

Uttaran

Partnership and due diligence policy

Community Mobilization

Poverty Eradication

Environmental Justice

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Date: June 2012 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Dr Nazrul Islam Chairman
Update - 1 Date: August 2015 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Dr Nazrul Islam Chairman
Update - 2 Date: October 2018 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
Update – 3 Date: November 2020 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
Update - 4 Date: November 2023 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
Update - 5 Date: January 2026 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
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Pretext

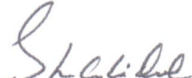
Uttaran does believe in working together to have synergy and shared strength. Since 1986, Uttaran from its experiences of working in the southwest coastal region of Bangladesh; located from greater Khulna district to lower part of greater Jessore district apprehends that joining hands with local community based organizations, likeminded NGOs, civil society platforms broaden the coverage and create accentuated opportunity to achieve the intended mission of alleviating poverty. Uttaran had a long experience of working with and for the disadvantaged and oppressed people and on wetland issues and concerns. However, when Uttaran finds that many NGOs in this southwest part of the country do not have any regional level platform to confront regional problems such as waterlogging, women trafficking, caste (religio-ethnic minority), environment and ecology, shrimp farming, *khasland* (public land) issue, river siltation and arsenic issues and concerns collectively. Moreover, these local level people oriented organizations have a long felt need to consolidate relations; develop organizational/institutional capacity, exchange ideas, views and information; undertake collective effort to confront regional problems and fund constraints; establish a secular democratic society. For the purpose of working collectively to deal with the above discussed issues and concerns and building of mutual understanding and cooperation Uttaran outlines a **Partnership Policy** which can be referred as organizational framework to embark on Partnership or to float any network of CSOs/NGOs. In addition, this **Partnership Policy** has been followed when Uttaran intends to form collaborative framework of NGOs for a specific project or programmatic intervention to initiate innovative programs or to upscale, mainstream, or sustain earned learning. Uttaran is concerned with due diligence issue and enhance its partner to abide by the context and conduct assessment on the subject to continue partnership. In this context Uttaran conduct the assessment of its downstream partner after 3 years letter.

Rationale

The rationale for formulating the **Partnership Policy** to for Uttaran and Southwest regional Development Organizations on the following capital grounds, which are among others:

- Initially this partnership policy is for the organizations working in the rural areas of the southwest coastal region of Bangladesh. And, if not, in principal, contradictory will be followed or extended for even national level Partnership based Network A platform of the like minded organisations could provide its member organisations a formal institutional forum to exchange ideas and experiences among themselves to their mutual enrichment. It could also help them innovate, and adapt good development intervention models and experiment.
- There are remarkable similarity of many NGOs in respect of their vision, mission and strategies. Even they exclusively address a common kind of audience of programme participants comprising of landless, land poor marginal farmers, widow, divorced, abandoned, disabled, outcaste, and other resource poor and disadvantaged sections of the rural population.
- Good things of a society are retained by its value system. Every NGO works for a set of good values. All the values upheld by the different NGOs comprised most of the good

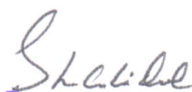

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values of the society. Interaction among the NGOs with sharpens their value system which has a direct linkage on the values of the society.

