



PHASE 1: 1.1

Grant Guidelines

December 2024

Revised on January 15, 2025

Guideline Principles

1. Fairness
2. Transparency
3. Inclusiveness
4. Accountability
5. Administrative Efficiency
6. Appropriately Digital
7. Data Generating
8. Sustainable
9. Ensuring Workplace Safety

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List of acronyms

BIRDI	Bangladesh Industry Research Development & Innovation
COI	Conflict of Interest
EOI	Expression of Interest
FM	Fund Management
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
R&D	Research and Development
RDI	Research, Development, and Innovation
RMG	Ready-Made Garments
SICIP	Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation
SDCMU	Skills Development Coordination and Monitoring Unit

1. Overview

The Finance Division in the Ministry of Finance, is implementing the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP) which will contribute to building a technology-ready workforce for diversified and innovation-driven economy in Bangladesh. SICIP, with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), will implement skills development training through industry associations, non-government organizations and training institutes administered by five ministries to boost productivity and competitiveness across the priority and emerging sectors. The program aims to increase technology-oriented skilled workforce, promote inclusive skilling and upskilling opportunities, foster skills for climate-resilient manufacturing processes and green technologies, and incentivize partnerships with industry to nurture innovation capacity namely through industry-focused research and development (R&D) initiatives.

To implement the R&D component under Scheme 1, the Program has introduced competitive grants for collaborative **industry focused** research, development, and innovation projects. This initiative aligns with the nation's aspiration for accelerated growth, which seeks to position Bangladesh as a high-income, knowledge-driven competitive economy. The **Bangladesh Industry Research Development and Innovation (BIRDI) Grants** aim to address critical gaps in Research Development and Innovation (RDI) capacity by fostering collaboration between industry and academic and training institutions enabling businesses to develop innovative, market-driven solutions.

The program focuses on industry sectors of national significance, with high innovation and growth potential. These may include manufacturing, electronics, pharmaceuticals, automotive, agriculture, construction, renewable energy and others. The grants will also support sustainability solutions, climate-resilient green technologies, and serve as a catalyst for transitioning industries toward advanced technologies, fostering economic diversification, and reducing dependency on low-skill production models.

The primary objectives of the program are to incentivize applied research and innovation through collaboration between industry and academic and training institutions and to enhance the RDI value-awareness and capabilities of the priority and emerging industries. Priority will be given to projects that align with sustainable development goals, such as reducing environmental impact and advancing renewable energy solutions. This approach ensures that innovation drives both economic growth and environmental sustainability.

The BIRDI Grants program is expected to deliver transformative outcomes, including enhanced industrial competitiveness, expanded RDI capacity through collaborations, and increased participation in global value chains. By fostering a culture of innovation and equipping industries and academic and training institutions to tackle contemporary challenges together, this initiative lays the foundation for a competitive, resilient, and sustainable future for Bangladesh. The competitive grants, therefore, represent a pivotal step in bridging the gap between knowledge creation and industrial application, fueling the nation's progress toward its long-term economic, sustainability, and environmental objectives.

1.1. Introduction

The **Bangladesh Industry Research, Development and Innovation (BIRDI) Grants** program provides industry, academic and training institutions and potentially other stakeholders with grant funding to develop innovative solutions for industry competitiveness and challenges. This document outlines the guidelines under which the initial R&D projects will operationalize and may be adapted in response to the outcomes and assessment.

1.2. Purpose

- (a) To incentivize collaboration between industry and academic and training institutions to promote industrial competitiveness and find solutions through applied research and innovation.
- (b) To foster the development and adoption of green technologies and sustainable practices across key industries.
- (c) To improve the global competitiveness of Bangladesh's industries by driving technological advancements and fostering economic diversification.
- (d) To build capacity for innovation by encouraging participation from all levels of industries in research, development and innovation (RDI).

