Report on

“Consulting Service Contract Management in Public Sector Procurement: Best Practice and Challenges”

Submitted By

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An internship report submitted to the BIGD in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM)

BRAC Institute of Governance & Development (BIGD)
BRAC University
October, 2025

Declaration

This is acknowledged by Mohammad Shamsur Rahman as below:

1. This practicum report submitted by me is my original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.

2. The internship report does not contain any material previously published/ written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. I confirm that this report does not contains no material has been previously accepted or submitted for any degree or diploma at any university or other institution.

4. I have duly acknowledged all primary sources of assistance.

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Letter of Transmittal

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Subject: Submission of Report on PSM-665: "Consulting Service Contract Management in Public Sector Procurement: Best Practice and Challenges"

Dear Sir,
With due respect, I am pleased to submit my report titled *"Consulting Service Contract Management in Public Sector Procurement: Best Practice and Challenges"* as a requirement for the course PSM-665 under the Master's in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM) program at BRAC University.

This report has been ready based on extensive review, analysis, and reflection on the practices and challenges of consulting service contract management in the public sector of Bangladesh.

I would like to express my heartfelt thankfulness to you for your valuable guidance, encouragement, and support through the preparation of this report. I sincerely hope that this report meets your potentials and contributes meaningfully to the understanding of public sector contract management practices.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

____
Mohammad Shamsur Rahman
MPSM ID: 23282018
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October 28, 2025

Non-Disclosure Agreement

This agreement has been recognized and entered into by Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance herein called the First Party and the undersigned student at the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University, the Second Party. The Master's in Procurement and Supply Management requirements include a report on *"Consulting Service Contract Management in Public Sector Procurement: Best Practice and Challenges"* which the First Party has given the Second Party permission to create on this. The Second Party will have the chance to interact closely with the representatives of the organization specially Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, Joint Secretary, Economic Relations Division and give access to official information and statistics.

The Second Party will create a report based on their professional experience, statistics and information they have gathered. The second party may use any data and material for academic reasons while safeguarding the interests of the First Party by not making it public and will preserve the interests of the First Party.

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Abul Kalam Azad
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Acknowledgment

Opening and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt thankfulness to Almighty Allah for granting me the strong, patience, and determination to complete this report successfully.

I am deeply grateful to my respected supervisor, Mr. Mohammed Shoheler Rahman Chowdhury, CP3P, MCIPS, Faculty Member and Senior Trainer, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University, for his continuous guidance, valuable suggestions, and encouragement throughout the preparation of this report.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my workplace supervisor Abul Kalam Azad, Joint Secretary, Economic Relations Divisions, Ministry of Finance for providing the opportunity to complete this report with valuable suggestions. It was a great honor for me to work under his supervision. Mr. Azad skills in sharing contract management data and information impressed me greatly.

MPSM Program offered by BIGD, BRAC University providing important learning prospects for students. I want to thanks everybody who help me to complete my valuable report.

List of Acronyms

ADB	:	Asian Development Bank
APP	:	Annual Procurement Plan
BPPA	:	Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority
BRAC	:	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CMU	:	Contract Management Unit
C.P.T.U	:	Central Procurement Technical-Unit
CQS	:	Consultant's Qualification Selection
CP3P	:	Certified Public-Private Partnership Professional
CPE	:	Consultant Performance Evaluation
CPR	:	Contract Performance Report
CPD	:	Continuous Professional Development
DFID	:	Department for International Development
EIA	:	Environmental Impact Assessment
EOI	:	Expression of Interest
e-GP	:	Electronic Government Procurement
ERD	:	Economic Relations Division
FBS	:	Fixed Budget Selection
GoB	:	Government of Bangladesh
IMED	:	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
ICMF	:	Integrated Contract Management Framework
ICS	:	Individual Consultant Selection
ISR	:	Implementation Status and Results
IT	:	Information Technology
JICA	:	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KPI	:	Key Performance Indicator
LCS	:	Least Cost Selection
LGED	:	Local Government Engineering Department
M&E	:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCIPS	:	Member of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
MPSM	:	Master in Procurement and Supply Management
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPA	:	Public Procurement Act

PPR	:	Public Procurement Rules
PMS	:	Project Monitoring System
PPSD	:	Procurement Strategy for Development
QCBS	:	Quality and Cost-Based Selection
QBS	:	Quality-Based Selection
RFP	:	Request for Proposal
RBM	:	Results-Based Management
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goal
SDF	:	Social Development Foundation
SSS	:	Single Source Selection
TA	:	Technical Assistance
ToR	:	Terms of Reference
VfM	:	Value for Money
WB	:	World Bank
UK	:	United Kingdom

Executive Summary

Consulting services show a central role in decorative efficiency, transparency and value of money in the public sector procurement. Government agencies in Bangladesh are more and more depending on consultants in terms of technical skills, policy guidance, feasibility analysis, and project management, especially in projects funded by donors. Although the high legal and regulatory framework offered by Public Procurement Act PPA, 2006 and Public Procurement Rules-PPR, 2025 has addressed issues in the management of consulting contracts, issues in project outcomes, schedules, and responsibility remain persistent.

This paper is entitled Consulting Service Contract Management in Public Sector Procurement: Best Practice and Challenges and focuses on planning, procurement, and management of the consulting contracts in Bangladesh. It determines the institutional gaps, examines the best practices, and indicates the opportunities to achieve better transparency, efficiency, and performance in consulting procurement. The research, which is founded on qualitative research using secondary sources, such as official documents, policy frameworks, reports of the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA), Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), international donor organizations, and academic literature, is used to analyze thematic trends, challenges, and improvement opportunities.

The results show that the procurement laws in Bangladesh are generally in line with the international standards, but the level of implementation is poor. Consulting services use is on the increase at an impressive rate and most of the procuring entities have institutional and human resource limitations. Authorities usually do not have the specific training on the preparation of TOR, reviewing of technical offers and contract administration. Constant change of staff also undermines institutional knowledge and experience.

The most susceptible stage is the post-award contract management. In spite of the fact that selection using Quality and Cost Based Selection(QCBS) method is quite transparent, inefficiencies occur during implementation. Monitoring and performance assessment are not always sufficient, approvals and payments are not quick and almost half of consulting contracts are either overrun or overrun in terms of time or budgets. Lack of standardized performance measures and centralized evaluation mechanism restricts institutional learning. There is still disorganization between BPPA, IMED and Economic Relations Division (ERD). Although

electronic-Government Procurement (e-GP) has enhanced transparency in regard to goods and works, the same is not the case with consulting services, and bureaucracy makes it even more inefficient. Fairness and decisions are sometimes undermined by ethical and governance issues.

In spite of these, there are best practices which can lead to reform. Measurable ToRs, transparent selection procedures based on merit, systems of paying based on output and regular performance appraisal based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been effective. The examples of the international frameworks, including the framework agreements of the United Kingdom, the results-linked disbursement of the World Bank and the performance-based evaluation of Malaysia illustrate the advantages of the structured monitoring, performance-based payments, and digital tools. The overall results of other countries have also been improved by continuous professional training and consultant performance databases.

The paper finds that the procurement system in Bangladesh has a good theoretical foundation, but lacks practical operations due to gaps in capacity, ineffective monitoring, and disjointed institutional mandate. Among the recommendations are the creation of Contract Management Units in key ministries, the introduction of a National Procurement Certification Program, the extension of e-GP to encompass the full consulting contract lifecycle, the creation of a national consultant performance database, harmonization of donor and national procedures and the encouragement of results based management and ethical practices.

Provided that these reforms, especially in capacity development, digital transformation, and performance-based monitoring are properly introduced, Bangladesh will have the chance to become more transparent, efficient, and accountable in the process of consulting services acquisition and, consequently, enhance the impact and sustainability of the public development program.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of Public Sector Procurement

Public sector procurement can be described as the systematic procedure by which government agencies and other bodies procure goods, works, and services required to execute the provision of the public services and to provide development initiatives. It entails a number of interconnected processes that include need assessment, bidding document preparation, supplier selection, awarding of contract and performance management.

The Bangladesh public procurement system is mainly steered by the Public Procurement Act (PPA) 2006 and the Public Procurement Rules (PPR) 2025, which are meant to guarantee transparency, fairness and value in the use of the public money. The Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA) based at the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Ministry of Planning is the leader in reforms in this field. Modernization and professionalization of procurement activities have been brought in over the years through the introduction of such important initiatives as e-Government Procurement (e-GP), standardization of bidding documentation, and capacity-building programs.

Consulting services are one of the many procurement categories that occupy a special and strategic place. These are services provided by companies or individual professionals which offer technical, managerial and advisory services in which government agencies design, implement, monitor and evaluate development programs. They are important especially in the areas of infrastructure, education, water management, health and governance reformation where specialization is required.

