, will be a focus for Australian work with government, donors and civil society. Australia will also explore opportunities in secondary and technical/vocational education and training to address skills shortages in the workforce. Our tertiary scholarships will continue to empower individuals to contribute to the country's development.

Rates of maternal and child mortality have significantly reduced in Bangladesh but remain high compared with developing countries in the region. Australia will work with government, donors and civil society to ensure health facilities effectively treat the poorest women and children. This will be complemented by support for improvements in access to safe water and improved sanitation.

Complementing this engagement in health and education will be efforts to help the Government of Bangladesh further reduce poverty levels. This support will also help to spread the benefits of economic growth to the extreme poor. Poverty levels are improving in Bangladesh but malnutrition rates remain high. The vulnerability of the poor to social, economic and natural shocks continue to undermine development. Australia will support livelihood programs that provide the extreme poor with opportunities to earn an income and access services. Australia will also consider opportunities to work with the government to develop a national social protection strategy. This strategy will guide and encourage increased participation in state welfare programs over time, helping to reduce poverty and build the resilience of the poor to economic pressures.

Bangladesh will continue to be subject to natural disasters. The country's densely populated, low-lying Brahmaputra–Ganges Delta is highly vulnerable to cyclones, floods and tidal surges. This is compounded by the impact of climate change. Australia will support the Government of Bangladesh's leadership in this area, to reduce the risks associated with natural disasters and climate change as well as help respond to

humanitarian crises if required. Bangladesh will also benefit from Australian assistance at regional level, which will help address the challenge of water management across South Asia.

Bangladesh will benefit from Australian support promoting economic integration in the South Asia region. With the largest number of poor people in the world, support for measures to accelerate and sustain economic growth across South Asia, including through improved trade arrangements, can help to further reduce poverty.

Australia will continue efforts to improve the quality, accountability and transparency of the aid program, in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh. Australia will increase the amount of funding Australia provides through government systems, where we assess these as robust. In doing so, we will ensure aid effectiveness by actively reinforcing Bangladesh's priorities and systems and harmonising with other donors. Australia will also work in partnership with multilateral and bilateral organisations as well as non-government organisations (NGOs) to deliver our assistance.

Over the life of this program strategy Australia will continue to increase the size of the aid program in areas where our investments can have the most impact. Australia will maintain a strong focus on achieving outcomes and value-for-money so we can make a real difference to the lives of Bangladeshi people.

2 Development partnership principles

2.1 Principles and commitments

The fundamental objective of Australian aid is to help people overcome poverty.

The Australian aid program is guided by five strategic goals: save lives, promote opportunities for all, build sustainable economic development, build and support effective governance, and respond effectively to humanitarian crises and natural disasters. Australia focuses its efforts in areas where Australia can make a difference and where our resources can most effectively and efficiently be deployed. The Australia–Bangladesh program gives effect to this through a focus on basic service delivery, social protection and climate change.

Aid programs are more sustainable when owned and driven by partner governments. Australia is committed to providing assistance through the systems and processes of partner governments where these are assessed to be robust. Where they are not, Australia will work with partner governments to strengthen them. Australia is also committed to aligning its program with the priorities and policies of development partners. In delivering an aid program, risks have to be taken to achieve results. We take a sensible approach to risk management to guard against risk and fraud while delivering programs and assistance to poor people who need it.

Australia works through development partnerships to deliver its aid program to Bangladesh. Our partnerships are built on mutual accountability and accountability to our respective citizens, organisations and constituents. Critical to accountability is Australia's commitment to be more transparent about financial and operational information, results and performance. Australia supports greater transparency of all development partners to better measure and report on the impact of development efforts, foster accountability and promote more effective coordination.

In doing so, this program strategy is guided by the Australian Government's aid policy, *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—delivering real results*, which sets the strategic direction of Australia's aid program through to 2015–16. To give effect to this policy the Australian Government has prepared a Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework which outlines the resources and headline results to be delivered by 2015–16 and sets new standards for the efficient and effective delivery of Australian aid. Bangladesh has been identified by the Australian Government as one of the top 12 priority countries for Australian development assistance.