- The NGOs are aware and confronting of the regional problems such as waterlogging, women trafficking, caste (religio-ethnic minority), environment and ecology, shrimp farming, *khasland* (public land) issue, river siltation and arsenic issues and concerns.
- The confidence gained through the success of the recent struggle on *khasland* in Satkhira has heightened the moral of the landless people. This spirit should be maintained otherwise the poor people will be heavily suppressed by the landlords and reactionaries. People's organizational strength developed by the NGOs can keep it up.
- The leadership of the poor need to be developed to keep up the social change process, development initiatives and to save bio-diversity. Only capable and skilled local NGOs can play effective role in it. A network could help to keep up this spirit.
- The small NGOs spend smaller resource in implementing their program than the bigger ones. Donors are shifting their priority as a result small NGOs are suffering from shortage of fund. A network could help to mobilize both external and local resources.
- The conflicts among the small NGOs are very high. It is due to non-existence of a common platform. A network could provide them a common platform to work together to develop interrelationship and to avoid conflicts and misunderstanding.
- Many NGOs work for bringing basic social changes in the community. They sensitize people against all injustice and exploitation. A network can enable them to uphold social justice process in the community.
- Many NGOs are not quite aware about the organisational/institutional (OD/ID) development issues and concerns. It would be relatively more pragmatic and cost effective to develop a common proposition on OD/ID intervention for all, rather than each and every individual organisation.
- A network of the like minded micro level NGOs would mean emergence of a broad based organisation, with enhanced institutional capacities, enabling it to address regional and national issues strategically on a larger scale across the entire southwest coastal region.
- Solidarity of the member organisations means solidarity of the rural poor of the entire region which should play a crucial role of a strong countervailing force in asserting their rights and protecting their gains and interests against the ruling rural power and various vested interests. This should help the rural poor stand up on own feet and take charge of their own development.
- A network is envisaged to emerge as a compact interdependence of the member organisations. It would enable its member organisations to pull their resources together and thereby reinforcing their individual as well as integrated institutional capacity to combat rural poverty and underdevelopment in a more concerted way. It would


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provide ample scope for its member organisations to complement and supplement each other to their mutual benefits in better understanding and implementation of their program activities.

- The small NGOs function with minimum establishment and overhead expenditures as they emerge from the same locality and work with voluntary spirit. Their cost of operation is low. A network could help them to uphold their voluntary spirit.
- It would be more relatively easier and more cost effective to monitor and manage a network of like minded organisations as a whole, rather than a number of individual organisations on the part of the prospective funding organisations from a financial management point of view. Moreover, collective accountability is supposed to minimize wastage or abuse of resources, and ensure better transparency in administration of things.
- Convergence of like-minded NGOs is likely to encourage many similar others in the local areas and elsewhere to undertake similar collective endeavors and thereby set a process of multiplier effects in motion.

Basis of Forming Partnership/Collaborative Framework

Use strength of the collective efforts to establish social justice and organisational/institutional development of the member organisations.

Objectives of Any Partnership Formation

- Exchange views and opinions, share information and keep close contact to develop a better understanding among the member organizations;
- Address local issues which are bypassed or ignored by the government and/or national NGOs;
- Work together to confront regional problems such as waterlogging, women trafficking, caste (religio-ethnic minority), environment and ecology, shrimp farming, *khasland* (public land) issue, river siltation and arsenic issues and concerns;
- Avoid overlapping or duplication;
- Perform advocacy at the local, regional and national level;
- Develop potential joint proposals and mobilize external and local resources;
- Mobilize community for social change; and
- Support each other to be institutionalized.

Suggested Mechanisms of Partnership Formation

- Where every organization has a membership in top management of the network, platform or associations or project based network.
- There should be a steering committee/group with a provision of position of Chairperson and Secretary and general members.


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- The management committee will discuss, decides, coordinates and carries out all the network program activities commonly shared by the network member organizations. It will also discuss and decides official policies, principles of cooperation and operational strategies towards developing a collective leadership and responsibility.
- There will be a Lead organization which will work as secretariat and as ex-officio and other members will be elected for two years by the management board. And they will run be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of the member organizations.
- For the partnership formation Uttaran uses its own assessment form (annex-1) to evaluate the other organizations and as per the evaluation marking the highest scorer/scorers are selected for the partner/partners.
- Uttaran submits a due diligence questionnaire to the investment recipient, which is intended to elicit all relevant material information about the target investment.
- Uttaran uses an evaluation marking sheet (annex-2) where the assessment team give their marks in the selected area and after marking it send to the Director for final selection.
- After final selection from the Director the Executive committee/ management board will approve the partnership selection.
- After finalize the partner selection Uttaran makes an agreement with the selected partner/partners by using its own agreement form.

