



Bangladesh Investment
Development Authority



An In-depth Assessment of the Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP)

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)

Prime Minister's Office
Plot E-6/B, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

December 2021



Report on

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Message

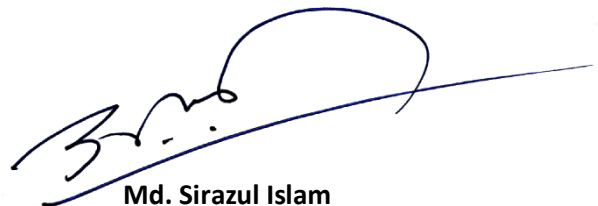
The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) is proud to have accomplished the objectives of the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project (ESDP) -- one of its flagship initiatives. The two-year model project has contributed to the national target for private investment (34% of GDP as per 7th Five Year Plan) and also to SDG-8 by facilitating the creation of decent work and economic growth.

As the country's apex investment promotion agency, BIDA firmly believes in promoting and supporting businesses, especially those that are innovative and can support larger industries through supply linkages. Through the ESDP, BIDA has trained around 25,000 aspirants across Bangladesh, among whom over 4,000 emerged as successful entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs have made investments worth around BDT 10 billion and are providing employment for nearly 40,000 people. As we speak, many more of our graduates are working to start their own business.

BIDA is pleased to have worked with the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) to undertake an in-depth assessment of ESDP and its impact on the development of young entrepreneurs, investment generation, and employment creation. The assessment is also aimed at finding evidential validation for developing a programme that will seek to achieve the private investment and employment targets set in 8th Five Year Plan and the Bangladesh Perspective Plan (2021-2041).

I want to therefore offer my thanks and acknowledge the hard work of the HDRC's Study Team led by Professor Abul Barkat, PhD. I also thank my colleagues at BIDA, particularly, Ms. Mohsina Yasmin, Additional Secretary and Executive Member, Mr. Nikhil Kumar Das (Joint Secretary) and Director General-2, Mr. Md. Ariful Hoque, Director (Registration & Incentives-1, Commercial), Mr. Md. Muzib-Ul-Ferdous, Director (Facilities Management), Mr. Suman Chowdhury, Deputy Secretary and Director (Investment Research and Economic Observatory) for their contributions in this assessment. I also thank our ESDP team, including Mr. AKM Hafizullah Khan, Project Director, Mr. Md. Mizanur Rahman, Deputy Project Director (Finance and Budget) and Ms. Afsana Kawsar, Deputy Project Director (Administration) for their all-out support.

I am excited to share the insights that have been collected through this assessment. I am very hopeful that the evidence of ESDP's success along with the recommendations included in this report will encourage the Government to initiate a nationwide programme for creating and supporting entrepreneurship, which is one of the crucial steps to achieving sustainable private sector development.



Md. Sirazul Islam
Executive Chairman
Bangladesh Investment Development Authority

Preface

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has taken many endeavours to make Bangladesh a high middle-income country by 2031. In line with this national agenda, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) is an apex body under the Prime Minister Office (PMO) undertaking diverse initiatives for promoting private investment and facilitation in Bangladesh. Piloted Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project (ESDP) is one of the model experiments by BIDA funded solely by the Bangladesh Government in this connection.

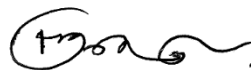
The GoB targets thirty million employment generation by 2030 with objectives of the policy is to create poverty and unemployment-free society. The GoB also aimed for BDT 52.66 trillion investment from the domestic private sector by 2025 (8FYP). The key source of targeted domestic employment and investment would be the booming of domestic industries.

BIDA using the ESDP, has tested the idea of entrepreneurship and skill development of the youth to make them self-sustained and self-reliant through developing their livelihood and creating job opportunities for their peers.

BIDA has commissioned a veteran and renowned research and consultancy organization named Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) to conduct an in-depth assessment of the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project (ESDP) to determine the number of entrepreneurs who emerged from training, investment generated, and the jobs created.

The study was officially kicked off in May 2021 because COVID-19 has delayed the completion of the ESDP. HDRC's study team, with the active collaboration of the ESDP team and BIDA officials, overcame all the pandemic induced obstacles and completed online and offline quantitative and qualitative surveys as part of the in-depth assessment of the project.

I like to take the opportunity to express sincere gratitude on behalf of BIDA to all trainees, trainers, resources persons, mentors, ESDP training centre coordinators, deputy directors, and the project director for their devoted role in the implementation of the ESDP and support the HDRC's study team to complete the in-depth assessment of the project. I also like to thank BIDA colleagues who participated in the two validation workshops on the In-Depth Assessment of ESDP findings and recommendations. I am fully confident that the study will act as a guiding document for the Prime Minister Office (PMO) and its apex investment promotion body BIDA to undertake the initiative of national-level entrepreneurship and skill development programme for massive employment and investment generation through the creation of youth entrepreneurs in the domestic market of Bangladesh. I hope PMO, BIDA, research and learning partners like HDRC, and other stakeholders will work hand in hand to make ESDP into a national programme feasible.



Parveen Akther

Executive Member (Grade-1)

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority

Abbreviations

a2i	Access to information
APD	Assistant Project Director
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BIDA	Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DCI	Data Collection Instrument
DPD	Deputy Project Director
DPP	Development Project Proforma/Proposal
EMK	Edward M. Kennedy
ESDP	Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	General Economic Division
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMED	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
KII	Key Informant Interview
LC	Letter of Credit
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEC-ECNEC	National Economic Council- Executive Committee of National Economic Council
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OTM	Open Tendering Method
PD	Project Director
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PPA	Public Procurement Act
PPR	Public Procurement Rules
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RDPP	Revised Development Project Proforma/Proposal
REG	Registration
RMG	Readymade Garments
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEIP	Skills for Employment Investment Program
SWOT	Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat
ToT	Training of Trainer
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Executive Summary

The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) introduced the two-year-long "Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP)" to foster entrepreneurship and increase private sector investment in line with the Government of Bangladesh's Vision 2021: Becoming an upper-middle-income country. The project provided a month-long training and subsequent mentoring to educated unemployed youth from Bangladesh's 64 districts to develop young entrepreneurs. BIDA commissioned the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) to conduct an in-depth assessment of the ESDP to determine the number of entrepreneurs who emerged from training, the amount of investment generated, and the jobs created. Additionally, HDRC evaluates project targets and objectives, project outputs and outcomes, and the project's overall goal, as specified in the Revised Development Project Proforma/Proposal (RDPP).

HDRC adopted a combination of a quantitative and qualitative approach to conduct the in-depth assessment of the ESDP. The quantitative approach espoused a structured questionnaire-based face-to-face survey with trained entrepreneurs, and a telephone administrated survey with trainees (non-entrepreneur). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) organized with trainees (entrepreneur) and trainees (non-entrepreneur) to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the ESDP. It conducted Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the training coordinators, resource persons, investors, local business leaders, and other stakeholders to explore opportunities and threats for the ESDP. The assessment brought 1,022 trainees under telephone-administrated interviews and 645 trained entrepreneurs under face-to-face interviews. It facilitated 32 FGDs and conducted around 40 KIIs to gather data and information regarding project inputs/interventions generated outputs contribution to the outcomes and ultimate project goal. FGDs, KIIs, and Case Studies provided qualitative information.

Moreover, HDRC acquired case studies of successful trained entrepreneurs to understand the role of the ESDP in youth employment and empowerment. Quantitative and qualitative data triangulated for in-depth analysis. HDRC conducted a Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat (SWOT) analysis to pinpoint the project's unexplored potentialities and unforeseen limitations. Ultimately, the assessment comes up with recommendable practices for the project.

Assessment of the Development Project Proforma/Proposal (DPP) and Revised Development Project Proforma/Proposal (RDPP) suggested that all the executed project activities (inputs/interventions) and produced outputs as per the logical framework. Entrepreneurship development training of registered youth is the core activity of the project. In addition to training, facilitate mentoring support to the trained entrepreneurs another critical activity of the project.

The ESDP provided training to the 24,914 trainees from 60,046 registrants from 64 districts. It has 67 training coordinators in charge of 67 district-level training centers (3 training centers are in the Dhaka district). The project also involved more than 800 resource persons from different government and non-government agencies as trainers. Trainers provided month-long training to 24,914 trainees in multiple batches. Trainers conducted sessions following six training modules.

A 4,338 out of 24,914 trainees are entrepreneurs, which means 17.41 percent emerged as entrepreneurs. The trainees could not become entrepreneurs due to various obstacles induced mainly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study found that 75.5 percent of the trained entrepreneurs are males and 24.5 percent are females. All trainees at least completed their SSC, which is a pre-condition to register for training. Notably, almost half of the ESDP trainees completed their graduation and post-graduation.

Remarkably, 39.4 percent of the trained entrepreneurs are new entrepreneurs with no previous business experience. Besides, the rest of the trained entrepreneurs with the prior business experience enhanced their existing business and started new business ventures. The study suggested that a trained entrepreneur generated employment for around nine persons on average. In total, they employed 37,046 persons, including fellow trainees.

According to the study, 67.3 percent of trained entrepreneurs had no prior training. Meanwhile, approximately 38 percent of trained entrepreneurs who received any type of entrepreneurship/business skills training beforehand view the ESDP training as more academic and strategic that aided them in expanding their business and entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. Reportedly, 30.4 percent of ESDP trainees rated the training's quality and duration superior to their previous training experiences.

All the surveyed trainees confirmed that they gained a thorough understanding of business and investment-related policies, strategies, and issues. According to the survey findings, 69 percent of trainees believe that ESDP training is the best option for beginners. Almost all trainees appreciate how well-organized and understandable the topics and contents are. Over three-quarters of trainees (non-entrepreneurs) are satisfied with the ESDP training, while 73 percent of trained entrepreneurs report that their expectations were met. Nearly 73 percent of trainees believe that their instructors are highly competent and diligent. Almost unanimously, trainees recommend expanding ESDP training.

The survey reveals that 98 percent of trained entrepreneurs applied their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Over 80 percent of trained entrepreneurs sought assistance from training centers. Reportedly, 95.5 percent of trained entrepreneurs obtained business licenses. Since the completion of training, nearly 46 percent of trained entrepreneurs have possessed TIN certificates. Around 75 percent of trained entrepreneurs developed a new marketing strategy with the assistance of an ESDP mentor. Simultaneously, 88.2 percent of experienced entrepreneurs upgraded their marketing strategies. The in-depth assessment found that nearly half of the trained entrepreneurs invested between BDT 1,000,000-1,900,000. According to the reported survey findings, one of the six trained entrepreneurs invested more than BDT 1,000,000 in their enterprise. Reportedly, all trained entrepreneurs contributed a percentage from self-funds in business, but substantial portions of business investment were arranged from other institutional and individual sources. The survey findings revealed that 54 percent of the trained entrepreneurs organized finance for their business from banks (private or public) and non-banking financial institutions. Almost 30 percent of trained entrepreneurs borrowed loans from NGOs. Notably, more than three-fourth of the trained entrepreneurs relied on individual sources like relatives, friends, and other contacts for business finance. However, the access of trained entrepreneurs to credit schemes of banks, non-banking financial institutions, NGOs and Cooperatives are minimal. The study found, on average, a trained entrepreneur loaned BDT 149,395 from banks or other financial institutions and BDT 159,045 from NGOs, cooperatives, or any other micro-finance institutions.

According to the survey findings, 92.1 percent of trained entrepreneurs arranged funding for their business ventures from themselves. Around 68 percent of trained entrepreneurs contacted the 24/7 Support System for assistance. 95.5 percent of ESDP trainees indicated that the ESDP contributed to youth empowerment.

According to the Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat (SWOT) Analysis, the ultimate project strengths are—more than 60,400 eligible and aspirant youth registrants, 24,914 trainees, 4,338 trained entrepreneurs, 67 young multi-skilled training coordinators, and more than 800 resource persons, digitized modules of training, mentoring support, and 24/7 support system for business-related information. The ESDP lacks staff trainers, unavailability of trade-based modules in the curriculum, a limited number of mentors, and unavailability of own funds to finance trained entrepreneurs. Mapped opportunities of the project are— the scope of connecting with trade and skill-based training programs of technical and vocational training institutes, connecting with other national training programs like Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP), aspirant youth (especially females) at the local level, availability of business credit products for entrepreneurs, local and national market with many potential customers, investors and online platform. The ESDP faced threats like the COVID-19 pandemic, social stigma about doing business, investment mapping, market assessment, and unavailability of one-stop business-related support services for young entrepreneurs.

Trained entrepreneurs, trainees, trainers, district-level training coordinators, and other resource persons made some recommendations considering the ESDP will get an extension or upgrade to the program:

- ☑ Considering the ongoing need to expand businesses regionally and nationally, the ESDP could be upgraded to a national program.
- ☑ Considering the COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdown and restriction on movement, organize physical-virtual mix training for aspirant young entrepreneurs.
- ☑ Launch advanced level entrepreneurship and skill development training for intermediate and advanced learner entrepreneurs.
- ☑ The demand for such training is high among youth, especially females, who establish training centers at the Upazila level.
- ☑ Seeing the urges from the trainees, the ESDP could create a fund to finance both start-up/beginner and intermediate entrepreneurs.
- ☑ To promote the young entrepreneur, convert the district level ESDP training center as the regional one-stop service center of BIDA.
- ☑ As per timely demand and requirements, revise and elaborate the curriculum of the ESDP entrepreneur training, including the introduction of trade courses.
- ☑ Develop formal networks through arranging Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with banking and non-banking financial institutions to create scopes for young entrepreneurs to access business financing.
- ☑ Develop Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) with government and non-government agencies to facilitate fast-track services for ESDP trained entrepreneurs.
- ☑ Launch sensitization and promotional activities at the national and local levels to increase women's participation in the training.

- ☑ Establish the training center at the Upazila level to increase participation of aspirant male and female youth in the entrepreneurship and skill development training.
- ☑ Conduct regional and national investment mapping and market assessment studies to support establishing and expanding the business of the trained entrepreneurs from the grassroots.

The ESDP has all the potential to contribute to the generation of employment and investment through business development. However, the ESDP needs to upgrade into a national entrepreneurship and business skill development program in accordance with the 8th Five Year Plan and 2nd Perspective Plan 2021-2041.