2.2 Joint focus on results

Australia and Bangladesh have made international commitments to delivering aid focused on results. Both countries have signed up to the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness (2005), Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2012).

We will ensure that the delivery of our aid program reflects Australia's and Bangladesh's international commitments to aid effectiveness. Australian aid to Bangladesh will align and respond to the country's national development strategy, the sixth Five Year Plan (2011–15). Through implementation of a joint cooperation strategy donors have agreed to coordinate their assistance with each other and the

Government of Bangladesh. This includes working together in sector working groups and joint review missions.

Australia's aid delivery through this program strategy period will be reviewed annually. We will establish senior-level bilateral discussions every calendar year to discuss progress in implementing joint programs of cooperation. Progress will also be documented in comprehensive yearly program performance assessments. The resulting Australia–Bangladesh annual program performance report will be made publicly available.

3 Context and rationale for Australian aid in Bangladesh

3.1 Poverty and need

Bangladesh has made impressive development progress over the last 20 years but faces many challenges as it transitions toward middle-income status. Sustained economic growth of around 6 per cent over the last five years, and development assistance delivered in partnership with the government, has helped to halve the proportion of people living in poverty since 1990. This progress has underpinned impressive results on food security and progress in health and education. However, the government's pro-poor focus will need renewed support as the government tackles the challenges of reducing inequality, promoting women's empowerment, managing urbanisation, strengthening economic integration with the region, and tackling climate change.

Despite impressive progress, poverty levels in Bangladesh remain among the highest in the world. The Government of Bangladesh estimates that more than 26 million people in the country are considered 'extreme poor', which means they are not meeting their minimum food needs. The extreme poor and those living just above or on the poverty line are particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, including to costs associated with illness, food-price hikes and natural disasters. Bangladesh's extreme poor are marginalised without adequate access to basic health and education services. Among the most marginalised are women, female-headed households, children, ethnic minority groups and people with disability. These groups are over represented among the poor. Bangladesh's high rates of poverty and marginalisation are a major constraint on the country's social and economic development.

Significant gains in primary school enrolment rates are yet to be matched by improvements in quality education outcomes. Just as many girls as boys are now enrolled in primary school, and net enrolment is at 92 per cent. However over one-third of children enrolled in primary school drop out before they complete grade five and less than one-third of children achieve expected grade-level competencies by the end of primary school. This means a high number of children are not achieving the learning outcomes needed to prepare them for further education, training and employment. Educational outcomes are also impeded by poor child nutrition. This effects cognitive development with long-term learning consequences.

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the health sector. Maternal and child mortality have both dropped significantly since 1990 (by 70 and 66 per cent respectively). Immunisation coverage increased by 30 per cent in the same period. While these improvements are impressive, more work is needed. A total of 134 000 young children still died in Bangladesh in 2011 from largely preventable causes. The challenge is to sustain the momentum in health by working to ensure health systems are providing basic services to the extreme poor.

Although aid flows to Bangladesh declined over the past decade, comprising around 0.99 per cent of gross domestic product in 2011–12, it remains a significant source of financing for sectoral government expenditure (at about 17 per cent). NGOs provide services to millions of Bangladeshis. The pro-poor focus of established NGOs places them in a good position to partner with donors and government in responding to the challenges of extreme poverty in Bangladesh.

Challenges to further development progress

Gender inequality remains a significant constraint to Bangladesh's progress, despite gains in recent years. While access to education has improved, learning outcomes for girls and boys continue to be poor and the gender gap is significant by the end of secondary schooling. Women's employment tends to be in the low-wage side of formal employment and informal sector activity, leading to a significant gender disparity in earnings. The high level of violence against women constrains their mobility, quality of life and has significant economic cost implications for Bangladesh.

