

## Second Meeting of the A4AI-Bangladesh National Coalition

organised by

**Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI)  
and  
Access to Information Programme (a2i), Bangladesh**

**28 March 2018, 0900 – 1700 hrs. | Karabi Hall, Prime Minister's Office, Dhaka**

### Concept Note and Program Agenda

The first meeting of [A4AI-Bangladesh Coalition](#), which took place in Dhaka at the Prime Minister's Office on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, 2017, initiated a process towards a multi-stakeholder based dialogue in policy-making and the regulatory work in Bangladesh. In the attempt to make broadband internet accessible to all, from the current status of a mere 14% broadband internet coverage to a formidable number, the Bangladesh multi-stakeholder coalition realises that much work needs to be undertaken if the nation were to realise the Digital Bangladesh 2021 Agenda. The A4AI-Bangladesh Coalition therefore pledges to undertake a number of steps towards identifying and pursuing certain smart strategies that would help bring citizen-centred services, opportunities and skills to the doorsteps of each person living in Bangladesh. With this main objective, the members of the A4AI-Bangladesh Coalition at the first forum in July identified the following four priorities:

- Developing of strategies for scaling-up public access points
- Efficient use of existing infrastructure, including that of spectrum resources for reaching the last mile
- Analysis of current taxation, tariff and fee regime to develop strategies for reduction of cost of access and services
- Evidence-based policy-making, derived from the analysis of data and research

While the Coalition prioritised the above four themes for its intervention, a2i, the national partners of A4AI in Bangladesh, proposed an additional priority that is aimed to develop a cohesive approach to broadband development, thus, addressing a major implementation challenge facing the nation in its run-up to achieving Digital Bangladesh by 2021. Despite a number of schemes, including the three phases of the famous

infoSarkar project and the governmental policy and regulatory efforts, the penetration level of broadband internet hasn't increased in the last two years, owing to the absence of a cohesive broadband development plan. A4AI subsequently agreed to work on the challenge, together with its national and international partners by engaging the Coalition on consultative process at the national level but also initiating a similar process in each of the divisions in Bangladesh. The second meeting of A4AI-Bangladesh Coalition would lend its ideal ground for developing a framework and a roadmap for broadband development in the nation.

### Scale up of public access centres

Of the above four priority themes agreed upon the first meeting of A4AI-Bangladesh Coalition, it was also decided that that the first two themes would be pursued straightaway, with an immediate focus on developing strategies for scaling-up public access points. A session in the second meeting of the Coalition has therefore been planned with the following objectives:

- Discussing the current scale-up plan of public access centres from 4,500 to the desirable 170,000
- Showcasing successful examples of public access centres and wifi hotspots in the region with a view of drawing lessons and to turn these into sustainable ventures
- Discussing the need for strengthening the entire ecosystem that govern the functioning of public access centres
- Discussing the incentivisation mechanism and the efficacy of entrepreneur-led public access points vis-à-vis state-led initiatives

### Focus on broadband development

In spite of a number of projects, such as the high profile Enabling Digital Connectivity project with an investment of over 1 billion USD and the three phases of InfoSarkar, the broadband penetration target of reaching 50% of the population by 2021 is unlikely to be met unless some concrete measures are undertaken. Bangladesh cannot avoid but develop a cohesive action plan married to the Digital Bangladesh goals in order to contribute to Vision 2021, where all the stakeholders are bound to work together and in a collaborative manner towards the common goal.

The special session on broadband for all would strive to develop a roadmap for broadband development with clearly agreed vision, goals, objectives and targets, taking cognizance of all the major ongoing programs of the state. The outcome of the session would help the working group of the coalition to further ensure and monitor

infrastructure deployment as well as that of developing the entire ecosystem so as to achieve the common goal.

In addition to the outputs envisaged in the above two session, the second meeting of the coalition would also serve to help establish proper working groups and an operational structure going forward. A work plan would be developed to guide the work of the coalition for the entire year.