Regional Issues and Concerns


Based on Which A Network or Platform Can be formed

The southwest coastal region of Bangladesh is located from greater Khulna district to lower part of greater Jessore district along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. The world largest mangrove forest Sundarban is also located in this region. The area is often mistaken to be an extension of the mainland but it is actually formed entirely by deltaic process and still continues to have a unique geographical setting, quite different from that of the mainland. The area used to have a rich biodiversity, especially for aquatic species. Saline tolerant crops and non-crop agriculture production also used to flourish in the area.

- Coastal Embankment Project (CEP:** built between 1962-1973): The area is continually subsiding at a rate of 1 cm per year. Before the coastal embankment project (CEP, this subsidence was recovered by the tidal silt, brought in by the tidal rivers, twice a day. The CEP was undertaken to convert tidal wetland to mainland and to introduce HYVs and pesticides in the coastal area. However, it has proved to be extremely shortsighted. Waterlogging of the *empoldered* areas has become a huge problem in some areas and threatens to engulf more and more land in the near future. Many aquatic species and saline-tolerant species have now disappeared and people living in the area have become very vulnerable.

- Socio-economic scenario:** The society is dominated by the wealthy class of the population (about 10%). The majority of the population (about 90%) come from the exploited and oppressed classes and there are a good number (about 29%) of outcaste


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minorities (Hindus by religion) who are the worst affected victims of this exploitation and oppression from the dominating class.

The economy of the area is mainly based on agriculture but shrimp farming, controlled by the dominating class, is increasing. Although the wealthy people are only a small minority of the population but they enjoy and use most of the resources. A huge number of agricultural laborers have become surplus because the shrimp farming is much less labour intensive. The handlooms in the region have almost been quitted due to government policies. This has made a good number of people jobless.

The different kinds of social exploitation have progressively "broken the backs" of the poor people and prejudice, religious superstition, illiteracy, ignorance and social injustice have also acted to keep them in the dark about their rights. By exploitation, the rich are becoming richer and the poor, poorer every day. As a result, thousands of people are living a totally inhuman life. Among the poor disadvantaged and exploited people the women are worst off. They are the victims of local exploitation from both the dominating class and from male chauvinism. Many women suffer untold misery from irregular divorces, polygamy and corporal punishment. Women are the poorest of the poor and are the victims of gender discrimination from birth. Finally, as the women do not get any recognition for their work, in the house and outside, they are victimized, exploited and forced to lead an inhuman existence.

- iii. **Natural calamities:** The southwest region suffers from frequent natural calamities like tidal bore, water logging, saline water etc. This disaster specially the waterlogging has ruined huge number of families economically and thrown greater number of people out of their traditional profession. Agriculture has reduced sharply for two reasons. One is for waterlogging. It has made agriculture impossible as the croplands are always submerged by water. And the other one is grabbing of land by shrimp culture lords.
- iv. **Shrimp farming:** The shrimp firms locally called *gher*, are mainly established on the land of the poor and marginalized farmers, sometimes with force and most of the time with very little amount of compensation. This has shrunked the traditional employment opportunity in the area as low as 4 to 6 percent. Finding no other survival ways, the families have disintegrated and have migrated to the big cities like Khulna, Dhaka. Some have crossed the border and are settled in India. As jobs for the adults are not available young girls work in the fish processing plant where they confront sexual harassment in the. Moreover, the plant owners make them work long hours through hard labour in unhygienic environment and pay a very small remuneration. Virtually they have become the captives of the plant or depot owners.
- v. **Women trafficking:** The region is a border area. Networks of smugglers and female traffickers are very strong and active here. Poor women and girls who have no skills to earn an income easily fall in the trap of the gang. Huge numbers of women and young girls cross the border by the provocation of the traffickers with the dream to earn good income in India and Pakistan. But ultimately they end up their life working as sex workers.


