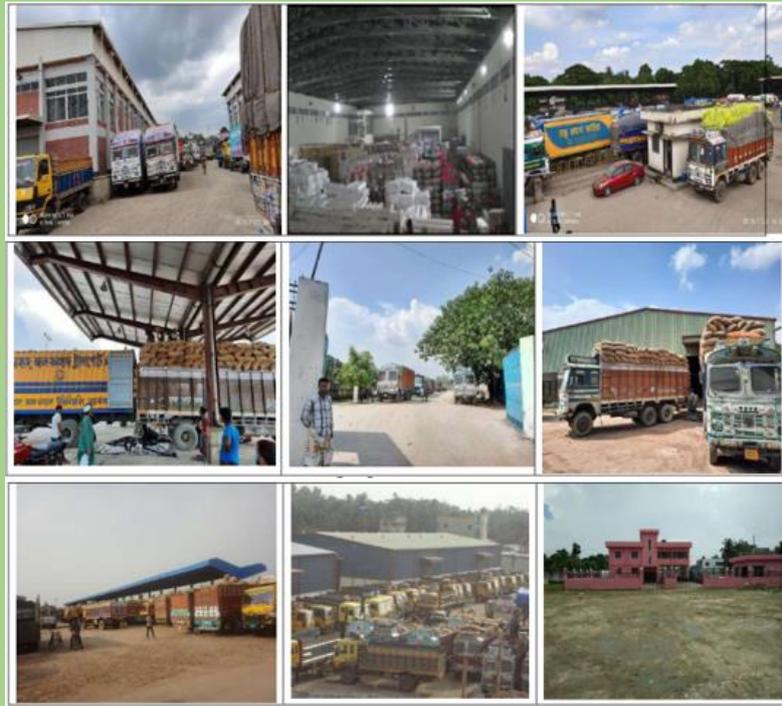




**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1**

Ministry of Commerce

**Study: A Compiled Policy and Regulatory Guidelines/Standard
Operating Procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management
with Respect to International Trade and Transport Formalities,
Procedures, Documentation and Related Matters**



Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)

March 2023

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1
Ministry of Commerce**

Level 12 (Westside), Prabashi Kallyan Bhaban, 71-72 Eskaton Garden Road, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

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SUBMITTED TO:

The Project Director

Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project (BRCP)-1

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March 2023

Preface

Bangladesh is placing its utmost importance on enhancing the cross-border trading system through land ports. The objective is to make the trade processes easier, quicker, and safe. This will not only enable trade growth but also create a solid and potential economic relationship with the neighboring countries. Moreover, focusing the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) under the World Trade Organisation (WTO), there has been a growing recognition around the world for the need to ensure greater efficiency and security of international supply chains, the need to reduce clearance time by simplifying trade clearance processes, and the need to reduce trade transaction costs. There is an increased focus around the world both the governments and the private sector to identify 'ways to move away from a paper-based document system towards paperless trade procedures and information exchange', since paperless trade offers the scope to 'significantly reduce the risk of global trade through less and better data', and reduces trade-transaction costs by increasing efficiency (UNCTAD, 2005). To facilitate overall trade performance, digital corridor for trade is now considered as an important mechanism to ensure transparency and reduce time and trade-related costs. For these reasons, Bangladesh Land Port Authority needs to develop standard operating procedures (SOP) for making port operation more efficient and practicable in line with global standards.

The purpose of the study is to make cross-border trading cost-effective, quicker and easier while ensuring sufficient safety and security. The study identified the underlying gaps in the operational and regulatory framework and formulated an SOP for facilitating paperless land port trade. The report includes detailed existing literature review, data collection (qualitative and quantitative through survey questionnaires, KIIs, FGD and public consultation), data management and analysis. The fourth industrial revolution is predicted to present significant challenges, particularly for land ports. In order to ensure effective performance by the land ports, it is essential to assess the issues of land port procedures and develop a standard of procedures for potential changes. The study has provided some recommendations related to land ports' operational efficiency and service quality enhancement along with the implementation of standard operating procedures. The said recommendations would be helpful in the development initiatives of the government.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to BFTI team and all other relevant stakeholders directly and indirectly contributing with their valuable opinions and efforts for the preparation of this report.

Mr. Md. Mijanur Rahman
Project Director (Joint Secretary)
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1
Ministry of Commerce

Acknowledgements

Bangladesh has successfully met the second triennial review of LDC graduation in February 2021 and is scheduled to be graduated in 2026. With consistent growth and impressive achievement in human, social and economic development fronts, Bangladesh aspires to reach the milestone of the developed country status by 2041. In this context, the 4 studies selected by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) in FY 2021-22 are very instrumental and contemporary for Bangladesh.

The study titled 'A compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters' has been conducted by the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute as a part of "04 studies suggested by Project Steering Committee (PSC) in FY 2021-22" under the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1. I would like to thank BRCP-1 for entrusting BFTI with the responsibility. The objective of the study is to improve conditions for trade through improving connectivity, reducing logistics bottlenecks and supporting the adoption of modern approaches to cross border trade, developing a standard operating procedure for cross border trade and trade facilitation.