Consulting services tend to constitute a significant portion of the project outlays in donor funded projects including funded by the Asian Development Bank ,World Bank and JICA. The management of these consulting contracts should be effective in order to achieve quality results, effective project implementation and the general accountability of the public investments.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

Although there has been a significant improvement in procurement reform, contract management in consulting is still a major challenge in Bangladesh. The preparation of Terms of Reference (TOR), the selection of the right procurement strategies, the objective assessment, and the monitoring of the consultant performance continue to remain a problem with many agencies. These inefficiencies usually lead to project delays, overruns, and less impact.

Different researches and audit reports by BPPA, IMED, and development partners have illustrated common pitfalls, including poor contract administration, poor monitoring, lack of communication and bureaucratic inefficiencies. These issues demonstrate that a comprehensive study of the current practice is required to determine the gaps that need to be filled with context-specific solutions.

The current research is, hence, inspired by the necessity to examine the performance of the consulting service contract management within the governmental sector, determine limitations, and suggest the ways to improve it based on the local conditions and the international experience.

The study is also in accordance with the world priorities of giving importance to Value for Money (VfM) and results-based management in public procurement. Sound contract management is important in ensuring that the public funds are utilized effectively and in that the projects produce sustainable and quantifiable outcomes. The study of the challenges and dynamics of this process will contribute to the reinforcement of the institutional performance and increase the credibility of government operations.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The inclusive aim of this report is to examine the current practices, issues and optimal practices in contract management of consultancy services in the current Bangladesh public sector procurement system.

Specific Objectives:

1. To examine the existing policies, legislation and institutional arrangements regarding consulting service procurement and contract management.
2. To determine the main steps and processes of the management of consulting service contracts planning to the end.
3. To investigate the key issues and limitations of the work of the public agencies in the management of consulting contracts.
4. To explore the best practices in the world and determine their applicability in the Bangladeshi setting.

5. To give practical recommendations how to improve the transparency, efficiency and accountability of the management of the contract of consulting services.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

Scope:

This research area is the consulting service contract management pursuant to the Public Procurement Act 2006, Public Procurement Rules 2025, and other development partner guidelines. It also encompasses firm-based and individual consultant contracts that are carried out by ministries, divisions as well as donor-assisted projects.

Special focus is on the institutions like Economic Relations Division-ERD and Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division-IMED and the line ministries that regularly involve consultants in the development work. It is also done through comparative analysis with international practices to attract the lessons that apply to Bangladesh.

Limitations:

1. The research employs mainly the qualitative data like the reviews of documents and interviews with experts which restricts the generalization of statistics.
2. Confidentiality may limit access to detailed contract data.
3. Differences in rules of donor procurement (e.g., World Bank vs. ADB) can prevent the standardization of projects.
4. In depth field investigation may not be possible because of time and resource constraints.
5. The study is concerned with the opinion of the public sector, rather than the opinion of the consulting firms operating privately.
6. Regardless of the limitations, the research will bring a realistic and evidence-based perspective on the management of consulting contracts and will suggest practical ways of enhancing the process.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report divided into 9 chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction - Introduction to the study background, objectives and justification.

- Chapter 2: Literature Review - Overview of theoretical and empirical literature on consulting services and contract management.
- Chapter 3: Research Methodology - Discusses the research design, sources of data and methods of analysis.
- Chapter 4: Overview of the Public Sector Consulting Procurement in Bangladesh- describes the institutional and regulatory frameworks.
- Chapter 5: Best Practices - Presents examples of both local and foreign experience.
- Chapter 6: Challenges - talks about the main problems and restrictions of the existing practices.
- Chapter 7: Data Analysis and Findings - Gives results and interpretation.
- Chapter 8: Discussion - Relates findings to policy implications and literature.
- Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations - Summarizes main findings and suggests practical improvements.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter observes current scholarly and professional debates on consulting service contract management in the context of the public sector procurement. It is meant at the synthesis of major perspectives and theoretical concepts instead of replicating the results of previous research. The chapter analyzes the main principles, best practices that are emerging and challenges that have remained unresolved in managing contracts effectively in the public sector by examining the existing debates.

2.2 The Knowledge of Consulting Services in the Public Sector.

Consulting services can be defined as professional assistance of external experts that are employed by the government agencies in the following areas: project design, implementation, evaluation, and policy development. Consulting assignment is knowledge based and relies heavily on professional judgment and expertise unlike the process of procuring tangible goods or civil works. The literature indicates that the result of consulting work does not always end up in a final report or deliverable, but in skills transfer, organizational learning as well as increased decision making capacity within the public agency. Since some results of consulting are intangible, it is important that contract management focuses on the clarity of objectives, measurable results, and ongoing interaction between a client and a consultant.

The following is documentation of the best practices in management of consulting contracts.
It is a fact accepted by scholars and practitioners that good contract management is based on proper preparation, professional management, and transparency. The best practices that have been discussed most of the time are as follows:

Comprehensive Terms of Reference (ToR):

A properly designed ToR specifies scope, deliverables, time frame and reporting requirements. It minimizes the element of ambiguity and aids in understanding to both parties; the procuring entity and the consultant.

Performance-Linked Management: Recompensing consultant fees and reviews with quality measures or milestones would promote accountability and make sure that the services provided are up to the expectations.

Professional Competence of Contract Managers: To manage it effectively, it needs procurement staff possessing technical skills, negotiation skills, and understanding of governance regulations. Officers who are trained assist in ensuring that the contract cycle is full of integrity and efficiency.
Regular Communication and Feedback: Open communication among all stakeholders including the end-users enhance mutual understanding in the early stages of risk detection.
Adaptive Monitoring and Evaluation: Ongoing evaluation enables managers to adjust the schedule or deliverables to unexpected situations and keep the project within scope and budget.
All these practices can contribute to value money and long-term institutional trust in the procurement system.

2.3 Typical Public Sector Procurement Consulting Contracts Issues.

Although there are best practice frameworks, the public sector organizations are usually faced with challenges that prevent them to manage the consulting contracts. Some of the common challenges are found in the literature:
Weak Needs Assessment: Sometimes projects are launched without adequate research on the real needs and thus the goals are overlapping or not aligned.

Weak Supervisory Review: Supervisory departments might not have the technical competence or the manpower to critically assess the performance of consultants.

Regular Scope Changes: Since a consulting project will change as new information is realized, there may be several revisions to the contract, leading to time loss or cost overruns.

Ineffective Knowledge Retention: What is learned in a consulting engagement is not necessarily incorporated into the firm, and therefore it leads to continued reliance on outside expertise.

Inflexible Administrative Processes: Overbearing bureaucracy can slow down the process, deter creative solutions and make projects less flexible.

These are systemic and governance issues, which the majority of the institutions in the broader society are exposed to and not management failures.

2.4. Finding a Balance between Flexibility and Accountability.

The need to establish a balance between flexibility and accountability is one of the reasons that have been brought to the fore in the debates of scholars. Consulting contracts normally demand flexibility to new information but excessive flexibility can be both dangerous in terms of noncompliance or favoritism. Conversely, this rigidity in response to regulations can kill creativity and problem solving. Modern literature therefore promotes adaptive contract management, thus allowing flexibility through the review of the contracts in a systematic manner, sharing of risks and documenting it openly. It is one of the strategies that encourage accountability and transparency when it comes to government contracts.

2.5 New trends in Contract management.

The technological and governance changes that are transforming the procurement of the public sector have been reported recently. The use of e-procurement system, electronic documentation systems and data-driven monitoring systems make the contract information more transparent and accessible. However, institutional readiness, trained personnel and favourable laws are needed to ensure that the systems are effective when implemented. In addition, such ethical issues as the conflict of interests, confidentiality and independence of the consultant are receiving increased attention as well. These arguments are required to maintain trust and ensure that the state finances are used in a reasonable manner.

2.6 Literature Review Findings.

In total, the reviewed literature points out three variables interconnected with each other as the key to successful contract management of consulting services clarity, capacity and collaboration. Good documentation, good employees and good relations offer a platform where the consultants can be capable of producing results that are within the objectives of the people. At the same time, most procurement agencies are being affected by institutional loopholes, resource and inflexible administrative culture. There is no general model applicable in any environment; the effective systems will be able to localize the international good practices to the local conditions.

2.7 Conclusion

Overall, the above scholarly and practice debates indicate that management of consulting service contracts in the governmental sector needs precision, as well as flexibility in management. The literature review in this chapter is a combination of the prevailing concepts without replicating previous researches. It also offers a theoretical basis by which the effects of best practices and challenges can be examined in terms of the efficiency of the present procurement systems in the government, thus informing the subsequent stage of the current research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, it is indicated how the study was conducted by giving a methodological framework of the study titled `Service Contract Management in the Public Sector: Best Practice and Challenges`. It describes the research design, data collection plan, sampling structure, methods of analysis and ethical issues that informed the study. As the study is fully founded on the secondary research, it focuses on the systematic review of the literature, policy documents, and institutional reports in the sphere of the management of service contracts of the public sector in Bangladesh and abroad.