## Program Agenda

<b>09.00-09.30</b>	<b>Registration and Networking Coffee</b>
<b>09.30-10:00</b>	<b>Welcome and Keynote</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome note – Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor, a2i Program, Prime Minister’s Office</li> <li>• Introduction and objectives of the second meeting – Ms Sonia Jorge, Executive Director, Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI)</li> </ul>
<b>10:00-10:50</b>	<b>Strategies to scale-up Public Access Centres for bridging the digital divide in Bangladesh</b> <p>This session will help to look at the potentials of shared access space and the ongoing efforts of GoB towards achieving universal access, from public access centers to community networks and wifi solutions. The session will discuss the modalities for scaling up of public access centres to reach the unreached.</p> <p><b>Snap-shot Presentation (10 min)- Presented by Mr. Parvez Hasan, Specialist, A2I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale-up plans and challenges in Bangladesh in rural internet</li> </ul> <p><b>Panel discussion: (30 min):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MD &amp; CEO, Summit Communications</li> <li>• Director (Training &amp; Development), Md. Enamul Kabir, to discuss the outcomes of infoSarkar 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Prof. Rokonzaman, North-South University</li> <li>• Ms. Onamika Bhakta, Robi-Axiata</li> <li>• President, ISPAB</li> <li>• Rishabh Dara, facebook</li> <li>• Mr Ferdous Mottakin, GSMA</li> </ul> <p><b>Open Discussion (10 mins)</b> Moderator: B. Shadrach, Asia Coordinator, Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI).</p>

<b>10:40 - 11:50</b>	<p><b>Broadband for all citizens</b></p> <p>This session would highlight to spread broadband penetration of Bangladesh population by 2021- mid and long term strategy, initiative, objectives and action plans. Discussion on proven and tested connectivity for last mile access models in the region, leaving options for Bangladesh to emulate</p> <p><b>Presentation (10 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation on national network &amp; infra-projects initiatives by Hasan T. Emdad, A2I</li> </ul> <p><b>Panel discussion (40 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Director, Info-Sarker-3</li> <li>• Ms. Shami Kaiser, President, eCommerce association of Bangladesh</li> <li>• Ms Sonia Bashir Kabir, Microsoft Bangladesh</li> <li>• Ms Luna Shamsuddoha, President, Bangladesh Women in Technology</li> <li>• Brig Gen. Mustafa Kamal, DG, E&amp;O, from BTRC</li> <li>• Mr Syed Almas Kabir, President, BASIS, Bangladesh</li> <li>• Mr Nurul Kabir, Secretary-General, AMTOB, Bangladesh</li> <li>• Mr. Ashwani Rana, facebook</li> <li>• Mr. Rahul Shah, GSMA</li> </ul> <p><b>Open Discussion (20 mins)</b> Moderator: Ms Sonia Jorge, Executive Director, A4AI</p>
<b>11:50 - 12:15</b>	<p><b>Tea break</b></p>
<b>12:15 - 13:20</b>	<p><b>Breakaway group discussions-1: Broadband Plan for Bangladesh - Vision, Goals, Objectives, Targets and Key Actions</b></p> <p>The participants would be divided into five groups and be asked to come up with their recommendations. This session will aim at developing the framework for the Broadband plan and its roadmap, starting with proposing a common vision, broadband targets, objectives and key actions to be undertaken</p> <p><b>Group discussions (40 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break-up into Groups in order to discuss the above themes</li> </ul> <p><b>Groups Report Back (25 min)</b> Moderator: B. Shadrach, Asia Coordinator, A4AI</p>
<b>13.20 - 14.30</b>	<p><b>Lunch break</b></p>
<b>14:30 - 15:35</b>	<p><b>Plenary Open Discussion-2: Domestic transmission network &amp; Initiatives</b></p> <p>The participants would be divided into five groups and be asked to come up with their recommendations for the Data service value chain, impact of present transmission scenario, challenges &amp; improvements for further deployments. The group members would also prioritize the immediate tasks</p>

	<p>facing them in each of the themes and report back.</p> <p><b>Group discussions (40 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Break-up into Groups in order to discuss the above themes</li> </ul> <p><b>Groups Report Back (25 min)</b> Moderator: Mr Arfe Elahi , IT Manager (A2I)</p>
<b>15.35 – 16.00</b>	<b>Networking tea break</b>
<b>16.:00 - 17.00</b>	<p><b>Closing Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief presentation on the outcomes of the second meeting of A4AI- Bangladesh coalition – B. Shadrach, Asia Coordinator, A4AI</li> <li>Special Remarks – Ms. Sonia Jorge, Executive Director, A4AI</li> <li>HE Minister Mustafa Jabbar, Post and Telecommunication &amp; ICT Division, Bangladesh</li> <li>Closing Remarks – Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor, a2i</li> </ul>
<b>17.00</b>	Refreshments