1.3. Rationale

- (a) The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is driving demand for advanced technical skills and managerial capabilities, which many Bangladeshi industries currently lack.
- (b) There is a critical shortage of RDI capacity within local industries, which limits their ability to adopt new technologies or develop innovative products.
- (c) Industry and academic and training institutions collaboration has been minimal, failing to resolve skills gaps and skills mismatches due to continuous advancement of technologies, resulting in reliance on foreign expertise.
- (d) Green technologies and sustainable industrial practices are increasingly necessary to meet global standards and address climate change challenges.
- (e) Competitive grants can motivate industries to invest in long-term innovation and reduce reliance on low-skill, labor-intensive models.

1.4. Expected Outcomes

- (a) Establishment of industry and academia partnerships for collaborative innovation and advanced skills development.
- (b) Creation of value-added products, improved industrial processes and environmentally friendly technologies.
- (c) Increased participation of industries in RDI activities, driving inclusive economic growth.
- (d) Enhanced industry capacity for innovation, leading to increased productivity and competitiveness in global markets.
- (e) Sustainable development outcomes through the integration of green technology and climate-resilient practices.

1.5. Sectoral Challenges and Opportunities

- (a) In the **textiles and ready-made garment** (RMG) sectors, there is a heavy reliance on low-cost, low-skill labor and mass production of low value-added products without the diversification, innovation or technology upgrades that ensure global competitiveness.
- (b) Environmental sustainability issues throughout industry sectors (air, water, chemical, energy) also pose significant hurdles.

- (c) Limited value addition in **agriculture** resulting from traditional farming methods, lack of cold chain infrastructure, and vulnerability to climate change. Post-harvest losses remain high due to inadequate advanced agro-processing facilities, cropping intensity remains low and product diversification is minimal.
- (d) Limited high-end RDI in **pharmaceuticals and biotechnology** in order to move beyond generic drug formulations and enter the global value chain for complex therapeutics and biologics. Compliance with international regulatory standards requires improved quality control, testing infrastructure, and intellectual property management.
- (e) Heavy dependence on imported components and low-value assembly work for **light industry and electronics** sectors. Limited design and prototyping capabilities prevent companies from climbing up the technology ladder. Skill gaps in mechatronics, robotics, and electronics engineering hamper innovation.
- (f) While the **ICT** sector is growing, RDI is often limited to software outsourcing rather than high-end product development. There is a need to move towards artificial intelligence, data analytics, blockchain, and cybersecurity solutions developed locally.
- (g) Industry is hampered by unreliable power supply, limited **renewable energy** penetration, and inefficient industrial energy usage that hinder productivity and sustainable growth. Both physical and digital infrastructure is not fully optimized for industrial needs.
- (h) More generally, low levels of industry innovation impact regional and global competitiveness, quality, and profitability.
- (i) Small and medium-sized enterprises are more susceptible to the risks of low levels of industrial, technological, and digital transformation and innovation.

1.6. Grant Information

1.6.1. Funding Source

The Bangladesh Industry Research, Development and Innovation (BIRDI) Grants are funded through the Advanced Technical Skills, Managerial Capabilities, and R&D Driven Innovation Capacity Development for Priority and Emerging Industries Scheme that is under the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP) administered by the Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, and implemented by the Skills Development Coordination and Monitoring Unit (SDCMU), Finance Division, Ministry of Finance.

1.6.2. Funding Categories

- (a) Industry initiated partnership with academic and training institutions
- (b) Academic and training institutions-initiated partnership with industry
- (c) Student-team initiated industry partnership
- (d) Industry initiated open innovation challenge involving local students/researchers for industry and green solutions
- (e) Industry matching grant for individuals/teams (cost sharing R&D initiatives between SICIP and industry)

1.6.3. Funding Amounts and Limitations

- (a) Not more than one application can be submitted.

