

## Automated Government Financial Services Tackle Resource Misuse and Corruption



Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed highlighted the crucial role of automated government financial services in curbing resource misuse and corruption. He noted that integrating various financial service platforms into a unified management system would enhance transparency and accountability in financial operations. The more services are provided through automated

systems, reducing the need for direct interaction with service providers, the more corruption will decline, leading to uninterrupted services for citizens.

Speaking as the Chief Guest at the inauguration of various online platforms aimed at enhancing the efficiency, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness of finance division services, Dr. Ahmed stressed the importance of developing skilled personnel and consistently updating the systems to maintain the effectiveness of these automated platforms.

The newly introduced services include an updated iBAS++ website, an A-Chalan portal, a Life Verification app for pensioners, a paperless online Last Payment Certificate (LPC), an Online Leave Management System for government employees to manage leave requests and approvals, an Online Government Housing Non-Claim Certificate, and the iBAS SAFE mobile app for submitting salary and allowance bills and accessing employment-related information.

The event was attended by special guests including Md. Nurul Islam, Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh, Md. Saifullah Panna, Secretary, Office of the Chief Advisor; Md. Abdur Rahman Khan, Secretary of the Internal Resources Division and Chairman of the National Board of Revenue and Md. Shahriar Kader Siddique, Secretary of the Economic Relations







Division. The meeting, presided over by Finance Secretary Dr. Md. Khairuzzaman Majumder, and Mohammad Saiful Islam, Additional Secretary and National Program Director of the Strengthening Public Financial Management for Service Delivery (SPFM) made a presentation featuring different online platform. Suraiya Zannath, Lead Governance Specialist and Task Team Leader, World Bank, Dhaka also spoke in the ceremony.

Md. Nurul Islam underscored the indispensable role of quality accounting and auditing procedures in ensuring effective public financial management. He explained that these practices are critical for the efficient and cost-effective use of public funds.

Md. Abdur Rahman Khan noted that various operations within the National Board of Revenue (NBR) are being automated to deliver transparent services to the public. These automation efforts are being integrated with iBAS++ to broaden service offerings while ensuring transparency and accountability.

Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiqui emphasized the importance of inclusive financial management to support second-generation economic reforms, ensuring long-term sustainable financial practices.

Dr. Khairuzzaman Majumder stressed the importance of a modern technology-driven Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) for effective government finance management, with iBAS++ serving this function in Bangladesh.

In his presentation, Mohammad Saiful Islam



showcased the vital role of various online services from the finance division in ensuring sound financial management. He introduced a state-of-the-art website designed to maximize benefits for service recipients, featuring real-time data on 'A-Chalan,' 'EFT,' G2P, pensions, and personal ledger accounts.

Additionally, he discussed about the iBAS SAFE mobile app for efficient service delivery, and various online processes to simplify the acquisition of government housing certificates and refunds.



# Internal Auditing in Government System for Efficient Public Financial Management



The Secretary of the Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Dr. Md. Khairuzzaman Mozumder, emphasized the importance of internal auditing in the government system for efficient public financial management during the closing ceremony of a special training course on "Basics of Internal Auditing and Preparation of CIA Professional Exams."

The event, held on September 14, 2024, at the SPFMS Program office in Dhaka, marked the conclusion of a month-long training for selected government officials. Dr. Mozumder highlighted that the Scheme on Audit and Audit Follow-up, a scheme of Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS), is actively establishing Internal Audit Units (IAUs) in high-spending government departments.

Currently, IAUs have been set up in four of the targeted five departments, with the last one nearing completion. Dr. Mozumder pointed out that, to ensure the broader success of IAUs, their implementation should be incorporated into the upcoming Public Financial Management (PFM) Strategy's action plan. He emphasized the value of training and noted that professional growth in specialized areas like internal

auditing is crucial for enhancing public service delivery.