I express my gratitude to the Ms. Nusrat Jabeen Banu ndc, Additional Secretary, WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, former Director General WTO Wing, Mr. Md. Atiqur Rahman Khan, Team Leader of this study, Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, National Trade Expert as well as the Director, BFTI, and other researchers, statisticians, data analysts, and field surveyors of the study team from BFTI who worked diligently on the report.

I would also like to thank Mr. Md. Mijanur Rahman, Project Director, Mr. Md. Munir Chowdhury, National Trade Expert, Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1 as well as high officials from Ministry of Commerce, NBR, EPB, Bangladesh Land port Authority, Chambers, Associations who extended their supports and gave us an opportunity to complete the study. Most importantly, I would like to convey my deepest respect to the Mr. Md. Mostafa Kamal, Secretary, Ministry of Shipping for his kind presence and comments in the public consultation. I am thankful to all of participants of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), FGD and Public Consultation for their valuable cooperation and suggestions.

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin
Chief Executive Officer
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Table of Contents

Preface	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures	ix
List of Abbreviations.....	x
Executive Summary	xiii
Chapter-1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Land Ports of Bangladesh	2
1.3 Objective of the study	7
1.4 Rationale of the study	7
1.5 Scope of the study	8
1.6 Methodology	9
1.7 Limitations.....	11
Chapter 2: Current status of the Bangladesh land port management.....	12
2.1 Significance of land port in the current trade scenario of Bangladesh.....	12
2.2 Overview of land ports of Bangladesh.....	16
2.3 Procedures for trade in land ports	35
2.4 Transport formalities and management systems in land ports.....	40
2.5 Types of documentations used in land ports	43
2.6 Time required for export and import in land ports	48
Chapter 3: Major Institutional Weakness for Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border Management.....	54
3.1 Major institutions related to trade facilitation and cross-border management in Bangladesh	54
3.2 Identified institutional weakness for Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border management	65
3.3 Procedural hindrances in cross border management	66
Chapter 4: Coordination Mechanism, One stop Service and Standard Operating Procedure	72
4.1 Coordination mechanism at the border point.....	72
4.1.2 Interagency and Intra-agency coordination.....	75
4.1.3 Areas of coordination	78
4.1.4 Resource and data sharing for coordination at border point	79

4.1.5 Policy and legal framework for Coordination.....	80
4.1.6 Cross-border coordination and issues	81
4.2 Status of the one stop service for the land port management	83
4.2.1 National Single Window	85
4.3 Standard operating procedure for port management.....	87
4.3.1 Import process	90
4.3.2 Export process	97
4.3.3 Immigration process	101
4.4 Streamlining the existing standard operating procedure:.....	102
Chapter 5: International Standards, Best Practices and Technologies Used Elsewhere in Terms of Operation of the Land Port	104
5.1 International standards of land port management	104
5.2 Best practice for land port management.....	109
5.2.1 Development of Integrated Check Posts (ICP)	109
5.2.2 Investment in infrastructure development and automation	111
5.2.3 Simplification of Procedures	111
5.2.4 Ensuring private participations (PPP Model).....	112
5.2.5 Reformed legislative standards	112
5.2.6 Holistic Port Management.....	113
5.2.7 21 st Century Border Management	115
5.2.8 One-Stop Border Post (OSBP)	116
5.2.9 Digital Transport Corridor	117
5.2.10 The Cross Border Transport Agreement	118
5.2.11 Gulf Cooperation Council.....	118
5.2.12 Border pass management system of Cambodia-Thailand.....	118
5.2.13 Border Management Coordination Agency Development by Indonesia	119
5.2.14 Inter-agency coordinated border management committee by Philippines	119
5.2.15 Authorized Economic Operators.....	120
5.2.16 Automated border management	121
5.2.17 Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) of the BBIN.....	121
5.2.18 UN TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers) system	122
5.2.19 Coordinated Border management of Singapore	123
5.2.20 Innovative Finnish model for border coordination	123
5.2.21 Road Cargo System (ROCARS) (Hong Kong China)	124

5.3	Technologies used in the operation of land ports	129
Chapter 6: Findings from Survey, KII, FGD and Public Consultation		136
6.1	Survey insights	136
6.2	Insights from KIIs, FGD and Public Consultation.....	141
Chapter 7: Requirements of Legislative, Administrative and Policy Reforms Identified		146
7.1	Legislation, administrative procedures and policies that govern the Land Port Management	146
7.2	Recommendations on reform requirements of legislative, administrative and policy.....	148
Chapter 8: Adjustments or Modifications Required for Making the Bangladesh Land Port Management Efficient, Effective and Harmonized for Trade Facilitation		151
8.1	Recommendations on SOP	151
8.2	Recommendations on custom procedures	157
8.3	Recommendation for the Bangladesh Land port Authority/ Private Operators	158
8.3.1	Automation.....	158
8.3.2	Transport facilitation	159
8.3.3	Infrastructure development.....	160
8.4	Recommendations on quarantine and testing	161
8.5	Recommendations on immigration service.....	161
8.6	Recommendations for BGB.....	162
8.7	Recommendations for C&F agents.....	162
8.8	Recommendations on coordination mechanism and harmonization	162
8.9	Recommendations on implementing international standards, technologies and best practices.....	163
8.10	Recommendation on risk management at border point	164
8.11	Other recommendations for increasing land port efficiency	165
Conclusions		166
References.....		167
Appendix-1: Questionnaire of the field survey		170
Appendix-2: Questionnaire for the key informant interview		173
Appendix-3: Sample distribution for conducted quantitative survey		181
Appendix-4: List of respondents of key informant interviews		184
Appendix-5: List of participants in the focus group discussion		185