- (b) Applicant will not be eligible if the entity receives funding from another government or non-government grant provider in the same field.
- (c) Maximum grant amount for a single proposal will be BDT 01 (one) Crore.
- (d) Payment will be made in three installments:
 - (i) Mobilization advance
 - (ii) Interim progress payment
 - (iii) Final payment

1.6.4. Grant Period

- (a) This BIRDI Grant opportunity will receive Expression of Interests (EOI) from 1-30 April 2025 (1 month). Approved applicants must complete comprehensive grant applications by 30 June 2025.
- (b) Selected projects will commence by August 2025 and are expected to complete within 12 months. An extended period of completion will be considered in justified cases.
- (c) Following this first phase, another grant opportunity may be announced in 2026.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, applicant must be one of the following entity types:

- (a) An academic entity or training institutions based in Bangladesh.
- (b) A student team within any academic entity based in Bangladesh and comprehensively supervised by an academic faculty.
- (c) An industry entity based in Bangladesh.
- (d) An individual endorsed by industry and preferably by a registered educational/ research/ training institutions based within Bangladesh.

The grant application must have partnership with one industry entity and preferably with one academic or training institution. Either organization can submit the application, however only one organization will be the grant awardee.

Any partner entity would be a sub-contractor of the grant awardee. A formal arrangement must be in place with all parties prior to execution of the grant agreement.

Non-eligibility criteria:

- (a) Unregistered business entity or academic institution
- (b) A defense related or aligned institution or industry (including suppliers)
- (c) Not compliant with Bangladesh law, including required licenses, permits

2.2. Grant Activities

Eligible activities must have a direct connection to the project and may include tasks such as:

- (a) Evaluating the technical feasibility of the proposed solution
- (b) Assessing the innovation of the solution in comparison to existing alternatives
- (c) Examining the commercial potential of the solution in local and/or international markets
- (d) Addressing any security concerns specifically related to the proposed solution

- (e) Assessing and addressing safety issues

Organizations which are currently a recipient of any other government funding or Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding will need to disclose it and demonstrate that the proposed grant does not duplicate existing and ongoing activities.

2.3. Grant Expenditure

Grant funds may only be used for eligible expenditure incurred as part of the agreed project, as outlined in the grant agreement.

To be eligible, expenditure must be directly attributable to the project and comply with the guidelines for eligible expenditures.

2.3.1. Eligible Grant Expenditure

Eligible expenditure includes:

- (a) Honorarium for personnel directly working on the project
- (b) Research and development costs, such as prototype and material costs essential for project milestones
- (c) Travel costs for site visits, data collection or other activities directly related to the project
- (d) Subcontractor costs, such as for testing and design services
- (e) Other costs, such as project-related training.

2.3.2. Ineligible Grant Expenditure

Ineligible expenditure includes:

- (a) Capital expenditure, including purchase of real estate, buildings, or vehicles
- (b) Retrospective costs or recurrent funding for ongoing activities
- (c) Expenses incurred in the preparation of the grant application
- (d) Costs for attending academic conferences and submitting journal articles
- (e) Scholarships
- (f) Activities, equipment, or supplies already funded through other sources
- (g) Routine maintenance costs
- (h) Costs associated to acquiring resources to be used on the project
- (i) Banking-related fees
- (j) Recurring or ongoing general business/operational/business planning activities that are usual requirements of a business

3. About the Application Process

3.1. Overview of the Application Process

The program grant process will be undertaken through a three-stage process.

- (a) Stage 1: Information Session, EOI and Comprehensive Grant Application Training.

Before starting the application process, all applicants must attend a series of training workshops, including an Information Session and EOI Application Workshop, followed by a Comprehensive Grant Application Workshop.

- (b) Stage 2: Expression of Interest
An open call for Expressions of Interest will be undertaken to collect project concepts, which will be assessed against the grant focus areas and initial eligibility criteria. Approved EOI applicants are invited to submit a comprehensive grant application.
- (c) Stage 3: Comprehensive Grant Application
Invited applicants will submit a comprehensive grant application with detailed responses to the selection criteria. Applications will be reviewed by the selection panel.

