

Concept Note

“Spatial Planning for Just Transition in Bangladesh”

4th International Conference on Urban and Regional
Planning (ICURP) 2025



10-12 May 2025
Venue: Yet to determine

Background

Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), the Country's Professional Body for Urban, Regional, and Rural Planners in Bangladesh, welcomes everyone to the 4th International Conference on Urban and Regional Planning (ICURP) 2025 with the theme '**Spatial Planning for Just Transition in Bangladesh**' which will be held on 10-12 May 2025.

With the experience of three successful conferences over the past six years, the organizing committee is looking forward to a more fruitful conference by engaging with international policy frameworks, best-practice examples and case studies of other countries with similar policy experiences, case studies on good practices around the world, and participation of national level experts related to urban, regional and rural planning for defining a better proposal on the ongoing transition of Bangladesh.

The concept of just transition is embedded in green and resilient pathways for economic growth ensuring societal inclusiveness and harmony in ecology and nature, which cannot be delivered without a functional Spatial Planning System. Through COP29, Bangladesh has made a clear mark in global climate leadership by once again highlighting the "World of Three Zero's" principle championed by the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh, which has clearly articulated more robust climate action for global leaders. That also exemplifies Bangladesh's commitment to an effective transition to that pathway. Since global 2030 agendas are accompanying the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, and the Global Biodiversity Policy Framework, through emphasizing the needs of developing countries, the primary goals of our nation would be to work parallelly with the international communities and help them achieve the target of The World in 2050 (TWI2050).

In Bangladesh, public sector plans are implemented as projects. Therefore, the ultimate quality of public investment depends on properly translating aggregate socio-economic plans to projects in geographic space. This translation is done by line ministries or departments through sectoral masterplan or even through direct project design by sectors. This process can instill incoherence in project planning across sectors, which leads to overlap, conflict, and lack of coordination during implementation. Spatial planning is proposed as a bridge between national socio-economic plans and ground-level projects through a three-tier spatial planning system. covering all of Bangladesh, supported by legal and Institutional mechanisms as needed. Without such a planning system, 90% of the country's land area is outside any form of spatial plan. This leads to large-scale sprawl and massive loss of land away from agricultural production in rural areas, as well as endangering ecology and natural habitats that support wildlife and biodiversity.

The Government of Bangladesh, through the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), has committed itself to 'Spatial Planning for All Areas,' as the first target and submitted it to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat. However, implementing this commitment to Spatial Planning requires contributions from The Ministry of Housing and Public Works, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Land, and all other

ministries delivering the development agenda of GoB. The current bifurcated approach to planning through line ministries clashes with the comprehensive approach implied by the importance given by CBD to involving the 'whole of the government'.

Bangladesh is now experiencing a political and economic transition. It is of the utmost priority to develop transition strategies and a roadmap that address the desires of Bangladesh's cross-sectional population and align the transition roadmap with international goals and targets for Sustainable development, climate targets, and nature conservation. Institutional readiness and the financial mechanisms needed to realize this are critical to a just transition.

The upcoming 4th ICURP will offer a platform for Urban Regional and Rural Planners, experts from relevant sectors, academia and researchers, public policy makers from all relevant disciplines, and stakeholders for academic and policy discussions and debates and consolidate a comprehensive recommendation for achieving a just transition in Bangladesh.

Organizer

Being the national professional body for Urban, Regional and Rural Planners in Bangladesh, BIP has been working to ensure the planned and orderly development of the urban and rural areas across the country through its various activities. Administration of training and workshops, seminars, conferences are one of the significant activities of BIP to expand knowledge of sustainable planning, management, and development of the urban, rural, and regional areas in Bangladesh. The conference will be held for the fourth time in 2025. ICURP was officially launched in 2019 for the first time, 2021 for the second and 2023 for the third time. A short brief of the past conferences are as follows;



ICURP 2019

The 1st International Conference on Urban and Regional Planning (ICURP) was held on 5-6 October 2019 with the presence of Honorable Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Md. Tajul Islam PM as a chief guest. The conference aided as a potential international platform for the leading academics, researchers, scholars, prominent national and International NGO representatives and decision-makers working in Urban and Regional Planning around the world to exchange their research works, and new ideas, share knowledge and explore recent developments of this field.

