

SIPS 2025: Reform in Action

YEAR-END HIGHLIGHTS BULLETIN

January 2026

Reform Areas | 2025 Result Highlights



Human Rights

- NHRC Ordinance 2025 adopted, aligned with the Paris Principles and expected to be passed by Parliament.
- Human rights reporting capacity strengthened.

Civil Service

- Civil service training needs assessed; GTI evaluation framework developed, adapted, and piloted across 5 institutes.
- Competency-based recruitment and interview frameworks developed, and BCS syllabus reviewed.



Data Integrity

- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) autonomous data publishing authority enabled.
- R&D Cell operationalized.
- 388 staff assessed using UN STAT tools.
- DataNext Fellowship launched.



Parliament

- e-Parliament feasibility study completed.
- Digital transformation roadmap developed.



Local Government

SIPS's support to Local Government Reform Commission contributed to meaningful local governance reforms proposals.



Citizen Accountability & Reform Transparency

- Supported the Citizens' Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh to launch the Citizen-led Reform Tracker for public monitoring of reforms.



Citizen Engagement

- 286 Human Rights Defenders trained.
- 5,000+ youth sensitized nationwide.
- 3+ million citizens engaged through youth-led gender equality campaigns.



SDG Report

- Supported to produce Citizen-led inclusive VNR Report 2025.
- Supported to produce SDG Progress Report 2025.



Defining 2025: A Year of Institutional Reform

2025 was a defining year for governance reform in Bangladesh. Amid rising public expectations and an ambitious reform agenda, the Strengthening Institutions, Policies and Services (SIPS) Project, co-funded by UNDP and the Embassy of Switzerland, supported national institutions in advancing reform priorities

Embedded within institutions, SIPS supported evidence generation, reform design, and early implementation across civil service reform, oversight institutions, human rights protection, and citizen-led accountability—with a focus on strengthening ownership, inclusion, and credibility.

The stories in this bulletin show how, in 2025, reform pathways were not only defined—they were actively set in motion.





Redefining Civil Service Capacity with GIU

For years, civil service capacity development in Bangladesh had been shaped by fragmented training approaches and limited evidence. In 2025, SIPS supported the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) to strengthen this approach.

Through comprehensive consultations across all ministries, a national picture of civil service training needs was established for the first time. This evidence became the foundation for developing a competency based civil service framework—catering the focus of reform discussions toward targeted institutional strengthening.

Responding to a priority initiative of the Chief Adviser, SIPS also supported GIU in developing and operationalising Bangladesh's first government approved framework to evaluate public training institutes. Evaluations of five flagship institutes were launched, signalling a shift towards accountability, quality assurance, and results-oriented public training.

What changed

Civil service reform moved from ad hoc interventions to a structured, evidence driven pathway anchored within government.

Advancing Fair and Merit-Based Recruitment with BPSC

Public confidence in civil service recruitment hinges on fairness, transparency, and merit. In 2025, SIPS supported the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) at a moment of growing reform momentum.

Building on institutional leadership within BPSC, the project supported the development of competency-based recruitment and interview frameworks—laying the groundwork for a modernized recruitment system aligned with international good practice. At the same time, the BCS examination syllabus was reviewed and updated, ensuring that future recruitment better reflects contemporary governance and service delivery needs.

These reforms did more than modernize tools; they strengthened BPSC’s institutional vision for change and aligned with evolving public expectations for a fair, transparent and merit-based civil service recruitment system.

What changed

Merit-based Recruitment reform shifted from intent to implementation, with concrete tools ready for rollout in 2026.





Strengthening Confidence in National Data through BBS Reform

In 2025, reform at the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) shifted decisively from planning to institutional action. With SIPS support, BBS strengthened its autonomy and credibility by independently publishing official statistics—an important step in strengthening public confidence in national data.

Reform efforts extended beyond credibility to innovation. A dedicated R&D Cell was operationalized to drive methodological improvements, while a data-driven capacity assessment tool (UN Statistical Training Needs Assessment Tool) was deployed to identify skills gaps among hundreds of officials. The launch of the DataNext Fellowship further signalled a commitment to building future-ready statistical capacity.

Most importantly, these changes were institutionally anchored. Through technical support for the preparation of the BBS Training Academy proposal, SIPS helped lay the foundation for sustainable, in-house capacity development.

What changed

BBS reform moved from concept to institutionally owned transformation—combining credibility, capacity, and innovation.