Appendix-6: List of participants in the public consultation	187
Appendix-7: Validation workshop proceedings and participants	190
Appendix-8: Findings from KII, FGD and PC	197
Appendix-9: List of relevant laws, policies etc.	212
Appendix-10: Terms of reference	218

List of Tables

Table 1: Current land customs stations of Bangladesh.....	2
Table 2: Details of operational and proposed land ports of Bangladesh.....	5
Table 3: Export-import statistics of Bangladesh.....	12
Table 4: Imports by routes.....	13
Table 5: Exports by routes.....	14
Table 6: Land port trade statistics.....	15
Table 7: Import-export statistics of 7 land ports operated by BLPA.....	16
Table 8: Name of the operators of BOT based land ports.....	18
Table 9: Trade statistics of 5 BOT operated land ports.....	18
Table 10: Land Ports Explored Under this Study.....	20
Table 11: Port wise banned goods.....	27
Table 12: Ranking of land ports.....	30
Table 13: Ranking of land ports based on income.....	31
Table 14: Comparison of BLPA and BOT based land ports (trade growth).....	32
Table 15: Comparison of BLPA and BOT based land ports (average income).....	33
Table 16: Comparison of BLPA and BOT based land ports (average trade volume).....	33
Table 17: Border trade transport system in land ports.....	40
Table 18: Required documents in land ports (export).....	43
Table 19: Procedure wise documentation requirement (Export).....	45
Table 20: Required documents in land ports (Import).....	46
Table 21: Procedure wise documentation requirement (Import).....	47
Table 22: Product category wise release time (Benapole land port).....	48
Table 23: Comparison of release time.....	50
Table 24: Comparison of TRS findings.....	51
Table 25: Comparison of LPI Index of Bangladesh with ASEAN countries.....	52
Table 26: Major institutions related to Trade Facilitation.....	54
Table 27: Major institutions related to Trade Facilitation and Cross-Broder Management in land ports.....	55
Table 28: Weaknesses of the major institutions involved in the cross-border management.....	66
Table 29: Import-export procedural hindrances.....	67
Table 30: SOP for import and export in land ports.....	89
Table 31: Standard and major functions, features of a port.....	104
Table 32: Features and standards of land port of entry.....	105
Table 33: Facilities provided in a dry/ inland port.....	106
Table 34: Comprehensive set of facilities provided in dry/inland ports.....	106
Table 35: Commonly used international agreements, laws, regulations, standards, and procedures in ports.....	107
Table 36: Best practices in managing inland ports in Europe.....	113
Table 37: Comparison of best practices in port management.....	124
Table 38: LPI of the selected countries with best practices.....	128
Table 39: Technologies used in land ports.....	133
Table 40: Technologies used in land ports of Bangladesh.....	133
Table 41: Sample distribution (Respondent's Category).....	136

Table 42: Port users' views on land port efficiency in trade facilitation and inter-port management (Efficiency of relevant service providers).....	137
Table 43: Quality of land port services in case of import.....	138
Table 44: Quality of land port services in case of export.....	138
Table 45: Quality of other land port services	139
Table 46: Coordination system in the port for coordination between the service providers	139
Table 47: Assessment about the current coordination system	140
Table 48: Perception of service quality improvement if one-stop service is introduced in the land port	140
Table 49: Necessary things to be done for making Bangladesh's land port more efficient	140
Table 50: Charges and fees in land ports	147

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map showing land port locations of Bangladesh	6
Figure 2: Portion of imports through land ports in total import (last 5 years)	13
Figure 3: Portion of exports through land ports in total exports (last 5 years)	14
Figure 4: Income statistics of BLPA (last 6 years).....	15
Figure 5: Total trade volume of BOT based land ports in FY 2021-2022.....	19
Figure 6: Import-export statistics of Benapole land port (last 6 years)	21
Figure 7: Import-export statistics of Bhomra land port (last 6 years).....	23
Figure 8: Import-export statistics of Akhaura land port (last 6 years)	24
Figure 9: Import-export statistics of Sonamasjid land port (last 6 years)	25
Figure 10: Import-export statistics of Banglabandha land port (last 6 years)	27
Figure 11: Share of total trade volume by the BLPA and BOT operated ports in the FY2021-22	33
Figure 12: Import procedure in land ports	36
Figure 13: Export procedure in land ports	39
Figure 14: Immigration procedure in land ports	40
Figure 15: Transport formalities in land ports (Import).....	41
Figure 16: Transport formalities in land ports (Export)	42
Figure 17: Stakeholder-wise time allocation in Benapole land port.....	49
Figure 18: Commodity wise time requirements of Benapole land port.....	49
Figure 19: Responses on coordination system of land ports	74
Figure 20: Assessment about the current coordination system.....	74
Figure 21: Agencies engaged in cross-border trade.....	77
Figure 22: Perception of service quality improvement if one-stop service is introduced in the land port	84
Figure 23: National Single Window concept	87
Figure 24: Proposed E-port diagram	134

