

National Road Safety Program

Background

1. Road safety crisis is a global epidemic with enormous human toll and high economic costs. Like other countries, improving road safety is critical for reducing poverty and advancing growth in Bangladesh. The road safety crisis is unacceptable, but preventable.
2. It is estimated that more than 4,200 people were killed, and 16,100 others injured in road crashes in Dhaka in 2017. Approximately 2.4 million vehicles are being driven by unqualified drivers in Dhaka in 2018..
3. As highlighted in the WHO 2018 Global Status Report on Road Safety, Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of road deaths in the region and has been increasing. Global studies have also reported that road injuries are among the top five causes of deaths for children and young working-age adults in Bangladesh. Therefore, in addition to the human suffering, the economic cost of crash deaths and injuries is substantial.
4. Based on Government request for financing, the Bank is preparing a National Road Safety Program to help the Government of Bangladesh reduce/curb the incidence of road crashes leading to fatalities and grievous injuries. Broad objective of the Program – (i) sustained and targeted reductions in fatalities and serious injuries caused by the road crashes in Bangladesh; and (ii) To strengthen coordination and road safety management in the country including capacity building of agencies.
5. Road Transport and Highway Division (RTHD) under the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges (MoRTB) would be the lead ministry for implementation of the program including its agencies RHD, BRTA and DTCA. Other key ministries /agencies include Ministry of Home Affairs (Bangladesh Police, DMP, Highway Police) and Ministry of Health and Family Affairs (MoFA)
6. The areas of prioritized interventions/pillars/components identified for the proposed Bangladesh Road Safety Program are summarized below.
 - A) **Road Safety Management and Institutional Capacity Building:** The proposed program would include activities to strengthen overall road safety management and inter-ministerial coordination in the country, including establishing an appropriate institutional mechanism required (e.g. a national road safety agency) to work as secretariat to the National Road Safety Council (NRSC). This would also include a comprehensive technical assistance program for training and capacity building of agencies.
 - B) **Support for Safer Infrastructure (RHD):** the proposed program will include systematic crash risk assessment (using iRAP) of the entire national highway (NH) and regional highway (RH) networks, totaling about 8000km, and related mass action treatments, especially on high risk corridors, at about 150 major and about 591 minor junctions, bazaar areas, locations connecting feeder roads to these highways and at railway crossings. Considering that almost half (45%) of the annual road fatalities are of vulnerable road users (VRUs, i.e., pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists), substantial improvements in facilities are warranted to improve VRU safety, especially on highways and in urban areas. These could be complemented with improvement of road geometry, enforcement of speed and axle-load using both physical (i.e., traffic calming, weigh-in-motion stations) and electronic measures.

- C) Support for Safer Vehicles (BRTA):** The following intervention support activities were requested: i) developing an Enterprise Resource Planning system to be used across the BRTA for delivering services to the public, ii) improving the framework for vehicle inspection system and compliance measures, iii) developing driver training and testing facilities for commercial vehicles, iv) improved driver licensing system, v) improvements to the existing platform for crash data system, vi) review of the existing vehicle regulatory framework and standards, vii) revisions to the road signal and driving testing manual, viii) capacity and training for BRTA officials, and ix) guidelines for BRTA to conduct crash investigation of vehicles and understand how vehicle safety framework can be improved, x) integrating the existing isolated online information systems/services (vehicle information, driving license information, to one integrated system, xi) syllabus and curriculum development for driver's capacity testing.
- D) Support for Safer Users and Enforcement:** Key areas of support would include development of a comprehensive road crash database management system for recording, analyzing, reporting and management of crashes; establishment of Intelligent Traffic Monitoring and Incident Detection System; procurement of modern enforcement equipment for Police, to enforce speed, helmet-wearing and to deter risky road user behavior, and improving their incident management/emergency response capability; formulation and execution of targeted programs and media campaigns to enhance driver/user awareness combined with enforcement drives.
- E) Support for Improved Post-crash care:** The proposed intervention will target improving post-crash care in the country including bystander care for crash victims, transportation of victims to hospital as well as hospital-based care especially on the major highways. The proposed program will also include strengthening the emergency departments in District Hospital and Upazila Health Complexes (UHC) on the highways rather than building standalone trauma care facilities. Other areas of focus identified were awareness generation and community participation to provide first aid to crash victim, the establishment of a single universal toll-free number to access emergency care and the setting up of an integrated network of well-equipped public and private ambulances manned by trained personnel.
- F) Support for Urban Road Safety (DTCA):** The focus of the urban interventions could include: i) facilities for vulnerable road users including safer route planning; ii) safety arrangements for on-going mass-transit projects; iii) safe operations of buses; iv) safety at railway crossings; v) improvements in crash data management (GIS-based); vi) network-level assessments of safety risk across the city-wide jurisdiction; vii) development of training manuals and audit guides.
7. A comprehensive awareness & communication program to change user's behaviors would be a cross cutting area for each of the above component/pillars of the program.