

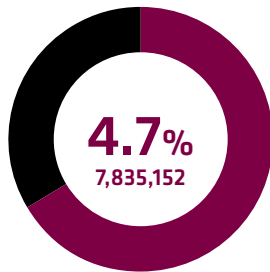


# Diaspora engagement mapping BANGLADESH

## Facts & figures

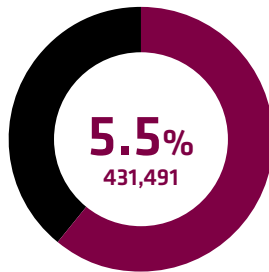
### Emigration

% of emigrants in total population



♂ 66.6%  
♀ 33.4%

% of which in the EU



♂ 61.0%  
♀ 39.0%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **6.6%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **21,750**



### Top countries of destination

India	3,103,664
Saudi Arabia	1,246,052
United Arab Emirates	1,079,013
Malaysia	410,195
Kuwait	370,844



### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



Voting from abroad:

Online



**Bangladesh does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

1 <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b51f10.pdf>  
<http://www.ourtimebd.com/beta/2019/01/15/the-legality-of-dual-citizenship-in-bangladesh/>  
 2 <https://tbsnews.net/bangladesh/overseas-voter-registration-begins>

## Overview of policy and legislative framework



- 2013** ● **Overseas Employment and Migrants Act (OEMA)**<sup>3</sup> facilitates foreign employment and ensures a safe migration governance system. As part of the Act: (1) all workers migrating from Bangladesh, including domestic workers, are recognised as workers and are guaranteed basic labour rights; (2) they have the right to legal remedy; (3) they can access labour courts, mobile courts, and other courts; and (4) the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and labour attachés in destination countries are recognised as key rights custodians.
- 2016** ● **Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy (EWOEP)**<sup>4</sup> complements the OEMA 2013 by offering a more comprehensive policy framework for safe labour migration. Its priority areas include: protection of the rights of migrants and their families; welfare support for migrant workers; gender-specific labour migration; integrating labour migration with national development; and migration governance. The government will work in consultation with various stakeholders, including prospective migrants, trade unions, recruiting agencies, employers and international organisations.
- 2016** ∨  
**2020** ● **Seventh Five Year Plan**<sup>5</sup> has a separate section called 'Migration for Development' which focuses on areas of economic growth and equity, skills and overseas labour market development and protection, human development and migration and enabling frameworks for migration and development through South-South cooperation.
- 2018** ● **Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB) Act**<sup>6</sup> provides a legal framework for improved welfare services for migrant women and male workers. The governing body of the WEWB<sup>7</sup> includes relevant ministries and two delegates from recruitment agencies as well as migrant workers, including women.
- 2018** ● **Bangladesh National Strategy and Action Plan on Migration and Development**<sup>8</sup>  
This plan focuses on eight priority areas: recruitment process and related financial costs; social costs; skills development; social protection and rights; irregular migration and human trafficking; remittances; diaspora engagement; and climate migration.



### Trends:

Successive governments of Bangladesh have gradually realised the importance of its migrant communities. The most decisive step in this respect was in creating a separate ministry, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), in 2001 to efficiently manage the migration sector. Banks have also begun to provide financial incentives to the diaspora and migrants. They provide loans to migrant workers and minimise income tax for diaspora who invest through these banks. They also provide tax rebates on diaspora investments.



### Achievements:

National efforts have so far focused on creating an enabling environment for migrants and built trust through an increased attention to labour migrants' rights. The government has shown a strong commitment to develop a migration system that complies with global human rights norms, including by regulating the role of recruitment agents.

3 <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/169/Act.pdf>

4 [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/annual\\_migration\\_report\\_2017.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/annual_migration_report_2017.pdf). [https://mof.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mof.portal.gov.bd/page/3ef1111d\\_f0d6\\_41ea\\_aca9\\_6afb61228825/G-2\\_08\\_65\\_Expatriate%27s\\_English.pdf](https://mof.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mof.portal.gov.bd/page/3ef1111d_f0d6_41ea_aca9_6afb61228825/G-2_08_65_Expatriate%27s_English.pdf)

5 [https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/sites/unicef.org.bangladesh/files/2018-10/7th\\_FYP\\_18\\_02\\_2016.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/sites/unicef.org.bangladesh/files/2018-10/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf)

6 [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/annual\\_migration\\_report\\_2017.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/annual_migration_report_2017.pdf). <http://www.wewb.gov.bd/>

7 <http://www.wewb.gov.bd/site/page/41931875-0d57-42f1-a51c-b9f8a1a4c3dd/>

8 <http://www.mainstreamingmigration.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/bangladesh-programme-brochure.pdf>