Recent economic modernisation, including rapidly increasing urban migration and reliance on informal sector employment, risks entrenching inequality in Bangladesh. It is expected that at least half of the population will live in urban areas by 2045. Increasing food prices, more evident in urban areas, are a major contributor to inflation, which has a disproportionate impact on the poorest and most marginalised.

Bangladesh will continue to be subject to natural shocks and pressures, including across borders, affecting its capacity to maintain gains and manage reform. Two-thirds of the country is less than 5 metres above sea level and in an average year one-quarter of the country is inundated. The impact of these seasonal events is likely to be compounded by climate change, posing a risk to Bangladesh's recent social and economic progress. How neighbouring countries work together to manage shared water resources will also impact on Bangladesh's ability to meet the needs of its people.

Inadequate infrastructure and acute energy shortages, together with an uncertain business climate, affects Bangladesh's ability to capitalise on regional trade opportunities. Better trade with its neighbours has the potential to improve the income-earning potential for the extreme poor, for example through jobs in the garment industry. Political and economic relationships with its nearest neighbours (Burma, Nepal and North-East India), and its proximity to the two fastest growing economies (China and India), will have a big impact on prospects for improved intra-regional trade and integration. Going forward, the main challenge will be to implement policy measures geared towards broad-based inclusive growth.

Bangladesh faces the challenge of sustaining and accelerating economic growth, as it strives to achieve middle income status. To meet this challenge, Bangladesh is seeking to improve its productivity and competitiveness in order to attract investment and create employment opportunities. These improvements require a quality labour force. Skills levels are critically low in Bangladesh, due to low adult literacy rates and the poor quality of education and training. Despite various initiatives, there continues to be a mismatch between available jobs and required skills.

Better governance needed to support development

Bangladesh is a young democracy. The speed at which Bangladesh reaches its development goals will in part be a function of its ability to provide public administration that delivers services effectively to the poor. Service delivery to the extreme poor can be more effective where providers are working with and are accountable to the community, in particular women, children and marginalised groups.

3.2 Australia's national interests

Australia has a national interest in working with Bangladesh to overcome poverty.

Australia's aid to Bangladesh is helping to lower poverty levels and prepare the country's next generation of workers, who will drive its economic growth. Australian business stands to benefit from this growth. Australia's trade with Bangladesh has tripled since 2008 and the country is now our second largest trading partner in South Asia.

As the fifth most populous country in Asia, Bangladesh's stability is of regional importance. Australia's aid is helping to maintain this stability by reducing poverty and building community resilience to social, economic and natural shocks.

3.3 Capacity to make a difference

Australia is increasingly making a valuable contribution to Bangladesh. We are building on successes and lessons learned from 40 years of bilateral development cooperation with the country and adapting our approach to better represent what is now one of Australia's most significant aid programs. Australia's aid is evolving from a small program covering a wide range of activities to a large program consolidated in selected areas where Australia can achieve significant improvements for those living in poverty in Bangladesh. As part of this transition, Australia is positioning its aid to support the Government of Bangladesh in strengthening national government systems in service delivery to provide for the poorest and most vulnerable.

To date, Australia has had notable success through its aid program. We have assisted more than 600 000 extremely poor Bangladeshi families lift themselves out of poverty since 2007, provided more than 376 000 school children with a primary education in 2011 and helped to reduce annual maternal deaths in targeted districts of Bangladesh by 11 per cent (well above the rate achieved at the national level).

A key lesson from our engagement to date has been the need to extend the reach of our assistance, given the widespread and uneven nature of poverty in Bangladesh. Australian aid must work in a way that ensures services will be provided to those who need it the most, both in rural and urban areas. We also need to more effectively support Government policy reforms and ensure that programs operating outside of the Government remain closely linked to its priorities and long-term goals. Finally, we will work to strengthen governance systems that support service delivery so gains are sustainable.