3.2. Application Requirements and Assessment Criteria

The Expression of Interest and the comprehensive grant application must be submitted in English.

Application will address all assessment criteria. Applications will be assessed based on the weight given to each criterion. Template of EOI and comprehensive grant application will be available on SICIP, Finance Division's and relevant websites.

3.3. Expected Timeframe

Activity	Date
Information session and EOI application workshop	Q1 2025
Call for EOI	Open: 1 April 2025 Close: 30 April 2025
Assessment of EOI	May 2025
Comprehensive grant application workshop	June 2025
Comprehensive grant application submission	Open: 1 June 2025 Close: 30 June 2025
Evaluation of grant application	July 2025
Approval of selected grant application	July 2025
Grant agreement negotiations	July 2025
Grant awardees management, reporting and compliance (MRC) training	July 2025
Commencement of grant activities	August 2025
Expected end date	September 2026

3.4. Grant Selection Process

Grants will be processed through two synchronous streams of assessment, aligned with the categories of grant assessment criteria: one stream for general assessment and due diligence, and another for RDI merit based on the assessment matrix.

Methodology: Both streams operate simultaneously, using standardized scoring rubrics to independently evaluate applications. The results are then integrated, with a weighted scoring system to balance the findings from each stream, followed by a consensus meeting to resolve discrepancies and finalize decisions.

4. Stages of the Application Process

4.1. Stage 1: Information Session, EOI and Comprehensive Grant Application Training

Before starting the application process, all applicants must attend a series of training workshops:

- (a) Information session and EOI application workshop with industries, universities, training institutions and research entities.
- (b) Comprehensive grant application workshop

Upon completing both workshops, applicants must pass a short quiz. The quiz will cover, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- (a) Purpose of the grant
- (b) Eligibility requirements
- (c) Application process
- (d) Funding priorities
- (e) Assessment criteria
- (f) Common errors in grant applications

4.2. Stage 2: Expressions of Interest (EOI)

4.2.1. Assessment Criteria

No.	Category	Weight %
1	The industry problem is clearly described and defined.	5
2	The proposed technology intervention or other solution is clearly described and plausible.	20
3	The proposed project can plausibly be completed within the timeframe.	5
4	The industry partner and project leadership are suitable recipients of grant and do not present any obvious ethical, environmental, or conflict concerns.	10
5	The academic and training institutions partner and project leadership are suitable recipients of the grant and do not present any obvious ethical, environmental, or conflict concerns.	10
6	The ongoing positive value of the proposed solution to the industry sector is clearly identified and understood.	10
7	The extent to which the project will advance ethical industry practices and sustainability issues has been clearly identified.	10
8	Future high-level skills for the industry/industry sector have been clearly identified.	10
9	The positive impact of the project on either future research, curriculum design, or industry engagement has been clearly identified.	10
10	Overall, the project demonstrates industry innovation or transformation solutions that will deliver meaningful outcomes for Bangladesh.	10

Note: This is an indicative assessment matrix which may be revised subject to the approval of the NPD

4.2.2. EOI Submission

To apply, the applicant must:

- (a) Complete and submit the EOI through the online portal
- (b) Provide all the information requested
- (c) Address all eligibility criteria

4.2.3. Assessment Process

Expressions of Interest will be assessed by an expert review panel formed by Skills Development Coordination and Monitoring Unit (SDCMU), SICIP, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance.

The Expert Review Panel will consist of professionals with expertise in:

- (a) Industry-Specific Knowledge (e.g., textiles, pharmaceuticals, ICT, agro-processing)
- (b) Research, Development and Innovation
- (c) Sustainability and Ethical Practices aligned with SDGs
- (d) Academic research (e.g., university researchers)
- (e) Legal and Regulatory Compliance

The panel will include:

- (a) Industry Representatives (e.g., industry associations, peak bodies)
- (b) Academic Experts from renowned universities/institutes
- (c) Government Officials (from the Ministry of Finance and related agencies)
- (d) International Representatives (optional) for global best practices
- (e) At least two (02) representatives from SDCMU, SICIP

4.2.4. Notification of Successful EOI

SDCMU will advise the applicant of the outcome of the application through the online application portal. Successful applicant will be invited to lodge the comprehensive grant application for further assessment.