## Obstacles:



- **Formal channels:** Bangladesh does not have a specific institution that targets diaspora engagement so formal and structured support from the government (including the embassies) could be further strengthened to channel such engagement. There is also no regular and comprehensive system to tap into diaspora support for development initiatives in areas such as technology, skills transfer and tourism.
- **Remittances:** most remittances are informally transferred to individual households due to concerns of corruption, red tape, political instability, high money transfer fees and a feeling of not knowing how to help.<sup>9</sup>
- **Diaspora networks:** initiatives to establish Bangladeshi diaspora networks mushroom and compete for resources and funding.
- **Return:** There is a gap in framing policies on returning migrants, this undermines reintegration programmes. Low-skilled migrants often come back with higher skills than are in demand domestically. However, the absence of a database hinders employers from hiring appropriately skilled workers.

## Spotlight: effective practices



### Wage Earners' Development Bond (WEDB), 1981<sup>10</sup>

The central bank of Bangladesh has taken the initiative to attract the investments of overseas wage earners and diaspora members. Bonds can be purchased without opening a foreign currency account by submitting the copy of the wage earners' passport and through the exchange companies of Bangladeshi banks working abroad.

INVESTMENT

### US Dollar Investment Bond (USDIB) and US Dollar Premium Bond (USDPB), 2002<sup>11</sup>

The Government introduced these bonds to facilitate investment in foreign currency by non-resident Bangladeshis.

INVESTMENT

### Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd<sup>12</sup>, NRB Bank<sup>13</sup>, Probashi Kalyan Bank (PKB)<sup>14</sup>

The stock exchange provides incentives for Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) such as a 10% quota in all Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) reserved for NRBs, individual income tax assessment similar to resident Bangladeshis and a 10% tax rebate on security investment. The NRB Bank incentivises NRBs to invest in Bangladesh through remittances directly credited to a savings account which can be used to invest in WEDB; attractive interest rates; WEDB principal amount repatriated to the NRB's residing country; and USDPB entirely tax waived and principal amount repatriated to residing country in US Dollar.<sup>15</sup> The state-run PKB provides collateral free loans to workers going abroad, returnees, facilitate remittances and encourage investment.

REMITTANCES

9 'Diaspora-driven development: how to turn wealth to health in Bangladesh', The Guardian, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/feb/05/bangladesh-diaspora-development-health-wealth>

10 <https://www.bb.org.bd/investfacility/wedbond.php>

11 <https://www.bb.org.bd/investfacility/premibond.php>

12 <https://www.dsebd.org/pdf/facilities%20for%20nrb.pdf>

13 <https://www.nrbbankbd.com/nrb-banking-bd/>

14 <http://www.pkb.gov.bd/>

15 <https://www.nrbbankbd.com/forms-downloads/#interest-rates>



## Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC), 2018<sup>16</sup>

HUMANITARIAN  
AID

The EU-ICMPD MICIC programme in Bangladesh initiated cooperation between diaspora communities in Italy and Malaysia, the embassies in both host countries and the Bangladeshi central authorities (MFA and MEWOE) to engage diaspora in crisis preparedness and response effort. MICIC also held a workshop in December 2019 in Dhaka to validate the country's new Migration Crisis Operational Framework, as well as crisis preparedness and response plans for countries hosting large numbers of migrants from Bangladesh.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/policy-research/policy/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://micicinitiative.iom.int/events/bangladesh-strengthening-crisis-assistance-nationals-abroad>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

**International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Dhaka** <https://bangladesh.iom.int/>

IOM has partnered with the Government of Bangladesh since the mid-1990s and has provided continuous support to the government in its migration management efforts. The IOM regional office has partnered with the government on several initiatives, including publication of an annual migration report.

**International Labour Organisation (ILO) Dhaka** <https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/lang--en/index.htm>

The International Labour Organization (ILO) works with the Bangladeshi government, workers and employers' organisations to promote decent and productive employment opportunities for women and men in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been an active member state of the ILO since 1972 and has ratified 35 ILO Conventions including seven fundamental conventions.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

**Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE)** <https://probashi.gov.bd/>

The ministry was established in 2001 to ensure the overall welfare and equal opportunities for expatriate Bangladeshi citizens to explore new labour markets, to create a skilled labour force through training according to the demands of the market, to reduce unemployment through foreign employment and to increase remittance inflow. MoEWOE is the focal ministry for labour migration policies and programme implementation and it performs these functions in cooperation with other government institutions.

- At sub-ministerial level

**Bangladesh Bank** <https://www.bb.org.bd/>

The Bangladesh Bank is the central bank and apex regulatory body for the country's monetary and financial system. It formulates and implements monetary and credit policies, regulates and supervises banks and non-bank financial institutions, manages international reserves, prevents money laundering and implements the foreign exchange regulation act<sup>18</sup>. The bank was involved in the setting up of the Wage Earners' Development Bond, which was one of the first diaspora engagement initiatives established in Bangladesh.

**Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)** <http://www.bmet.gov.bd/>

BMET was established in 1976 by the Government of Bangladesh as a department under the then Ministry of Manpower Development and Social Welfare. It is now under the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) serving as its main executive arm. It is responsible for monitoring private recruitment agencies as well as facilitating the process of recruitment and migration of Bangladeshis for overseas employment.

18 Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-218.html>

## **Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) <http://www.baira.org.bd/>**

BAIRA is one of the largest trade bodies in Bangladesh affiliated with the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the apex body on trade & industry. It was established in 1984 to cater to the needs of the licensed recruiting agencies who are engaging Bangladeshi migrant workers. Currently BAIRA has about 1,000 government approved recruiting agents as its members.

## **Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL) <http://www.boesl.gov.bd/>**

BOESL, which is a government agency under MoEWOE, is involved in recruiting Bangladeshis for overseas employment. BOESL operates the Employment Permit System with the Republic of Korea. It also manages recruitment schemes for Jordan and Japan.

## **NRB Bank <https://www.nrbbankbd.com/>**

NRB Bank commenced banking operations in 2013, with a vision to be the leading dedicated financial institution for Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) to invest in Bangladesh and for Bangladeshi individuals and corporates to access international markets. It has a wide variety of products and services such as retail banking, SME banking and NRB Banking. As of 2019, it has 42 branches, 43 ATM booths and 165 agent outlets across the country.

## **Probashi Kalyan Bank <http://www.pkb.gov.bd/>**

The bank was set up in 2010 to disburse loans to Bangladeshi migrant workers. To date, the bank has given loans to 35,400 migrant workers. It has 63 branches and aims to have a presence in every district in Bangladesh.

## **Diaspora organisations in Europe**



### **Associazione Shabuz Bangla 2015 Italy <https://www.facebook.com/asshabuzbangla/>**

This is an organisation in Italy, which aims at helping Bangladeshi migrants. It celebrates Bangladeshi national days, such as Mother Language Day and Bangla New Year. It also has its own cricket team.

### **Bangla Mirror Group 2002 UK <http://banglamirrornews.com/>**

The Bangla Mirror is a British English-language weekly newspaper for British Bangladeshis. It aims to give a voice to more than 500,000 British Bangladeshis with a view to strengthening the community's sense of its own identity.

### **Bangladesh Caterers Association (BBCA) 2015 UK <http://www.bbca-co.uk/>**

#### **☑ Development activities**

The association represents British-Bangladeshi restaurateurs and is one of the important business associations in the UK. Catering has become the flagship business of British Bangladeshis in the UK and British Bangladeshis manage almost 12,000 restaurants with a yearly turnover of nearly £3 billion and about 100,000 employees. The association plays an active role in providing assistance during disasters in Bangladesh and has undertaken initiatives to support development work in Bangladesh.

**Bangladesh Medical Society in the UK** 2013 UK <http://www.bmsuk.org.uk/>

This volunteer organisation is made up of Bangladeshi medical doctors and medical students working and living in the UK. Its aim is to promote and serve the interests of the British Bangladeshi doctors' community.

**Brick Lane Housing and Community Trust** 1987 UK <https://thcvs.org.uk/contacts/view/351>

 **Development activities**

The trust assists residents and claimants living and working in Tower Hamlets (London) of Bangladeshi origin on education, housing, employment, human rights and community development. It also liaises and works with UK government agencies and NGOs in education, housing, cultural heritage, development and to assist people in need of health care and social services in Bangladesh.

**British Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BBCCI)** 1991 UK <http://www.bbcci.org.uk/>

 **Development activities**

BBCCI was founded by a group of Bangladeshi businessmen who wanted to promote trade and investment opportunities and cooperation between the UK and Bangladesh. The chamber offers a wide range of services to both Bangladeshi and British companies already involved in - or planning to become part of - the long-standing bilateral trading relationship. These services include the provision of business information and research, seminars and workshops, cultural advice and networking opportunities.

**Greater Sylhet Development and Welfare Council (GSC)** 1993 UK <http://www.gscuk.org.uk/>

 **Development activities**

GSC is a national voluntary organisation working for the welfare of Sylheti people living in Britain and Bangladesh. Sylhetis constitute 95% of the Bangladeshis living in Britain and GSC is Britain's largest Bangladeshi organisation. Since its inception, it has provided leadership in nation-wide programmes ranging from campaigns for voting rights, to racial discrimination. The council has 12 regional committees in England and Ireland, with four branch offices in Sylhet, Bangladesh.

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