We are committed to working in areas where we have experience, credibility and the potential to make a real difference. However, Australia's aid management presence in Bangladesh is limited, and in line with policies outlined in *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference - delivering real results*, programs will be largely implemented through multilateral and local partners. Along with other donors, Australia is able to begin contributing directly to the Government's national education program. Australia will explore further opportunities to work within the government system after the completion of our Assessment of National Systems.

Australia has selected the key sectors of health, education, social protection and climate change/disaster risk reduction to align with the Government of Bangladesh's interests and priorities. Australia will support donor harmonisation by engaging jointly with other donors in Government-led programs. Australia also recognises that improving governance is an underlying requirement for Bangladesh's long term development and prosperity. Australia is realistic about its ability to influence in this area and will seek to build opportunities, as Australia's program grows and matures, for more effective dialogue on policy reforms and settings that promote inclusion, equity and a focus on the extreme poor.

As Australia strengthens its links with Government programs, we will continue to support policy development and service delivery through local civil society partners. Australia's Strategic Partnership with BRAC (Bangladesh's largest NGO) and the United Kingdom is an opportunity to show leadership on an innovative approach to poverty reduction which complements Government programs.

3.4 Scale and effectiveness

Australia is Bangladesh's sixth largest bilateral donor and ninth largest development partner, representing 2.4 per cent of total aid to the country in 2010. While results from Australia's aid have been strong, consolidation of programs in a limited number of sectors and deeper policy engagement with the government and donors in these sectors are intended to improve the impact of our aid during the life of this program strategy. For this reason Australia will not seek to engage in areas such as large scale economic investments or transport infrastructure which are supported by others.

A key development partner relationship is with the United Kingdom, who Australia works closely with on social protection and poverty reduction and as part of broader donor groups supporting the government's programs in health, education and climate change. Other large donors include Canada, the European Union, India, Japan and the United States. A significant portion of aid to Bangladesh is in the form of low interest loans through the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. Australia works closely with these and other development partners including United Nations agencies in Bangladesh to increase the effectiveness of its aid, especially through policy discussions with the Government of Bangladesh, as part of sector-wide approaches in key sectors of health and education and pooled funding arrangements in support of climate change adaptation.

4 Strategic priorities for Australian aid

4.1 Proposed focus areas and expected outcomes

The goal of Australian aid to Bangladesh is to help accelerate gains in poverty reduction and human development in support of the country's vision for equitable economic and social development. To achieve this, our aid objectives are:

1. Increased equity of access to, and improved outcomes from, health and education services.
2. Fewer women and men living in extreme poverty and vulnerable to economic and natural shocks.
3. Women and marginalised groups better able to demand and obtain services and assert their rights.

Australia's program is focused on four core areas—education, health, social protection, and climate change and disaster risk reduction—with a crosscutting theme of demand for good governance. These areas are a priority for the Government of Bangladesh, as outlined in its sixth Five Year Plan. They also reflect the following three of the five core goals of the Australian aid program:

1. Save lives—through expanded support for health, water and sanitation programs to reach the extreme poor in rural and urban areas. Australia will also promote policy research raising Bangladesh's expertise and evidence base in the health sector.
2. Promote opportunities for all—through expanded support for good quality, universal primary and pre-primary education in rural and urban areas, reaching ethnic minorities and people with disability. Tertiary education assistance will be provided through Australian Awards. Australia will also consider support secondary education and technical/vocational education and training.
3. Build sustainable economic development—through expanded assistance for livelihoods programs to build resilience to economic and natural shocks, particularly targeting children and female-headed households. Australia will explore opportunities to support the development of the Government of Bangladesh's social protection strategy. We will also support its response to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

The Australian aid program in Bangladesh includes multi-year commitments to Government-led health, education and climate change programs to provide essential services to the people of Bangladesh. Australia joined the national health and primary education sector programs, with other donor countries, UN Agencies and multilateral organisations, to strengthen the government's capacity to deliver more effective and accessible services for its citizens. Australia has also committed A\$15 million, from 2011, support for the Government of Bangladesh led Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme and the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund. Australia is also seeking opportunities to work closely with the Government in strengthening its social protection systems.

