

Bangladesh Moves Forward with National Sustainable Building Labelling System

Bangladesh has taken a significant step toward establishing its national Sustainable Building Labelling System as government agencies, United Nations organisations, financial institutions, academia, professional bodies and private sector representatives convened in Dhaka for a stakeholder consultation on the implementation of HBRI-DESH (Design for Environment and Sustainable Habitats).

The consultation workshop was organised by the Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI) under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MoHPW), in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The initiative is part of the project Transforming the Built Environment through Sustainable Materials in Bangladesh, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Discussions focused on implementing HBRI-DESH and its digital platform, DESHboard, which together form Bangladesh's nationally developed assessment and labelling system for sustainable, affordable and climate-resilient buildings.

The inaugural session featured Most. Ferdousi Begum, Additional Secretary and Chairman of the National Housing Authority; Asifur Rahman Bhuiyan, Chief Architect of the Department of Architecture; and Dr. Giasuddin Haider, Director General of HBRI.

A high-level panel discussion titled "Advancing Sustainable Buildings in Bangladesh: Policy, Institutional Pathways and

Financing for HBRI-DESH Implementation” brought together senior officials from the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (RAJUK), the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited (DPDC). Among the participants were Md. Abdul Awal, Deputy Secretary of MoHPW, and Md. Ashraful Islam, Chief Town Planner of RAJUK, who discussed policy reforms, institutional coordination and financing strategies needed for nationwide implementation.

Speakers highlighted the urgency of promoting sustainable buildings, citing the UNEP/GlobalABC Global Status Report 2025–2026, which states that buildings and construction account for nearly 37 percent of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions and around half of global material extraction. They also noted that Bangladesh’s urban population has doubled over the past two decades and is expected to become majority-urban by 2037. According to the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the country’s housing demand is projected to reach 10.5 million units by 2030.

The workshop brought together representatives from government ministries, Bangladesh Bank, financial institutions, development partners, universities, research organisations, the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), architectural firms, real estate developers, construction industry representatives, environmental experts and civil society organisations.

Addressing the event, Most. Ferdousi Begum said HBRI-DESH is more than a technical framework, describing it as a nationally owned instrument that will help translate Bangladesh’s commitment to sustainable urban development into practical action. She said collaboration among the government, private sector and development partners would help establish a credible and transparent system to promote sustainable, affordable and climate-resilient buildings across the country.

The consultation produced a series of recommendations on governance, institutional coordination, financing mechanisms, capacity development and digital systems. These recommendations will help shape the implementation guidelines for HBRI-DESH and support its phased nationwide rollout through pilot projects and strategic partnerships.

The initiative is expected to contribute to Bangladesh's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement while advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11, 12 and 13, marking an important milestone toward a low-carbon, resource-efficient and climate-resilient built environment.