Additional Secretary, Budget-1 and National Program Director of SPFMS, Mohammad Saiful Islam, presided over the function. He underscored the pioneering nature of this training, as it prepares participants to guide others in establishing IAUs. He added that establishing



IAUs in various departments is a challenging task but essential for achieving higher Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) scores.

Also addressing the event, Additional Secretary, Finance Division Bilquis Jahan Rimi acknowledged the demanding nature of the after-office hours training program. She expressed hope that the upcoming third PFM strategy would expand IAUs to other departments, facilitating ongoing reforms in public financial management.



# Key Stakeholders Convene Shaping PFM Reform Strategy for 2025-2030

The Government of Bangladesh acknowledges the essential role of a robust Public Financial Management (PFM) system in optimizing public resources, enhancing transparency, ensuring accountability, and advancing sustainable development. A well-structured PFM system is foundational for building resilient institutions, ensuring economic stability, promoting efficient resource use, and delivering exemplary public services.

Currently, the Finance Division, with support from the World Bank, Global Affairs Canada, and the European Commission, is developing the PFM Reform Strategy for 2025-2030. This strategy aims to elevate PFM policies, practices, and institutions in Bangladesh, underscoring its importance for achieving the vision of a prosperous Bangladesh.



functionalities with broader political mandates, such as sustainable economic growth and efficient citizen services, to build a resilient and prosperous future for



Previous PFM Reform Strategies, implemented from 2007-2012 and 2016-2021, paved the way for reforms and fostered broad-based government ownership of the process. The upcoming strategy emphasizes the need for cohesive collaboration among policy makers, academia, and development partners to establish a resilient and effective financial system that supports economic stability and sustainable growth.

Bangladesh aspires to transform its PFM system into one that is technology-driven, performance-oriented, and efficiently manages public expenditure to support better service delivery and sustainable development. The PFM Reform Strategy 2025-2030 is designed to address gaps from previous reforms and align PFM

Bangladesh.

To foster cohesive collaboration among a diverse group of stakeholders—including government officials, policymakers, academia, and development partners—a series of consultation meetings took place from July 2, 2024, to September 30, 2024. During this period, a total of 26 sessions were conducted, addressing various aspects related to the formulation of the Public Financial Management (PFM) Strategy.

The sessions covered a wide selection of topics. These included iBAS++ and its pathways toward an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), as well as the digitization and interoperability of iBAS++.





Discussions also focused on accounting standards, the Bangladesh Accounting Classification System (BACS), coding structures, and the role of IT stakeholders within iBAS++; Additional key themes included accrual and commitment accounting practices, reporting disclosure, and treasury and cash management; the perspectives of development partners and professional bodies were considered, alongside PFM issues in crucial sectors such as health, education, social services, and local government. Political economy dimensions of PFM were explored, particularly concerning civil society

organizations, along with business processes, strategic enablers, and government infrastructure that support PFM.

Further topics included debt management; oversight of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and the regulatory frameworks guiding PFM; the role of audit and accountability institutions, notably the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament; climate-based PFM practices; public procurement; investment management, budgeting, and macro-fiscal modeling (MFMod); contributions from the Planning Commission and statistics divisions; internal control and audit processes. The sessions also delved into revenue mobilization strategies, involving the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Internal Resources Division (IRD), pension and fund management by the Office of the Comptroller General of Accounts (CGA), and insights from various entities including the Cabinet, the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPP), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), and others.

More than 1,000 participants took part in these discussions, including senior government officials, representatives from development partners, professional bodies, academia, and researchers. The participants shared valuable insights and suggestions, which were compiled and forwarded to the Finance Division for consideration in the development of the PFM Strategy for 2025-2030.





# Workshop held on Transforming M&E Data into RTT for SPFMS Program



A two-day workshop titled “Transforming M&E Data into RTT for the 8 Components of the SPFMS Program” was held on September 18-19, 2024, at the SPFMS Program Office in Dhaka. Organized by the Scheme on PFM Reforms Leadership, Coordination, and Monitoring, under the Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS) of the Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, this workshop aimed to validate data and information provided by the respective schemes, in alignment with the M&E guidelines.