4.3. Stage 3: Comprehensive Grant Application

4.3.1. Assessment Criteria

Category	Criteria Description	Weight (%)
Problem Definition	The industry problem is clearly defined, significant, and supported by evidence.	10
Proposed Solution	The proposed solution is well-articulated, innovative, and addresses the identified industry problem effectively.	15
Feasibility and Methodology	The project methodology is sound, technically feasible, and achievable within the 12-month timeframe.	10
Industry Impact	The project provides clear and measurable benefits to the industry, such as economic value, efficiencies, or safety improvements.	10
Innovation and Transformation Potential	The solution demonstrates potential for significant industry transformation or innovation.	10
Sustainability and Ethical Impact	The project aligns with SDGs and promotes sustainable and ethical industry practices.	10
High-Skilled Job Opportunities	The project outlines clear opportunities for future high-skilled job creation within the industry.	5

Future Research and Curriculum Impact	The project will impact future research, curriculum design, or industry engagement strategies.	5
Team Capability and Collaboration	The project team (industry and academic and training institutions partners) demonstrates the expertise, experience, and collaboration required to execute the project successfully.	10
Budget and Value for Money	The budget is detailed, justified, and demonstrates cost-efficiency and value for money.	5
Risk Assessment and Mitigation	Risks are identified, and robust mitigation strategies are provided.	5
Compliance and Ethical Considerations	The project complies with all ethical guidelines, legal requirements, and conflict of interest policies.	5

Note: This is an indicative assessment matrix which may be revised subject to the approval of the NPD

The following information must be included in the application:

- (a) Applicant's information
- (b) Project proposal
- (c) Value proposition
- (d) Partner profiles and capabilities
- (e) Project timeline
- (f) Budget proposal
- (g) Risk assessment and management
- (h) Compliance and ethical considerations
- (i) Supporting documentations
- (j) Disclosure of non-receipt of grants from other sources
- (k) Declaration of authenticity

4.3.2. Application Submission

- (a) Complete and submit the comprehensive grant application through the online portal
- (b) Attach all necessary attachments

4.3.3. Assessment Process

Comprehensive grant application will be assessed by an expert review panel formed by Skills Development Coordination and Monitoring Unit (SDCMU), Finance Division, Ministry of Finance.

The Expert Review Panel will consist of professionals with expertise in:

- (a) Industry-specific knowledge (e.g., textiles, pharmaceuticals, ICT, agro-processing)
- (b) Research, Development and Innovation
- (c) Sustainability and ethical practices aligned with the growth vision of the country
- (d) Academic research (e.g., university researchers)
- (e) Legal and regulatory compliance

The panel will include:

- (a) Industry representatives (e.g., industry associations, peak bodies)
- (b) Academic experts from renowned universities
- (c) Government officials (from the Ministry of Finance and related agencies)
- (d) International representatives (optional) for global best practices
- (e) At least two (02) representatives from SDCMU including R&D specialist

There will be two separate committees for EOI and Comprehensive Grant Application assessment. However, two members from EOI assessment panel should be there on the comprehensive grant application assessment panel.

4.3.4. Grant Approval

The National Program Director (NPD), SICIP will make the final decision of which grant applications and how much grant funds are approved, based on recommendations from the Expert Review Panel.

4.3.5. Notification of Grant Decision

Outcome of the application will be intimated through the online application portal. Successful applicant will have to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the SDCMU, SICIP.