Australia will complement its support for government led programs with investments in the activities of local organisations. Australia has formed a strategic partnership with the United Kingdom, and BRAC providing A\$180 million core funding from 2012 over four years for BRAC's operations. Along with other donors, Australia provides A\$15 million over four years in core funding to the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh.

These bilateral aid investments are complemented by Australian contribution's through regional programs in South Asia dealing with the trans-boundary issues of economic integration and water resource management.

Education

In education, Australia will join other donors in work with the Government of Bangladesh to provide primary education services to more than 17 million students. Support for the government's primary education program will focus at the school level on improving the learning environment for children, increasing student participation in classrooms and decreasing disparities in access to primary school services. This is expected to improve the quality of primary education services and increase the rate of transition from primary to secondary school. Australia will also explore opportunities to support secondary, technical/vocational education and training, improving training quality and the link between training provision and market needs.

Education assistance through civil society (BRAC) will provide pre-primary and primary school services to children, mostly girls, from extremely poor households. BRAC's ability to work with the community including in hard to reach areas of the country encourages greater school attendance. Australian Awards will continue to be taken up by Bangladeshi professionals in a range of areas, including in education and health, and by students from ethnic minority groups.

Health

Australia will work with other donors to support the government's health program. This will help Bangladesh strengthen its health system to continue the reduction in mortality rates, particularly among infants, children and women. Australian support for the government's program will increase the number of community health clinics and the number of trained health workers operating throughout the country. This will mean more births are attended by trained professionals, immunisation coverage is increased, and mothers and children are assisted to have a better nutritional intake. Australia will also support programs improving access to safe water and improved sanitation.

These outcomes will also be supported through our assistance for civil society programs that provide maternal and child health services to the extreme poor in urban and rural areas. Community-based health workers will provide basic antenatal treatment to pregnant women and treatment for communicable diseases such as malaria. Australia will work with institutions that undertake research into the country's health challenges, train health practitioners in new treatment methods and treat patients for acute diarrheal disease.

Social protection

Australian support for social protection programs will help Bangladesh respond to the needs of the population living in extreme poverty, building their resilience to economic shocks. Support will address both transient poverty issues, such as food insecurity and entrenched structural poverty. Support will include provision of livelihood assistance in the form of productive assets, training, free health care and regular cash assistance. This support will complement our investments in education, health and climate change, helping to promote better outcomes in nutrition, childhood mortality, attendance at school, work productivity and resilience to economic shocks. Australia will also consider opportunities to assist the Government of Bangladesh develop a national-level social protection strategy, to streamline and align multiple existing programs.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

In climate change and disaster risk reduction, Australian assistance will support the government's climate change strategy and support improved regional water resource management. This will assist the Government of Bangladesh and communities prepare and respond to the impacts of climate change and natural shocks. Bangladesh Government agencies responsible for administering climate change and disaster preparedness will have access to technical assistance to help them perform these functions. Community resilience to natural shocks will be strengthened through funding for activities such as constructing pre-fabricated, cyclone-resilient houses, developing local-level disaster risk reduction plans and deploying volunteers to expand the coverage of the government's Cyclone Preparedness Programme. Regional support for efficient use of water resources will help build Bangladesh's resilience to the impacts of climate change. Australia will also provide humanitarian support if required.

4.2 Program approaches and ways of working

The Australia–Bangladesh Aid Program Strategy 2012–16 will build on the successes of the current in-country aid program. We recognise some changes in emphasis are required to sustain gains already made and to meet emerging challenges. To this end, these five features will underpin Australian aid to Bangladesh over the life of this program strategy.