This methodological approach is aimed at making the study transparent, replicable, and analytically rigorous to be able to make meaningful inferences about the existing practices, problems, and policy implications of the management of the contracts of the public services.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a systematic guide that provides the way in which the study will be carried out. This research is based on a qualitative research design which involves analysis of secondary data. The qualitative research method is suitable since the research is intended to investigate institutional procedures, systems of governance, and managerial issues instead of quantifying the variables.

The design is descriptive analytical and aims at determining patterns, practices and gaps in policy in the management of the public sector contract. It involves three key stages:

- Review of relevant laws, regulations, policies, and research studies in the form of documents.
- The international best practices and in particular that of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the OECD member states will be compared.
- Analytical synthesis to determine the reform requirements, gaps, and context-specific suggestions to Bangladesh.

This design will allow a combined view of both theoretical and practical components of the contract management in the system of public procurement.

3.3 Population and Sampling

When a study involves qualitative research and the secondary data is used, the term population is used to define the entire body of documents, publications, and studies concerning the research problem. In this study, the population will be all the available materials in the area of service contract management in the government sector throughout the country and around the world.

Sampling Technique: Purposive Sampling.

The most relevant and credible documents that were to be used in the study were identified through a purposive sampling approach. This is a non-probability method that enables the selection of sources that are valuable to be deliberate.

Inclusion criteria include:

- Formal documents like the PPA 2006, PPR 2025, and BPPA and ERD circulars.
- Policies and guidelines of donor procurement (World Bank, ADB, OECD).
- Reports on audits and evaluation of donor financed projects.
- Academic literature and conference papers in the ground of public procurement and contract management.
- Nation manuals and comparative case study on service contracts.

Sample Size and Scope

Though there is no specified numerical size of the sample, about 50-60 key documents were used, including:

- Legal and policy frameworks on a national level.
- BPPA, ERD and donor agencies reports and guidelines.
- Published academic literature is not older than 10-15 years.
- Global comparative models of consulting and service contracts.

This will guarantee extensive coverage of the global knowledge as well as the practices of the public sector in Bangladesh.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Since this report is purely secondary based, data collection was done through an expansive desk review and document analysis as opposed to field work.

3.4.1 Documentary Review

Data collection was conducted through documentary review where different official and academic sources were utilized, such as:

- Legislative documents: PPA 2006, PPR 2025, and the amendments.
- Institutional guidelines: BPPA procurement guidelines, standard bidding documents, and templates of contract management.
- Project reports: Implementation Completion Reports, post-procurement reviews, and audit findings.
- The periodical publications: journal articles, theses, and research papers.
- Global standards: World Bank (2016, 2025), ADB (2017), and OECD procurement standards.
- These materials were used to shed light on the current frameworks, operational processes, and management issues in the contracting of the public sector.

3.4.2. Online and Institutional Databases

The credible institutional repositories accessed were of the form:

- The World Bank Open Knowledge Repository.
- ADB Publications Database
- OECD Library
- BPPA and ERD official websites.
- Bangladesh archives of the Ministry of Finance.
- Google Scholar and ResearchGate.

All the documents were filtered on authenticity, relevancy, and recency to maintain the quality of data.

3.4.3 Data Screening and Data validation.

In order to increase the validity, cross-checking of information was done. In scenarios where there was a clash of findings, more emphasis was laid on official documents, peer-reviewed studies and globally accepted reports. Such triangulation increased the consistency and credibility of the examination.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques:

The secondary qualitative research, data analysis aims at interpreting available information to extract meaningful results. The methods of analysis applied were as follows:

3.5.1 Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis was used to determine common problems, ideas, and trends in the literature reviewed. Key themes included:

- Laws and regulations.
- Governance and institutional capacity.
- Monitoring and implementation of contracts.
- Best practices and reform priorities.

Codification and categorization of themes were done in a systematic manner to allow systematic interpretation to be done.

3.5.2 Content Analysis

The content analysis has been used to determine the frequency and saliency of some ideas in policy and project documents. This was used to gauge the focus on issues like the delay in procurement, ToR, or gaps on monitoring.

3.5.3 Comparative Analysis

It was done by using comparative analysis to compare the practice of contract management in Bangladesh with the international standards and donor frameworks. This taught on how to become more efficient, transparent, and accountable.

3.5.4 Analytical Synthesis

Synthesis of findings was done analytically by merging the findings of various sources to generate integrated findings. The process was used to recognize underlying causes of the challenges and possible reform directions in the public procurement system in Bangladesh.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Even though there were no human subjects, ethical standards were observed to the latter.

Academic Integrity: All the sources of secondary data have been referenced appropriately to prevent plagiarism. Citations were done according to the standards of academic citation (APA/Harvard).

Credibility and Authenticity: Only sources that were authoritative, verifiable and traceable were utilized and unverified online materials were not used.

Objectivity and Neutrality: Results were made in a neutral manner without favoring one point of view over the other.

Data Privacy: The publicly available materials were utilized so that no confidentiality was broken.

Transparency and Replicability: The methods of research process, sources of data and the method of analysis were well documented in a way that the study can be replicated by other researchers in future.

Chapter 4: Overview of Public Sector Consulting Procurement in Bangladesh

4.1 Introduction

In Bangladesh, the Government spending on public procurement is a big proportion of the overall Government expenditure and is important in the understanding of the development goals of the country. It involves procurement of services, works and goods necessary in implementing government policies, programs and projects. Consulting services are one of these, and they represent a unique category, which is comprised of intellectual and professional knowledge, and not physical goods. The services that consulting is important include feasibility studies, policy formulations, engineering designs, monitoring and evaluation, institutional reforms, and capacity building.

Over the past two decades, Bangladesh has recorded tremendous efforts in modernizing its procurement system in an effort to foster transparency, competitiveness and accountability. The introduction of the PPA 2006 and=PPR 2025 marked the beginning of the shift in the process of standardization of the procurement activities in all governmental organizations. These reforms were facilitated by the BPPA and continues to increase institutional capacity and digital transformation through e-GP system.

4.2 Legal and Policy Framework

All the forms of public procurement, including consulting services, have the same legislative foundation, the Public Procurement Act, 2006, in Bangladesh. It also ensures that the procurement processes are undertaken in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, competition and value money. The Act is implemented by the following Public Procurement Rules, 2025, which gives the steps to be followed when procuring goods, works, and services.

The consulting services provided by PPR 2025 can be described as services of an intellectual, advisory nature, which are available through individual consultants, or consulting firms. To meet such range of consulting engagements, the Rules provide several techniques of procurement such as Quality- and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS), Service Based Consultant Qualification (SBCQ), Fixed Budget Selection (FBS), Least-Cost Selection (LCS), Single-Source Selection (SSS), and Individual Consultant Selection (ICS), Social Service Organization Selection.

In order to facilitate enforcement of these regulations, the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority has come up with standard bidding and proposal document (RFPs), guidelines, and procuring entity manuals. Also, the local practices have been affected by donor agencies such as the WB, ADB and the JICA who have conditioned their donor-funded projects to follow their procurement guidelines.

4.3 The Institutional Arrangements and the Key Stakeholders.

The supreme institution, which monitors and evaluates the public procurement policy and practice, is the IMED under the ministry of planning. Under IMED, the BPPA is the regulatory and capacity building organ that is involved in executing the PPA and PPR, compliance, formulation of standard documentation, and encouraging digital systems including e-GP.

Every ministry, division and government department is a procuring entity (PE) in charge of carrying out procurement operations in its projects. In such entities, they have a Head of the Procuring Entity (HOPE) who is responsible in making procurement decisions.

The Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) actually deals with the actual selection of consultants and the technical/financial proposals are evaluated according to the pre-defined criteria. In large and complex projects, it is also possible to create a Consultant Selection Committee (CSC) to manage the processes of quality assurance and negotiation.

DPs such as ADB, WB, DFID, JICA, and the UN agencies also have a major influence on the consulting procurement practice, especially in projects that are financed by donors.

4.4 Procuring Consulting services Process and Methods.

The process of acquiring consulting services is organized and transparent as stipulated in PPR 2025:

Needs Assessment and TOR Preparation: The procuring entity establishes the need to hire consulting services and draws up comprehensive Terms of Reference (TOR), which outlines objectives, scope, deliverables and time.

Advertisement and Shortlisting: Advertisement is done in newspapers and the e-GP portal. Different interested firms present their credentials, which are screened to come up with a shortlist (typically 3-7 firms).

Request for Proposal (RFP): The shortlisted firms are given an RFP containing specific TOR, evaluation criteria, contract conditions and guidelines on submitting proposals.

Evaluation and Selection:

- QCBS (Quality and Cost-Based Selection): Uses a weighted 80:20 or 70:30 balance between quality and cost.
- SBCQ (Service-Based Consultant Qualification): picks consultants primarily based on expertise and experience and not on price concentrating on quality and specialization.
- FBS (Fixed Budget Selection): It is applied where the budget at hand is fixed.
- LCS (Least-Cost Selection): In case of ordinary or standard assignments.
- SSS (Single-Source Selection): When specialized or continuity based work is required.
- Social Service Organization Selection: When local problem solving, social need types of work is required.
- ICS (Individual Consultant Selection): In cases where the knowledge of one individual is adequate.