List of Abbreviations

AEO	Authorized Economic Operators
AI	Artificial Intelligence
API	Application Programming Interface
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
AW	ASYCUDA World
AWB	Air Waybill
BBIN	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCH	Benapole Customs House
BCOM	Bangladesh Customs Office Management
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BFTI	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute
BGB	Border Guard Bangladesh
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BIDA	Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BIN	Business Identification Number
BIWTA	Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BLPA	Bangladesh Land Port Authority
BOE	Bill of Export
BOT	Build, Operate, Transfer
BRCP	Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project
BSTI	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution
C&F	Clearing and Forwarding
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CBM	Coordinated Border Management
CCC	Customs Co-operation Council
CCZ	Common Control Zone
CO	Certificate of Origin
CPA	Chittagong Port Authority
CSI	Container Security Initiative
DCCI	Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry
DTM	Deputy Traffic Manager
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
EGM	Export General Manifest
EMS	Enterprise Management System
EPB	Export Promotion Bureau
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
ERC	Export Registration Certificate
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESPO	The European Sea Ports Organisation
FBCCI	Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries

FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FS	Field Survey
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
HS	Harmonized System
ICCB	International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh
ICD	Inland Container Depots
ICP	Integrated Check Posts
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGM	Import General Manifest
IIT	Imports and Internal Trade
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INR	Indian Rupee
IoT	Internet of Things
IRC	Import Registration Certificate
IRD	Internal Resources Division
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Center
IWT	Inland Water Transport
KII	Key Informant Interview
LC	Letter of Credit
LCA	Letter Of Credit Authorization
LCS	Land Customs Stations
LDC	Least Developed Country
LPAI	Land Ports Authority of India
LPMS	Land Port Management System
MCCI	Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MOS	Ministry of Shipping
MT	Metric Ton
NBR	National Board of Revenue
NOC	No Object Certificate
NOO	No Objection Order
NSW	National Single Window
NTFB	National Trade Facilitation Body
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
OGA	Other Government Agencies
OOC	Out of Charge
OSBP	One-Stop Border Post
PC	Public Consultation
PCS	Port Community System
PNCT	Port Newark Container Terminal
PPP	Public-Private Partnership

PSC	Project Steering Committee
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification Devices
RJSC	Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
RKC	Revised Kyoto Convention
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Area
SAPTA	SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement
SASEC	South Asia Sub Regional Economic Cooperation
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SRO	Statutory Regulatory Orders
STA	Special Trade Agreement
TAR	Trans-Asian Railway
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TIN	Tax Identification Number
TOS	Terminal Operating System
TRS	Time Release Study
UN	United Nations
UN TIR	United Nations Transports International Route
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
USA	United States of America
VAT	Value Added Tax
VOA	Visa on Arrival
WCO	World Customs Organization
WITS	World Integrated Trade Solution
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

The Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) is working to proliferate the services of the land ports through the development of infrastructure, effective cargo handling and storage, the provision of high-quality services, and the facilitation of public-private partnerships. Bangladesh Land Port Authority was established to manage the land ports in 2001 and at present, under this authority, among the 57 land customs stations spread around the country, 24 important customs stations have been declared as land ports by the government. Land ports of Bangladesh play an important role by facilitating the movement of goods and passengers to and from Bangladesh to India and other neighboring countries. Due to Bangladesh's unique geographical position with India, land ports bring opportunities for cross-border trade with the neighboring countries. Over the years, land ports experienced steady trade growth and the income of BLPA also increased congenially. Making cross-border trade quicker and simpler while ensuring sufficient safety and security is critical for land ports. The existing procedures and systems in the land ports are facing myriad challenges which may escalate as the land ports are expected to handle an increased volume of trade. According to the World Bank Logistics Performance Index 2023, Bangladesh ranks 88th out of 139 countries. Bangladesh currently holds an LPI score of 2.6 and 2.3, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 2.4 and 3 respectively in customs, infrastructure, international shipments, logistics competence, tracking & tracing and timeliness scores. Within the six dimensions of the LPI namely customs, infrastructure, international shipments, logistics competence and quality, timeliness, tracking, and tracing Bangladesh ought to improve the score in each dimension for ensuring a seamless trade environment and complying with the WTO TFA agreement. Thus, it is now imperative to assess current practices and procedures of the land ports, identifying the institutions related to port management and their functionality, gaps for mapping existing procedures and developing efficient standard operating procedures in accordance with international standards and best practices.