The opening session on September 18 was chaired by Mohammad Saiful Islam, Additional Secretary (Budget-1) and National Program Director of SPFMS, Finance Division. Among the speakers were Rizwana Tabassum, Governance Specialist at the World Bank, Dhaka, and Riva Chakma, Deputy Secretary, Finance Division. The M&E report was presented by Rukhsana Hasin, ndc, Senior Consultant (M&E), with moderation by Md. Nazrul Islam, Program Executive & Coordinator (Joint Secretary).

On the concluding day, A. H. M. Shamsur Rahman, Additional CGA (Administration), joined the workshop, which was chaired by Mohammad Saiful Islam. Key addresses were also given by Mohammad Azad Sallal, Joint Secretary of Expenditure Management & Internal Audit-3 Branch, and Dr. Mst. Sheren Shobnom, Deputy Secretary (Budget-3), Finance Division.

In his remarks, Mohammad Saiful Islam emphasized

the Interim Government’s dedication to financial transparency and accountability, underscoring the role of M&E in these efforts. A. H. M. Shamsur Rahman also highlighted M&E’s importance in sustaining progress within SPFMS initiatives.

Rukhsana Hasin’s presentation focused on data collection, transmission, and analysis, as well as the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders within



SPFMS. A comprehensive review and validation of the M&E report were conducted, with input from Program Executives, Coordinators, and other key participants, including Md. Nazrul Islam, Md. Rafiqul Islam, Tanima Tasmin, Muhammad Anisuzzaman, and Md. Tajul Islam.

The workshop concluded with an insightful discussion, reflecting a shared commitment to the ongoing success of the SPFMS program.



# Workshop on Finalizing SPFMS Communication Strategy and Plan Held



A workshop on the "Finalization of the SPFMS Communication Strategy and Communication Plan" was held at the SPFMS Program Office in Dhaka, bringing together senior government officials and representatives from the World Bank. The event aimed to develop a comprehensive communication framework to promote government initiatives, with a particular focus on the significance of effective public financial management reforms.



Dr. Md. Mohiuddin, Additional Secretary for Admin & TDM at the Finance Division, attended the workshop as the Chief Guest and underscored the importance of a structured communication approach in showcasing government achievements. He stressed the importance of leveraging digital platforms, especially social media, to enhance the reach and engagement of government messages in today's fast-paced digital world.

The workshop was presided over by Mohammad Saiful Islam, Additional Secretary, Budget-1, Finance Division, and National Program Director of SPFMS. In his opening remarks, Mr. noted that clear, consistent messaging is key to building public trust and transparency in government initiatives, particularly in

financial matters.

Saima Shahin Sultana, Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Public Administration participated the Workshop as Special Guest. The session was moderated by Md. Nazrul Islam, Program Executive & Coordinator, who facilitated a dynamic discussion among the participants, drawing insights and recommendations on improving the communication plan.

The workshop featured in-depth discussions led by senior officials from the Finance Division and World Bank representatives. The agenda included a thorough review of the Communication Strategy and Plan, which had been in development over recent months. The participants shared insights on best practices for message delivery and stakeholder engagement, recognizing the need to adapt communication approaches to better align with government objectives and public expectations.

Based on feedback from the participants, the Communication Strategy and Plan were revised to enhance alignment with the government's goals. Key changes included recommendations for incorporating more real-time communication tools and improving transparency to boost public trust. The updated strategy aims to create a more open and interactive dialogue between the government and the public, ultimately fostering a better understanding of public financial management reforms and other essential initiatives.

In closing, Mohammad Saiful Islam reaffirmed the Finance Division's commitment to maintaining an effective and transparent communication approach, stating, "Our efforts to enhance public financial management reforms depend heavily on how well we communicate. This strategy will help us build trust and foster engagement with the public, showcasing our dedication to transparency and good governance."