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Overview

Entrepreneurship and skill development are essential for employment generation, livelihood development, and increasing productivity. Accordingly, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) identified entrepreneurship and skill development as prerequisites for achieving double-digit national economic growth. The GOB articulated its position to streamline the entrepreneurship development by the government and non-government agencies in its last Perspective Plan (2010-2021) and two Five Year Plans (6th Five Year Plan from FY 2011 to FY 2015 and 7th Five Year Plan from FY 2016 to FY 2020). Also, the latest version of the Perspective Plan (201-2041) 8th Five-Year Plan (July 2020-June 2025) reflects the same. The GOB acknowledged the intense role of the private sector through investment and employment generation to materialize Bangladesh Vision 2021: Becoming an upper-middle-income country. The GOB planned to reduce the youth unemployment rate by creating entrepreneurship. In line with the GOB's vision, the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) launched the "Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project (ESDP)" to foster young entrepreneurs and increase private sector investment. The project aims to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-8 (decent work and economic growth) by creating skilled entrepreneurs for suppliers and linking development industries providing training to the potential youths on the regulatory regime and business procedure. The project also visioned to generate investment in the private sector to reach 34 percent of GDP according to the 7th Five Year Plan. Following are the project's specific objectives:

- a) To create skilled entrepreneurs for supplier and linkage development industries by providing training to the potential youths on regulatory regimes and business procedures;
- b) To accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals 8 (decent work and economic growth);
- c) To reach the private investment target (34% of GDP) according to the 7th Five Year Plan.

The ESDP trained 24,914 young-educated unemployed youth (male and female) from 60,580 registrants in 64 districts on entrepreneurship and skill development. As a result of the training, 4,338 trained entrepreneurs emerged. They invested BDT 10.94 billion in Bangladesh's domestic market.

ESDP is a one-of-a-kind pilot project that necessitated an in-depth analysis of the role of entrepreneurship and skill development training in developing entrepreneurs, investment, and livelihood. Against this backdrop, BIDA intended to conduct an in-depth assessment of the ESDP to ascertain the project's attributes and prospects for investment and job creation through youth-led business development. As a result, BIDA tasked the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) with conducting an in-depth assessment of the ESDP.

1.2 Assignment Rationale

The assignment aimed to ascertain the ESDP's contribution to entrepreneurship development, private sector investment generation, and job creation through trained entrepreneurs' business and entrepreneurial expansion.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Assessment

The purpose of the assignment was to conduct an in-depth assessment of the “Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project” to assess the project outcomes and the emergence of successful entrepreneurship.

The assessment's *Specific Objectives* are as follows:

- a) To assess and analyze the data regarding the number of entrepreneurs emerged, the amount of investment, and the number of employment opportunities created by the enterprises of those entrepreneurs through the project in the following manner:

The number of entrepreneurs: New/fresher, Old with new trade license and other business documentation, Old with trade license and other business documentation but expanded their business.

Amount of Investment: Total investment, fund sources (Own/Personal, Loan, Borrowing).

Employment Opportunities: Total employment, sector-wise segregation or categorization.

- b) To assess the attainment level of the project target and objectives as per the approved DPP/RDPP;
- c) To assess and analyze the additional outputs/accomplishments/achievements (if any) of the project and recommend further action as per the outputs;
- d) To assess the development of the entrepreneurial knowledge and business skill of educated unemployed young people (male and female) through training and involve them in their enterprises and other income-generating activities;
- e) To survey the beneficiaries/stakeholders of the project and analyze their opinions included in the study;
- f) To make specific recommendations based on the findings of the study; and
- g) To review and recommend the sustainability of the project's benefits, the follow-up actions to be undertaken, and an appropriate exit plan.

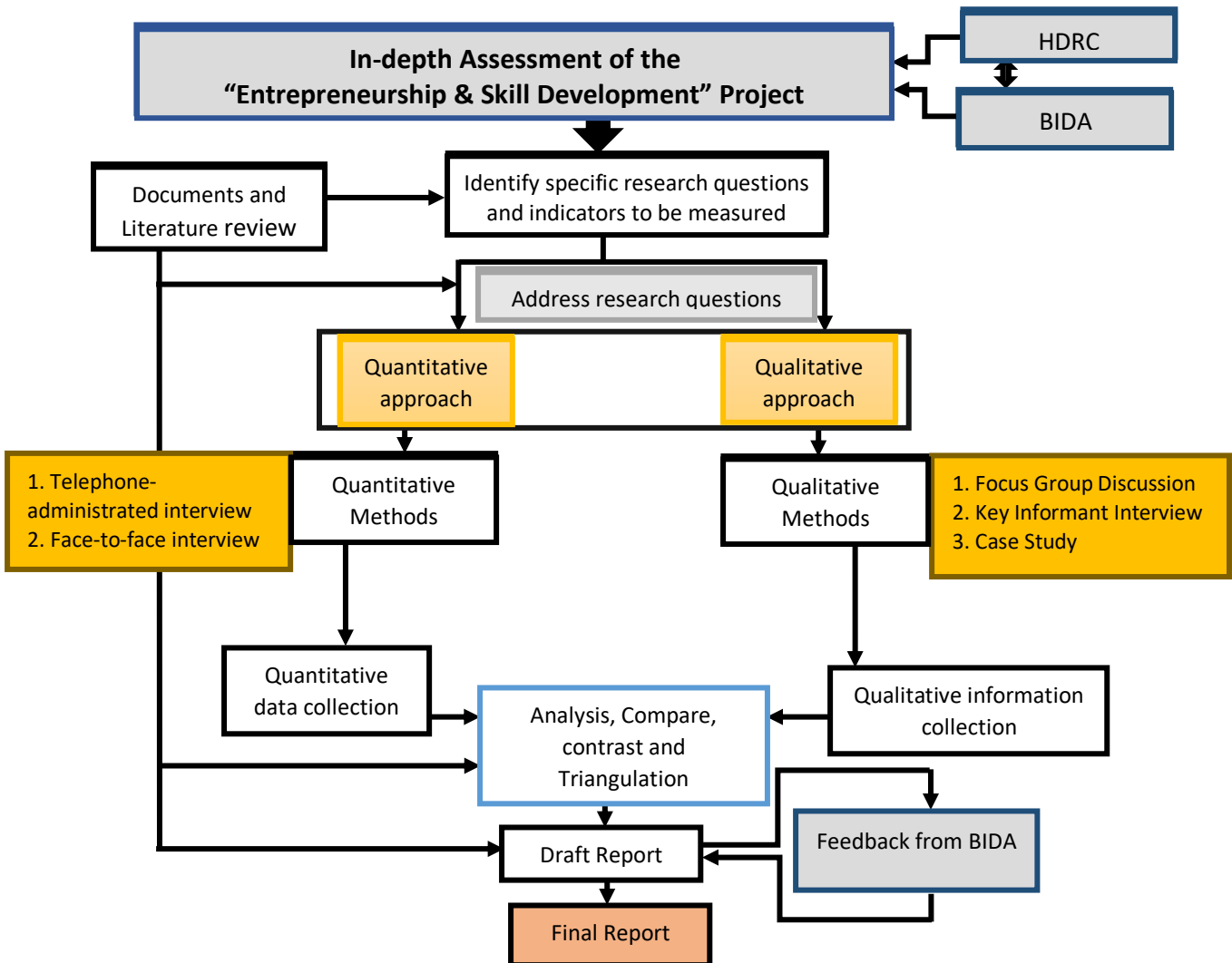
Chapter Two

Methodology and Implementation Plan

2.1 Research Design

The HDRC conducted an in-depth assessment of the ESDP using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. It primarily gathered quantitative data through a structured questionnaire administered via telephone and in-person to train participants and entrepreneurs. It used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Case Studies as qualitative methods. Diagram 2.1 shows the overall research approach in a flowchart.

Diagram 2. 1. Overall research approach and methods of the survey



Source: Developed by HDRC Study Team

2.2 Survey Design

Study Population

The study followed a cross-sectional survey design. It collected quantitative data from the project trainees to analyze the number of newly emerged entrepreneurs and the growth of the trained entrepreneurs who have experience doing business. It used qualitative tools: FGDs, KIs, and Case Studies. It facilitated FGDs with the training participants—both entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. KIs covered trainers, organizers, investors, iconic business people related to ESDP. It conducted Case studies to document entrepreneurs' journey from training to entrepreneurship.

Quantitative Survey Design

Inclusion Criteria for the Quantitative Survey

- Telephone-administrated interview with the trainees: With the trainees who received training before the COVID-19 pandemic. It assumed that the trainees require some time after completing training to start a business.
- Face-to-Face Entrepreneur Survey: With the entrepreneurs who received training from the ESDP.

Sample size: The quantitative survey had different sample sizes for two types of surveys: i) Telephone administered interviews with project trainees, and ii) Face-to-face questionnaire survey with the entrepreneurs who emerged from the training.

i) Telephone-administered interviews with project trainees

The study calculates the sample size for this for "Telephone-administered interview with project trainees" using the following equation:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} \times deff$$

n = sample size; e= margin of error (5%); p= proportion of defectiveness or success of the indicators (50% for calculating maximum sample size); probability of failure (q) =1-p; z= Standard normal score (1.96), deff=design effect (2.5)

Using the above formula and using a 95% confidence interval and 3% margin of error, the maximum sample size estimated for the trainees is 1,022, i.e., a total of 1,022 telephone administered interviews with the training participants is required for the assessment.

Survey design: To reach out to sample frame 1,022, HDRC has contacted 2,076 respondents from the trainees of 64 districts information acquired from the database of the ESDP. It considered the response rate on the lower side in the telephone administrated interviews compared to face-to-face interviews for various reasons.

It followed the following process to conduct the 1,022 telephone-administered interviews:

- The survey team called at least three times on the active number(s) to reach out to a targeted respondent before declaring the contact number non-responsive.
- Verified the full name, district, registration number, and mobile number before proceeding to the interview.

- Fixed interview time with verified respondent considering the availability of his/her time. Completed the interviews in multiple phone calls as the respondent had time constraints.

ii) Face-to-face structured questionnaire survey with the entrepreneurs emerged from the training

The sample size for this survey has been calculated using the following equation:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N}{z^2 pq + (N - 1)e^2}$$

n = sample size; N= Target population size (4,338); e= margin of error (5%); p= proportion of defectiveness or success of the indicators (50% for calculating maximum sample size); probability of failure (q) =1-p; z= Standard normal score (1.96), deff=design effect (1.8)

Using the above formula and 95% confidence interval, 5% margin of error, and 65% design effect, the maximum sample size estimated for the entrepreneurs stands at 634, i.e., a total of 634 telephone interviews with the training participants is required for the assessment.

Survey design: The survey followed a cluster sampling design. It collected the sampling frame from the BIDA website. The first stage randomly selected 25 percent of the districts out of 64 (i.e., 16 districts). Each district drew 40 samples randomly; that is, a total of 640 samples of entrepreneurs emerged from the training. In each district, the survey team communicated with the respective district training center coordinators of ESDP to find the selected subject of study.

Qualitative Survey Design

HDRC applied the following methods for qualitative information collection:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- Case Studies

It facilitated FGDs with the entrepreneur and non-entrepreneurs trainees to collect qualitative information, including knowledge and skill development of trainees and entrepreneurship development. The study conducted KIIs Key Informant interviews with the trainers, organizers, investors.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): The study facilitated FGDs with the target population in the project area to learn the untold stories about business success and failure to initiate a new business. FGDs involved about 7-9 carefully chosen participants grouped to discuss issues concerning them. A moderator with a note-taker facilitated the FGD. The facilitator used a discussion guideline (semi-structured). At the same time, the note taker had jot down discussion, comments, and observations. It organized a total of 32 FGDs (16 with trained entrepreneurs and 16 with non-entrepreneur-trainee).

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): KIIs provided important information and insights about training, pros and cons, advantageous elements, among other vital issues. The survey team conducted KIIs with the trainers, organizers, investors, iconic business persons, project staff, and other relevant stakeholders.

It used semi-structured and unstructured questionnaires to collect the necessary information. It conducted 40 KIIs for the survey.

Case Studies: Case studies have proven beneficial in explaining HOW change comes about (processes and causal mechanisms) and WHEN (situations and contexts). The study conducted a total of 64 case studies (one in each district) to ascertain the project's intended/unintended outcomes through the systematic selection and collection of stories from direct beneficiaries demonstrating changes.

Document Reviewing

The study team thoroughly reviewed the BIDA circulated ESDP-related documents to understand the contribution of the project. The study team reviewed DPP, RDPP, entrepreneurship and skill development training modules, online training modules, brochures, leaflets, and ESDP database.

2.3 Summary of Survey

Table 2.1 presents a summary of the sample for the in-depth assessment of the ESDP.