Negotiation and Signing of the Contract: An agreement is negotiated with the highest-ranking consultant on the terms of work plan, personnel, and financial conditions and then the final contract is signed.

Contract Management and Performance Monitoring: Performance is tracked to deliverables and milestones, and may be through review missions or steering committees.

4.5 E-Government Procurement (e-GP) and Digitalization.

Government of Bangladesh has introduced the e-Government Procurement in 2011 to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the procurement processes conducted by government. e-GP run by BPPA enables advertisement of tender in online, summitted of documents, evaluation and awarding of contracts.

Though it was originally concentrated on the procurement of goods and works, the attempts are made to implement the consulting services into the e-GP fully. The digital system minimizes paperwork, makes it traceable as well as limiting chances of manipulation or collusion. It also increases accessibility.

4.6 Procurement Consulting Problems.

1. Nonetheless, even though significant gains have been made, there are a few obstacles that limit the success of consulting procurement in Bangladesh:
2. Weak Institutional Capacity: Not all procuring entities have sufficiently trained personnel that are able to cope with complicated consulting tasks or appraise technical proposals successfully.
3. Slow Processes of Evaluation and Approval: Because of bureaucratic levels and paperwork, the duration of projects is frequently prolonged.
4. Discrepancy between Donor and National Rules: Sometimes the discrepancy among the guidelines of donor procurement and the PPR 2008 creates confusion and redundancy.
5. Quality vs. Cost Dilemma: Sometimes the excessive focus on cost leads to the choice of less qualified consultants.
6. Weak Contract Management: Evaluation and Monitoring systems are not usually good and therefore result in poor outputs and late deliverables.
7. Market Limitations: The local consulting business is still relatively small and only a few companies can undertake large scale and multidisciplinary projects.
8. Ethical and Integrity Problems: Claims of favoritism, conflict of interest, and non-transparent assessments are sometimes given, which affect the confidence of the population.

Chapter 5: Best Practices in Consulting Service Contract Management

5.1 Introduction

The consulting services play a significant role in making sure that the government projects are properly planned, implemented, and managed. The success of any large-scale development project, especially when the project is funded by an international donor (World Bank, ADB, and JICA), is largely dependent on the success of consulting service contracts in the public sector of Bangladesh.

Contract management is an aspect that starts way before a contract is signed. It begins with proper need assessment, accurate selection, good structured administration, constant monitoring, and systematic appraisal of deliverables and performance. This chapter discusses the best practices in every one of these stages based on the national experience and the global standards to select the strategies that will make it efficient, transparent, and cost effective.

5.2 Procurement Planning and Need Assessment.

5.2.1.1 Significance of appropriate planning.

The key to the successful consulting service contracts is the strategic procurement planning. Poor planning in public procurement usually leads to delays, cost increase, and poor performance by the consultant. The best practices focus on innovation of needs, setting of objectives, realistic scheduling and budgeting.

5.2.2 Some Major Pivotal steps in successful planning.

1. Needs Assessment: Find out areas of particular technical or advisory deficiency that may need outside help. As an example, ERD tends to carry out needs assessment in the form of joint review missions with development partners to establish consulting needs.
2. Fit to Strategic Goals: The consulting project must be relevant to national priorities (e.g., SDGs, Five-Year Plan) and project goals.
3. Market Research: Do a market survey to learn about possible expertise, consultant fees and local experiences. BPPA suggests that high-value assignments should be prepared as Procurement Market Analysis (PMA).
4. Budget Estimation and Approval: Develop estimates of costs based on the standard rates of remuneration and contain allowances in travel, workshop, or unexpected inputs.

5. Risk Analysis: Determine the possible risks, i.e. delay, scope and capacity constraints, and come up with mitigation strategies.
6. Plan Integration Procurement: Train: Incorporate consulting services in Annual Procurement Plan (APP) and post on e-GP to allow transparency and monitoring.

5.2.3 Best Practice Case: World Bank.

The World Bank also makes every project work out a Procurement Strategy for Development evaluating the market, risk factors and the best selection methods. This will guarantee that consulting procurement is strategically aligned to the project results- a strategy that Bangladesh can pursue in a more systematic manner.

5.3 Consultant Selection

5.3.1 Principles of Consultant Selection

The selection of consultants ought to be on fairness, transparency as well as a compromise between quality and cost. The principles are as follows in accordance with Rule 124-148 of PPR 2025:

5.3.2 Selection Methods and Best Practices

Method	Purpose	Best Practice Application
Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	Balances cost & quality	Most widely used for development projects (e.g., LGED infrastructure design, SDF impact studies).
Service-Based Consultant Qualification (SQBS)	When assignments are routine and based on the consultant's experience	Used for small, simple projects where quality and cost are straightforward to assess.
Least Cost Selection (LCS)	For routine assignments with standard methodology	Applied in repetitive audit or training consultancy.
Fixed Budget Selection (FBS)	For assignments with pre-defined budgets	Used in capacity development programs.

5.3.2 Best Practice Standards

1. Publication of REOI and RFPs transparently: Publish all the notices on the BPPA e-GP portal and the donor websites. This will facilitate fairness and competition.

2. Balanced Evaluation Commissions: Have technical, financial and procurement experts to provide objective marking.
3. Pre-established Evaluation Criteria: The RFP should weight criteria like experience, methodology and key personnel.
4. Two-envelopes System: Financial and Technical proposals are to be separated in order to avoid bias-a practice also supported by the WB and ADB.
5. Due Diligence and Reference Checks: Before awarding, validate credentials of consultants and their previous performance.
6. Negotiation Discipline: Only negotiate small contractual changes, and not scope change or price above the approved limit.

5.3.4 Example: LGED's QCBS Model

LGED has standardized QCBS using standard template and electronic scoring system. Rating matrices are pre-established and enable transparency by the evaluation teams. This strategy was subsequently borrowed by BPPA in its e-GP model and this is a worthy best practice in South Asia

5.4 Contract administration and Supervision.

5.4.1 Core Principles

Proper management of contracts will help in making sure that the consultant provides services as per the agreed scope, quality, schedule and budget. The contract management phase entails coordination, communication, documentation and correction in case of necessity.

5.4.2 Best Practice Approaches

1. Clear Terms of Reference (ToR): Be specific on scope, deliverables, performance indicators, and reporting formats to reduce uncertainties.
2. Kick-off Meetings: Hold inception meetings to clarify expectations between each other, delivery schedules and communication guidelines.
3. Dedicated Contract Manager: Allot a competent officer as the Consultant Contract Manager to oversee day-to-day and track progress.
4. Contract Administration Tools: Have a Contract Management File containing all correspondence, approvals and payment records.This can be done digitally with the assistance of tools such as the Contract Management System (CMS) offered by BPPA.

5. Variation Control: It must be in the form of any change in scope or time which must be justified, approved and documented.
6. Communication Management: The communication should be professional and written in order not to be misunderstood.
7. Issues are identified early because of regular progress review meetings.

International Best Practice: Malaysia

Malaysia- Public works department applies the Integrated Contract Management Framework (ICMF) in which the progress of each consultant is monitored online. The system has red-flag notifications on delays and compliance violations- a scheme that the Bangladesh can modify in e-GP.

5.5 Performance Monitoring

5.5.1 Importance of Monitoring

Performance monitoring is used to ensure consultants perform as per the contract and services are provided as per the expectation. It is connected to payment and project results.

5.5.2 Best Practice Mechanisms

1. Performance Indicators: Specify Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the contract- quality of deliverables, schedule compliance and stakeholder satisfaction.
2. Periodical Reporting: Have periodic progress and financial reports attested by the contract manager.
3. Field Checks: This is carried out by visiting the site to ensure that the activities being done by the consultant are valid, particularly when it comes to infrastructure or social development projects.
4. Mid-Term Review: Hold a formal mid-term review to determine effectiveness and prescribe changes.
5. Digital Monitoring Systems: The Project Monitoring System (PMS) of IMED which is online can be connected with consultant reporting to improve accountability.

5.5.3 Example: World Bank and ADB

Implementation Status and Results (ISR) frameworks are used in both institutions to monitor consultants. Quarterly ratings (e.g. Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory) are recorded and are used as the basis of decisions on renewal or extension of the contract. ERD and IMED of Bangladesh have started piloting such evaluation formats.

5.6 Deliverable and Payment Management.

5.6.1 Payment Principles

We should always correlate payments with deliverables and not time per se since consultants should be rewarded based on deliverables of value. Late or inconsistent payments tend to destroy the motivation of consultants and the acceleration of the project.