Laying the Groundwork for a Digital Parliament

A modern parliament is central to democratic governance. In 2025, SIPS supported the Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat to take the first concrete steps toward digital transformation. Through extensive stakeholder consultations and global benchmarking, including lessons from Italy and Estonia, the project helped establish a robust evidence base for e-Parliament reform.

Rather than rushing into technology procurement, the focus remained on designing a credible, nationally owned pathway—one that balances technical feasibility with institutional ownership.

Rather than rushing implementation, the focus remained on national ownership and feasibility. By year's end, a clear roadmap for Development Project Proposal formulation was in place—positioning Parliament for more transparent, efficient, and citizen-accessible legislative processes.

What changed

Digital reform shifted from aspiration to a clearly defined, institution-led pathway.

Strengthening Human Rights Protection through NHRC Reform



Few reforms in 2025 were as consequential as those supporting the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). At an important stage, SIPS supported a participatory and inclusive reform process that contributed to the finalization of the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2025—strengthening the legal foundation of the institution.

Legal reform was matched by investments in institutional capacity and public engagement. NHRC staff enhanced their capacity on treaty body reporting, improving compliance with international human rights obligations. At the same time, nationwide youth engagement initiatives expanded awareness of human rights and complaint mechanisms, enhancing access to reporting mechanisms.

These parallel efforts—legal, institutional, and societal—helped creating a foundation for reporting NHRC for a more credible, accessible, and effective guardian of human rights.

What changed

Bangladesh adopted a strengthened National Human Rights Commission Ordinance aligned with the Paris Principles through an inclusive and consultative reform process.

Towards More Citizen-Informed Governance

Beyond individual institutions, SIPS in 2025 supported a broader shift in how reform processes are shaped—placing citizens, evidence, and inclusion at the center.

Project-supported analysis and advocacy with [Local Government Reform Commission](#) contributed to meaningful local governance reforms proposal.



The [Joint Assessment of Media Reform](#), gained visibility and traction in national reform debates, while youth voices—captured through a [nationwide perception study](#)—directly contributed into the 166-point Consensus Commission’s Reform priority agenda.

Throughout these efforts, inclusion was not an afterthought. Ethnic minorities, transgender persons, persons with disabilities, elderly citizens, and youth were actively engaged, ensuring reform processes reflected the diversity of Bangladeshi society.



SPOTLIGHT



Citizen-Led Reform Tracker

In a period of institutional transition, transparency and public trust became critical. In 2025, SIPS supported the Citizen Platform for SDGs in Bangladesh to launch of a citizen-led **Reform Tracker**—an innovative platform enabling the public to monitor reform commitments and progress. By opening reform processes to public scrutiny, the tracker strengthened accountability beyond electoral cycles and reinforced citizen engagement in governance.



VNR 2025: Bangladesh on the Global Stage

SIPS also supported Bangladesh's **Voluntary National Review 2025**, which stood out internationally for its inclusive, data-driven approach. Presented at the High-Level Political Forum, the VNR demonstrated how citizen engagement and credible data can enhance national and global accountability for the SDGs.



"Her Tale, He Tells"

In 2025, SIPS supported Her Tale, He Tells, a youth-led campaign that engaged young men as allies for gender equality while amplifying women's voices. Through digital storytelling and peer engagement, the campaign reached over three million people nationwide, helping shift attitudes and promote shared responsibility for gender equality.



and in a teacher's quiet inspiration.

BANGLADESH REFORM TRACKER
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Human Rights
Police
Data Media
Electoral Process
Anti-Corruption
Women's Empowerment
Administration
Judiciary
Local Government
Banking
LDC Graduation
Health
Education
Public Finance
Gender Equality



Youth Human Rights Fellowship

In 2025, SIPS strengthened youth human rights education nationwide, reaching more than 5,000 young people through trainings and a Training-of-Trainers approach. Participants increased their understanding of human rights and gained greater confidence in using NHRC complaint mechanisms bridging awareness with access to justice.

Looking Ahead: From Reform Foundations to Lasting Change

By the end of 2025, SIPS had helped institutions build reform foundations that are credible, inclusive, and nationally owned. The focus for 2026 is clear: scaling implementation, sustaining momentum through government transition, and ensuring reforms deliver lasting benefits for citizens.

The experience of 2025 affirms a central lesson: when institutions lead, citizens are engaged, and reforms are anchored in evidence, governance change becomes possible—and durable.

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