Bangladesh's land ports have become more crucial for facilitating the import, export, transportation, and distribution of goods since the establishment of the BLPA. The performance of Land ports must be improved if they are to keep up with the rapid changes in logistics and freight processes. For example, Burimari land port in Lalmonirhat is the busiest of all the land ports, handling a higher volume of traded cargo compared to other ports, and port users frequently experience issues while obtaining the port's services without interruption. In addition to the port authority, a number of other land port stakeholders, such as customs, immigration, quarantine, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), banks, importers-exporters, C&F agents, association, and others, are involved in port operations and their performance impacts the overall standards and operational efficacy of the port.

This study, spotting the land ports of Bangladesh explored their current situation and identified issues, gaps, and procedural hindrances which are impeding broad trade facilitation objectives. Presenting a model for standard procedures in the land port activities, the study also recommended various actions to make land port operational

procedures seamless and other relevant reform suggestions based on the analysis of existing rules, regulations, and concerns of the stakeholders and port users.

Chapter one of this study outlined the introduction of the study and its objectives, purposes, rationale, and scopes based on the terms of references. The study aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis of present land port management and international standards and best practices that are critical for border operations. This study has therefore conducted an elaborate analysis of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for cross border land port management along with identifying procedural hindrances, institutional weakness of the border agencies, and current coordination mechanism at the border point to suggest adjustments or modifications for making the Bangladesh land port management efficient. The methodology of the study comprises a hybrid approach of both quantitative and qualitative methods. For quantitative data collection, a field survey of 201 respondents from the port users and stakeholders was conducted and for qualitative data collection, 21 key informant interviews and one focus group discussion were held. A public consultation was also organized for the study to generate valuable insights from the stakeholders on the relevant issues of the study.

Chapter two of the study elucidated the current status of land ports and procedural aspects of the land ports' operations. This chapter revealed the significance of land ports as 8.6% of the foreign trade was maneuvered through land ports in FY 2020-21. Land ports are experiencing continuous growth since after the pandemic period FY2019-20 trade through land ports increased 40.24% in FY2021-22. From the declared 24 land ports, 12 land ports are now operational. Out of the total 12 operational land ports, only 7 ports consisting of Benapole, Burimari, Akhaura, Bhomra, Nakugaon, Tamabil, and Sonahat are now being governed, monitored, managed and operated under the direct supervision of the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA). The rest 5 ports Sonamasjid, Hilis, Banglabandha, Teknaf and Bibirbazar are operated through private port operations on build-operate and transfer (BOT) basis. Trade statistics of these ports showed Burimari as the busiest or top port and Bhomra, Shonamashjid as the second and third positioned land port in terms of the amount of trade volume handling. This chapter also inspected current procedures of export-imports and immigration in the land ports and outlined the specific steps involved in land port trade and passenger movement. The transportation system aligned with the border trade also has dispensable formalities like redundant document submission or repetitive security checking. Trade through land ports requires different documents many of which can be digitized for paperless trade. The study also examined time release studies for exhibiting the time required in the land port trade and found the release time of land ports higher compared to the neighboring countries.

Chapter three of this report revealed major institutions engaged in trade facilitation and cross-border trade as well as port management. Generally, the Ministry of Commerce, its wings, and different agencies, NBR, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Home Affairs and etc. are engaged in broad trade facilitation activities. Considering the supply side and demand side of the ports' service point of view, several types of institutions or agencies like Bangladesh Land Port Authority, Customs, Port Operator, Certification and Quality Control Authority, Bank, Immigration, Transport and

Logistics Company, C&F Agents, Exporters and Importers, BGB are engaged in the trade facilitation and port operations or service activities. The study found various gaps and weaknesses of these institutions like infrastructural limitations, policy constraints, lack of coordination and procedural ambiguities. In case of export-import and other functionalities of the land ports, hard copy document submission, scanty coordination, lack of timeliness in assessment and assessed duty payment, security issues, testing and certification time lag, lengthy custom processes, lack of integrated automation and absence of one-stop service center were found under procedural hindrances.

Chapter four of the study traversed around the coordination mechanism at the border point and in the management of the land ports. The survey of the study found that a coordination system prevails in the land ports but there is much room for improvement. One of the reasons behind the coordination problem is that each organization operates under its own rules and regulations and there is no formal uniform rules or regulation for binding all organizations under one umbrella. The survey of this study found the majority of the port users think that OSS (one-stop service center) and NSW can be a fulcrum for improving the overall quality of ports, however, the implementation of the cherished one-stop service system in the land ports is also being curbed due to proper coordination mechanism and interagency cooperation. Besides, regulatory reforms and coordination approaches, technology implementation and skilled manpower are also required for initiating OSS for better port service and trade facilitation. The chapter also outlined an automation based standard operating procedure (SOP) for the facilitation of current land port practices. Although land Port-wise, standard operating procedures will vary, the outlined SOP can be customized port-wise and automation can be inserted in relevant processes for removing institutional ambiguities and procedural redundancies. Also, the study proposed approaches like single entry of car pass, coordinated automation of trade documents, express mail system for sample testing, sharing of information for streamlining the current operating procedure in the land ports.

