Can BIMSTEC rise to meet the new challenges?

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COLLAGE: STAR

THE 5th summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) ended on March 30, 2022 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The summit adopted a charter for the first time since its inception in 1997, and signed three memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Mutual Cooperation Between Diplomatic Academics/Training Institutions of the BIMSTEC Member States, and Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo, Sri Lanka. According to the newly adopted BIMSTEC Charter, the summit will now take place every two years, while the meeting of the foreign ministers of member states will take place every year.

Though BIMSTEC's progress in terms of regional integration, even after 25 years of its existence, has been slow, a successful implementation of the agreements of the 5th summit can pave the way for greater integration in the region.

BIMSTEC provides a unique opportunity for its members from South Asia and Southeast Asia to collaborate for mutual benefits. By global standards, the platform is a relatively new regional organisation, its seven members coming from a variety of geographical, historical, cultural, and developmental backgrounds. They account for around 22 percent of the world's population and 4 percent of world GDP, which demonstrates the platform's considerable potential. Its members have proceeded gradually and carefully to build the institution and foster regional cooperation in a step-by-step manner.

In 2014, for example, a permanent secretariat was formed in Dhaka, led by a secretary-general and staffed by seven country directors appointed by the members. Several key areas of collaboration were identified, and recently consolidated into seven major themes, and some BIMSTEC centres were also set up on priority subjects for the region.

There is no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has drastically altered the global economy's recovery prospects. The global economy is about to enter a new, more uncertain period marked by increased geopolitical, economic, and pandemic-related threats. Many countries in South and Southeast Asia, particularly the smaller ones, are extremely vulnerable to these threats, and face a bleak future of slower growth, limited market opportunities, rising inflation, and increased poverty.

South Asia looking east, and Southeast Asia looking west, offers a pathway to mitigate multiple risks and exploit opportunities for trade-led growth in Asia—a potential that remains largely untapped. International experience suggests that effective regional governance is necessary for economic development and for achieving a peace dividend.

More has to be done, however, to build on these achievements and position BIMSTEC as an effective organisation tuned to the needs of the emerging uncertain era. For a start, there is the long-standing unfinished agenda item of concluding a BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (FTA), which has been under negotiation since 2004. A comprehensive BIMSTEC FTA can help reduce barriers to trade and investment and assist businesses to join global supply chains. At the 5th summit, all heads of BIMSTEC governments/states expressed a strong desire to conclude the BIMSTEC FTA negotiation. Therefore, we must bring this to a successful conclusion within a reasonable timetable.

In the spirit of solidarity and common purpose, the more advanced members of BIMSTEC must support the less developed ones so that the benefits of regional integration are spread among all the members.

The region displays significant complementarity among the members, which bodes well for a mutually beneficial trade. The foundation of BIMSTEC's economic growth has been the rules-based, open multilateral trading system. Along with it, the FDI must move freely in the region if we want to promote national growth as well as the regional and global value chains.

The 5th summit also highlighted the importance of energy connectivity, transport connectivity, digital connectivity, and people-to-people connectivity.

Seamless and sustainable multi-modal transport links and synergy with other connectivity frameworks, like the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity 2025, are what BIMSTEC needs in the post-Covid era. Improving trade facilitation can also speed up the BIMSTEC integration process. Accordingly, moving to a regional single window in customs and a paperless trade regime can help to reduce trade costs and facilitate cross-border business.

Furthermore, significant work is needed to prepare BIMSTEC members to embrace the potential of the fast-moving digital economy. This means investment in digital technologies and related infrastructure, a business-friendly regulatory approach to e-commerce, and investing in digital skills. It's important to ensure greater gender equality in education and the workplace for women. It will foster jobs, income and entrepreneurship across BIMSTEC countries.

These countries differ not only in size, geography, population and level of development, but also in financial resources, technical skills and development capacity. Most of the members face such constraints that may be further exacerbated for those who are slated to graduate from the group of least developed countries by 2026. In the spirit of solidarity and common purpose, the more advanced members must support the less developed ones so that the benefits of regional integration are spread among all the members.