1. **Aid delivery through proven partners:** Australia will continue to work with partners to harmonise our assistance with other donors and align our support to Bangladesh's programs and systems. Australia will support government-led sectoral programs, provide core funding to long-established local partners and look to establish similar arrangements with newer partners after institutional capacity assessments.
2. **High-level policy engagement:** Australia recognises Bangladesh's strong ambition to maintain economic growth and share its benefits equitably. Consistent with this ambition, Australia aims to become more effectively engaged in policy discussion with Bangladesh on key sectors of education, health and social protection.
3. **A focus on inclusive development, particularly on gender and disability:** Australia will pursue its aid policy agenda by promoting accountability for service delivery, ensuring programs respond to the needs of the extreme poor. This will include a focus on the areas of gender and disability-inclusive development and be achieved through our engagement with health, education, social protection and climate change sectors. Australia will encourage a division of labour with other donors in relation to these priorities.
4. **Continued, complementary support to civil society organisations:** While support to Government of Bangladesh policies, priorities and systems will deepen over the program strategy period, Australia will maintain its long-running support to civil society organisations. These organisations work at the grassroots level and complement the government's service delivery role. They help empower people living in poverty, including women, by building livelihood opportunities of the poorest and most disadvantaged in a targeted and direct manner.
5. **Results focus:** Achieving development results is paramount for this program strategy's success. Realistic development targets and indicators will allow Australia to demonstrate how Australian aid is contributing to joint efforts to overcome poverty in Bangladesh. Where our programs are not performing, we will reshape or terminate them.

4.3 Program partners

To achieve this program strategy's objectives, Australia will engage with the Government of Bangladesh on national programs and complement this assistance with support for service delivery through civil society partnerships. Australia works with bilateral and multilateral agencies as well as with civil society organisations to support its engagement in Bangladesh.

Australia works closely with the United Kingdom across all areas of our engagement. Australia's direct support for the extreme poor is particularly linked with the United Kingdom with whom we have formed a large three way partnership with BRAC for its programs in education, maternal and child health and poverty reduction. Australia also works with bilateral agencies to support the health services provided and research analysis undertaken by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh.

Multilateral partners such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank provide technical and administrative support enhancing Australia's engagement in health, education and climate change. Similarly, technical and administrative support provided by the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Program strengthens our work in education, climate change and social protection. The resources and logistical capability of the World Food Programme helps Australia respond quickly and effectively to humanitarian emergencies.

These partners have a wealth of knowledge and experience based on a long history of cooperation in Bangladesh. Working closely with them is an effective way for Australia to help Bangladesh achieve its development goals.

5 Program performance and risk management

5.1 What will success look like at the end of this program strategy

By 2016:

1. Increased equity of access to and improved outcomes from health and education services.

We would expect to see: women, children and marginalised groups receiving increased and better quality health and education services; strengthened government health and education systems; and better integration of state and non- state service provision.

2. Fewer women and men living in extreme poverty and vulnerable to economic and natural shocks.

We would expect to see: a reduction in absolute poverty and proportion of extreme poor; increased numbers of extreme poor supported through social protection transfers; improved policy coherence and coordination of civil society and government efforts to reduce poverty; strengthened disaster risk reduction and emergency responses; increased numbers of people with reduced vulnerability to climate change and increased numbers of people with access to cyclone shelters.

3. Women and marginalised groups better able to demand and obtain services and assert rights.

We would expect to see: increased participation of civil society in policy development for reform of basic services; increased capacity of government and NGOs to combat violence against women, advocate for justice for the poor, and promote accountability and responsiveness of government service delivery; improvements in legal and social rights of women and vulnerable groups.

5.2 Performance assessment framework

This program strategy's performance assessment framework (Table 1) lists our three strategic objectives for Australian aid to Bangladesh. It links these to the core goals of *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—delivering real results*, and outlines 2016 indicators and targets Australian assistance will work towards.