Chapter five of this study explored international standards, best practices and technologies used in land ports around the world. The chapter outlined international land port features and standards from the USA land ports of entry, ICPs of India and European dry ports or inland ports. Standard features of land ports were revealed that include customs control and clearance office, temporary storage during customs inspection, infrastructure for transport stations, road and rail network, industrial area management, control of vehicles entering and leaving the port, environmental control, control of dangerous cargo, safety and security systems, Immigration, health, warehouse facilities, parking and sheds, loading, discharging, storage and distribution of cargo and so on.

Best practices around the globe for port and border management have been also represented in chapter five. Best practices typified initiatives like Integrated Check Posts (ICP) adorned with Land Port Management System (LPMS) of India, investment in infrastructure development and automation of Singapore port, Bureaucratic process cutting in Ukrainian ports, private participation in Port Newark, reformed legislative standards followed by India and other neighboring countries that can be

replicable for better land port management. The study outlined the 21st century border management of the USA-Mexico, the one-stop border post (OSBP) of Zambia-Zimbabwe, cross border transport agreement between Vietnam and Laos, the Gulf cooperation council for customs and border trade, and the practice of authorized economic operators (AEO) in Malaysia, automated border management type best practices available across the world for efficient and harmonized land port as well as border management.

This chapter also discussed the technologies like ICP with LPMS, ASYCUDA, IoT, automated warehouse or digital warehouse systems, web-based platforms, RFID, barcode and QR code etc. which are used in different land ports around the world. However, in case of land ports of Bangladesh a lot of procedures are carried out manually and presence of technological approaches are still limited.

The **chapter six** of the study presented findings of the survey, KII, FGD and Public Consultation conducted for the study.

A total of 201 participants from Benapole land port, Bhomra Land Port, Shona Masjid Land port, Akhaura land port, and Banglabandha land port were surveyed for the study. The survey revealed major findings like efficiency of relevant service providers in the port, quality of land port services in the case of export and import, and necessary things like Infrastructure development, increasing port efficiency, increasing the quality of logistics and transportation services, implementation of SOP and automation for making Bangladesh's land port more efficient, effective and properly functional.

From KIIs conducted on 21 respondents of different sectors, major findings include complications in export-import procedures, automation and coordination problems in the ports, and institutional weakness of the different agencies engaged in the land ports.

The focus group discussion shed light on various procedural and infrastructural issues in the land ports. FGD also revealed immigration problems and ways to resolve port inefficiencies by taking measures like improving custom and port procedures, ensuring effective coordination, automation, and adequate infrastructure development-type measures.

The public consultation revealed the necessity of automation systems and required integrated digitalized systems in land ports for seamless trade. Stakeholders identified the customs, land port authority and testing facility-related issues and provided ways forward to overcome trade hindrances through coordinated approaches. Stakeholders also suggested possible courses of action to reduce some documents and processes for making the current operating procedures more simplified and efficient.

Chapter seven incorporated legislative, administrative and policies that govern the land ports which includes the BLPA acts and regulation. As a crucial piece of legislation, the Bangladesh Land Port Authority Act of 2001, created the BLPA and facilitated trade by establishing regional connections via land routes. Execution of the act currently falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Shipping.

The land ports authority act consists of only 23 concise, straightforward sections. The Act has empowered the government to declare any land customs station in the country as the land port, and also to constitute the Bangladesh Land Ports Authority as a statutory body.

The policy reform requirements should consider the importance of developing a National Master Plan that includes long-term targets, goals, and actions for the development, operation, and modernization of land ports in order to construct a strong policy to improve land port management. Additionally, simplifying the procedures that port users must follow and identifying the agencies' functions in the operation of land ports that are not vitally significant will aid in the reform of land port difficulties.

For legislative reform, when the roles of several government agencies operating within the purview of a land port are listed in the Act, the BLPA's precise role may be defined by including their functions in the broader trade promotion and management process. The Board of BLPA's membership may also be changed to include representatives from relevant ministries and departments, The Board may also include representatives from trade associations, port users' associations, and worker's associations.

And administrative reform should consider that to enable greater coordination at the policy level, a National Committee may be established with the participation of concerned ministries, trade groups, think-tank organizations, intelligentsia, etc. Additionally, in order to secure the future development of the land ports, it is imperative to build and maintain the infrastructural facilities required, such as office buildings, warehouses, transportation networks, and financial systems.

Chapter eight included recommendations on various aspects to improve port efficiency and service quality. Suggestions on improving custom procedures, management of land port authority, quarantine and testing, immigration, and coordination were put forward for implementation. The study recommended a standard operating procedure focusing automation and coordination among the border service agencies. For instance, in case of streamlining the standard operating procedure, digitally coordinated car pass system, easy e-payment of duties, digital payment of port fees, online submission of custom clearance certificate, removal of joint signatory gate pass, etc. can make land port trade procedures seamless.