# FD Reveals Reforms Simplifying Budget and Improve Fiscal Transparency

A three-day workshop on Budget in Brief, Sector Mapping of Budget Codes and Peer Review Report on Budget Scorecard held at the Grand Sultan Tea Resort, Moulvibazar from July 4 to 6, 2024. Organized by the Finance Division's Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS) program, the workshop unveiled several reforms aimed at streamlining the budget process and enhancing transparency in government spending.

During the event, the Finance Division introduced three major initiatives designed to improve fiscal management. The first initiative highlighted was the redesign of the Budget-in-Brief (BiB), a key publication accompanying the national budget. This revamped version aims to present government revenue,

expenditure plans, and deficit financing in a simple and accessible manner through the use of infographics, making it easier for citizens to understand. The existing BiB, although informative, has been deemed too complex for non-experts.

The second initiative focused on improving Budget Sector Mapping to ensure that budget codes for both recurring and development expenditures align with the Planning Division's classifications and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG). This change aims to provide more consistent and transparent sectoral allocations, which are vital for effective policy-making.

The third key reform discussed was the introduction of the Budget Scorecard, a tool designed to evaluate budget execution performance across various ministries and divisions. This scorecard, used in a peer review process, assesses the performance of Budget Management Committees (BMCs) and Budget Working Groups (BWGs), with the goal of improving budget preparation, implementation, and monitoring processes. Ten ministries and divisions have already been evaluated using this framework.

The workshop was chaired by Mohammad Saiful Islam, Additional Secretary and National Program Director of SPFMS. It was addressed by several high-ranking officials, including Sirajun Noor Chowdhury, Additional

Secretary, Finance Division, Bilquis Jahan Rimi, Additional Secretary, Finance Division, Mofidur Rahman, Additional Secretary, Finance Division, Md. Anwar Uddin, Additional Secretary, Planning Commission, Mr. S.M. Rezvi, Deputy Controller of Audits and Accounts, Mr. Mofidur Rahman, Additional Secretary, Finance Division, Shariful Islam, Additional DG (Finance), Bangladesh Railway, Abu Daiyan Mohammad Ahsanullah, Joint Secretary, the Finance

Division. Abul Bashar Mohammad Amir Uddin, Senior Consultant (Joint Secretary), SPFMS, A.H.M. Anwar Pasha, Joint Chief, Planning Commission, Dr. Nadira Sultana, Joint Secretary of the Finance Division among others.

Attendees included representatives from the Finance Division,

Comptroller and Auditor General's Office, the Controller General of Accounts, and the Planning Commission, along with consultants from the SPFMS Program.

In his address, Mr. Saiful Islam emphasized the importance of citizen engagement in understanding the national budget through the redesigned BiB. He noted that the new version would allow policymakers and the public alike to better grasp sectoral allocations, income-expenditure trends, and the government's deficit financing strategies.

Several speakers also highlighted the need for continuous collaboration with line ministries to ensure accurate classification of budget allocations, stressing that socio-economic objectives, not just organizational structures, should guide government spending.

The workshop concluded with discussions on the significance of starting with small, manageable reforms to lay the groundwork for more comprehensive PFM improvements in the future. Participants expressed optimism that these initiatives would contribute to better fiscal transparency and more efficient government spending, aligning Bangladesh's budgetary practices with international standards.

The Finance Division is expected to roll out these reforms in the upcoming fiscal year, with the hope of making the budgeting process more transparent and accessible to the general public.





# COFOG Training for GOB Officials involve PFM Reform and Implementation



The 5-day training on the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) was completed on 26th September 2024 at the Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS) training room. The training aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of government officials involved in public financial management reform and implementation.