Table 1: Australia–Bangladesh aid program strategy’s performance assessment framework

Program strategy objective 1	
Increased equity of access to and improved outcomes from health and education services.	
<i>Save lives</i>	
Health	• 700 000 additional births attended by a skilled attendant • 500 000 people provided with increased access to safe water and sanitation • 2 000 000 additional children vaccinated • lower instances of stock-out at facility level, including in disadvantaged areas • increased resource allocation in government health budgets • extent to which evidence generated by partners is being provided to government and integrated into policies and programs
<i>Promote opportunities for all</i>	
Education	• 470 000 additional children enrolled in primary school • 520 000 students provided with financial or nutritional support • 10 000 000 textbooks provided • increased number of girls and boys graduating from basic education • increased number of teachers with professional qualification • increased number of schools in improved condition, including in disadvantaged areas • increased number of children enrolled with special needs including disability • increased tertiary scholarships awarded to women and ethnic minorities • increased resource allocation in government education budgets • extent to which evidence generated by partners is being provided to government and integrated into policies and programs
Program strategy objective 2	
Fewer women and men living in extreme poverty and vulnerable to economic and natural shocks.	
<i>Build sustainable economic development</i>	
Economic development	• 260 000 people received asset transfers and income-generation support • increased numbers of people sustainably lifted out of extreme poverty • increased resource allocation in government social protection

	budgets • increased instances of significant high-level political support for social protection • existence and quality of new national social protection strategy and evidence of implementation • increased number of people with reduced vulnerability to climate change and natural shocks
Program strategy objective 3	
Women and marginalised groups better able to demand and obtain services and assert rights.	
<i>Save lives</i> <i>Promote opportunities for all</i>	
Health and education	• increased participation of civil society in policy development for reform of basic services • increased capacity of government and NGOs to combat violence against women • improved legal and social rights of women and vulnerable groups • extent to which women and marginalised people claim rights and entitlements from local government and service providers • extent to which evidence from NGO and sector programs is used—by media, civil society and champions in government—to advocate for change

5.3 Risk management (narrative)

Political tensions in relation to the 2013 election could lead to a period of instability. The rivalry between Bangladesh's two major political parties has the potential to result in unrest. This could affect the ability of aid partners (government, NGOs and multilateral organisations) to implement their programs and Australia's ability to engage on policy issues. However the focus of our program is in areas where the public service has been able to continue operations in previous periods of uncertainty. Our approach also includes support through civil society organisations which complements government service delivery.

Balance of investments in civil society organisations and government systems may generate parallel processes. Working through government and civil society programs allows Australia to complement support for long-term gains with immediate service delivery results. Australia can play an important role in advocating common policy approaches and promoting learning between NGOs and the Government of Bangladesh. Effective representation and partnership management will be required to support this work.

Major partnerships need to function effectively to provide adequate development results to the people of Bangladesh. Australia relies heavily on the effectiveness of its partners in Bangladesh. This approach has been taken for reasons of operational efficiency and aid effectiveness. However, it carries with it a level of risk if partners do not meet our expectations in delivering effective programs. Australia has taken steps to ensure as far as possible that Australian aid funding will be effectively used, including by engaging closely with each partner throughout the implementation of programs. Key partnerships have been formed only after institutional assessments of each partners' capability to deliver high-quality results and maintain effective internal systems to safeguard Australian funding.

Working with the Government of Bangladesh more directly on health and education involves closer engagement with public sector systems. Our entry into sector-wide programs will link our funding with government systems, which entails increased risks of corruption and fraud. Australia has taken steps to ensure investments in these government programs are used effectively. For example, our funding of the government's health program will be provided through a World Bank Trust Fund, benefiting from the application of the Bank's financial procedures. In the case of education our funding will be released on a reimbursable basis on the submission and acceptance of financial reports. Both areas of support will require oversight by our technical advisers and active senior level participation in coordination mechanisms.

6 References

Bangladesh is the subject of much research and analysis. Sources informing the development of this program strategy include:

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