5. Successful Grant Applications

5.1. Grant Agreement

The grant agreement process will be managed through the online portal, including its issuance and execution. Key sections that will be included in the grant agreement are:

- (a) Preamble: Introduction and background
- (b) Parties to the agreement: Identify grant awardee and partnering organizations.
- (c) Scope and objectives: Clearly define the project goals and expected outcomes.
- (d) Modalities of implementing the research project: Clearly mention the implementation process with the use of grant proceeds and effectiveness
- (e) Monitoring and Evaluation: Specify in details the M&E procedures to be used for the project
- (f) Funding amount and payment terms: Specify total grant amount, expenditure modalities, payment terms, and conditions for disbursement.
- (g) Project milestones and deliverables: Outline key milestones, timelines, and deliverables.
- (h) Reporting requirements: Detail the format, frequency, and content of required reports.
- (i) Intellectual Property management: State ownership and usage rights of project-generated IP.
- (j) Compliance obligations: Include legal, regulatory, ethical compliance clauses and Conflict of Interest (COI) issues.
- (k) Audit and record-Keeping: Specify requirements for maintaining and submitting records.
- (l) Dispute resolution: Procedures for handling dispute resolution.
- (m) Termination: Procedure for termination and guarantee
- (n) Implementation period: Mention number of days/months required to implement the project

5.2. Grant Payment Modality

Grants will be paid in the currency reflected in the budget (BDT). Payment will be made as follows:

- (a) Mobilization advance: 15% (based of inception report)
- (b) Midterm milestone payment: 60% (Number of installments may vary depending on the implementation period)
- (c) Final payment: 25%

All midterm and final payments will be subjected to prior assessment and may vary depending on assessment criteria, overall implementation period, nature of the R&D proposal and achieved outputs against the agreed deliverable outputs.

5.3. Grant Agreement Variation

It is recognized that unexpected events (natural disaster, earthquakes, fires, flood, cyclone or any unexpected such force majeure situations) may affect project timeline. When this happens, a request for variation to the grant agreement may be considered which may include, but not limited to the following:

- (a) Adjusting project milestones
- (b) Extending the timeframe for completing the project within the maximum period
- (c) Adjusting project activities.

5.4. Grant Awardees Management, Reporting and Compliance Workshop

Successful grant applicants will be required to attend a grant awardees management, reporting and compliance workshop session to ensure that grant funding is managed appropriately according to existing laws and grant agreement.

5.5. Public Announcement of Grants

Successful project will be listed as one of the program grant awardees on the SICIP and Finace Division's website after the grant agreement is signed.

Only non-sensitive details will be published on SICIP website. This may include:

- (a) Name of company/organization
- (b) Title of the project
- (c) Description of the project
- (d) Amount of grant awarded
- (e) Name of industry sector

5.6. Feedback for Unsuccessful Applicants

Feedback for applicants will focus on identifying the strengths of their application based on the assessment criteria, highlighting areas for improvement to help them refine future submissions, and offering clarifications on why the application was not successful.

This constructive feedback aims to better prepare applicants for future grant opportunities while ensuring continuous capacity building and promoting equitable access to funding opportunities for all stakeholders.

6. Grant Activities Monitoring

6.1. Responsibilities

Awardee will be responsible for:

- (a) Adhering to the grant agreement and all applicable laws
- (b) Making progress against agreed timeframe
- (c) Reporting progress against project milestones and development
- (d) Complying with administrative, legal, environmental and ethical requirements.

SDCMU, SICIP will be responsible for:

- (a) Completing duties as outlined in the grant agreement
- (b) Timely disbursement of fund
- (c) Facilitating periodic training, workshop, meetings for promoting the grant activities, when necessary
- (d) Facilitating communications for the applicants with the industries, academia, business associations etc.
- (e) Monitoring and evaluating grant activities

If any public statements about a project funded under this program need to be made, such as in brochures or publications, they must acknowledge the grant with the following statement: 'This project received grant funding from the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP), Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh'. Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and fund management (FM) of the R&D project will be carried out in accordance with the M&E Guidelines and FM Manual of SICIP Program respectively.