Md. Mohiuddin, Additional Secretary (Admin & TDM), Finance Division participated the closing ceremony of the program as the Chief Guest and presented certificates to the participants, acknowledging their successful completion of the intensive program. The program was chaired by Mohammad Saiful Islam, Additional Secretary (Budget-1) and National Project Director (NPD) and Finance Division.

In his closing remarks, Md. Mohiuddin underscored the significance of such training in building the capacity of public servants to drive reforms in public financial management. He noted that the hands-on learning provided through the COFOG training would play a critical role in improving the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of government financial operations.

Mohammad Saiful Islam reiterated the importance of

continuous learning and professional development, stating that a refresher course is planned to reinforce the knowledge gained from this training. He expressed his optimism that the participants would use the new skills to enhance the effectiveness of financial management practices across government institutions, aligning with broader efforts to improve service delivery and fiscal responsibility.

A total of 18 participants from various key government bodies, including the Finance Division, the Office of the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), and the



Planning Commission (PC), took part in the training. During the closing ceremony, participants shared their key learning outcomes and highlighted the practical knowledge they gained, which would directly contribute to their respective roles in public financial management.



## Workshop for Finalization of the Economic Codes Manual



As part of the initiative to improve public financial services delivery, a draft manual on the description of economic codes has been developed by the Improvement of Public Financial Services Delivery through Implementation of BACS and iBAS++ scheme under the Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS). The manual has been created in strict adherence to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

To ensure its accuracy and relevance, a series of four validation workshops were conducted on July 18, 30, 31, and August 1, 2024. These sessions saw the participation of 103 government officials who provided valuable feedback and insights into the finalization process.

The Budget and Accounting Classification System (BACS) serves as a crucial framework for categorizing government financial transactions, allowing for accurate recording, reporting, and analysis of revenues and expenditures. Such a system is vital for maintaining transparency and accountability within Public Financial Management (PFM). Without a standardized classification structure, on-demand financial analysis and reporting would be challenging, hindering the efficiency of PFM.

With approval from His Excellency the President, the new BACS was officially implemented, as directed by the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh, starting with the financial year 2018-19. Article 21 of the Accounts Code Volume 1 outlines this classification system, with the BACS being incorporated as Annexure-I in the same document.

The draft manual on the description of economic codes, finalized in August 2024 following workshops held in March and April, will now form an integral part of Annexure-I in Accounts Code Volume 1. This finalized manual is expected to play a critical role in further strengthening public financial management in Bangladesh by promoting consistency and clarity in the classification of financial transactions.

## Workshop Reviews Online Management for Government Building Repairs



A workshop to review the progress of the online management system for the repair and maintenance of government buildings under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works was held in Dhaka on October 29, 2024. This initiative is part of the BACS and iBAS++ Scheme under the Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS), which aims to manage budget preparation and execution activities through the iBAS++ system.

This effort continues various initiatives by the Finance Division to ensure a transparent public financial management system. Meanwhile, the preparation of the Functional Requirements Specification (FRS) for the online management of budget preparation and execution for repair and maintenance works is ongoing. An inter-ministerial meeting has already taken place with representatives from the Finance Division, the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, and the Directorate of Public Works.



In light of this collaboration, several aspects of the project are being implemented with the active participation of iBAS++, the relevant budget wing of the Finance Division, and representatives from the coordination wing of the Public Works Directorate. The workshop aimed to review the work completed so far and make effective decisions to expedite the implementation of e-R&MW.



# Training Program on Artificial Intelligence in Public Sector Office Work



In a significant move to modernize public service delivery, the Monitoring Cell and Scheme on Strengthening of State-owned Enterprises' Governance, under the Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS), the Finance Division (FD), organized an informative training program titled "Applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Office Work." This initiative aims to empower public sector officials with the skills necessary to harness AI technologies effectively in their daily operations.