Fulfilling the economic promise of the BIMSTEC Charter and the proposed development agenda under the "new normal" may not be achieved without empowering BIMSTEC Secretariat. The Secretariat needs to be adequately resourced and should have sufficient power to fulfil its role as a coordinator of activities across BIMSTEC members. It is very encouraging that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India would provide USD 1 million to BIMSTEC Secretariat to increase its operational budget. With the increased resources, there is now a need to develop a roadmap for the capacity building of the Secretariat.

Finally, efforts to overhaul the integration process in the BIMSTEC region require normative dialogues about the desirable and substantive form of regional architecture in this region. The time is ripe for fresh thinking on BIMSTEC's priorities and developing the required institutional capability for the new era. The success of the regional integration initiative will be guided by a strong "political will" in the BIMSTEC countries to carry the integration agenda forward. The 5th summit creates the optimism that such "political will" will finally be translated into a reality.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Scheme on Improvement of Public Financial Services Delivery through Implementation of BACS and iBAS++
Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)
Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) Bhaban, (4th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka-1000

EOI Ref. No-07.00.0000.000.11.002.19-1502 Date: 30/03/2022

Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Finance
Agency	:	Finance Division
Procuring Entity Name	:	National Program Director Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
Procuring Entity Code	:	Not used at present
Procuring Entity District	:	Dhaka
Expression of Interest for Selection of	:	Individual Consultant (National) (Time-Based)
KEY INFORMATION		
Procurement Sub-Method	:	Selection of Individual Consultants (SIC)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
Budget and Source of Funds	:	GoB
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
Program Name	:	Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)
Scheme Name	:	Scheme on Improvement of Public Financial Services Delivery through Implementation of BACS and iBAS++**
EOI Closing Date and Time	:	EOI shall be submitted to the SPFMS program office on or before **2:00 pm, 25/04/2022** in sealed envelope delivered to the undersigned and be clearly marked "Request for Expressions of Interest for Selection of [Name of the position]". Contact address with email and mobile no of the applicant should be written on the left side of the A4 size envelope. Necessary documents in support of educational qualifications, experience and skills have to be submitted.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT

Title Of Service	No. of Service*	Minimum Qualification	Minimum General Experience	Brief Description of Assignment
Deputy Team Leader (IT)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 15 years' experience in IT field with at least 5 years in managing an IT team; Experience in developing and implementing IT systems for government organization, preferably in financial management sector	System requirements analysis, quality assurance and testing of Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS++), system documentation and implementation management, and preparing process reports.
Senior IT Consultant	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 10 years' experience in IT field; Experience in developing and implementing IT systems preferably in financial management sector.	System design and front end (dot net)/backend programming of Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS++).
Senior IT Consultant (IT Security)	1	Graduation in Computer Science/Engineering, Information Security or related subject	Minimum 10 years' experience in IT field Minimum 08 years' of experience in working with security technologies in Vulnerability Scanning, Firewalls & Log Analysis, Host-based detection tools, Security Event and Incident Management (SEIM), Antivirus, Network Packet Analyzers, malware analysis and forensics tools. Experience in analyzing audit logs, router logs, firewall logs, IDS logs and TCP/IP headers.	Design, implement and monitor security standards. Ensure security and safety of iBAS++ and other related systems.
Senior IT Consultant (Quality Assurance)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 10 years' experience in IT field with 5 year experience in software quality assurance.	Ensure that iBAS++ modules meet international quality standards and are released for live operation after adequate testing and validations.
Senior Consultant (Training and Planning)	1	Graduation in any discipline	Minimum 15 years' experience in Government service; Experience in developing and implementing training plans and programs. Experience in implementing IT systems will be given preference.	Map out training strategy, schedules and implement training programs. Assess and plan the priority need for the further development of Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS++) and Budget and Accounts Classification System (BACS) and implementation.
Senior Functional Consultant (Asset & Treasury Challan Management)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Accounting/ Finance	Minimum 15 years' experience in Financial Management, preferably in asset management. Service in Public Sector will be given preference.	Help to develop a classification system for all fixed assets and related module of Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS++). Also help to develop Treasury Challan Management system to strengthen revenue collection. Prepare rollout strategy, implement and coordinate the rollout of newly developed modules throughout the country.
Senior Consultant (Accounting Code & Manual)	1	Graduation in any discipline	Minimum 15 years' experience in Government service, preferably 3 years' in financial management.	Update accounting code and manuals and prepare detailed manual of new chart of accounts.
IT Consultant (Programmer)	3	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 8 years' experience in software development; Experience in government financial management system will be given preference.	Front end (dotnet) and back end (Oracle) programming of Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS++).
IT Consultant: (System Documentation)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 8 years' experience in IT with 2 years' experience in technical documentation.	Documentation and maintenance of technical design and user manuals of all developed systems and modules.
IT Consultant (Safety Net)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 8 years' experience in software development; Experience in government financial management system will be given preference.	System development and maintenance support of the Safety Net Database.
IT Consultant (Network Management)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Vendor certification of renowned network equipment manufacturer. Minimum 8 years' experience in network management.	Installation, configuration, maintenance and support for servers, LAN & WAN related to iBAS++. Coordinate with BCC, Finance Division, Bangladesh Bank, CBs and CGA to ensure smooth network operation.
IT Consultant (UI/UX Designer)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 8 years' experience in IT including 2 years' experience in UI/UX design.	Graphical user interface design and related programming of iBAS++ to improve user experience.
IT Consultant (Testing)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Minimum 8 years' experience in IT including 2 years' experience in software testing.	Prepare detail software test plans, execute testing and document test results for all additions/changes in iBAS++ and other systems developed by the project.
Consultant (iBAS++ Implementation)	1	Graduation in any discipline preferably in Accounting/ Finance	Minimum 10 years' experience in government service, preferably in financial management systems.	Help planning and provide support for iBAS++ rollout and implementation and prepare functional specification.
Jr. IT Consultant (Network Administrator)	1	Graduation in any discipline, preferably in Engineering	Vendor certification of renowned network equipment manufacturer Minimum 5 years' experience in network management.	Installation, configuration, maintenance and support for servers, LAN & WAN related to iBAS++.
Jr. IT Consultant (SAE, SOE & Other Module Implementation and Support)	1	Graduation in any discipline preferably in IT	Minimum 5 years' experience in providing software implementation support, preferably for GoB.	Provide user level support for SAE & SOE and other modules of iBAS++ rollout and implementation.
Jr. Consultant (iBAS++ & BACS Implementation)	2	Graduation in any discipline	Minimum 5 years' job experience, preferably in implementing classification.	Provide support for iBAS++ rollout and BACS implementation.
Junior Consultant (Executives)	1	Graduation in any discipline	Minimum 5 years' experience as office executives.	Data processing, documentation, publication, file management, process invoices, support training arrangement, transport and catering services.

* No of post may vary
**iBAS++ is Government Integrated Financial Management System of Bangladesh

Other Details (if applicable)	:	A copy of the terms of reference (TOR). Request for Application (RFA) and necessary forms may be obtained from the office of the undersigned during 09.00 to 17.00 hours till **25/04/2022** and website of Finance Division **(www.mof.gov.bd)** and SPFMS program office **(www.spfms.gov.bd)** within the stipulated date.
Association with foreign firms is	:	Not Applicable

EoI Detail Information

Ref No	Phasing Of Services	Location	Start Date	Completion Date
02	Single: Time Based	Dhaka	May, 2022	June, 2023 (to be extended to June, 2025

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
Name of Official Inviting EOI	:	Tahmid Hasnat Khan
Designation of Official Inviting EOI	:	National Program Director (Additional Secretary)
Address of Official Inviting EOI	:	Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) Bhaban, (4th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka-1000
Contact details of Official Inviting EOI	:	Phone : 55110546-55, Email : nazmamobarek@yahoo.co.uk

The procuring entity reserves all the right to accept or reject any or all EoIs

30/03/2022
(Tahmid Hasnat Khan)
National Program Director (Additional Secretary)
Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery, (SPFMS)
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GD-609