Table 2. 1. Summary of sample

Study methods	Respondents/Participants	Number
Over telephone interview	ESDP trainees	1,022
Face-to-face survey	Entrepreneurs emerged from the ESDP training recipients	645
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	16 FGDs with trained entrepreneurs and 16 FGDs with non-entrepreneur-trainees	32
Key Informant Interview (KII)	Trainers, organizers, investors, iconic business person, project staff	40
Case studies	32 male trained entrepreneurs and 32 female trained entrepreneurs	64

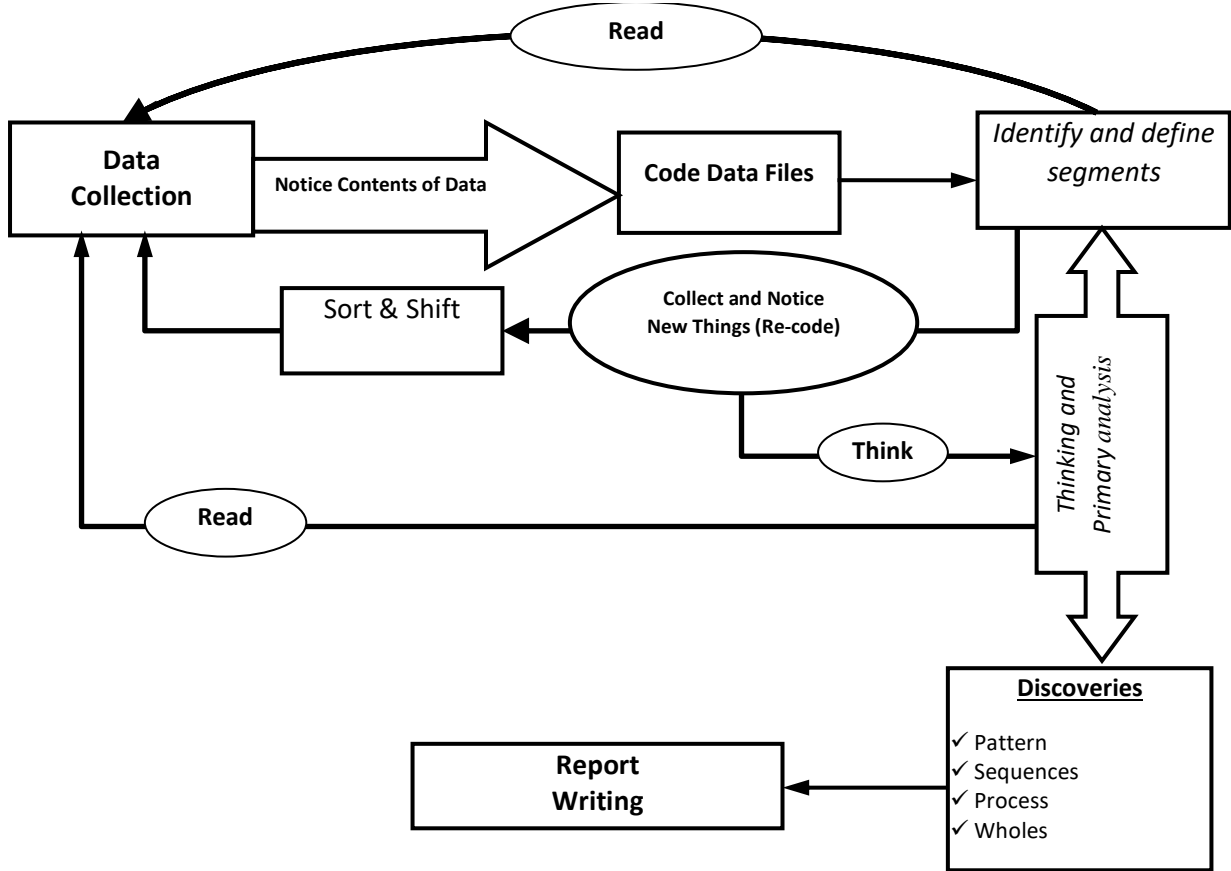
Source: Developed by HDRC Study Team.

2.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis: The primary unit of analysis of the study was the beneficiaries (project trainees and entrepreneurs emerged as training outcomes). For analyzing the quantitative data, the study used the statistical software SPSS 24. As essential tools, the analysis used distributions (i.e., numbers, proportions, and percentages), graphical presentations, descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, numbers, proportions, percentage), cross-tabulations, comparative analysis, and hypothesis testing.

Qualitative information analysis: The analysis followed the followed steps in qualitative data analysis: (1) Documentation; (2) Organization/categorization; (3) Connection between information; (4) Corroboration/legitimization; and (5) reporting the findings. Diagram 2.2 depicts the information analysis procedure collected using the qualitative tools.

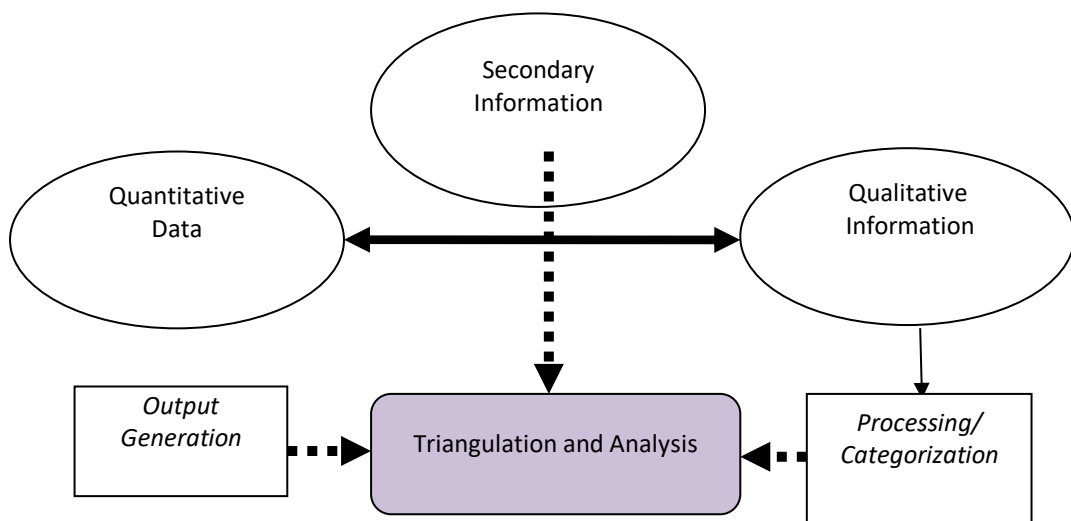
Diagram 2. 2. The qualitative information analysis procedure



Source: Developed by HDRC Study Team.

Triangulation: The study performed analysis for the qualitative information and quantitative data separately. Therefore, it triangulated the findings (shown in Diagram 2.3).

Diagram 2. 3. Triangulation of data and information

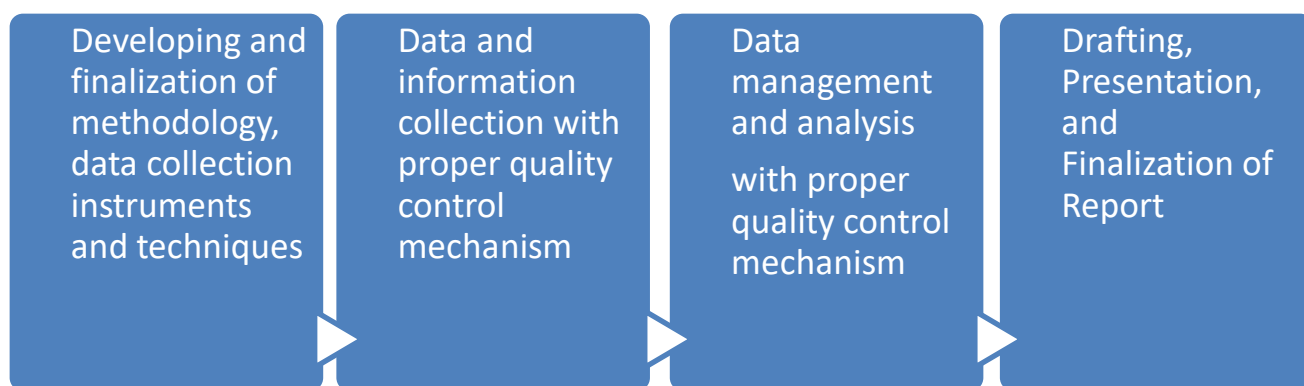


Source: Developed by HDRC Study Team.

2.5 Study Implementation

The execution of the assignment started with a project briefing meeting organized by ESDP. The ESDP officials delivered project documents. HDRC prepared an inception report and submitted that to ESDP containing the finalized methodology and data collection instruments (DCIs). HDRC recruited competent field researchers, trained them, and organized them for primary data and information collection. The data management team cleaned the collected data and information; then, they processed and analyzed it. The study team drafted the report based on the analyzed and triangulated primary and secondary data and project documents review findings. All the study steps, shown in Diagram 2.4, had a proper quality control mechanism. HDRC maintained regular communication with ESDP and took every major decision in consultation with the concerned ESDP/BIDA officials.

Diagram 2. 4. Key steps of implementation

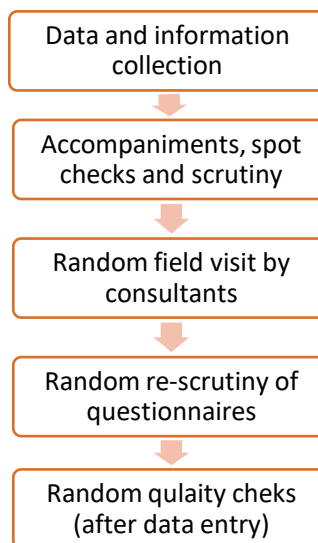


Source: Developed by HDRC Study Team.

2.6 Applied Quality Assurance Mechanism and Risk Management

HDRC applied a multi-tier quality assurance mechanism for quantitative data and qualitative information collection. First of all, HDRC ensured a compact recruitment process to recruit qualified field researchers as per set criteria based on requirements associated with the assignment. The field researchers' selection process followed an astringent filtering mechanism. HDRC briefed the appointed field researchers on the BIDA, activities of ESDP, objectives of the in-depth assignment, and intensely trained the data collection instruments (DCIs). The training sessions included strategies to administer the DCIs, ensuring the survey ethics. HDRC, in collaboration with BIDA, developed and followed a time-bound and target-oriented implementation plan for random inspection for quality control of the data collection to ensure complete authenticity and reliability of the data collected. The survey used paper-based questionnaires to collect data. Field researchers documented all the relevant additional and out-of-the-box information in separate notes. HDRC's

Diagram 2. 5. Quality Assurance Mechanism



Source: Developed by HDRC Study Team.

HDRC's study team routinely followed up with the field researchers in the group and individually to keep track of reaching targets and quality assurance. HDRC's IT experts enrolled in the data management process to ensure the availability of needful troubleshooting and data entry programs and management maintenance.

In light of the risk factors associated with COVID-19, HDRC followed all recommended protocols, including physical separation and personal safety measures, to avoid contamination among the field researchers and respondents/participants.

2.7 Limitation

In this assignment, HDRC has to be obliged with following limitations:

- Trainees who received training in 2020 could not start up their business due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Emerged entrepreneurs from the training of ESDP just started their business, and it is unwarranted to speculate the growth of their businesses within less than a year.
- Due to the intangible nature of evidence, difficulties in measuring trainees' benefits from the training platform through developed networking with experienced and resourceful resource persons like government officials, investors, and business personnel.

Chapter Three Project Portfolio

3.1 Project Profile

The Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project (ESDP), enrolled from 14 March 2019 (BIDA, n.d.), increased the local and foreign investment in the private sector to contribute to the higher economic growth. BIDA used ESDP to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-8 by creating skilled entrepreneurs through providing training to the potential youth (ESDP, n.d.).

ESDP's core eight activities were to *train up potential entrepreneurs, connect aspirant entrepreneurs with investors, track and monitor the progress of project associated entrepreneurs and investors, arrange mentoring offers for young entrepreneurs, support trained entrepreneurs to process legal and administrative documents related to business, facilitate co-working spaces for trained entrepreneurs, circulate information on potential sectors to the trainees, and provide investment information to trained entrepreneurs.*

ESDP: At a Glance ¹					
Project Title	: "Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (1 st Revised)"				
Administrative Ministry/ Division	: Prime Minister's Office (PMO)				
Executing Agency	: Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)				
Target Beneficiaries	: 24,914 young educated unemployed male and female				
Project target	: To provide training to 24,914 young educated unemployed males and females on entrepreneurship and skill development				
Brief of Project Activities	<p>Registrant: 60,580 Registrants</p> <p>Selected and Trained: 24,914</p> <p>Training Curriculum: 6-Modules (40 sessions)</p> <p>Trainers (Resource Persons): 874 (including 67 training coordinators)</p> <p>Training: 60 Hours (Excluding orientation and closing sessions)</p> <p>Technical Support: Resource persons from government offices and the private sector (particularly business chamber) providing mentoring and technical support to emerging trained entrepreneurs</p> <p>Network: Trained youth are formally and informally connected with business-related government bodies, including DC Office</p>				
Project Implementation (Duration)	: Original: 01 January 2019 - 31 December 2020 Revised: 01 January 2019 - 30 June 2021				
Cost of the project (Taka in Lakh)	: Original: Tk. 4,999.54 (GOB) 1 st Revised: Tk. 6,217.44 (GOB) 2 nd Revised: Tk. 4,762.00 (GOB)				
Location of the project	: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Division</th> <th>District</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>64</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Division	District	8	64
Division	District				
8	64				

¹ ESDP (2021). Official ESDB Website, Database and Revised Development Project Proforma. ESDP: Dhaka.

ESDP: At a Glance ¹	
Project Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training provided to 24,914 young educated unemployed males and females (15 batches with at least 25 young educated unemployed males and females in each district) • 4,338 entrepreneurs emerged from the trained young educated males and females • 37,959 employment generated by the 4,338 entrepreneurs

Source: ESDP Website, ESDP Database, Revised DPP.

3.2 Status of Project Activities

The ESDP completed all the planned project activities. The project started well, but the COVID-19 pandemic-induced challenges caused some hick-up. However, it overcame the hurdles by adapting the online platform and completing the remaining project activities without further interruption.

ESDP assigned a procurement consultant at the inception phase, complying with the Public Procurement Act (PPA)-2006 and Public Procurement Rules (PPR)-2008. The Open Tendering Method (OTM) recruited required human resources for both head office and district offices. The ESDP appointed outsourcing firms through OTM to recruit district-level trainers cum training centers coordinators. Outsourcing firms recruited 67 trainers cum training coordinators². Trainers cum training coordinators received training of trainers (ToT) from 1 to 30 June 2019. The project was rented Training Centers in the 64 districts following OTM. The project published a public advertisement on the leading national daily's front page. The advertisement informed and invited aspirant young, educated unemployed females and males to register for entrepreneurship and skill development training. Also, a similar advertisement was published in the two renowned local dailies at the district level (in all 64 districts) requesting pre-registration for entrepreneurship and skill development training. Potential young educated unemployed entrepreneurs have registered either through the website link of ESDP: <http://118.67.215.206:8080/Register/PublicRegister> or physically from district training centers. A total of 24,914 out of 60,580 registered applicants received training on entrepreneurship and skill development³. An online learning platform has been created on the ESDP website to ensure students' instant access to learning materials (link: <http://esdp.gov.bd/courses/>). A total of 4,338 trainees (Nearly 17% of total trained youth) emerged as entrepreneurs after the training⁴. These young, energetic, devoted, and determined entrepreneurs generated total investments of BDT 1,095 crores and created employment for 37,953 persons.⁵

Table 3.1 captures the implementation status of the project activities. It clearly shows that the ESDP completes all the activities successfully— planned, additional, and designed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic needs.

² ESDP (2021). Revised Development Project Proforma/Proposal (RDPP)I. ESDP: Dhaka.