With the main theme ***“Planning for Sustainable Cities and Communities”***, ICURP 2019 highlighted on a wide variety of fields of Urban and Regional Planning including;

- Urban Planning and Management,
- Housing - Community Planning – Environmental Management-Sustainable Cities and Settlements,
- Transport – Infrastructure – Urban Economy and Governance, and
- Regional and Rural Planning – Disaster Management – Climate Change.



ICURP 2021

The Second International Conference on Urban and Regional Planning (ICURP) was held from October 30, 2021, to November 6, 2021, in collaboration with GIZ, DSCC, DNCC, DWASA, FAO, UN-Habitat, Save the Children, and ISOCARP. The conference created a great platform for exchanging new ideas, sharing knowledge, and exploring recent developments in the field of Urban and Regional Planning during this extraordinary time with planners, professionals, academics, practitioners, scientists, researchers, scholars, and decision-makers around the world.

Covid pandemic has posed several challenges to traditional planning practices leading the planning norms and ideas to major shifts in pursuit of attaining the goal of inclusiveness and sustainability in post Pandemic era. In this backdrop, BIP organized the 2nd International Conference on Urban and Regional Planning (ICURP 2021) with the theme ***“Planning for Inclusiveness and Sustainability in Post Pandemic Era”***. Under the broad theme, the conference focused on the following sub-themes, like, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda - Spatial Planning for Including Each Person and Place in the Planet, Paris agreement and UN Climate Change Conferences (COPs): Implications for Urban, Regional and Rural Planning, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: Mainstreaming Resilience in Planning and Development, BDP 2100, Bangladesh Perspective Plan 2041 and National Physical Planning: Integration, Inclusiveness and Prosperity, Transformative Mobility for Cities and Regions etc.



ICURP 2023

The Third International Conference on Urban and Regional Planning (ICURP 2023) was held from September 23–25, 2023 in collaboration with two ministries, 13 government departments, development authorities, 16 pourashavas, six local and international NGOs, and 18 international organizations with the aim of shaping national and global planning policies by presenting reformed proposals to key stakeholders, including government leaders, development partners, and international organizations.

With the theme ***“Spatial Planning for Sustainable Development- Achieving National and Global Goals”***, ICURP 2023 explored critical topics such as sustainable urban development, climate-induced migration, transformative mobility, and aligning national frameworks like BDP 2100 with global targets such as the SDGs, Paris Agreement, and Sendai Framework. Under the broad theme, the conference focused on the following sub-themes.

The three-day event featured plenary sessions, thematic parallel discussions, and a poster exhibition, providing a platform for planners, academics, and policymakers to

collaborate on innovative solutions. The findings and recommendations were presented to the Honorable Prime Minister during the closing session to ensure actionable outcomes.

ICURP 2023 emphasized inclusive participation, inviting diverse stakeholders from urban and rural contexts, alongside women, youth, and marginalized groups. Organized by BIP, with support from national and international partners, the conference reaffirmed the role of planning in fostering a sustainable and resilient future for Bangladesh.

ICURP 2025

As already stated, the past two conferences highlighted several urban, regional, and rural planning issues. With the experience, this year BIP aims to contribute to the formulation of the government planning policies and reforming proposals in line with attaining the national and global targets under the major theme ***“Spatial Planning for Just Transition in Bangladesh”***. Hence, the main goal of the conference is to hand over the reformed policies and proposals to the governmental and international organization heads. Hence, the conference targets the presence of the Prime Minister, respective sector Ministry (Minister, Secretary and leads), urban change-makers, active Development Partners, leading private sector entities, NGOs, and INGOs.

Major thematic areas (But not limited to):

Theme 1: Country-Wide Spatial Planning and Integration of Sectoral

Sub-Categories:

- ✓ Spatial Planning at scale (National, Regional and Local)
- ✓ Land use Planning and Management
- ✓ Spatial Planning and Integration of Nature Conservation & Biodiversity
- ✓ Zero Hunger and Minimum Poverty in Lagging Regions
- ✓ Development Financing

Theme 2: Urban Planning and Management

Sub-Categories:

- ✓ Just Urban Transition
- ✓ Density Planning, Housing, and Development Control
- ✓ Sustainable, Just and Equitable Cities.
- ✓ Transportation Planning.
- ✓ Environmental Planning and Nature-based Solutions (NbS)
- ✓ Urban Governance
- ✓ Solid waste management

- ✓ Fecal Sludge Management
- ✓ Municipal Governance and Services
- ✓ Climate Change and Urban Environmental Challenges