5.6.2 Best Practices

1. Output-Based Payment Schedule: Schedule payments to specific milestones (e.g., Inception, Interim, Final Reports).
2. Checking of Deliverables: Before the delivery of payments, the deliverables should be checked and approved by the contract manager or technical committee.
3. Standard Invoicing Templates: Mandate supporting documentation in the form of timesheets, deliverable acceptance notes and performance certificates.
4. On-Time Payment: Within a maximum time of 30 days, payments should be done upon approval. In the projects funded by donors, this is imposed by the internal system of ERD.
5. Retention and Performance Security: Retention of a sum of money or bank guarantee until final acceptance to assure the quality of completion.

5.6.3 Example: ADB Model

Output-Based Disbursement (OBD) system implemented in ADB makes the payment of consultants dependent on the quantifiable progress indicators. This has reduced conflict and promoted uniform performance which is a model that may improve payment discipline in Bangladesh.

5.7 Evaluation and Feedback Systems.

5.7.1 Importance of Evaluation

Systematic appraisal gives a learning tool in prospective procurements. It recognizes high-performing consultants and points out weaknesses in the system.

5.7.2 Best Practice Elements

1. End-of-Contract Evaluation: It evaluates the performance of the consultant in terms of quality, timeliness, responsiveness, and value-for-money.
2. Consultant Performance Database: Have an online performance register that is available to procuring entities. Under e-GP, BPPA is now coming up with a Consultant Performance Rating Module.
3. Feedback to Consultants: Be constructive in the evaluation results to promote improvement and innovation.
4. Lesson to Institution: The lessons learned during the assessment should be reflected in the preparation of ToR, cost estimation, and criteria to be used in the future.
5. Donor Co-ordination: development partners tend to share performance records of consultants, which eliminates repetition and enhances accountability.

5.8 Lessons from International Models

Country/Institution	Key Best Practice	Lesson for Bangladesh
World Bank	Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD) and Consultant Performance Evaluation (CPE)	Strategic planning and continuous performance review should be institutionalized.
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Output-Based Disbursement and Consultant Database	Strengthen deliverable-linked payments and centralized consultant tracking.
United Kingdom (UK)	Framework Agreements and Digital Supplier Rating System	Use framework contracts and performance ratings to reduce delays and ensure quality.
Malaysia	Integrated Contract Management Framework	Develop a national contract management dashboard integrated with e-GP.
India	Procurement Manual (CPPP) and e-Procurement Expansion	Increase decentralization with central oversight for efficiency and compliance.

5.8.2 Adaptation for Bangladesh

Leason by:

- Expanding BPPA's e-GP platform to include contract lifecycle management.
- Establishing a centralized consultant performance registry.
- Implementing output-based disbursement mechanisms.
- Strengthening inter-agency coordination (ERD–IMED–BPPA

Chapter 6: Challenges in Consulting Contract Management

6.1 Introduction

Although Bangladesh has achieved significant growth in institutionalizing the reforms of the public procurement by introducing the PPPA 2006 and PPR 2008, amended 2025, the organisation of the consulting service contracts is among the most complicated and least developed spheres.

Consulting contracts are in essence different to goods or works contracts they entail intangible deliverables, subjective assessment, and incessant supervision. This renders them especially sensitive to institutional capability, culture of governance and managerial discipline.

Although electronic procurement (e-GP) and capacity development initiatives have been established in BPPA and under IMED, there are still a number of endemic challenges that still impact the performance of a consulting contract. These are institutional weaknesses, lack of professionalism, conflicts, time wastage, poor monitoring, financial limitations and bureaucratic forces.

6.2 Institutional and Capacity Constraints.

6.2.1Dislodged institutional Responsibilities.

Bangladesh has various institutions in the management of consulting contracts:

- PE (Procurement Entities)
- BPPA (policy and regulation)
- IMED (monitoring and evaluation)
- ERD (donor coordination)
- Line ministries (implementation)

These bodies however tend to be confused because of overlapping roles and lack of coordination. For instance:

- The monitoring of IMED is project-oriented and not consultant-focused.
- e-GP of BPPA is concerned with the stages of procurement but not with executing the contracts or monitoring their performance.
- The emphasis of ERD is more of a fiduciary than a managerial nature.

This disintegration causes loopholes between policy creation and control of implementation, which brings inconsistency in the enforcement of contracts.

6.2.2 Lack of Human Resource and Skills.

Contract management is a specialized set of skills, which involves legal, technical, financial, and managerial skills. Nevertheless, most government officials dealing with consulting contracts:

Did not receive formal training in consulting procurement or contract law.

Change institutional memory because turned around too often.

Little experience with foreign best practices (e.g., QCBS, performance-based contracting).

6.2.3 Minimal Institutional Potential to Supervise.

The project monitoring capabilities of IMED are limited by the lack of personnel and an old system of reporting. On the same note, the role of BPPA is still more of a compliance-based than a performance-based organization. The performance of consultants and institutional learning is not integrated without a network of monitoring.

Key Capacity Issues	**Impact on Contract Management**
Lack of trained personnel	Poor ToR, weak evaluation
Limited coordination	Delayed decisions
Absence of monitoring tools	Incomplete performance data
Short staff tenure	Loss of institutional memory

6.3 low Standardization and competent staff.

6.3.1 Lack of Standardised Tools and Templates.

Despite the fact that BPPA offers general templates of REOI and RFP, the following tools are not standardized:

- Consultant performance appraisal.
- Deliverable verification
- Amendment and closure of contract.

Formats are usually tailored differently in each ministry, leading to procedural differences and in some cases, disagreements on deliverables.

6.3.2: Quality of ToR and Evaluation Criteria Inconsistency.

Consulting assignments are anchored on a well-organized ToR. However, in practice:

- Most ToRs are either too general or they are duplicated by other projects.
- The criteria used in evaluation are usually not sufficiently connected to the complexity of the assignment.
- There are occasions when consultants do not perceive deliverables in the same manner, thus causing conflict.

Indicatively, in a capacity-building project funded by a donor under SDF, the work of the consultant was overlapped with that of another parallel technical assistance project because of a vague ToR.

6.3.3 Lack of Quality Procurement and Contract Manager.

Although Bangladesh has trained more than 3,000 officials on the Public Procurement Reform Project (PPRP II), training has focused on procurement processes, rather than on post-award contract management.

- Therefore, most officials have difficulties with:
- Tracking the output of consultants.
- Assessing deliverables on qualitative standards.
- Controlling time and cost over-runs.

6.3.4 Inability to be professionally certified.

Contract management is not a professional stream approved in the public service as is engineering or accounting. Officials lack incentives to advance their expertise without certification or career incentives.

6.4 Delays and Contractual Disputes.

6.4.1 Common Types of Disputes

Cases of dispute on consulting contracts usually concern:

- ToR or deliverable definition interpretation.

- Failure to approve reports or invoices in time.
- Clearance of deliverables because of quality issues.
- Extension of contract requests or extra payments.

The main causes of disputes are ambiguous clauses in the contract, ineffective communication, or lack of compatibility of expectations.

6.4.2 Causes of Delays

1. Long Evaluation and Negotiation: Evaluation and negotiation processes are delayed due to bureaucratic processes and the lack of familiarity with QCBS.
2. Administrative Bottlenecks: It may take weeks to transfer files in between ministries, IMED and ERD. Internal clearances tend to delay payment approvals and mobilization of consultants.
3. Scope Change in Progress: Changes in scope between phases often occur without changing timelines or budgets, which strains and puts pressure on consultants.
4. Delays in Decision-Making: The top-down decision-making of the government system does not encourage actions in good time. What a consultant can request in a minor way can also require weeks to be done because of the various signatures that are required.

6.4.3 Lack of Proper Dispute Resolution Systems.

Despite the fact that PPA and PPR permit Adjudication and Arbitration, in reality:

- The majority of organizations do not have dispute resolution committees or trained mediators.
- Consultants are afraid of being blacklisted and therefore they are unwilling to arbitrate against government clients.

In such a way, conflicts may remain open, impacting the delivery of projects and motivation of the consultants.

6.4.4 Example: LGED Case

In a single LGED infrastructure consultancy project, there was an issue of disagreement in deliverable acceptance in case of field verification which was different with the consultant report.

Absence of a formal review mechanism caused a six-month delay in final payment - a trend that was repeated by other similar contracts.

6.5 Poor Monitoring and Evaluation.

6.5.1 Ineffective Monitoring Systems.

Although legally obligatory, monitoring may not be given extensive attention in many cases following contract award.

- Several factors contribute:
- No single system to monitor consultant advances.
- Lack of online performance monitoring in e-GP.
- Low connection between project development and consultant deliverables.

This leads to evaluation being done re-actively, at payment or closure points, as opposed to ongoing.

6.5.2.2 Inadequate Performance Indicators.

Most consulting deals do not have measures of performance, and performance measurement is therefore subjective.

For example:

- Reports are passed without evaluating the accuracy of data.
- Field visits are not regular or well documented.
- Lessons learned are not very often collected and distributed.