³ ESDP (2021). Live Data Charts in ESDP Database. ESDP, Dhaka.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

Table 3.1: Execution status of the ESDP activities

Project Activity	Brief Description	Status
Planned Project Activities		
Project Office establishment	Project Head Office opened at the premises of BIDA.	Completed
Procurement Consultant appointment	ESDP, as per DPP, recruited a Procurement Consultant to complete the procurement following PPA-2006 and PPR-2008.	
Human resources recruitment	As per the Open Tendering Method, an outsourcing company selected by ESDP recruited human resources: 67 training coordinators, 02 facilitators, and a programmer, including other required support staff of the project head office and district training centers.	
Trainer recruitment and provide training	Recruited training coordinators by the outsourcing company provided one-month training of trainers (TOT) from 1 June to 30 June 2019.	
Training Center establishment	Established 67 District Training Center through Open Tendering Method (OTM).	
Project-related essential goods procurement	As per DPP, ESDP procured required logistic goods for the project office and training centers.	
Project-related essential service procurement	According to DPP, the project required services for the project head office and training centers.	
Investor selection	Trainee selection followed the criteria mentioned in the DPP.	
Provide training to investors	Registered and selected trainees were trained by training coordinators and resource persons from August 2019.	
Investors mentoring	Potential entrepreneurs formulate investment plans with consultation and guidance from mentors (training coordinators/resource persons)	
Prepare official website of ESDP	Developed an independent and resourceful website (www.esdp.gov.bd). The website facilitates online registration, online resource circulation, and documentation	
Prepare digital content	Prepared and uploaded digital content to the BIDA website. It has information on to do for new business initiatives, business plan development pre-preparation for investment, investment sectors of Bangladesh, investment reasons, contacts to communicate with local and foreign investors, investor success stories, contacts of investment control regimes, potential investment sectors of Bangladesh, investment project life cycle, investment on suppliers and linkage industries, and global value chain.	
Incubation Center/Entrepreneur Support Center	Formed an Incubation Center under each district training center to facilitate documentation, meeting organization, and finalizing investors' list	

Project Activity	Brief Description	Status
Organize awareness program to increase entrepreneurship and investment	All District Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Centers regionally arranged awareness programs to promote investment at the grassroots level.	Completed
Prepare database	Prepared a database with information about the new investors, local and foreign entrepreneurs. The database also has up-to-date information on ESDP trainees, including the entrepreneurs	
Online learning platform	Created an online learning platform using the ESDP website to provide entrepreneurship development-related learning materials to the trainees.	
Additional Project Activities		
Collaboration with a2i	The ESDP, in association with a2i and other government and non-government organizations, created an online-based emergency service program for the backward and forward linkage market. More than 2,500 ESDP trained entrepreneurs and volunteers across 64 districts provided services under the 333 helpline.	Completed
Join in promoting innovation	The ESDP officials joined in the innovation talk, organized jointly with a2i and EMK Center.	
Humanitarian Works during COVID-19 Pandemic		
Nationwide free distribution of mask	During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESDP project officials, training coordinators, and trainees jointly distributed masks from their collective and project funds to the people at the grassroots level.	Completed
Essential goods supply under call 333 helpline	In collaboration with the a2i, ESDP trainees, including trained entrepreneurs, supplied essential goods and medicines door-to-door through “Phone-e-Nittoponno” (Essential goods over the phone call) at the district level.	
Shipping services to fish, vegetables, and dairy producers	Trained entrepreneurs arrange shipping services for the grassroots level of fish, vegetables, and dairy goods producers. ESDP-trained entrepreneurs collected farmers’ produced fish, vegetables, and dairies and supplied them to the Offices of the Deputy Commissioner for distribution among poor people.	
Relief Distribution	Under the leadership of the training coordinators, trainees from all 64 district-level ESDP training centers distributed relief among the helpless and poor people of their respective districts during the COVID-19 pandemic.	

Source: HDRC Study Team developed according to the Revised DPP of ESDP and in-depth consultation with the project officials.

3.3 Project Management

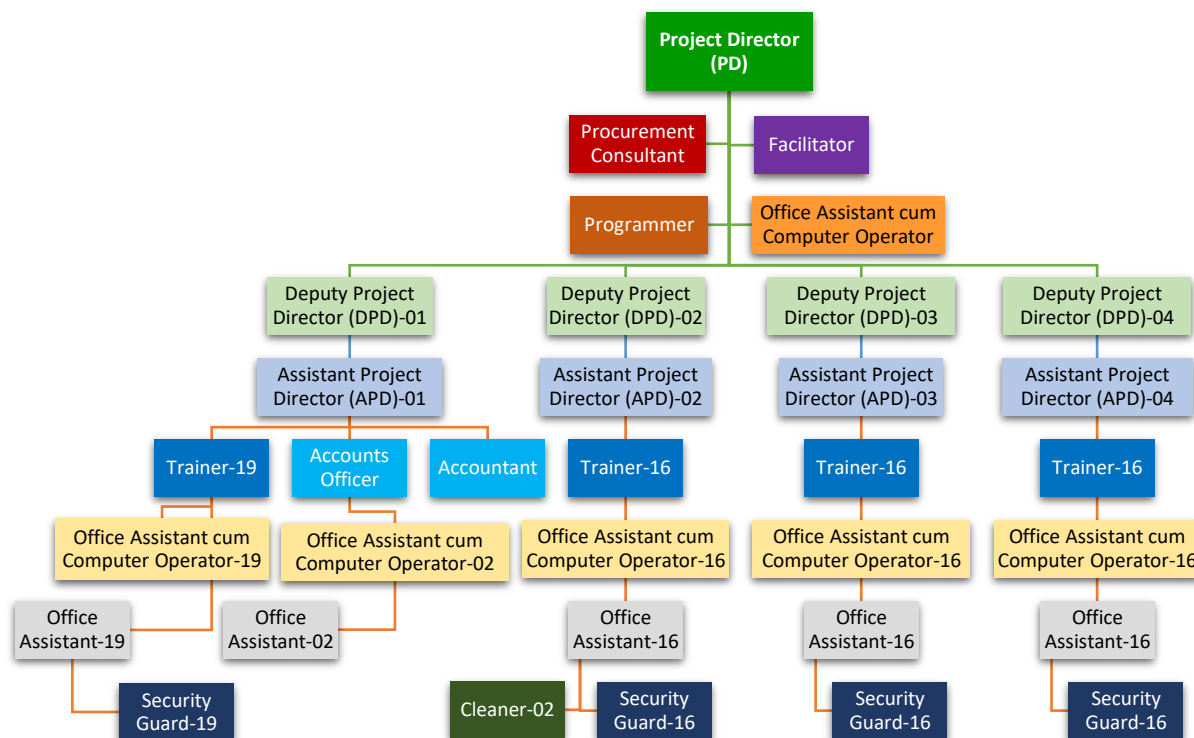
A detailed organizational organogram articulates and ensures disciplined implementation of the project (Diagram 3.1). The top management officials of the project are appointed from civil services in the deputation. The ESDP selected outsourcing companies through the Open Tender Method (OTM) to outsource human resources for mid-level officials and support staff for ESDP Head Office and district-level ESDP training centers. Table 3.2 shows the human resource status.

Table 3. 2. Human Resources of the ESDP

Sl. No.	Name of the Position	Number	Work Station (Posting)
1.	Project Director (PD)	01	Head Office (Recruited on deputation)
2.	Deputy Project Director (DPD)	04	Head Office (Recruited on deputation)
3.	Assistant Project Director (APD)	04	Head Office (Recruited on deputation)
4.	Procurement Consultant	01	Head Office (Direct recruitment)
5.	Facilitator	02	Head Office (Outsourcing recruitment)
6.	Programmer	01	Head Office (Outsourcing recruitment)
7.	Trainer/Training Coordinator	67	District Training Centers (Outsourcing recruitment)
8.	Accounts Officer	01	Head Office (Outsourcing recruitment)
9.	Accountant	01	Head Office (Outsourcing recruitment)
10.	Office Assistant cum Computer Operator	73	Head Office/District Training Centers (Outsourcing recruitment)
11.	Office Assistant	75	Head Office/District Training Centers (Outsourcing recruitment)
12.	Cleaner	02	Head Office/District Training Centers (Outsourcing recruitment)
13.	Security Guard	67	Head Office (Outsourcing recruitment)
Total Human Resources of the ESDP=			301

Source: Revised DPP (Attachment 2 Ka) of the ESDP.

Diagram 3. 1. Organogram of the ESDP



Source: DPP (2019) and Revised RDPP (2021) of the ESDP

There are two committees formed at the very beginning of the ESDP, namely Project Implementation Committee (PIC) chaired by Honorable Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and Project Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by Honorable Principal Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). These two committees oversee the implementation and progress of the ESDP and its activities. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 depict the structure of the two committees (i.e., PIC and PSC) mentioned above.

Table 3.3: Structure of the Project Implementation Committee

Project Implementation Committee (PIC)		
Sl. No.	Personnel	Designation
1.	Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)	Chair
2.	Executive Member, BIDA	Member
3.	Director General-01, Prime Minister Office (PMO)	Member
4.	Director (Relevant), BIDA	Member
5.	A PMO Representative	Member
6.	A Finance Division Representative	Member
7.	A Planning Commission Representative (Relevant Sector)	Member
8.	A Planning Commission Representative (Programming Division)	Member
9.	A Planning Division NEC-ECNEC and Coordinator Department Representative	Member
10.	IMED Representative (Relevant Sector)	Member
11.	Project Director	Member
12.	Deputy Project Director	Member Secretary

Source: Revised DPP of the ESDP

Project Implementation Committee (PIC) is responsible for the following functions:

- Provide necessary support in the orderly and timely implementation of the project.
- Take crucial decisions regarding problems that arose during project implementation.
- The PIC will sit in a meeting at least once in three months/quarterly basis.
- The PIC could co-opt members, if necessary.

Table 3.4: Structure of the Project Steering Committee

Project Steering Committee (PSC)		
Sl.No.	Personnel	Designation
1.	Principal Secretary, Prime Minister Office (PMO)	Chair
2.	Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)	Member
3.	Executive Member (Relevant), BIDA	Member
4.	Director General-01, PMO	Member
5.	Director (Relevant), PMO	Member
6.	Director (Relevant), PMO	Member
7.	A Finance Division Representative	Member
8.	A Planning Commission Representative (Relevant Wing)	Member
9.	A Planning Commission Representative (Programming Division)	Member
10.	An IMED Representative	Member

Project Steering Committee (PSC)		
11.	A General Economic Division (GED) Representative	Member
12.	A Planning Division NEC-ECNEC and Coordinator Department Representative	Member
13.	Project Director	Member Secretary

Source: Revised DPP of the ESDP.

Project Steering Committee (PSC) is responsible for the following functions:

- By examining and assessing suggestions and recommendations, providing necessary advice/guidelines, and making decisions in required cases.
- Provide necessary directives and formulate policies.
- Take critical decisions regarding problems to arise while implementing the project.
- The PIC will sit at least meet once in three months/quarterly basis in a meeting.
- The PIC could co-opt members, if necessary.

3.4 Selection of Trainees

According to a telephone survey, nearly 70 percent of trainees learned about the training through their friends. More than 40 percent knew about training registration through social media (Table 3.1) (details are in annex tables 7 and 8). In addition, the FGDS revealed that trainees' friends, in most cases, noticed the training information at newspapers (national and local) and social media (FGDs with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021). Table 3.6 shows the pertinent data.

Table 3. 5: Distribution of sources of registration information of the training received by the surveyed trainees (in %)

Response (multiple)	(in %)
National Daily Newspaper	10.9
Local Daily Newspaper	39.7
Referred by Friend	68.1
Referred by Relatives	20.3
Social Media	43.1
Others	2.8

Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey, 2021.

There is a Trainee Selection Committee (Table 3.6 shows the committee structure). The trainee selection committee searched among registrants who wanted to be entrepreneurs and expand production and supply of the primary and intermediate goods for the suppliers, linkage industries, and local and foreign heavy industries. The committee followed the following criteria in selecting the trainees:

1. The age of the potential entrepreneur must be 20 years.
2. The minimum educational qualification is SSC.
3. Applicants interested in Suppliers and Linkage Industry will get priority in selection.
4. Applicants with experience in business and investment will get priority in selection.
5. The potential entrepreneur has to submit an investment plan on the priority sector of the district.

With due permission from the ESDP Head Office, the Selection Committee could make any changes, revisions, and add to the conditions mentioned above considering the reality.

Table 3.6. Structure of the Trainee Selection Committee

Trainee Selection Committee		
Sl. No.	Personnel	Designation
1.	Deputy Commissioner (DC) of relevant District	Chair
2.	Chamber President	Member
3.	Chamber nominated Representative from Business Association	Member
4.	Deputy Commissioner nominated Representative from Higher Secondary Educational Institution	Member
5.	Deputy Commissioner nominated Representative from Technical/Vocational Training Institute	Member
6.	Deputy Commissioner nominated Representative from Public or Private Bank/Financial Institute	Member
7.	Deputy Commissioner nominated Successful Investor/Businessperson	Member
8.	Deputy Commissioner nominated Successful Female Entrepreneur	Member
9.	Trainer/ Training Coordinator	Member Secretary

Source: Revised DPP of the ESDP

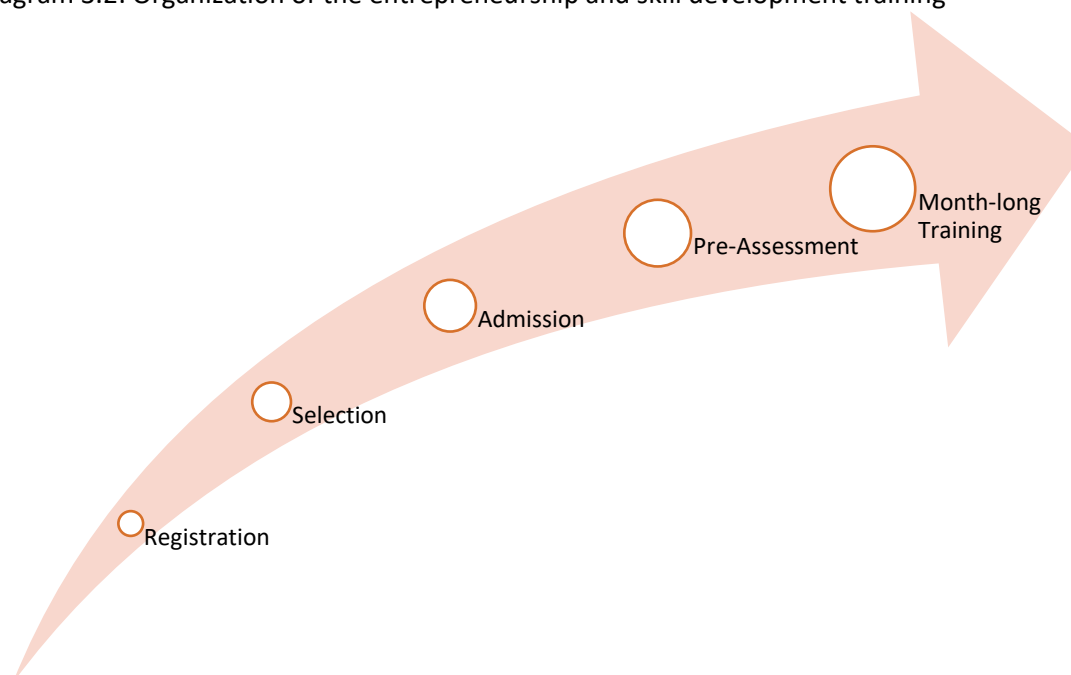
Responsibilities of the Trainee Selection Committee are following:

1. The committee will conduct sorting and selection of entrepreneurs as per mentioned conditions.
2. After trainers (Training Coordinator) sort out the eligible applicants, the committee will select 375 entrepreneurs (15 months X 25 Persons) allocated for the district-level training. If the allocated number of trainee entrepreneur seats is not filled from the respective district, the committee could consider applicants from other districts.