For improving the customs procedure, rigorous use of online documentation systems, online based examination report submission, fully automated bill of entry submission, digitized clearance certification sharing systems, reduction of hardcopy submissions, pre-arrival processing, digital and integrated car pass and gate pass processes can improve the efficiency of the trade procedures in the land ports.

The land port authority can improve its operations and management through automation, transport facilitation and necessary infrastructure development. For automation, the port authority needs to initiate a digital payment system for port charges, develop OSS based digital help desks, an automated warehouse monitoring system and so on. For transport system facilitation, more sheds, parking spaces, and

terminals as well as development of private parking systems and multimodal transportation systems are necessary. For infrastructural development to facilitate trade, the port authority can increase and improve warehouse, and cold storage facilities, initiate a vehicle tracking system, and ensure 24/7 seamless electricity and internet facilities along with developing fire stations, and hospital facilities inside the port premises.

For seamless quarantine and testing services, an express mail system can be introduced for sample carrying and faster testing. Plant Quarantine or other testing authorities can be granted access to customs systems for information and certification sharing. Moreover, an emergency testing system, booth systems for collecting and sending the samples to nearby testing labs and engaging nearby university labs for testing services can be beneficial for time-efficient and easy testing services.

Immigration services may introduce a token system for efficient queue management. A separate roadway or lane should be constructed for the passengers or travelers and restrooms, entertainment sections, and shopping malls can be constructed within the port premise to facilitate a seamless immigration system and better passenger management. Also, for improving the present immigration system, the number of workforces needs to be increased in the immigration.

As a key stakeholder in port management, C&F agents need to be trained with the updated knowledge of customs rules and regulations including HS code and advanced ruling systems. Also, the BGB checking system of cargo and passengers needs to be time bound for ensuring time efficacy in the cross-border trade operations.

A stable coordination system outlining each institution's specific roles and managerial authorities should be introduced to improve the coordination mechanism at the land ports, A single entry system for car pass, one-stop service center development, comprehensive coordination between the land port authority and customs and other stakeholders along with harmonized integrated check post development with the neighboring countries are also necessary for enhancing coordination among the land port stakeholders. A coordination committee can be formed including all service providers at land port co-chaired by appropriate representatives of Customs and BLPA. Moreover, for adjusting better coordination with neighboring countries, stakeholders from private sectors need to be included in relevant bilateral country (e.g. joint working group) meetings.

Land ports can also incorporate international best practices like ICP development, port modernization and integrative automation, one-stop border post, cross-border transport management, digital transport corridor, UN TIR system, authorized economic operators and so on. With these recommendations from the stakeholders, this chapter provided ways forward to make standard operating procedures robust and land port trade efficient, effective and harmonious with global standards that can help improve coordination and trade performance in the land ports.

Chapter-1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Ports are catalysts for economic development as they enable trade and support supply chains. Ports are the hub and node of networks that link countries with the rest of the world. Bangladesh is blessed with a geographical location having the entire southern part open to the Bay of Bengal. The country has three seaports and border connections with India and Myanmar through land ports. For conducting trade smoothly and effectively, these characteristics can be regarded as unique because nowadays ports are treated as significantly contributive in addition to trade liberalization and other concerned policies to trade openness.

However, the ports of Bangladesh are not still considered adequately efficient globally in terms of both technical and non-technical issues. According to the World Bank Logistics Performance Index 2023, Bangladesh ranks 88th out of 139 countries and the LPI index covers performance in dimensions like timeliness, infrastructure, customs, tracking and tracing, logistic competency, and international shipment and many of these are closely related to port operations.

Many ports in Bangladesh face bottlenecks due to inadequate infrastructure and disruptive logistics as well as communication systems. Moreover, some ports are not well connected with key cities, nevertheless where connected transportation condition including other associated services are not sufficient to deliver the goods effectively to derive the utmost benefits from the ports. To grow international trade and to achieve trade facilitation goals, addressing multi-sectoral aspects for the effective operation of the ports is imperative for Bangladesh.

Currently, Land Ports of Bangladesh are governed and managed by the Bangladesh Land port authority (BLPA). This Authority was established in accordance with the Bangladesh Land Port Authority Act, 2001 in order to facilitate export and import between Bangladesh and its neighboring countries. BLPA has been active in seeking the improvement of Land ports in Bangladesh, especially looking at infrastructure development initiatives, increasing the efficiency of cargo handling, improving storage facilities and fostering public-private partnerships for effective and responsive service delivery at the border.

Land ports are playing a significant role in increasing import and export and collecting government revenue. At the same time, it is playing an effective role in alleviating poverty and reducing border smuggling by creating employment and increasing the income of the marginal people of the country. The daily activities of Bangladesh Land Port Authority are being conducted keeping in mind the objective of accelerating economic growth. Moreover, Bangladesh entered the era of paperless trade as a member country of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and agreed to it to reduce hassles in cross-border trade and to expedite customs activities. The paperless trade aims to accelerate the implementation of digital trade facilitation measures for trade and development which will likely reduce time and harassment in the export and import of goods. Devising the procedures of the trade in the land ports in accordance to trade facilitation and paperless trade objectives is crucial now that instigates the

crying need for a standard operating procedure with digitalized, automated and smart border management approaches.