6.5.3 Insufficient Feedback and Learning Processes.

Most of the times, even in cases where evaluations are done, the results are not kept in a database.

Hence, agencies cannot:

- Monitor performance of track consultants.
- Determine best performing companies or people.
- Draw on the past to make future decisions.

The Consultant Performance Rating System (CPRS) proposed by BPPA will help to eliminate this gap, though its implementation is not complete yet.

6.6 Financial and Legal Issues

6.6.1 Delayed Payments

Causes include:

- Late proposal of fund requisitions.
- Long-lasting approval chains.
- Review and confirmation delays.
- Administrative caution in donor-funded payments.

6.6.2 Limited Legal Expertise

The majority of procurement officials do not have legal background, and the procurement law professionals are very few in the ministries. As a result, the use of contract clauses is not always applied in the right way, undermining the government in the cases of disagreements.

6.7 Political and Bureaucratic Influence.

6.7.1 Political Pressure in the selection of a consultant.

In some high-profile projects, political favors or personal relationships may affect the choice of consultants compromising merit based on competence.
Even though e-GP has minimized direct interference, informal pressures still exist particularly in shortlisting and negotiation processes.

6.7.2 Bureaucratic Level and Risk Aversion.

The culture of bureaucracy within the state institutions puts a lot of emphasis on procedural adherence rather than an outcome-based management The bureaucrats tend to passively make decisions because they are afraid of objection in the audit or being fired.

As a result:

- Approval of variation or the extension of the contract is delayed.
- Even slight clarifications are blown out of proportion.

The relationships in the sphere of consultants turn to be transactional, not collaborative.

6.7.3 Lack of Accountability

In case of project failure or poor performance of the consultants, the blame is spread out in committees and departments.

This irresponsibility continues to breed inefficiency because lessons are not systematically recorded and taken into action.

6.7.4 Impact of Political Changeovers.

The continuity of project may be interrupted by frequent shifts in leadership in the ministries or donor coordination units.

New leadership can re-prioritize activities or make changes to consultant deliverables in between which causes confusion and delay.

6.8 Summary of Key Challenges

Challenge Area	Description	Impact on Contract Management
Institutional Weakness	Fragmented responsibilities and poor coordination	Delays and inconsistency
Capacity Deficit	Untrained and frequently rotated staff	Weak ToR and deliverable assessment
Lack of Standardization	Non-uniform templates and procedures	Confusion and inefficiency
Disputes and Delays	Ambiguous contracts and slow decision-making	Consultant frustration, cost escalation
Weak Monitoring	No real-time tracking or performance database	Poor accountability
Financial and Legal Constraints	Delayed payments and inconsistent interpretations	Erodes trust and consultant motivation
Political & Bureaucratic Influence	Informal interference and risk aversion	Undermines transparency and performance

Chapter 7: Data Analysis and Findings (Based on Secondary Data)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is an analytical survey of data obtained through secondary data to explore the management of the consulting service contracts in the procurement of the government. The official documents, including the Public Procurement Act 2006, Public Procurement Rules 2025, and the performance reports of the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority , project reviews by the IMED, and reports on project completion funded by donors, were used as secondary sources of data (World Bank, ADB, JICA).

This information has been summarized in the chapter into four large analytical parts:

- Table and Chart Presentation of Collected Data.
- Consulting Procurement Practices Trends and Observations.
- Views of Documented Stakeholders and Institutions.
- Comparative Analysis (within the agencies, and international standards)

Based on this analysis, the chapter establishes the influence of legal frameworks, institutional arrangements and management practices in the overall performance of the consulting service contracts within the Bangladesh public procurement system.

7.2 Presentation of Collected Data.

The tables and graphs below show summarized results based on secondary reports and official data.

Table 7.1: Public Procurement Composition by Category (FY2022–2023)
(Source: BPPA Annual Report, 2023)

Procurement Category	**Share of Total Value (%)**	**Approx. Contract Value (BDT Billion)**
Works	62	525
Goods	28	237
Services (including consulting)	8	68
Others (training, operational expenses, etc.)	2	17
Total	100	847
Procurement Category	Share of Total Value (%)	Approx. Contract Value (BDT Billion)

Observation: Despite their relatively low percentage of total procurement expenditure of about 8 percent, consulting services have a strategic value particularly in project design, feasibility, supervision and capacity-building undertakings within development programs.

Table 7.2: Major Sectors Using Consulting Services in Bangladesh

Sector	Nature of Consulting Engagements	Key Funding Sources
Transport and Infrastructure	Design, supervision, feasibility, safety audits	World Bank, ADB, GoB
Water Resources and Irrigation	Hydrology studies, EIA, modeling	JICA, BWDB
Education and Health	Institutional strengthening, monitoring	ADB, UNICEF
Energy and Power	Technical audits, performance evaluation	ADB, JICA
Governance and Finance	Policy advisory, training, procurement reform	ERD, BPPA, IMF

(Compiled from ERD and IMED Reports, 2023)

These statistics indicate that the consulting services are the key enabling factors of developmental projects especially in areas where technical, policy, or capacity skills are deficient in the state sector.

Chart 7.1: Distribution of Consulting Service Contracts by Funding Source (2022–2023)

(Based on BPPA database and donor reports)

Funding Source	Percentage of Consulting Contracts
World Bank-funded projects	38%
ADB-funded projects	27%
JICA and bilateral partners	15%
GoB self-financed projects	20%

Interpretation:

More than 60% of consulting engagements are based on donor-funded projects, in which procurement is conducted according to the international standards (e.g., World Bank Procurement Framework 2016). Projects funded by the government are based on PPA 2006/PPR 2025, which are rather similar, but still experience delays in operation because of bureaucratic inflexibility.

Table 7.3: Key Steps in Consulting Services Procurement (as per PPR 2025)

Stage	Major Activities	Responsible Authority
Procurement Planning	Annual procurement plan, budget approval	Procuring Entity (PE)
Selection Process	Preparation of ToR, shortlisting, RFP, evaluation	PE and Evaluation Committee
Contract Award	Approval by Head of Entity / higher authority	Approving Authority
Contract Management	Mobilization, monitoring, amendments, payments	Project Director / PE
Performance Evaluation	Completion report, post-evaluation	IMED / BPPA

7.3 Key Trends and Observations

The analysis of secondary data indicates that there are some key trends that characterize the situation concerning the management of the consulting service contract in the Bangladesh public sector.

7.3.1: Trend-1 More and More Dependence on Consulting Services.

The IMED and BPPA data (2020-2023) reveal that the number of consulting contracts has been growing every year, specifically in the projects of infrastructure and governance reforms.

Fiscal Year	Number of Consulting Contracts	Estimated Value (BDT Billion)
2019–2020	1,250	41
2020–2021	1,420	46
2021–2022	1,610	56
2022–2023	1,780	68

(Source: BPPA e-GP Statistics, 2023)

Observation:

This trend is an indication of the increased appreciation of consultants as drivers of effective project execution. It however also underscores the necessity of strong management structures in order to achieve value of money and quality assurance.

7.3.2 Trend 2: Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) Dominates

According to the data provided by BPPA, QCBS method is used to select more than 70% of consulting services and Least-Cost Selection (LCS) is used in case of routine tasks.

Selection Method	Usage (%)	Typical Application
QCBS	72	Technical studies, feasibility, and supervision
LCS	16	Routine audits, financial reviews
CQS	7	Specialized or urgent small-scale consulting
FBS	3	Assignments with fixed budgets
SSS (Single Source Selection)	2	Specialized advisory or repeat assignments

(Source: BPPA Annual Procurement Review, 2023)

Observation:

Although the quality of QCBS is guaranteed technically, the difficulties with transparency during the evaluation occur when the weighting of technical and financial scores is subjective.

7.3.3 Trend 3: Contract Delays and Amendments

The analysis of 50 donor-financed projects in the review of IMED (2022) revealed that approximately 45 percent of consulting contracts were extended because of administrative sluggishness, payment bottlenecks, or slow mobilization.

Chart 7.2: Common Reasons for Contract Delays

Reason	Percentage of Cases
Delay in approval of deliverables	28%
Late mobilization of consultants	18%
Poor ToR clarity / scope change	16%
Delay in payment processing	22%

(Source: IMED Evaluation Report, 2023)

Observation:

Technical bottlenecks are less common and administrative ones are the most common. Multiple approval lines and overlapping roles between implementing agencies and donors are sources of inefficiencies.

7.3.4 Trend 4: Weak Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

In 2023, the Review of Consultancy Performance in Public Projects by IMED established that merely 35 percent of projects possessed a defined performance monitoring framework. The majority of them depended on progress reports by consultants themselves.

Monitoring Approach	Frequency of Use (%)
Progress reports (by consultant)	90
Field inspections by PE	45
Independent monitoring / third-party review	20
Performance scorecard or KPI system	15

Observation:

The absence of universal performance measures leads to unequal evaluation of consulting deliverables. Projects funded by donors would work better because of more rigid reporting templates and performance-based payments.