3.5 Entrepreneurs Training

The concerned committee sorts out the trainees from the registrants. After admission, the trainees receive a month-long training. Before the start of the training, the trainees go through a pre-assessment phase. Diagram 3.2 shows the appropriate steps.

Diagram 3.2: Organization of the entrepreneurship and skill development training



Source: HDRC Study Team developed according to the Revised DPP of ESDP.

ESDP has provided a month-long training to 24,914 aspirant entrepreneurs out of 60,580 registrants from 64 Districts. Table 3.7 shows the division-wise distribution of the trainees. Most registration comes from the Dhaka division, and most trainees are from this division. The lowest registrants come from the Mymensingh division, while both Mymensingh and Sylhet have the lowest trainees. A total of 876 trainers provided training to selected trainees in 960 batches. Out of the 876 trainers, 67 are staff trainers cum training coordinators, and 809 are resource persons from public and private sectors.

Table 3.7. Number of registered and selected trainees from eight divisions

Divisions	Registrants	Trainees	Percentage of trainees selected of the registrants
Barishal	4,124	2,334	56.59
Chattogram	9,128	4,279	46.87
Dhaka	13,979	5,074	36.29
Khulna	8,204	3,890	47.41
Mymensingh	3,899	1,556	39.90
Rajshahi	7,450	3,112	41.77
Rangpur	8,965	3,113	34.72
Sylhet	4,831	1,556	32.20
Total	60,580	24,914	41.12

Source: ESDP Database (June, 2021)

3.6 Training Curriculum

A total of 6 thematic modules (40 sessions) were taught in training. The total length of training was 60 hours (excluding orientation and six-hour-long closing/feedback sessions). Trainees learned about business and investment-focused planning, development, rules, and regulation. Table 3.8 contains the relevant details.

Table 3.8: Modules of Entrepreneur Training

Module	Subject	Time Duration
Module No. 01	Training Inception	
Module No. 02	Management Skill	04 hours
Module No. 03	The benefit of Investment and Investment Development	10 hours
Module No. 04	Investment Environment, Service and Rules-Regulation	10 hours
Module No. 05	Investment Plan	20 hours
Module No. 06	Investment Initiatives	16 hours

Source: ESDP Training Manual.

The entrepreneur training also discussed business and investment management skills, investment and business development benefits, investment and business regimes, investment plan development, and investing in the enterprises. Following Box 3.1 shows the topics discussed in the youth entrepreneur training.

Box 3.1. Topics discussed in the youth entrepreneur training

Building awareness and confidence among the trainees on participation in investment and business	Change misperception and negative attitude towards investment and business
Inspiring to create scope of self-employment	Business-related regulatory documents preparation
Training on investment-related rules and regulation	Orientation on market survey and analysis
Supply chain management, orientation on linkage industry ventures	Business capital/principal capital arrangement and management
Finance management	Market management
Banking and insurance services	Orientation on Letter of Credit (LC)
Orientation on bookkeeping and accountancy	Orientation on TAX and VAT related Acts, Product HS Code
Orientation on labor law	Inventory management
Orientation on costing and pricing, product labeling and packaging	Break event analysis
Land registration and dispute settlement	Orientation on clearing and forwarding
Orientation on product quality control and marketing	Identification of potential investment sector
Business plan preparation	WTO rules and agreement
Orientation on TRIPS, SPS, TRIM, TBT	Experience sharing with the successful business person

Source: ESDP Training Manual.

3.7 Trainers/Resource Persons

The ESDP database suggested that more than 800 resource persons from different government and non-government institutions engaged in the training as trainers/resource persons. Among the trainers, relevant government agencies representatives involved like officials from 64 Offices of Deputy Commissioner, Export Promotion Bureau, Office of the chief controller of Imports and Exports, Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection, Bangladesh Standards & Testing Institution, Department of Environment, Department of Youth Development, Department of Women Affairs, National Board of Revenue, and Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerates, Department of Fisheries, Department of Livestock Services. Besides, bankers from public and private banks and representatives from other financial institutions are also involved in the district-level ESDP training. Their engagement has opened the window for trained entrepreneurs to access direct business financing from bank/financial institutions and acquire knowledge on the process of arranging business financing. In addition, regional and national business networks resource persons like representatives from national-level chambers of commerce and industries and district-level chambers of commerce also conducted training sessions. Table 3.9 shows the resource persons/trainers by module.

Table 3.9: Module-specific session's facilitator resource persons/trainers

Module No.	Module Theme	Module Content	Resource Persons/Trainers
Module No. 01	Training Inception	Course orientation; introduction, icebreaking and get to know each other; basic information about the business plan; and pre-assessment	Training Coordinators
Module No. 02	Management Skill	Knowledge about management (human resources management, risk management, decision and creative thinking, financial management); leadership development (communication skills, good relationships with colleagues and business stakeholders, conflict resolution, and negotiation); and business/investment plan development	Training Coordinators, Officials of Office of Deputy Commissioner
Module No. 03	The benefit of Investment and Investment Development	Definitions, objectives, and necessities of entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, and investment; entrepreneur development - the combination of knowledge, skill and motivation; inspired to be an entrepreneur and positive thinking; possibilities, challenges, problems, and incentives of the entrepreneur; entrepreneur's contribution - economic development and employment; entrepreneur's contribution - at the individual level and in the national economy (case study); invest in transition from LDC and Bangabandhu; exchange real experiences with successful entrepreneurs; prospect, challenge, result and implication of investment; and domestic and joint venture.	Officials of Office of Deputy Commissioner, Export Promotion Bureau, Office of the chief controller of Imports and Exports, Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection, Bangladesh Standards & Testing Institution
Module No. 04	Investment Environment, Service and	The investment environment in Bangladesh and current situation: starting a business, construction permit, getting electricity, paying taxes, enforcing contracts, reasons, and requirements for business	Officials of Office of Deputy Commissioner, National Board of Revenue, and

Module No.	Module Theme	Module Content	Resource Persons/Trainers
	Rules-Regulation	process simplification; relevant policies, laws, rules, and regulations issued by the government on local and joint ventures; services and facilities provided by the Bangladesh investment development authority: services provided by the regional offices of Bangladesh investment development authority, BIDA and one-stop services and the process of receiving services; and services and facilities provided by all ministries, departments, offices, agencies, and authorities related to investment	Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerates, Office of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports, Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Department of Fisheries, Department of Livestock Services, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
Module No. 05	Investment Plan	What is investment plan; purpose and requirements of the formulation; product production and services: steps of the production process, production capacity, production cost, stock management; organization planning: institutional structure, details of affiliates, pre-business activities, office equipment; management planning: work environment and structure; financial planning: pre-business cost, administrative cost, income statement, break-even point, balance sheet (estimated), cash flow statement, bank account management; and investment in suppliers and linkage industry: suppliers and linkage industry and its development potentiality, selection of suitable suppliers and linkage industries for investment, fourth industrial revolution and the possibility of investment in suppliers and linkage industries; strategies for taking loans from potential investors and banks, business plan review.	Officials of Office of Deputy Commissioner, National Board of Revenue, and Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerates, Department of Fisheries, Department of Livestock Services
Module No. 06	Investment Initiatives	Types of business and the process of starting: proprietorship, partnership, limited company, and necessary documents; local, joint and foreign licenses, permits, clearances, and trade licenses; tin and vat registration; import and export process; customs clearance, shipment, and port formalities; LC; loans and insurance; financial and other incentives; environmental clearance certificate; product quality, weight and quantity confirmation and related legal grounds, packaging, labeling; and finalization of the business plan	Officials from banking (public and private banks) and non-banking financial institutions

Source: ESDP Training Manual and FGDs with trainees (non-entrepreneur) and trained entrepreneurs (2021).

Surveyed trainees confirmed that resource persons had appropriate academic and professional backgrounds (Telephone-administrated survey of ESDP trainees, 2021).

3.8 Training Usage

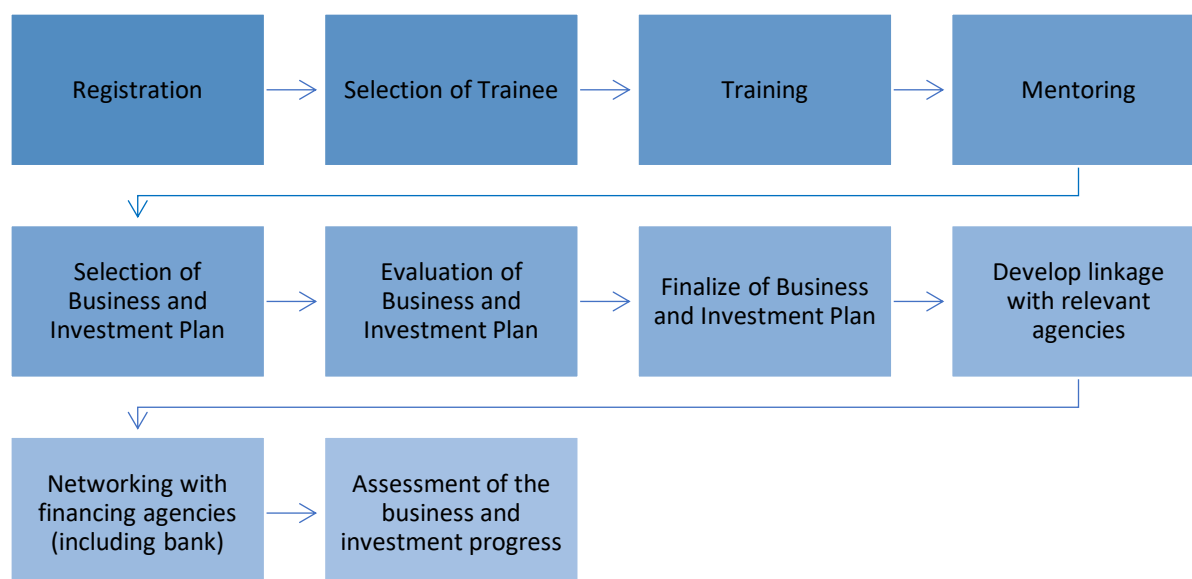
The entrepreneurship and skill development training has contributed to the development of local entrepreneurs through training facilitation, motivation, and mentoring to aspirant trainees. Trainees applied the knowledge and skills they gained. They strengthened their skills during the training to launch business ventures using a self-designed investment plan supported by the mentors from the ESDP training center. Face-to-face surveys with trained entrepreneurs confirmed that learnings (acquired knowledge and skills) from training have proven beneficial and effective in their business operation. The telephone-administrated survey conducted with trainees revealed that ESDP training participants gained substantial knowledge on entrepreneurship and business management, which will be essential for launching their business.

3.9 Entrepreneurship Development

The ESDP developed a step-by-step process to develop aspirant young educated males and females as young entrepreneurs. The pathway of the educated youth to become entrepreneurs is shown in Diagram 3.3. The pathway starts with registration. After selection, training, and mentoring, the trainee designs a business/investment plan. His/her project gets selected and evaluated. Then, necessary linkages and networking development.

Consequently, business/investment progress is assessed. Diagram 3.3 shows the process. According to the findings from face-to-face surveys with trained entrepreneurs, training largely contributed to develop new entrepreneurs and strengthen the existing entrepreneur's capacity.

Diagram 3.3: Pathway of the young educated unemployed to become an entrepreneur



Source: Developed by HDRC Study Team from Revised DPP

Chapter Four

Inputs and Outputs of the Project

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) launched the Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP) to create skilled young entrepreneurs who would increase the private sector investment to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth).

4.1 Inputs of the Project

The Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP) made step-by-step inputs to ensure effective and smooth implementation of the project and its planned interventions.

Establishment of Project Office in Dhaka

Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP) head office was established at the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) Complex following the Development Project Proforma (DPP) of the ESDP.

Renting training center space at the district level

The ESDP has arranged rented-in training centers in 64 districts following the DPP-guided Open Tendering Method (OTM). ESDP training center is the hub of all major activities of the ESDP at the district level, mainly providing training, guiding, and mentoring support to registered trainees.

Employee/Manpower recruitment

Outsourcing companies hired following OTM conducted the recruitment of human resources for the project. Outsourcing companies recruited Sixty-seven trainers cum training coordinators, two facilitators for a 24/7 support system, one programmer, and other required support staff for the head office and district level ESDP training centers.

Recruitment procurement consultant

The ESDP recruited a procurement consultant to ensure the procured particulars standard applying PPA-2006 and PPA-2008 as per the DPP.

Preparing training module

The ESDP appointed external resource persons to develop two specific training modules: a module for training of training coordinators and another for training young entrepreneurs.

Logistics Procurement

The ESDP has procured all the logistics as per the need assessment for the project office and district level ESDP training centers, strictly following the DPP and revised DPP.