The event took place at the Finance Division in Dhaka and was chaired by Dr. Mohammad Abu Yusuf, the Director General (Additional Secretary) of the Finance Division. Nasrin Sultana, Additional Director General-1 (Joint Secretary), attended the meeting as the Chief Guest. Special guests included Md. Firoz Ahmed, Additional Director General-2 (Joint Secretary), and Md. Amirul Islam, Director-1 (Joint Secretary), both of whom emphasized the importance of integrating AI into public sector practices.

Md. Iqbal Ahmed Fakhurul Hasan, the Vice President of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), led the training session. His expertise provided participants with valuable insights into the world of AI, helping them understand its practical applications within government offices.

The training program aimed to enhance participants' understanding of artificial intelligence, focusing

specifically on how these technologies can streamline processes and improve service delivery in the public sector. The curriculum covered a wide array of AI concepts, tools, and applications, with a strong emphasis on practical implementation. Participants engaged in hands-on activities, case studies, and interactive discussions designed to foster critical thinking and collaboration.

Among the key highlights of the training were comprehensive discussions on AI fundamentals and advanced techniques. Participants explored the challenges and opportunities that accompany the adoption of AI technologies, fostering a dialogue about best practices and innovative approaches. The training also provided networking opportunities, allowing attendees to connect with AI experts and peers in the field.

The expected outcomes of this program are promising. Participants will gain enhanced competencies in AI, which in turn will lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery. Additionally, the training aims to create a strategic roadmap for the adoption of AI in various public sector initiatives, paving the way for transformative changes in how services are rendered to the community.

This initiative marks a pivotal step in Bangladesh's journey toward embracing digital transformation within its public sector, leveraging cutting-edge technology to better meet the needs of its citizens.



# SPFMS Program organized Office Management Training for Junior Consultants



Dhaka, 29 September 2024: PFM Reform Leadership, Coordination, and Monitoring Scheme has initiated a specialized training program on Office Management for Junior Consultants of the Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS). This initiative aims to increase the office management skills of Junior Consultants, enhancing their capacity to execute tasks efficiently and contribute to better service delivery within the program.

A total of 54 Junior Consultants from eight schemes within the SPFMS program were selected to participate in this training. The participants have been divided into two groups, with each batch receiving a comprehensive two-day training session designed to improve their understanding of effective office management practices.

The first batch, consisting of 28 Junior Consultants, successfully completed its training on the 21st and 28th of September 2024. The second batch, comprising 26 Junior Consultants, is scheduled to undergo the same training on the 5th and 12th of October 2024. These sessions will further emphasize the importance of well-organized office environments in contributing to the overall objectives of the SPFMS program.

The training module covers a broad range of topics integral to office management. Among the key aspects are:

- Secretariat Guidelines 2024: Familiarizing participants with the latest administrative directives.
- Writing Skills: Focus on drafting different types of letters, notes, and file presentations.
- Practical Office Management: Hands-on sessions to

implement office management concepts.

- E-Filing: Discussions and practical guidance on managing files electronically.
- Automatic Note-Taking: Techniques for efficient note-taking within government files.
- Bengali Spelling Rules and Terminology: Ensuring correct use of administrative language in official documents.
- File Management: Creation, classification, and destruction of files, and best practices for presenting postal files.
- File Drafting and Attachment Techniques: Methods for adding attachments, references, and flags to files.
- Etiquette and Professionalism: Expected behavior, table manners during meetings, and general workplace etiquette.
- Document Drafting: Crafting working papers, office orders, and meeting minutes.
- Leave Management: Maintaining leave registers and handling employee records.
- Social Media Guidelines: Best practices for government employees using social media.
- Communication Skills: Effective use of phone and email communication in a professional setting.
- Employee and Office Resource Management: Best practices for managing employees and maintaining office equipment like computers, printers, and other assets.
- Asset Management: Record-keeping for both permanent and temporary office assets.

## Published by

Scheme on PFM Reform Leadership, Coordination & Monitoring  
Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)  
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[www.spfms.gov.bd](http://www.spfms.gov.bd)