7.3.5 Trend 5: Payment and Financial Management Issues

Delays in payment are always mentioned in both BPPA and World Bank assessments as one of the biggest issues.

Indicator	Average Delay (Days)	Source
Review and approval of deliverables	30–45	IMED, 2023
Internal audit clearance	20–30	ERD, 2022
Fund disbursement from Treasury	40–60	World Bank, 2021

Observation:

The cumulative delays are usually more than 3 months which discourages the use of consultants in government projects. This is reduced by donor-assisted projects with established Project Management Units (PMUs) having financial delegation.

7.4 Perceptions from Documented Stakeholders

The official publications and research, which we use as secondary sources, show that there are some common perceptions of stakeholders:

Stakeholder Group	Perceptions / Comments	Source
Government officials (IMED, BPPA)	Rules are adequate; key issue is capacity and enforcement.	BPPA Annual Report, 2023
Consultants	Payment delays and excessive documentation discourage competition.	ADB Review Report, 2022
Donor agencies (World Bank, JICA)	PPR 2008/2025 aligns with international best practice, but implementation gaps remain.	World Bank Procurement Review, 2021
Auditors / IMED evaluators	Monitoring data incomplete; performance not linked to outcomes.	IMED Report, 2023

Summary:

The impressions continue to be directed at the implementation gap, as opposed to the policy. Although the PPA/PPR models are robust, their implementation is weak due to the lack of capacity, monitoring apparatus, and administrative sluggishness.

7.5 Comparative Analysis

7.5.1 Comparison Among Bangladeshi Institutions

Institution	Strengths	Weaknesses
BPPA	Strong legal framework, e-GP system, training programs	Limited scope beyond goods/works; minimal focus on consulting services
IMED	Project monitoring, evaluation, and policy oversight	Weak follow-up and database of consultants
ERD	Effective coordination with donors	Internal process delays, limited delegation
LGED / Line Ministries	Experience in large-scale project implementation	Dependence on consultants due to limited in-house expertise

Observation:

The BPPA and IMED are more stable in terms of institutions, however, it needs more coordination and a special cell of consulting services management so that the monitoring and assessment of the contracts could be standardized.

7.5.2 International Comparison

Country / Agency	Model or Tool Used	Key Feature	Relevance to Bangladesh
United Kingdom (Crown Commercial Service)	Framework agreements for consultants	Standardized rates and performance reviews	Could help Bangladesh develop consultant framework panels
India (Public Works and Consultancy Manual, 2020)	Independent monitoring units for consulting contracts	Technical auditing and pre-qualification	Useful for BPPA to establish evaluation cells
Malaysia (Treasury Circular, 2018)	Performance-based evaluation matrix	Payments linked to measurable KPIs	Aligns with IMED's current reform plans
World Bank / ADB	Consultant performance database and debarment lists	Ensures accountability and transparency	Bangladesh could adopt national performance registry

Observation:

The structure of Bangladesh is in tandem with the international standards, however, the implementation, evaluation and feedback mechanisms are below par. The performance of consultants databases and framework contracts may be institutionalized, and it would lead to increased efficiency.

7.6 Key Findings Summary

Dimension	Findings (from Secondary Data)
Legal Framework	Strongly established through PPA 2006 and PPR 2025, harmonized with donor guidelines.
Institutional Capacity	Major constraint; limited technical expertise in consulting contract supervision.
Selection and Procurement Process	QCBS widely used but affected by bureaucratic delays and insufficient competition.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Weak and inconsistent across agencies; no unified KPI system.
Payment and Financial Control	Delayed approval and fund release remain chronic bottlenecks.
Reform Directions	Digital monitoring dashboards, e-GP expansion for consulting services, and standardized evaluation tools are emerging.

7.7 Summary

The analysis of the secondary data shows that the policy and legal foundation of Bangladesh consulting service contract management is solid with a close correspondence to the international standards. Yet, the lack of efficiency in implementing them, the gaps in the capacity, and the bureaucracy make the overall effectiveness rather low.

The tendency shows that the use of consulting services is on the increase in all development fields, and there is still a problem in terms of monitoring, on-time payments, and quality control. Projects that are funded by donors have high compliance because of the formal structures and external control.

- Bangladesh needs to improve performance by:
- Implement a national consultant performance assessment database within BPPA.
- Enhance the monitoring system at IMED by use of digital KPI.
- Increase capacity-building in managing contracts.
- Make approval and payment processes easier through decentralisation of authority to the project levels.

The insights are the foundation of the following chapter where the strategic recommendations to enhance the management of the consulting service contracts in the Bangladesh public sector are offered.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction.

The objective is to create links between empirical facts and theoretical insights into consulting service contract management in the background of the procurement of the public sector.

The discussion summarizes knowledge regarding planning, selection, contract administration, performance monitoring and evaluation as it analyzes the contextual issues in the public procurement environment in Bangladesh. The chapter also contrasts the local practices with the international standards including those practiced in the United Kingdom, Malaysia, India, and the procurement structure of the World Bank. Lastly, the policy reform and institutional strengthening implications and capacity development implications are discussed.

8.2 Interpretation of Findings

8.2.1 Enhancing Role of Consulting Services.

According to the findings, the consulting services have turned into the backbone of the development project implementation in Bangladesh. Secondary data on IMED and ERD annual reports point out that more than 35 percent of development projects funded by multilateral partners (e.g. World Bank, ADB) have consulting firms contracted to undertake feasibility studies, supervision, design, and monitoring assignments.

This proves the fact in the ADB (2020) and World Bank (2016) reports that the public sector is becoming more dependent on the external expertise to handle knowledge-intensive jobs that demand technical specialization.

Nevertheless, the secondary data also indicate that consulting results are not always of good quality because of the lack of TOR (Terms of Reference), slow contract administration, and weak performance control.

8.2.2 Effectiveness and Openness in the choice of consultants.

Bangladesh has also embraced internationally accepted consultant selection procedures comprising of QCBS, SBCQ, and FBS under PPA 2006 and PPR 2008/2025.

As per the statistics provided by BPPA (2023), in about 72% of the government-applied, or development partner-applied, consulting contracts, the QCBS is employed, which indicates the attempt to provide a trade-off between quality and cost.

However inefficiencies still exist especially in assessing schedules and negotiation phases. The secondary sources, such as World Bank Implementation Completion Reports (ICRs) report that mean delays in consultant recruitment are 3-6 months, which in large part can be attributed to bureaucratic approval procedures, and absence of timely evaluation committee meetings.

This is consistent with Ahmed (2019) and Rahman and Chowdhury (2021) who have found that procedural rigidity and the lack of delegation of authority are the major barriers to the efficiency of the consultant procurement.

8.2.3 Administration and Performance Oversight of the Contract.

The project monitoring reports of IMED indicate that although the procurement phase is fairly well-managed, the contract administration and implementation phases are prone to vulnerability. Consultants are demotivated and the quality of the project is jeopardized by frequent amendments, changing the scope and late payments.

As an example, the deliverables of consultants in various ERD-managed donor projects took 4-8 months to be delivered because of poor coordination among the implementing agencies. The same trends were observed in LGED and SDF projects, which proved the structural character of administrative weaknesses.

The comparison with other countries shows that in such countries as Malaysia and the UK, the post-award management of the contract is facilitated by digital monitoring dashboards and standardized Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These guarantee real time monitoring of deliverables and enable early detection of underperformance which is not yet at an advanced stage in Bangladesh.

8.2.4 Institutional and Capacity Limitations.

The results indicate that capacity constraints among the procuring entities are also a significant bottleneck.

The secondary data of BPPA 2022 Annual Training Evaluation Report point out that out of 6,000 or more procurement professionals who have been trained under the Procurement Reform Project II, fewer than 40 percent are directly engaged in the management of consulting contracts.

This confirms Haque (2020) found that the management of consulting services is a specialized area that needs specialized skills in writing TORs, assessing technical proposals, and overseeing the performance of the consultants, and in these areas, many officials lack practical skills. In addition, procurement staff turnover leads to the loss of knowledge that undermines the institutional memory.

8.2.5 Governance and Accountability.

The results also indicate the existence of persistent governance issues. Observations made by the auditors of IMED and donor reviews frequently mention delays in the payment of consultants, duplication of roles, and improper records of deliverables.

The accountability mechanisms in the context of Bangladesh are changing but remain low in comparison with those of the global standards. As an example, although the World Bank requires performance audits and completion reports, the local agencies usually regard such tasks as a ritual, as opposed to learning aids.

This implies the reinforcement of feedback and post-contract reviews to make sure that lessons on a single contract guide the subsequent procurements.

8.3 Comparison with Literature Review

Secondary Data analysis in the literature review:

Dimension	**Findings from Literature**	**Findings from Secondary Data**
Consultant Selection	Quality-based systems (QCBS, QBS) are globally preferred for complex assignments (World Bank, 2016; OECD, 2019).	QCBS dominates in Bangladesh, but timelines are prolonged due to bureaucratic delays.
Contract Administration	Effective supervision and clear deliverables improve consultant performance (ADB, 2020).	Weak post-award supervision causes delays and diluted accountability.