6.2. Reporting and Progress Update Requirements

The awardees are required to submit reports as specified in the grant agreement, which must cover:

- (a) Progress toward the agreed project milestones and outcomes
- (b) Details of project financial records, including the transparent use of grant funds
- (c) Contributions from participants that are directly related to the project.

Upon project completion, the awardee must submit a final report by the designated due date, which shall include:

- (a) Complete evidence of project milestones and deliverables as outlined in the grant agreement
- (b) Total eligible expenditures incurred during the project
- (c) A declaration confirming that the grant funds were spent in accordance with the grant agreement, including reporting on any underspent funds

6.3. Record Keeping

The awardee must maintain clear and accurate records related to the project in accordance with the grant agreement. These records must be readily accessible for review and audit in the online portal.

The records should include:

- (a) Financial documentation: Detailed accounts of all expenditures, including invoices, receipts and vouchers with relevant documents, showing how grant funds were used.
- (b) Project progress: Evidence of milestones achieved, tests or technical reports (if required), timelines followed, and outcomes delivered as outlined in the agreement.
- (c) Compliance records: Documentation demonstrating adherence to grant terms and relevant regulations.

SDCMU may review these records during or after the project through audits, site visits, or other verification processes. The awardee will receive reasonable notice before any such review.

All project-related records must be retained for the period of three (03) years after project completion.

6.4. Evaluation

SDCMU will evaluate the overall grant program to assess the extent to which its objectives and outcomes have been achieved. This evaluation may involve using information from awardee's application and project reports. SDCMU will also interview the awardee or request additional details to better understand the grant's impact of the project and to determine the program's effectiveness.

6.5. Site Visits

During the implementation of the project or upon its completion, SDCMU will conduct site visits for monitoring, evaluation, and compliance providing reasonable notice beforehand. These visits offer an opportunity to showcase the success story of the project and facilitate access for organizers to document project outcomes.

7. Probity

7.1. Conflict of Interest

As part of the application, the SDCMU will ask the awardee to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of their knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

7.2. Confidential Information

The SDCMU will regard the information provided by the awardee as sensitive and confidential if it satisfies all of the following criteria:

- (a) The information is commercially sensitive.
- (b) Disclosing the information would cause undue harm to the awardee or another party.

However, the SDCMU may disclose confidential information to the competent authorities according to the law of the land.

7.3. Dispute resolution

- (a) Any dispute arising out of this grant agreement shall, preferably, be settled out of court through consensus ensuring mutual understanding and benefits.
- (b) If the dispute cannot be resolved on the basis of consensus, the Contract PARTIES may take it to an arbitration court, Dhaka, Bangladesh and seek resolution in accordance with the relevant provisions of law. The court's decree shall be final and binding on all PARTIES.
- (c) Any fees and other related charges incurred in settlement of disputes shall be borne by the parties according to the arbitration related law of the land.

7.4. Termination

This grant agreement may be suspended or terminated prior to its stipulated expiry date in the following cases:

- (a) The awardee fails to comply fully with the provisions and regulations governing the Project implementation, the requirements of funds utilization, or responsibilities assigned under this agreement. The SDCMU, based on the level of violation by the awardee shall give a written decision on suspension or termination of this Contract before completion; or
- (b) if there is delay in the Project implementation by the awardee due to unforeseen factors such as natural disaster, earthquakes, fires, flood, cyclone or any unexpected such force majeure

situations beyond human capacity, and these situations are certified to be the direct reasons for the delay or obstacle to the implementation of the proposals, and the awardee has tried alternatives to overcome these situations, the provisions and conditions regulated in this Clause may not be applied provided that the awardee should inform the SDCMU in writing, within two weeks after the occurrence of such events, of the reasons and the applied alternatives, and should inform SDCMU as soon as possible after the situation has returned to normal.