

Terms of Reference (TOR)
FOR
‘Individual Consultant (Research)’
for
“Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Public Hearing.”

I. Background

The People's Republic of Bangladesh Constitution, which practically arose from the spirit of the great liberation war, states that Bangladesh shall be a society founded on equality and justice, and that each component of the State machinery, including citizens, families, the State, and business organizations, shall be free of corruption and cherish integrity. Unfortunately, corruption in Bangladesh could not be abolished. Corruption is a severe impediment to any developmental efforts aimed at meeting citizens' basic requirements. Corruption is no longer a Bangladeshi phenomena; it has taken on a global scale. Corruption exists on various scales practically everywhere in the world.

Since its inception on November 21, 2004, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has been charged with implementing several anti-corruption measures. The ACC's stumbling expedition is divided into two approaches. The first is punitive, whereas the second is preventative. Conducting an inquiry and investigation into the listed offences of corruption as defined by the ACC Act, 2004 (updated in 2015), and bringing the perpetrators before the Court are among the punitive actions. In addition, the Commission is hell-bent on carrying out a diverse program of activities aimed at effectively preventing corruption. The Commission accelerates the steps established to integrate people's instinctive engagement, with the goal of building a national social movement against corruption. In 427 Upazilas, 62 districts, and 9 metropolitan cities, Corruption Prevention Committees (CPCs) have been established. The CPCs hold discussion meetings, seminars, symposiums, consultation meetings, way-wide gatherings, debate and essay competitions, and other events to raise public awareness against corruption.

Furthermore, the ACC offers several unique programs, such as Public Hearing in Government and Semi-Governmental Organizations. These public hearings are being held in compliance with the ACC Act of 2004, Cabinet Division instructions, and the Government's National Integrity Strategy (NIS) of 2012. The Cabinet Division's District Magistracy Wing has issued a guideline for holding public hearings in government offices between June 1 and 5, 2014.

Public hearings are an important approach for demonstrating transparency and accountability in the government's welfare actions at the local level. This is a new approach of interacting between ordinary citizens and government authorities.

Public hearing can be defined as an effective technique of establishing direct connection between the people who seek government services and the public official in charge of providing such services. During the Public Hearing, the high officials of the Commission are present in person to resolve various issues. When reviewing the complaints of service recipients and the responses given by the officials involved, it becomes clear that the harassment in receiving government services is primarily due to citizens' lack of awareness, officials' inefficiency, irregularities, mismanagement, and, in some cases, corruption, as well as defiance of time limits. The Public Hearing is being used as a powerful instrument to improve government openness, accountability, and public awareness at the local level. The ACC organized 130 public hearings in various districts, as well as 14 follow-up hearings,

bringing the total number of 144 public hearings between 2014 and 2020. The ACC began holding public hearings in Muktagasa, Mymensingh, in 2014. The public's large turnout and overwhelming support for the Public Hearing prompted the Commission to go ahead with this program. Currently, public hearings are being held with the technical assistance of a number of organizations, including the World Bank and the TIB. In between 2018 and 2020, the Commission received 2175 complaints from citizens through 62 public hearings, with 2064 of them being dismissed. That means that about 95 percent of concerns received during public hearings are resolved.

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the state's primary responsibility is to provide basic services to its inhabitants. Second, Article 13 of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) emphasizes the need of civil society (NGOs, media, etc.) participation in avoiding corruption, gathering information, and reporting. Third, the government's approval of the National Integrity Strategy, 2012, outlines the commitment to provide residents with corruption-free public services. Fourth, public hearings on public service delivery have become a very important working instrument in neighboring countries such as India and Nepal. It's worth emphasizing that the major subject of the 7th Five-Year Plan is citizen empowerment, which can be accomplished through the use of public hearings and other social responsibility methods.

Following the research, it will be possible to assess the effectiveness of public hearings, identify obstacles to public hearings, and develop guidelines for assuring more efficient public hearings.

II. Objectives:

Overall Objective:

To evaluate the effectiveness of Public Hearing.

Specific Objective:

- a. To determine the impediment to ensuring the Public Hearing's decisions.
- b. To find out the causes of hindrance to ensure the decisions of Public Hearing.
- c. To come up with strategies and guidelines to improve the effectiveness of public hearings.

III. Outputs:

- a. Reports on public hearing with a new argument or idea about the effectiveness of public hearing.
- b. Explore and explain the underlying concepts, casual links and impacts of public hearing in real life context.
- c. Structural overview of the public hearing.
- d. Proposal for effective methods of public hearing.
- e. Find out the future research scope from the research topic.

IV. Research scope:

This study will involve frontline public offices which were subject of public hearing organized by the ACC between 2016 and 2019. It will include government officials who are both organizers of the hearings and parties to the underlying accountability issues. In addition

to officials from the ACC, the government and concerned departments, private concerns (the general public, local elites, civil society, and others) will also be considered for this exploration. This study will focus on 24 public hearings which comprise of three public hearings from each Division (one divisional, one district, and one upzilla level) chosen by the Commission.

An 'Individual Consultant (Research)' will be assigned to this research project to conduct research on a specific topic: "Evaluation the Effectiveness of Public Hearings".

This study intends to assess the utility of public hearings, determine the causes of public hearing decision implementation problems, and investigate methods and approaches for improving public hearing performance.

V. Final outputs/deliverables:

The consultant will submit a draft of the report which should include at least the following contents:

- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Key findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendation
- Annexes

VI. Qualification and experience (selection criteria) and responsibilities of consultants:

Name of the post: Individual consultant (Research)

Name of the position: 1

The duration of the service: 6 months

Name of the post/Key Professionals	Qualifications	Experience	Duties and Responsibilities
Individual consultant (Research)	At least Master's Degree in Public Management/Public Policy/Governance/Legal Studies/Criminology or any subject related to research topics. Having Ph.D degree on related subjects will be given preference.	Should have 12 Years research experience on communication sector or public administration sector or legal sector. Preferably experience on anti-corruption related research in any Govt. organization/university.	1. The research works should include the following: - Evaluate the effectiveness of public hearing. - Explore the hindrance of public hearing and suggest appropriate approach to resolve those blockages. - Find out the future research scope from the research topic. - Submission of a final report on the selected research topic.