Recruitment of Training Coordinators

An outsourcing company hired following the DPP through OTM has recruited 64 trainers for 64 district-level ESDP training centers.

Training of Training Coordinators

The ESDP centrally provided a month-long Training to recruited 67 training coordinators of 67 district-level ESDP training centers from 1 June 2019 to 30 June 2019. In the ToT, training coordinators learned and drilled modules conducted with entrepreneurship & skill development training trainees.

ESDP Website

The ESDP designed an official website. The website serves as a service and information portal containing information on the project, training resources for the trainees, and an online registration system to enroll in the training.

National and local advertisement

The ESDP published a public advertisement inviting young educated males and females to register for entrepreneurship and skill development training on the front page of two national daily newspapers. Under the project, the registration announcement for entrepreneurship & skill development training was also published in two leading local daily newspapers in every district.

National and local advertisement

The ESDP arranged two-ways registration for the entrepreneurship & skill development training. Aspirant trainees could complete registration through the official website of the ESDP, and alternatively, they also could register from the district-level registration booth.

Entrepreneurship & skill development training

In total, 60,580 aspirant youth from 64 districts were registered for the entrepreneurship & skill development training. Out of them, 24,914 were selected and received training from 64 district-level ESDP training centers. Sixty-seven training coordinators and expert and skilled resource persons from business-related government agencies and private sectors trained these promising and enthusiastic youth.

Incubation Center

Incubation center has been established in all district level ESDP training centers to support young entrepreneurs with official documentation management, business advice/tips, and other need-based services.

Arrangement of mentoring

The ESDP has purposively engaged officials of business-relevant government agencies, successful entrepreneurs (male and female), district-level chamber of commerce, and industries leaders in entrepreneur training on specific modules and onward mentoring support to trained entrepreneurs to start and expand their businesses.

Awareness Program

Under the ESDP, various awareness campaigns organized at the district level inspired the aspirant young male and female entrepreneurs to participate in entrepreneurship & skill development training and emerge as entrepreneurs.

4.2 Outputs of the Project

The Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP) has generated the following outputs that ultimately contributed to producing young entrepreneurs and accelerating investments in the local markets.

Skilled entrepreneur emerged

A total of 4,338 young entrepreneurs out of 24,914 trainees emerged from the entrepreneurship & skill development training organized in 64 districts. Many trainees hitherto start their business ventures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Investment by trained entrepreneurs generated

A total of 4,338 trained entrepreneurs generated an investment amount of BDT 10.94 billion in the national economy. Investment generation contributed both to the local and the national economy.

Employment by trained entrepreneurs generated

A total of 4,338 trained entrepreneurs generated 37,460 employments through their business ventures. Employment generation contributed both to the local and the national economy.

Trained entrepreneurs contributed to supply and linkage markets

ESDP trained 4,338 entrepreneurs who have contributed and continued their contribution to the national supply and linkage market by expanding the primary and intermediate industries through investment generation.

Online platform created

An official website of the ESDP was designed and developed by December 2019 that provided various support to trainees, training coordinators, and project officials. The website provided registration support, online learning platforms, and success stories of young entrepreneurs.

Digital content developed

Digital content on training developed and uploaded in the online learning platforms of the ESDP website for easier and faster access to trainees.

Database created

The ESDP using the website platform, created an informative and highly resourceful database containing information of project officials, training coordinators, resource persons, registrants, trainees, and young entrepreneurs.

Chapter Five Project Assessment

Project Goal

- 34% of GDP Achieving target in private sector investment in the 7th Five Years Plan.
- Achieving Sustainable Development Goal- 8.

Contribution of the ESDP:

- 17.41% (4,338) of the ESDP trainees emerged as entrepreneurs
- 4,338 trained entrepreneurs created 37,959 employment for youth
- 4,338 trained entrepreneurs generated BDT 10.94 billion investment in the private sector

Project Outcomes

Outcome 01: *To create the potential unemployed people of the country as entrepreneurs*

Contribution of the ESDP:

- 17.41% (4,338) of the ESDP trainees emerged as entrepreneurs
- 4,338 trained entrepreneurs created 37,953 employments for youth

Outcome 02: *To develop them as investors by developing their skills*

Contribution of the ESDP:

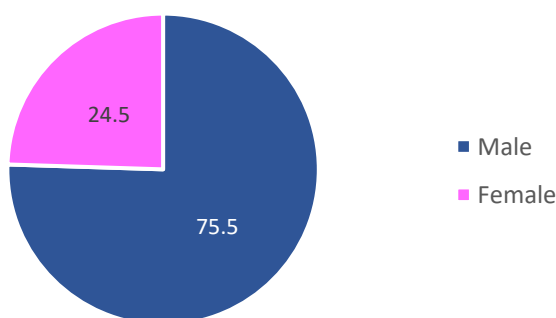
- 4,338 trained entrepreneurs generated BDT 10.94 billion investment in the private sector

The ESDP plans and organizes interventions to achieve expected results aligned with the set goal and outcomes.

5.1 Number of Emerged Entrepreneurs

Under the ESDP, 24,914 trainees received training from the 64 district-level ESDP training centers. A total of 4,338 entrepreneurs have emerged from the training, which is 17.41 percent of the total trainees. The survey showed that 65.5 percent of the trainees and 75.5 percent of the trained entrepreneurs are males. Notably, 34.5 percent of the trainees and 24.5 percent of the trained entrepreneurs are females (Figure 5.1) (details are in annex tables 1 and 2).

Figure 5.1: Male-female composition among the emerged entrepreneurs (in %)



Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021

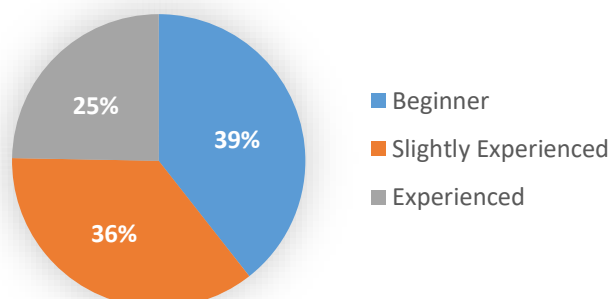
The study finds that female participation is lower than male participation due to social stigma in regional settings, which prevents females from traveling to district towns for training (Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained-entrepreneurs, 2021). Female participation is higher if training could be organized at the Upazila level (Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). On another note, a training coordinator from the Magura district said, *“Many women have young children. Therefore, if a daycare center could be established here, women could receive training conveniently”* (Key Informant Interview with district training coordinator, 2021).

According to the survey findings, approximately 83 percent of trainees have yet to start a business. In contrast, almost all surveyed trainees expressed satisfaction with training modules, content, trainers, and mentors. According to key informants interviewed, many trainees who completed the training could not start their enterprise/business due to various issues. The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the primary reasons that many trainees cannot begin their businesses. According to this study, non-entrepreneurial ESDP trainees indicated that they intended to start their own business once the situation stabilized. They could not risk the capital they possessed due to the market's dullness and high risk (FGDs with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021; and KIIs with training coordinators, 2021). This comprehensive assessment discovers that district-level ESDP training centers attempted to connect young trainees with financial institutions by engaging resource persons from those institutions and referring ESDP trainees to banks (public and private) and other financial institutions (Key Informant Interview with training coordinators, 2021). However, the outcome of such networking development takes time for a variety of reasons. Numerous ESDP trainees were unable to participate in available business schemes/credit products offered by banks and other financial institutions due to the non-availability and/or incomplete processing of required application documents. The guarantor requirement is another barrier for ESDP trainees seeking to access business schemes offered by banks and other financial institutions.

Additionally, while ESDP trainees were taught the process and value of developing a business or investment plan, they did not prepare one. A solid and promising business/investment plan is required to approach and obtain financing from banks or non-bank financial institutions. Meanwhile, trainees who are not entrepreneurs reported that many are completing the necessary paperwork to start a business, but the process is being delayed due to the pandemic (Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021; Key Informant Interviews with training coordinators, 2021).

The survey results confirm that most ESDP trainees are young and mostly (90%) in the age group 19-44 (details in Annex Table 3). More than half of the trained entrepreneurs are in the age group 25-34, while one-fourth of them are in the age group 35-44 (see Annex Table 4). All trainees completed their SSC at least one of the pre-conditions to register for the training (for details, see Annex Table 5). However, the survey found that more than half of the emerged entrepreneurs are graduates or postgraduates (details in Annex Table 6). The survey indicates that 39.4 percent of entrepreneurs from the ESDP are new/beginner entrepreneurs with no prior business experience. As a result, the ESDP makes an extraordinary contribution to the project's objectives and outcomes. Additionally, more than 60 percent of trained entrepreneurs with prior business experience could expand their businesses due to this training (Figure 5.2) (see Annex Table 39).

Figure 5.2: Status of trained entrepreneurs by their prior business experience (in %)



Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021

The Chattogram district's trained entrepreneurs stated, "We became entrepreneurs as a result of this ESDP training and provided employment for another 71 unemployed individuals" (FGDs with trained entrepreneurs, Chattogram, 2021). Similarly to trained entrepreneurs in Chattogram, trained entrepreneurs in other districts confirmed during the discussion that they hired several employees for their new start-up or expanded business, including fellow trainees interested in gaining practical business knowledge before starting their own (FGDs with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021).

5.2 Employment Opportunities

According to the In-depth Assessment of Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP) survey findings, an entrepreneur employment generation average is 8.54 (male 5.26 and female 3.28). 4,338 entrepreneurs have employed 37,046 persons in their business ventures (details are in annex table 40).

Table 5. 3. Trained entrepreneur average employment creation

Employment	Average
Male	5.26
Female	3.28
Overall	8.54

Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021.

The survey with the trained entrepreneurs revealed that they recruited human resources in their business operations. As per the ESDP database and further validated by the surveys conducted under this study, 4,338 entrepreneurs recruited more than thirty thousand employees (37,046), including trainees from the ESDP training who hitherto did not start their own business. Reportedly, more than one-fifth of the trained entrepreneurs confirmed they recruited fellow trainees in their companies (Figure 5.3) (details are in the annex table 33). In addition, nearly 40 percent of the non-entrepreneurs trainees in the telephone survey suggest that trained entrepreneurs of the ESDP recruited fellow trainees in their businesses (details are in the annex table 32). Furthermore, almost sixty percent of

the employed fellow trainees by trained entrepreneurs are male, and around forty percent are female (details are in the annex table 34).

Figure 5.3. Status of trained entrepreneurs recruited fellow trainees (in %)



Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021.

5.3 Trainees Assessment of the ESDP

According to the survey, more than three-fourths of the trainees lacked prior training in entrepreneurship and business knowledge and skills. For 67.3 percent of entrepreneurs trained through the ESDP, this is their first exposure to entrepreneurial training (Table 5.4; details in Annex Tables 11 and 12).

Table 5.4. Status of non-entrepreneur and entrepreneur trainees received training beforehand of the ESDP training (in %)

Prior Entrepreneurship Training Experience	Trainees (Not Emerged Entrepreneur) (in %)	Trainees (Emerged Entrepreneur) (in %)
Received any entrepreneurship/business skill training earlier	22.3	32.7
Did not receive any entrepreneurship/business skill training	77.7	67.3

Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey and ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021.

Almost 38 percent of trainees believed that their previous entrepreneurship and business skill training was technical. In comparison, the ESDP-facilitated training is more academic/strategic by nature. It has aided them in expanding their knowledge of business and entrepreneurship. According to reports, 30.4 percent of respondents believe the ESDP training is of adequate quality and duration compared to previous training experiences (details are in annex 13). In addition, the survey findings show that the ESDP trainees have learned about business and investment-related policies, strategies, issues (Table 5.5) (details are in the annex table 14).

Table 5.5. Status of major knowledge gained by trainees from the ESDP training (in %)

Learned Issues (multiple)	%
Investment Plan	76.4
Management (Manpower Management, Risk management, Financial management)	92.2
Leadership (Communication Skill, Conflict Resolution and Negotiation, Establish Good Relations with staff)	85.0
Investment Environment (Starting a business, Construction Permit, Registering Property, Getting Credit, Paying Taxes, Enforcing Contracts)	89.3
Govt. policy for Local and Joint Investment	74.3
One-stop service, BIDA	82.2
Services from Investment-related Ministry, Divisions, Department, Agency	68.1

Learned Issues (multiple)	%
Business-related documentation (License or Registration, TIN or VAT registration, LIC, Loan, Insurance, etc.)	89.1
Linkage with Suppliers and Investors	67.6

Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey, 2021

ESDP trainees of the Mymensingh district stated, “we have received training on insurance, industry, environmental management, local government topics from ESDP training” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021). Besides, ESDP trainees of Magura district said, “we have learned about the business strategies, law issues, business validity, and initial steps of marketing of products, investment, Bank loan, entrepreneurship, insurance, and skills development from the ESDP training” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021).

This in-depth assessment found the demand for trade-based modules and the existing modules for the training (Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Trainees emphasized the inclusion of trade-based modules like livestock, poultry, agro, and handicraft businesses (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021). ESDP trainees also feel the unavailability of the module on business accounting (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021). ESDP trainees and training coordinators agreed to make developing an investment plan task compulsory for all trainees, which will boost their confidence to undertake the business venture (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021; Key Informant Interviews with training coordinators, 2021).

According to the survey, approximately 69% of trainees believe this training is suitable for beginners. Additionally, less than a fifth of trainees believes this training is most appropriate for intermediate-level trainees (details in Annex Table 15). Almost all trainees (emerged and non-emerged entrepreneurs) find training topics relevant, and the content is well organized and easy to follow (Table 5.6) (for details, see Annex Tables 16 and 17).

Table 5.6. Status of trainees opinion regarding training relevance (in %)

Response	Trainees (Not Emerged Entrepreneur)		Trainees (Emerg Entrepreneur)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Training topics relevant	99.4	0.6	99.4	0.6
Content well organized and easy to follow	98.4	1.6	98.4	1.6

Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey, 2021

According to the survey, 78.3 percent of trainees are very satisfied with the training they received through the ESDP (Figure 5.4). Also, 73 percent of the trained entrepreneurs stated that the training met their expectations in every way. (Figure 5.5) (details are in the annex tables 18 and 19).