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- vi. **Land issue:** There are thousand of hectares of *khas* (public) land in the southwest region of the country. Mainly the landlords and vested influentials occupy this vast resource. There are laws in favour of poor people for their access to this property. But the lands are already in the possession of the landlords. To keep this property illegally under their possession they bribe the administration, pollute the politics of the region, keep private armed cadres and give shelter to different insurgent groups of the area.
- vii. **Fundamentalism:** The region is the stronghold of the religious fundamentalists. Their warhead is always directed towards any advancement of women especially of the poor women. The NGOs of this region have been confronting with the religious fundamentalism since beginning of eighties.
- viii. **Water and sanitation:** The issue of scarcity of safe drinking water in southwest region of Bangladesh among the policy makers can/must considered as a concern. Uttaran with its network member (are/would be) intends engage to install water silt pit latrine and different safe drinking water options in southwest region.
- ix. **COVID situation and Emergency:** The coronavirus pandemic, cyclones, flood etc. brought about new challenges, such as the lack of sufficient availability on the market of personal protective equipment, the need for medical supplies, doctors and medical teams. In response to the coronavirus, Uttaran with its network member/members intends engage to Emergency Medical, Nutrition and Support Teams. Uttaran and its network are battling against the pandemic. Health capacity development is top most priority of the network to prevent Corona virus and save lives.

Due Diligence (Downstream Partners)

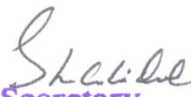
Due diligence is a process of research and analysis that is initiated before an acquisition, investment, make partnership, Financial transaction in order to determine the value of the subject of the due diligence or whether there are any major issues involved. Such findings are then summarized in a report which is known as the due diligence report. It is a kind of risk management approach to assess the potentiality of partner's ability. It helps to make the assessment of implementing partner risk prior to entering into an agreement.

Uttaran is concerned with the partners due diligence. Considering, this issue Uttaran conducts due diligence assessment of its downstream partners in every 2 years. In the assessment, the partner organization that got 75% or above marks (standards), Uttaran continues partnership with them. The capable partners will continue partnership by an agreement.

Due diligence is a process of:

- ✓ Analyzing various aspects to estimate an entities commercial potential
- ✓ Assessing the financial viability of the entity in terms of its assets and liabilities at a comprehensive level
- ✓ Examining the operations and verifying the material facts related to the entity in reference to a proposed transaction


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The due diligence team:

The due diligence team will be selected on the basis of specialist sector knowledge appropriate to the target area or program.

This team will usually consist of:

- ✓ The Inside Knowledge team, who will assess the organizational, program and financial risks arising from the transaction and to whom all advisers must therefore report,
- ✓ The team leader/ Administrator, who will co-ordinate the legal due diligence process on behalf of the investor with more senior members of the team who will take responsibility for drafting the due diligence report and liaising with the investor.
- ✓ The accountants and financial experts, who will advise on the financial due diligence and tax matters, which may impact on the financial assumptions within the investors opinion and valuation of the target;
- ✓ Other appropriate program specialists, who will be attracted to this process.

Due diligence reports:

Each adviser engaged in the due diligence process, will report their key findings (especially any key issues or problems), as they are discovered, and also then prepare a sector due diligence report to highlight material issues arising from their review exercise.

Due Diligence and capacity assessment instigators:

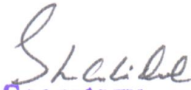
Uttaran considers the following issues of due diligence for partner assessment

- Governance
- Organizational Systems and Processes (Risk analysis and Safeguards)
- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Control Environment
- Humanitarian Program Capacity

The partner must abide by the following Uttaran policy for continuing the partnership;

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
2. Procurement Policy & Procedure Manual
3. Gender and Development Policy
4. Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy
5. Policy on Child Protection in Emergencies
6. Risk management Policy
7. Safeguarding Policy


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