Theme 3: Housing and Community Development Planning

Sub-Categories:

- ✓ Slum upgrading and land regularization
- ✓ Heritage, Culture and Community Planning
- ✓ Locally Led Planning and Development
- ✓ Low-Cost Housing or Affordable Housing
- ✓ Internal Migration
- ✓ Employment Generation of Youth and Low-Income Groups

Theme 4: Planning Concepts and Future of Cities

Sub-Categories:

- ✓ Infrastructure Planning for Cities and Communities
- ✓ Service Provision and Asset Management.
- ✓ Quantification of Environmental, Social, and Economic Impact of Planned and Unplanned Development
- ✓ Smart City Design with Spatial Equality Irrespective of Gender, Age, Disability

Theme 5: Regional and Rural Planning

Sub-Categories:

- ✓ Regional Analysis in District, Division, National and International Level
- ✓ Economic Planning and Econometrics
- ✓ Rural Development and Service Provision
- ✓ Rural Land Reform
- ✓ Sustainable Livelihood Framework
- ✓ National Corridor, Infrastructure, and Regional Planning

Theme 6: Disasters and Climate Change

Sub-Categories:

- ✓ Spatial Planning and Disaster Management & Climate Change.
- ✓ Vulnerability and Resilience of Regions
- ✓ Coastal Areas and Disaster Management

- ✓ Flood, Riverbank and Delta Management
- ✓ Integrated Water Resources Management and Planning
- ✓ Reducing Ecological and Carbon Footprint
- ✓ Climate Migration and Urbanization

Conference Programs and Format

The main program of the ICURP 2024 will be segmented into several parallel sessions covering six thematic clusters' prioritized areas. The primary goal of these sessions, in line with the conference's overarching topic, is to demonstrate the role of planning in shaping the sustainable future of Bangladesh. These sessions will be led by sectoral experts and representatives of stakeholders.

Research & Publications

BIP initiates a good number of researches every year on the contemporary issues of urbanization with a broad aim to solve the country's urban problems. The researched studies will be hand over to the Honorable Chief Advisor in the closing session of the conference.

Program Outline

ICURP 2024 will be a three-day event segmented in the following sessions designed to support the key objectives and reflect the main theme.



- **Opening session** will mainly cover the inauguration of the event.
- Following the event's inauguration, a **plenary session** will be held where all participants are expected to gather in one place. The major objectives under the key theme of the conference will be represented to the participants by the event convener. The session will be also be platform of speed networking among the participants.
- **Parallel sessions** will enable direct interactions among participants. Six sessions focusing on the themes of the conference (stated above), will be running parallelly in the first two days of the event. The participant will present their research to the audiences. The main aim of the sessions is to identify how urban, rural and regional planning can play significant roles in the various sectors of Bangladesh.
- In the **Poster exhibition** session, the interested participants can display their research posters in the designated section of the venue. The exhibition will be held for the entire program.

- **Closing session** will be held in the last day of the event, segmented into four parts. The first section named 'Summing up' will bring participants together to discuss the findings of the thematic ten parallel sessions. Rapporteurs from each group will provide a brief summary of the workshop discussions and highlight the major problems, potential solutions, and applicable examples of practice. A facilitated debate and reflections on the key messages emerging from the conference will be offered in the second section (Key lessons and way forward). Cultural program will be held in the third segment of the session. And the program will be ended in the following session featuring the book giving and awarding ceremony.

Organizing committee

BIP will be at the center of organizing committee of ICURP 2024. It is going to host the largest urban agglomerations in the Bangladesh with an aim to promote **spatial planning for just transition in Bangladesh**. International and national organizations as well as various development partners will also collaborate with BIP as sponsors and strategic partners.

Participation in the Conference

As we know, participatory process with representation from all stakeholders is vital for fostering any successful event. Hence, the organizing committee is going to invite **Honorable Chief Adviser Dr. Muhammad Yunus** as the **Chief Guest**, respective sector Ministry (Minister, Secretary and leads), urban change-makers, active Development Partners, leading private sector entities, NGOs, INGOs, CSOs and media in different thematic sessions as key stakeholders. The participation of stakeholders from outside of Dhaka, women, the disabled, minorities, and young people will receive special attention.

IMPORTANT DATES

20	25	31	31	28	
November 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	10-12 May 2025
Declaration	Registration Opens	Submission Deadline	Abstract Acceptance	Submission of Full Article	Conference Schedule*