Report on In-depth Assessment of Enterprenurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP)

Figure 5.4. Status of trainees satisfied with the training (in %)

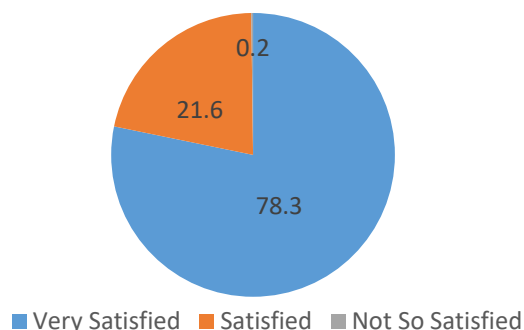
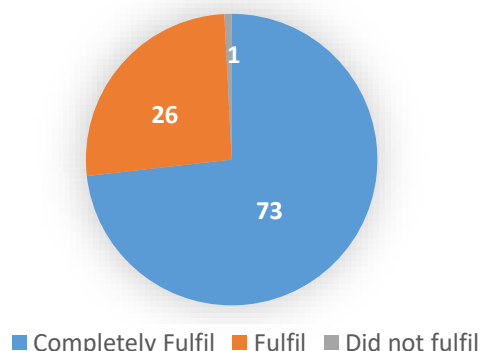


Figure 5.5. Status of trained entrepreneur’s expectations from training fulfilled (in %)



Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey and ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021.

Both non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, both types of ESDP trainees, firmly believed that many current non-entrepreneur-trainees would emerge as entrepreneurs after completing their preparatory work, adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic-induced condition, and gaining experience working at other business enterprises (Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Training coordinators from various regions stated that non-entrepreneurs trainees would come forward with their business ideas and determination to start their own business if they had access to business financing from banks or non-banking financial institutions, as well as institutional backing from business associations such as the chamber of commerce (Key Informant Interviews with training coordinators, 2021).

72.9 percent of trainees believe that ESDP trainers are proficient and diligent (details are in Annex Table 20). Noticeably, trainees who did not emerge as entrepreneurs yet emphasize extending the duration of the training (details in Annex Table 21). According to the survey findings, only 6 percent perceived the training duration as sufficient. Notably, 53 percent sought training of at least two months, while 41 percent suggest the training duration for three months and above.

The survey findings indicate that trainees are primarily satisfied with the subject matters of training modules, trainers’ qualifications, mentoring after training, and understandable sessions (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7. Status of trainees satisfaction about different aspects of training organization (in %)

Response	%
Training Time Schedule	57.7
Training Materials	55.0
Training Modules	92.7
Understandable Training Sessions	74.4
Trainers’ Qualifications	81.1
Audio Visual Training Mode	56.7
Mentoring after Training	80.3

Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey, 2021

The majority of the trainees (both entrepreneur and non-entrepreneur) are satisfied with the deliveries of resources persons of the training and training coordinators facilitation. However, they suggested more business personnel inclusion with training as resource persons (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Meanwhile, ESDP training coordinators identified the essentiality of refresher training and study visit both at home and abroad to learn about the trend of business culture, industry set-up, and technological advancement vis-a-vis fourth industrial revolution to serve the need of emerging entrepreneurs through training of ESDP (Key Informant Interviews with training coordinators, 2021). The ESDP trainees suggested bringing diversification among the mentors, considering the diverse business initiatives of trained entrepreneurs (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021). ESDP trainees also express the requirement for staff mentors for rapid response and guidance as per their needs (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021).

According to the survey findings, 99.4 percent of the trainees recommend expanding the ESDP training to create more young entrepreneurs and contribute to the business, investment, and employment generation (see Annex Table 46). The study discovered that trained entrepreneurs generated employment and investment, inspiring unemployed educated youth to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors through such training (Key Informant Interviews with successful business persons cum trained entrepreneur-mentors, 2021).

Contribution of ESDP activities on the business of the trained entrepreneurs: Trained entrepreneurs from Barguna and Magura districts said, *"We have earned profits through effective marketing and business strategies based on the knowledge gained during the ESDP training"* (FGDs in Barguna and Magura, 2021). Entrepreneurs trained in the Manikganj district stated, *"ESDP training sessions have taught us more about the profit and loss margins of various businesses." As a result, we can now calculate the risks associated with our business"* (Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021). Trainees of the Rajshahi and Rangpur districts said, *"ESDP training made a huge impact in the growth of people's business as well as in the growth of the national economy"* (FGDs in Rajshahi and Rangpur, 2021). While discussing the role of training in their business expansion, two trained entrepreneurs stated, *"We have earned the knowledge of how to cultivate vegetables with fisheries and stay ahead of other market leader businessmen"* (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Another trained entrepreneur of the Patuakhali district said, *"My business now has 20 percent more profit than before"* (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Following that, a trained entrepreneur from Mymensingh district stated, *"After receiving ESDP training, I opened a showroom, which has earned me respect in the community, and people come to me for small business advice and entrepreneurship"* (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Trained entrepreneurs with prior business experience from other regions confirmed that their businesses had grown due to reorganizing their operations using the knowledge gained through ESDP training (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Notably, another trained entrepreneur of the Mymensingh district mentioned, *"Corona (COVID-19) has hampered our business growth. Otherwise, this training was beneficial for our business development"* (Focus Group Discussion with trained entrepreneurs, 2021).

Women participation in the ESDP Training: Trainees of Chattogram districts said, *"Women desire financial independence, and as a result of this training, they are more receptive to entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, only 30% of trainees are female. The government should expand women entrepreneur"*

formation programs and publicize them on television, in newspapers, and via mobile SMS” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Also, trainees of Narail districts stated, “Only 30 percent participants were women. Women do not get support from their families to join these training. Many of them have kids, so they do not get enough time. This problem could be reduced if this training was Upazila-based” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Non-entrepreneur-trainees from Mymensingh, Magura, and Manikganj districts said, 40 percent of the training participants were women. Since the ESDP training took place in district-level centers, most rural sub-district women could not attend due to the distance, which needs prioritization”.

Additionally, social and familial barriers are the primary reasons women are reluctant to participate in or attend this type of training (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Notably, trainees from the Patuakhali district said, “Women's participation is insufficient, as they were less aware of these types of programs. Proper promotion of programs and awards and a shift in male thinking can increase women's participation rates. To increase women's participation, we must address issues such as legislative support, proper awareness, positive societal thinking, and women's associations” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Regarding the way to increase women's participation, trainees of Dhaka districts stated, “If all the pieces of training are held online, more women can participate and grow themselves as business owners” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021).

5.4 Development of Entrepreneurial Knowledge and Skills

The survey findings show that training from the ESDP contributed to the remarkable development of trained entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. The survey reported that 98 percent of the emerged trained entrepreneurs applied knowledge and skill gathered from the ESDP training in their businesses (details in Annex Table 23). Nearly 48 percent of the trainees confirmed that they learned about the issues involved in business management, which contributed to explore their business scopes (Table 5.5).

Table 5.8. Status of the trained entrepreneurs' opinion regarding their entrepreneurial knowledge and skill developed by training (in %)

Response	%
Have learned very well about all the things that are related/needed to do business	15.7
This training is essential for business improvement/development	2.7
Have received overall support from the government/Non-Gov./Individual sector	0.9
Helped in skill development	17.7
It is possible to do business through sound/proper planning	7.3
Did not know about the business before, but now have gained some knowledge	5.7
Learned about the issues involved in business management and so the scope of the business has increased	47.9
Was able to participate in local fairs	0.2
Got enough information to start a business/enterprise	2.4

Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021

Business Documentation: According to the survey findings, more than 80 percent of trained entrepreneurs seek assistance from district-level ESDP training centers in preparing and organizing business-related official certification and documents (details in Annex Table 36). Reportedly, 95.5 percent of the trained entrepreneurs' collected trade licenses since they completed the ESDP training. Besides, almost 46 percent of the trained entrepreneurs contained their TIN certificate (Table 5.9) (for details, see Annex Table 37). The study found that the number of trained entrepreneurs who had businesses before the training did not have all the required official documents (i.e., environment clearance, tax certificate, Vat Certificate/BIN, property registration, and construction permit (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Many have completed their official business registration and have collected required certifications from government agencies (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021). The ESDP training centers help the trained entrepreneurs to process the registration and collect certification from the concerned government agencies (Key Informant Interviews with training coordinators, 2021).

Table 5.9: Status of trained entrepreneurs having business-related documents since completion of training (in %)

Response (multiple)	%
Registration (Relevant Department)	27.6
Trade License	95.5
Vat Registration	22.5
Tax Registration	25.5
TIN Certificate	45.7
Environment Clearance	8.7
Construction Permit	8.6
Registering Property	16.6

Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey, 2021

A Mymensingh trainee stated, “I can run 3-4 small businesses which required 14/15 licenses. I have collected those licenses by the support of gathered knowledge from the ESDP training sessions” (Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021). Another trainee from the Sherpur district said, “From ESDP training, we get to know the importance of environmental release letters, support from land ports, investment, income strategies, and various other business sections” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021). Another trainee from Chattogram district stated, “From ESDP training sessions, we learned about investment planning, business management, vat registration, tax registration, and how to get exemption papers from different offices. We learned about online business plans also” (Focus Group Discussion with non-entrepreneur-trainees, 2021).

Improvement of Marketing: According to the survey, almost 96 percent of the trained entrepreneurs learned about marketing from the ESDP training (for details, see Annex Table 38). Reportedly, 75.3 percent of the trained entrepreneurs formulate marketing strategies in consultation with the ESDP trainers for their businesses (Table 5.10) (details in Annex Table 39).

Table 5.10. Status of trained entrepreneurs developed new marketing strategy after training (in %)

Response (multiple)	%
Self	18.7
Self with trainer	75.3
Self with Mentor	35.5

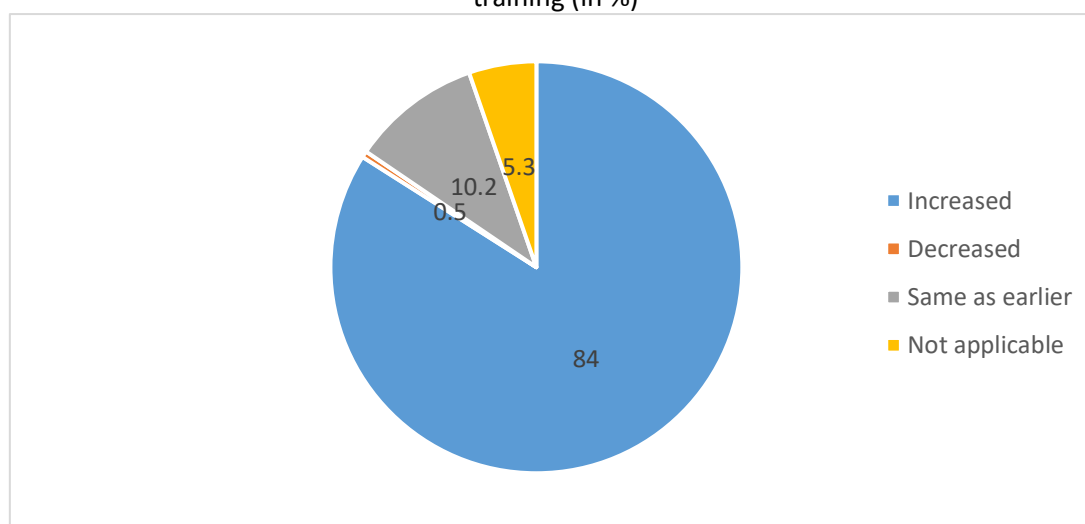
Response (multiple)	%
Self with another business entrepreneur	21.9
Self with Friends	14.6
Self with Investor	7.2
Self with Family Member	15.0
Self with Neighbor	3.9

Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021

The study showed that 88.2 percent of the trained entrepreneurs changed their marketing strategy after completing the ESDP training (details in Annex Table 40). Remarkably, 95 percent of trained entrepreneurs implemented a new physical marketing strategy, while 73.3 percent implemented a new virtual marketing strategy (see Annex Table 41).

The survey with trained entrepreneurs revealed that their prior businesses grew due to improved knowledge and skills from the ESDP training (Figure 5.6) (details in Annex Table 25).

Figure 5.6. Status of trained entrepreneurs business before the training grown after taking the training (in %)



Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021

5.5 Amount of Investment

The study reveals that, on average, nearly one of the six trained entrepreneurs invested more than BDT 1,000,000 in their enterprise, while almost half of them invested between BDT 1,000,000 and BDT 1,900,000. The Focus Group Discussions across 16 districts from different sub-regions of Bangladesh with trained entrepreneurs revealed that in several business cases, the invested amount was more than BDT 5,000,000 (Table 5.14). The estimates indicate that the trained entrepreneurs invested nearly BDT 10.682 billion into their entrepreneurship (details in Annex Table 29).

Table 5. 11. The average amount of investment by trained entrepreneurs

Amount of investment	Number	Percentage
>20,000,000	112	17.4
1,000,000-1,999,999	319	49.5

Amount of investment	Number	Percentage
100,000-999,999	175	27.1
< 99,999	39	6.0

All the entrepreneurs managed some funds on their own for their business/entrepreneurship; around three-fourths of them borrowed from non-institutional sources such as family and friends or other relative or non-relative individuals with interest or without interest. Reportedly, 54 percent of the entrepreneurs received loans from public or private banks or other non-bank financial institutions. Nearly 30 percent of trained entrepreneurs managed loans from NGOs, cooperatives, or other micro-finance institutions (MFIs). The largest share is borrowing from non-institutional sources such as family and friends in terms of the investment amount.

Table 5. 12. Source of investment of the trained entrepreneurs (multiple responses)

Sources of investment (multiple responses)	Percentage
Self-fund	100.0
Loan from Bank/Financial Institution	54.0
Loan From NGO/Co-operative/Micro-finance	29.9
Borrowing From Individual(s)	75.1

Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021.

The study found that the access of trained entrepreneurs to credit schemes of banks, non-banking financial institutions, NGOs and Cooperatives are minimal. Self-funding and borrowing from family and friends is the primary source of business financing for trained entrepreneurs. The investment would be more significant if trained entrepreneurs received a prompt response and increased access to credit schemes offered by banking and non-bank financial institutions. ESDP desired to contribute in several areas, including trained entrepreneurs' access to business credit schemes offered by banking and non-bank financial institutions. In this regard, ESDP recruited resource persons for training sessions from banking (public and private) and non-bank financial institutions. The ESDP's attempt in this area fell short of expectations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the study, training coordinators and trained entrepreneurs confirmed that financial assistance from banks (public and private) and non-bank financial institutions did not meet their expectations (Focus Group Discussions with trained entrepreneurs, 2021; Key Informant Interviews with training coordinators, 2021). The study showed that, on average, a trained entrepreneur loaned BDT 149,395 from a bank/financial institution. Besides, the study also found that, on average, a rained entrepreneur loaned BDT 159,045 from NGO/Cooperatives/Micro Finance Institutions.