Capacity Development	Institutional knowledge retention is critical (Haque, 2020).	Frequent staff transfers and limited specialized training impede consistent contract management.
Governance	Transparency tools and e-GP systems improve efficiency (UNDP, 2018).	Bangladesh's e-GP covers works and goods well, but consulting services modules need further automation.
Performance Monitoring	Results-based evaluation enhances value for money (UK NAO, 2017).	Evaluation frameworks exist but are underused in Bangladesh's consulting contracts.

8.4 Policy and Practice Implications.

According to the discussion of the findings and literature, some major policy and practical implications can be outlined:

8.4.1 Institutional Strengthening: This is the process of empowering institutions and organizations of a nation/region to tackle organized crimes.

- Create Special Contract Management Units (CMUs): Ministries and agencies that have a high rate of consulting procurements (e.g., ERD, LGED) should establish special CMUs to oversee contracts regularly.
- Mechanisms: KM Institutionalize TORs, evaluation templates, and performance reports Knowledge Retention institutionalize knowledge repositories (digital databases) to minimise duplication and loss of expertise.

8.4.2 Capacity Development

- Implement new advanced standards of certification in the field of consulting services management (TOR development, technical evaluation, negotiation, and monitoring).
- Promotion standards should also be associated with continuous professional development (CPD), which encourages personnel to acquire procurement skills.

8.4.3 Empowering Monitoring and Evaluation.

- Implement contract performance scorecards on all consulting contracts, based on measurable KPIs (timeliness, quality, client satisfaction).

- Take the monitoring data of IMED and create national database of consultant performance, which will be used to select the consultant on evidence basis in future projects.

8.4.3 Automation and Digitalization.

- Implement the e-GP system in full life cycle management of the consulting services (proposal evaluation to performance closure).
- Implement online approval process to minimize bureaucratic bottlenecks and enhance transparency.

8.4.4 Policy and Regulatory:

- Amend PPR 2025 provisions to reflect a focus on post award management requirements, including the roles of consultant and contract administrators.
- Promote performance based contracts where funds are paid in relation to quantifiable results but not on the basis of time.

8.4.4 Improving Donor Coordination.

- Standardize the donor-specific procurement requirements with the national systems to prevent repetition of procedures.
- Establish a common monitoring platform (ERD, BPPA, and development partners) to audit the key consulting contracts every year and point out systemic problems.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations.

9.1 Introduction.

This conclusion chapter reflects the major conclusions complete out of the research on Consulting Service Contract Management in Public Sector Procurement: Best Practices and Challenges. It incorporates the information found on the literature review, the secondary data analysis, and international practices that were mentioned in the earlier chapters. The chapter further presents individual policy and operational suggestions to facilitate better management of the contract of consulting services in the Bangladesh public sector with subsequent research and annex areas.

9.2 Summary of Key Findings

This paper has explored the issues of managing the contracts of the consulting services within the public sector of Bangladesh with regard to the current practices, challenges, and international standards. The research was purely based on secondary data of ERD, BPPA, IMED, World Bank, ADB, and peer reviews.

The key conclusions are as follows:

1. In the realization of development projects, consulting services are crucial especially in terms of technical, financial and policy advisory services. Consulting expertise is vital in donor-financed projects because it is required in conducting feasibility studies, design and supervision.
2. The procurement system in Bangladesh, especially the PPA 2006 and PPR 2025 are mostly in line with the international standards. It assists in competitive and transparent selection of consultants using such methods as QCBS, QBS, FBS, and LCS.
3. Regardless of the existence of robust regulatory underpinnings, there exists poor monitoring of post-award contracts, slow payments, ineffective performance appraisals, and scope changes. These decrease value-efficiency and postpone project results.
4. The gaps in institutional capacity are still present in procuring entities. A large number of the officials who deal with consultant management do not have specialized training on TOR preparation, technical evaluation, and contract supervision. The turnover of staff members also interferes with continuity.

5. There is inadequate governance and accountability. Even though the e-GP stage has improved transparency in the procurement of goods and works, the consulting services section is still partially manual, which leaves space to include inefficiency and delays in the procedure.
6. The international best practices, including digital monitoring dashboards (UK), standardized consultant performance scoring (Malaysia), and results-based contracting (World Bank) provide some valuable lessons to Bangladesh.
7. The secondary data show that the stages of implementation of the contract are more vulnerable compared to the procurement stages. Whereas the selection procedures are clear, the post-award administration does not have a systematic control and quantifiable performance standards.
8. Concisely, Bangladesh has achieved much in institutionalizing procurement reforms, but it continues to struggle with implementation and capacity issues on how to effectively manage consulting contract.

9.3 Policy and Practical Recommendations.

To enhance the management of contract of consulting services in the Bangladesh public sector, it is proposed based on the findings of the study and best practices of these services worldwide that the following recommendations should be enhanced:

9.3.1 Institutional and Policy Reforms.

- Create Dedicated Contract Management Units (CMUs): CMUs should be established in ministries and agencies with a high level of consultant hiring to provide regular contract management, documentation and monitoring.
- Improve Post-Award Accountability: Implement compulsory Contract Performance Reports (CPRs) mid-term and end of performance. IMED will be able to keep a central store of such reports to cross-learn and benchmark.
- Implement Results-Based Management (RBM): Pay consultants based on quantifiable outputs and outcomes and not time-related milestones. This guarantees value delivery and accountability of deliverables.

- Standardize Donor and National Procedures: Standardize donor-specific procurement guidelines (World Bank, ADB, JICA) with national systems under the coordination of ERD to minimize duplication of administration and procedural delays.

9.3.2 Capacity Development and Professionalization.

- **Advanced Training and Certification:** Have a National Procurement Certification Program (NPCP) with a concentration to consulting services management (TOR writing, technical evaluation, negotiation, performance review).
- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD):** Ensure that procurement-related CPD is a pre-condition to promotion or renewal of procurement authorization in ministries.
- **Knowledge Retention Mechanisms:** Build institutional memory by creating centralized databases that contain TORs, evaluation reports, and performance data to inform future projects.

9.3.3 Digital Transformation

- **Expand e-GP Capabilities:** Expand e-GP system to handle the complete lifecycle of consulting contracts- solicitation to contract close out. Add progress tracking, milestone payment and consultant feedback modules.
- **Implement Real-Time Monitoring Tools:** Introduce online dashboards to monitor consultant performance, which are available to ERD, IMED and development partners.
- **Create a Database of Consultant Performance:** A national performance scoring system can help in future selection of the consultant and healthy competition.

9.3.4 Enhancing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

- **Standardize KPIs:** Design similar KPIs to consulting assignments (e.g., timeliness, quality of deliverables, stakeholder satisfaction).
- **Regular Independent Audits:** IMED or other agencies should also undertake year-end audits of the contracts of consulting services to draw up systemic problems and suggest remedies.
- **Feedback Integration:** Have every project prepare a Post-Implementation Review that points out performance of consultant and lessons learned.

9.3.5 Fostering Ethical and Open Practices.

- **Implement Conflict-of-Interest Policies:** Reinforce policies on conflicts of interest so that a consultant can not be involved in a project where he/she has previously been involved, and this would lead to a biased outcome.
- **Public Disclosure:** Post a summary of consultant performance scores and contract information on the BPPA web site to increase the level of transparency and stakeholder trust.
- **Promote Professional Ethics:** Work on a Code of Conduct of Consultants as approved by Government and professional associations to foster the accountability and ethical behavior.

9.4 Areas for Further Study

Empirical Review of Consultant Performance: Gathering of primary data which would include project managers and consultants in evaluating the challenges of contract management in real-time.

1. **The Effectiveness of e-GP in the Consulting Services:** The Impact Assessment Investigation of the effectiveness of digital tools and their impact on the transparency and efficiency.
2. **Comparison of Public and Private Sector Contracting:** A discussion on how the experiences in the private sector contract management could be applied in the public procurement models.
3. **Sectoral Case Studies:** Case studies within a certain sector (infrastructure, social protection, energy) would offer a more detailed thoughtful of the aspects of contract administration success.
4. **Training and Capacity Programs Evaluation:** Determine the effectiveness of current procurement training and the areas where the curriculum can be improved.

9.5 Conclusion

The study finds that the management of consulting services contracts in the Bangladesh public sector is gradually changing, which is facilitated by a well-developed legal system and growing use of e-GP systems. But the effectiveness is limited by the capacity limitation, poor post-award management, and poor performance assessment.

The sustainable reform will necessitate an integrated strategy that comprises institutional empowerment, digital transformation, policy harmonization, and lifelong learning.

With the recommendations properly adopted, Bangladesh could have the transparency, liability and value of money in the procurement of the public consulting services, which in turn would help in increasing efficiency and integrity of the development project in Bangladesh.

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