



- ☐ Title of project: Online Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Support Service
- ☐ Organization name, country: Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development (BIID), Bangladesh
- ☐ Project manager name: Md Shahid Uddin Akbar

I. Background information

MSME,s are recognized as the engine of the economy but yet now Bangladesh couldn't maximize the benefits derived through the MSME sector. In coming days, it is expected that this sector will play a pivotal role in promoting and sustaining the industrial as well as overall economic growth. Access to information, access to finance, lack of transport services etc. have long been major obstacles for the growth of MSME in Bangladesh. Most MSMEs don't know how to introduce and explain their products to its target audience. As a result, local and rural MSMEs do not get paid well for their products and services.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become the most potential tool and can to offer benefits for rural enterprises by enhancing their access to information, advice and knowledge. Developing ICT-based platform to offer information and services for the rural enterprises can be an effective strategy to enhance the competitiveness of the rural MSMEs who have, among others, need for information on new markets, better business practices, and business promotion where technology can

become the catalyst to help the enterprises access the same. BIID envisages promoting commercially sustainable ICT initiative in Bangladesh.

This ‘Online MSME Support Service’ will use the high potential of ICT and act as a hub to bridge the existing communication gaps among stake holders, as well as it will provide a range of services from advisory to any kind of information.

II. Goals & timeframe

MSMEs get access to timely information and increase their competency in terms of business growth.

The main objective is to introduce ‘Online MSME Support Service’ as an online platform to facilitate MSMEs and its stake holders for the following services:

- *Providing advisory and Information Services (Online SME doctor)*
- *Establishing market linkage among stake holders*
- *Directory services*
- *Members’ forum*

III. Project’s added value and importance

The primary target beneficiaries are Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of rural, semi-urban and urban areas of Bangladesh. The following group are getting benefited from the service:

- Entrepreneurs range at individual, group and regional level.
- Association & Institutions.
- Corporate Customers
- Rural artisans will be specifically promoted to local and international market.

Services are divided into mainly four tiers. These are: 1) Advisory and information services (Online SME doctor) 2) Online market place 3) Members’ forum and 4) Directory services

- 1) *Advisory and information services (online SME doctor):* This portion will facilitate its users with the following services:
 - a. Setting up and operating a business
 - b. Access to finance (Process, Sources, Features)
 - c. Essential information for MSMEs, for example: Business licensing, registration, tax information, trade license etc.
 - d. MSMEs event/ programs, like: MSME fare, MSME training/ seminar, etc.
 - e. Online consultation service/ query service
 - f. Brand local products
 - g. GOB/ Bank special Schemes for MSMEs

2) *Online market place:*

- a. User friendly interface for both buyer and seller to display and manage their product, demand and service details along with customized price, transportation packaging cost.
- b. Special feature for market price will be available on classified products

3) *Directory Services:* The objective of this segment is to facilitate MSMEs and its stake holders with the necessary service providers and resource persons with contacts and product/service details. The main areas will be-

- a) List of reputed input suppliers and their service areas (range).
- b) List of support services, for example: packaging and transport. It has been found that packaging and transport facilities in remote areas can drastically improve economic growth for the MSMEs.
- c) Prioritized list of buyers and sellers will be listed in this segment, who already achieved and verified for their quality products and services.

4) *Members' forum:* This forum is designed to categorize the users according to their common interest. This helped SMEs to unite under common interest and will benefit them through exchange of information.

IV. Challenges

There are challenges identified as follows –

- Low awareness among the MSMEs on using ICT enabled services
- Business model is still to finalize
- Lack of resources and investment
- Availability of content and updated information
- Readiness of other service providers

V. Relevance of the project to the respective Action Line

e-Business is one of the Action Lines of PoA of WSIS

VI. Conclusion

This is the first integrated effort to facilitate MSMEs with the help of ICT in addressing and solving problems faced by MSMEs. The strength of this initiative which is collaboration of multi stakeholders is also the biggest weakness. So the dynamism and mutual understanding among stakeholders are very important to make it operational and successful.