Table 5. 13. Average of the loaned amount by entrepreneurs from financial institutions to invest in the business after completing training

Source of Finance	Average (in BDT)
Loan from Bank/Financial Institution	149,395
Loan From NGO/Co-operative/Micro-finance	159,045

Source: ESDP Trained Entrepreneur Survey, 2021.

According to reported findings of this in-depth assessment, trainees who have yet to start any business and newly emerged trained entrepreneurs urge business financing to start their business ventures

(Focus Group Discussions with non-entrepreneur-trainees and trained entrepreneurs, 2021). Besides, experienced-trained entrepreneurs craved matching funds to expand or start new business ventures (Focus Group Discussion with trained entrepreneurs, 2021).

5.6 Additional Outputs

24/7 Support System: Under the ESDP, a 24/7 Support System has been set up with every district-level ESDP training center. Reportedly, most of the trainees are aware of the 24/7 Support System, and 68.1 percent of the surveyed trained entrepreneurs informed they at least once contacted the 24/7 Support System for any business-related assistance or information (for details, see Annex Tables 42 and 43).

Youth Empowerment: Reportedly, 95.5 percent of the ESDP trainees believe the ESDP has contributed mainly to youth empowerment through interventions (details in Annex Table 44). As perceived by surveyed trainees, the ESDP's contribution to youth empowerment is summarized in Table 5.13 (details in Annex Table 45).

Table 5.14: Status of trainees' opinion about project role in youth empowerment (multiple responses)

Response	%
With proper training, it is possible to become a skilled entrepreneur/businessman	5.4
Unemployed educated youth will be able to start business/gain skills with training. The country will be free of unemployment	17.9
Employment will be created for oneself and others	19.8
It will play a role in creating new businesses and increasing production	3.4
Trained / skilled entrepreneurs will be created	31.3
I do not know. Everything is God's mercy and one's own sincere will	1.8
Doing business with training will benefit the business and improve the socio-economic condition	7.3
Through training, you get business ideas and the courage to start	6.2
Everything related to business is knowledge/skills are enhanced	4.7
Educated unemployed youth will be encouraged to invest without wasting time	8.1
Can play a role through training and financial support	11.4

Source: Telephone Administrated ESDP Trainees Survey, 2021

Collaboration with a2i: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESDP, in association with a2i and other government and non-government organizations, created an online-based emergency service program for the backward and forward linkage market. More than 2,500 ESDP entrepreneurs and volunteers across 64 districts provided services under the call 333 helpline.

Join in promoting innovation: The ESDP officials joined in the innovation talk jointly organized by a2i and EMK Center. In addition, the executive director of ESDP showcased the business innovation of the ESDP trained entrepreneurs. **Join in Humanitarian Service:** The ESDP launched a free mask distribution campaign all over the country to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic. The ESDP trained entrepreneurs and their partners from the RMG sector contributed these masks, and these masks were distributed all over Bangladesh.

Pieces of Evidence of Entrepreneurs Emerged from the ESDP training:

Profiles and success stories of the emerged entrepreneurs best demonstrate the achievements of the ESDP. Following are eight success stories of eight young entrepreneurs of different backgrounds from eight divisions of Bangladesh (more cases of other districts are available in the annex).

Barishal Division

Ms. Ayesha Akter, a trained entrepreneur from Barishal, established her business using the entrepreneurship knowledge and business skills acquired through the ESDP training. She owns Easy K.A. Fashion. She paved her path as an entrepreneur, but it was not an easy one. Her husband did not support her, but she never gave up on her dream. Following completion of the training, she established her business with a capital investment of BDT 5,000. Her organization employed more than ten people. Ms. Akter has been pursuing her dream and establishing her identity through hard work and determination.



Chattogram Division

Mr. Adham Bin Ibrahim, a Cox's Bazar entrepreneur with an ESDP background, co-founds the Fly Bangla Tours and Travels company. Mr. Ibrahim began with a capital of BDT 35,000, which has grown to BDT 3 million. He invested the money he had saved to establish a coaching center. Fly Bangla is currently involved in tourism, including hotel services, car rentals, airline tickets, tour packages, and student visa consulting. Mr. Ibrahim also co-founded a couple of other businesses with relatives and peers. He and his aunts opened a Women's Care Shop. He also founded the Durdam Entrepreneur Group, which spreads the Bangladesh Entrepreneur Forum's activities.



Mr. Ibrahim envisions the Bangladesh Entrepreneur Forum as the hub and heart of all Bangladesh's young entrepreneurs.

Dhaka Division

Mr. Selim Mia (REG-680038) from Narsingdi becomes a successful entrepreneur using the training received from the ESDP. He is the proprietor of Hena Consumer Products. He tried his luck for a job a hundred times before enrollment in the ESDP training. The ESDP training inspired him to undertake a business venture. He connected with an investor through the ESDP training center of Narsingdi, and the investor invested BDT 1 million in his business. Mr. Mia is now producing consumer goods like powder, soap, toilet cleaner, detergent liquid, floor cleaner, etc.



Khulna Division



Engineer Hossain Al-Mamun Munna (REG-475305) from Khulna has started his own recycling factory named Shutli with a small investment after



completing the training from the ESDP. He targeted the Khulna city daily demand of 2,000-2,500 kg of yarn. The need for yarn in the Khulna division is approximately 20,000 to 25,000 kg, indicating his business expansion's incredible scope. It is an environmentally responsible green business that produces no air or noise pollution. The business's primary components are hazardous plastics, which he recycles to create new products—Engineer Munna's visionary eco-business venture contributes to environmental development and job creation.

Mymensingh Division



Ms. Farjana Hoque Flora (REG-725184), inspired by reading stories of successful women entrepreneurs, registered for the ESDP training. She launched her own business venture after completing the training. With mentoring support from the ESDP resource persons, she established a farm named Startmark Food and Agro Ltd. to ensure the customer's healthy and nutrias food products. According to Flora, girls should move forward, crossing all the challenges to establish themselves. She is now an inspiration to many young girls of Netrokona.

Rajshahi Division



ESDP trained entrepreneur Shri Manik Sutradhar (REG-885463) from Sirajganj, using knowledge and skills acquired from training, launched his business initiative through a Facebook campaign. His business enterprise name SobSheba.com. He sells household products like ghee, honey, pottery, fashionwear, and fitness products through Facebook. He takes clients' orders and delivers



shipments through four permanent young delivery persons employed in his organization. As a result, he earned a good reputation in the local e-commerce marketplace.

Rangpur Division



Shahina Sultana (REG-77710), hailed from Panchagarh, emerged as an entrepreneur after receiving training from the ESDP. She with her husband started an agro farm named "Shommonito Farm. She started poultry and fish farming at her farm. Then, she began to sell her produced agro products in the local and other markets of the country. She, with mentoring support from the ESDP Panchagarh training center, developed her investment plan.



Sylhet Division

Ms. Roksana Alam Shoshi (REG-905458) completed entrepreneurship development training from the ESDP training center of Sunamganj District. She started her boutique business using inspiration and knowledge gathered from the training. She utilizes the social media platform to find customers for her products. She also opened a sales outlet under the enticing brand name 'Mem-Shaheb.' Her story as a female entrepreneur has been featured in many national daily newspapers. Additionally, her brand gains significant popularity on social media.



Chapter Six

Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat (SWOT) Analysis

An in-depth assessment of the Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP) utilized a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis to determine the project's accomplishments and potential future contributions to national development and the economy large. It is to note that in a SWOT analysis, while the strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) are internal to the system, the opportunities (O) and threats (T) are external ones. It is also worth noting that sometimes it is not easy to assign a system component to one single component to S or W or O or T.

The outcomes of the SWOT analysis of the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project (ESDP) are presented in the box below. Reviewing the SWOT analysis, the task of the relevant policymakers and the implementers would be the following: (1) strengthen further the already existed Strengths (S), (2) turn some of the Weaknesses (W) into Strengths (W to S), (3) tap all the Opportunities (O) either to address the Weaknesses (W) to turn them into Strengths (O to S via W), (4) try to convert Threats (T) into Opportunities (T to O). It implies the need for continuous improvement to reach maximum Strengths and Opportunities (Max SO). It is a process that aims to maximize outcomes for the benefit of the country's development.

Strengths (Internal)	Weaknesses (Internal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eligible, courageous, and self-esteemed more than 60,400 registrants from 64 districts wanted to be trained to become entrepreneurs themselves. ● ESDP training centers established in all 64 districts allowed easy access to existing and/or aspirants entrepreneurs. ● Dynamic, energetic, multi-skilled 67 young trainers cum training coordinators in charge of 67 district-level ESDP training centers. ● Highly knowledgeable and skilled resource persons engaged as trainers and conducted training sessions. ● Option of both offline/physical and online/virtual training for the young entrepreneurs. ● Online/virtual training for youth is the best option for continuing their career development amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. ● Digital content developed and opened sourced through the ESDP website for trained entrepreneurs. ● Mentoring support by successful entrepreneurs to the trained entrepreneurs. ● Trained entrepreneurs could access necessary business and investment-related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The project does not have adequate staff trainers. ● The ESDP training curriculum does have any trade-based modules. ● Developing a business/investment plan is an optional task for the trainees. ● Lack of diversification among mentors (in terms of industrial sector representation) associated with the ESDP training centers. ● Absence of staff/permanent mentor at the district-level ESDP training center. ● Unavailability of business accounting training is limiting young entrepreneurs from formulating business financing strategies ● Unavailability of refresher training for the training coordinators ● Unavailability of the fund to finance start-up and matching fund for the trained entrepreneurs ● Inadequate sensitization and awareness campaign targeting potential and interested women from the local level ● Unavailability of the training center at the Upazila level stopped many potential and interested young males and females from admitting to training due to communication and social barriers.

information from the 24/7 support system launched under the ESDP.	
Opportunities (External)	Threats (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ESDP could be connected with technical and vocation institutes to make skilled students into entrepreneurs. ● The ESDP could connect with the Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) program to develop business-minded trainees of those programs into entrepreneurs. ● Many youths at the local level are committed to getting such training to become entrepreneurs and change their socio-economic status. ● Many young females at the local level are interested in having such training to make them entrepreneurs and change their position in the family and society. ● Banking and non-banking financial institutions offer many investment opportunities through various business credit products new and existing entrepreneurs have explored. ● There is no shortage of customers for different products and services that new and existing entrepreneurs need to explore using knowledge and skills gathered from training. ● The market (both local/regional and national in Bangladesh is large enough to start up new businesses and expand the existing business, which is an excellent scope for the latest and existing entrepreneurs. ● Scopes of online markets are available for young entrepreneurs to reach out to potential customers living in other districts or abroad. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The COVID-19 pandemic stopped many ESDP trainees from emerging as entrepreneurs. ● Social stigma towards young trainees is also another barrier and threat to becoming entrepreneurs. Families and society as a whole prefer jobs instead of business. Social stigma also pulls women from doing business because society still could not admit women as entrepreneurs. ● Unavailability of the regional and national investment mapping also causing the lack of information to develop investment plans by young entrepreneurs. ● Unavailability of the regional and national market assessment also causing the lack of information to develop business plans by young entrepreneurs. ● Unavailability of one-stop business-related support services for young entrepreneurs

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project (ESDP) is Bangladesh's first of its kind. Previously, no government or non-government agency had launched a similar entrepreneurship-focused project. The project is unique in terms of its objective, intended outcomes, and intervention strategy. The ESDP is a nationwide initiative covering all 64 districts, but the scope of deepening and widening was limited due to the project's pilot status and limited resources. Nonetheless, the ESDP established its validity and significance by producing the best possible outputs to achieve the project's intended outcomes and objectives. The project provided knowledge and skills to 4,338 young entrepreneurs in 64 districts, who in turn created 37,046 jobs and invested BDT 10.94 billion in the national economy, genuinely remarkable accomplishments.

7.2 Recommendations

The ESDP, through the accomplishment of outcomes and goals, demonstrated that providing resourceful entrepreneurship knowledge and skill development training and mentoring to aspirant youth contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8, GDP growth target, and a thriving national economy. During the ESDP's in-depth evaluation, numerous recommendations were gathered from trained entrepreneurs, trainees, training coordinators, and resource persons. Recommendations related to the ESDP are the following:

- ☑ Considering the ongoing need to expand businesses regionally and nationally, the ESDP could be upgraded to a national program.
- ☑ Considering the COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdown and restriction on movement, organize physical-virtual mix training for aspirant young entrepreneurs.
- ☑ Launch advanced level entrepreneurship and skill development training for intermediate and advanced learner entrepreneurs.
- ☑ As demand for such training is very high among youth, especially females, establish training centers at the Upazila level.
- ☑ Seeing the urges from the trainees, the ESDP could create a fund to finance both start-up/beginner and intermediate entrepreneurs.
- ☑ To promote the young entrepreneur, convert the district level ESDP training center as the regional one-stop service center of BIDA.
- ☑ As per timely demand and requirements, revise and elaborate the curriculum of the ESDP entrepreneur training, including the introduction of trade courses.
- ☑ Develop formal networks through arranging Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with banking and non-banking financial institutions to create scopes for young entrepreneurs to access business financing.
- ☑ Develop Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) with government and non-government agencies to facilitate fast-track services for ESDP trained entrepreneurs.
- ☑ Launch sensitization and promotional activities at the national and local levels to increase women's participation in the training.
- ☑ Establish the training center at the Upazila level to increase participation of aspirant male and female youth in the entrepreneurship and skill development training.

- Conduct regional and national investment mapping and market assessment studies to support establishing and expanding the business of the trained entrepreneurs from the grassroots.

The essentiality of the entrepreneur development project like ESDP is evidentially realized. Such a project requires implementation on a larger scale to penetrate deeply and widely enough to raise more aspirant young male and female entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship development projects, such as the ESDP can help create jobs and capital through business development. The ESDP should be transformed into a national entrepreneurship and business skill development program in accordance with the Eighth Five Year Plan and the Second Perspective Plan 2021-2041.