However, the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) has no clear compiled policy and regulatory guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) regarding Cross Border Land Port Management and modus operandi of international trade, transport formalities, procedures and documentations commensurate with global standards.

Against the backdrop of this scenario, Bangladesh is in need of a compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedure (SOP) for cross-border land port management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures documentation, and related matters. SOP implies that it would be able to reduce impediments of logistic supports in 24 land ports of Bangladesh and to lower/lessen the regulatory expenses through simplifying commercial invoices inspection certificates, quality certificates both for exporters and importers.

An SOP outlining the modernization of border management procedures aiming at a clear, concise, transparent framework is likely to simplify and harmonize formalities, procedures, and the related exchange of information and documents between the various partners in the supply chain. Moreover, traders across the border will gain in terms of higher predictability and speed of operations and lower transaction costs, resulting in more competitive import and exports on global markets.

1.2 Land Ports of Bangladesh

The inception of land ports in the country began with the land customs stations. After the partition of undivided India, Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) inherited some connecting points for passenger movement with India. At the time, trade through such sites was not crucial. Due to a lack of commerce opportunities and passenger transit facilities after Bangladesh gained its independence, many of these sites ceased to function, and today, for the most part, they only exist on paper. Some of the checkpoints were transformed into Land Customs Stations (LCSs) in the 1980s to facilitate commerce with neighbors, and over time, trade increased through those checkpoints. After 90s, the policy of opening up the market accelerates the stride of increasing bilateral trade through those LCSs. The bilateral trade got momentum after 2000, as the industries, trade and businesses flourished in Bangladesh.

According to the latest Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) issued by the National Board of Revenue (SRO No-37-Act / 2022/53 / Customs, Date: February 16, 2022) the number of LCSs is 57 in Bangladesh. These custom stations also include operational land ports. The list of LCSs is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Current land customs stations of Bangladesh

Sl.	Name of the Land Custom Stations	District
1.	Benapole	Jashore
2.	Raimangal (Angtihar)	Khulna
3.	Khulna	Khulna
4.	Bhomra	Satkhira
5.	Darshana	Chouadanga

Sl.	Name of the Land Custom Stations	District
6.	Daulatganj	Chouadanga
7.	Mujibnagar	Meherpur
8.	Sultanganj/Premtoly (Godagari)	Rajshahi
9.	Rajshahi	Rajshahi
10.	Sirajganj	Sirajganj
11.	Sonamasjid	Chapainawabganj
12.	Rohonpur	Chapainawabganj
13.	Amnura	Chapainawabganj
14.	Dhamoir Hat	Naogaon
15.	Hili	Dinajpur
16.	Birol	Dinajpur
17.	Banglabandha	Panchagar
18.	Chilahati	Nilphamari
19.	Burimari	Lalmonirhat
20.	Sonahat	Kurigram
21.	Roumari	Kurigram
22.	Chilmari	Kurigram
23.	Noonkhawa	Kurigram
24.	Aricha ghat	Manikganj
25.	Dhanua- Kamalpur	Jamalpur
26.	Nakugaon	Sherpur
27.	Gobrakura	Mymensing
28.	Koraitoly	Mymensing
29.	Borochara	Sunamganj
30.	Chatak	Sunamganj
31.	Nowarai	Sunamganj
32.	Chela	Sunamganj
33.	Ichhamati	Sunamganj
34.	Bholaganj	Sylhet
35.	Tamabil	Sylhet
36.	Jokiganj	Sylhet
37.	Sheola	Sylhet
38.	Betuli (Fultola)	Moulvibazar
39.	Chatlapur	Moulvibazar
40.	Balla	Habiganj
41.	Ashuganj	Brahmanbaria
42.	Akhaura	Brahmanbaria
43.	Bibirbazar	Cumilla
44.	Belonia	Feni
45.	Ramgarh	Khagrachari
46.	Thegamukh	Rangamati
47.	Cox's bazar	Cox's bazar
48.	Teknaf	Cox's bazar

Sl.	Name of the Land Custom Stations	District
49.	Narayanganj	Narayanganj
50.	Muktarpur (Sumit)	Munshiganj
51.	Rooppur	Pabna
52.	Rampal	Bagerhat
53.	Premier	Chattogram
54.	BM Energy	Chattogram
55.	JMI	Chattogram
56.	Unitex	Chattogram
57.	Matarbari	Cox's bazar

Source: *Land Customs Stations of Bangladesh (2022)*, NBR

The total length of Bangladesh's land border is 4,246 km. Of this, the length of Bangladesh's border with India is 4,053 km, and another 193 km with Myanmar based on the Bangladesh National Information Bureau. This long land border of Bangladesh provides opportunities to exploit cross-border connection with neighboring countries for growing import-export and enhancing regional cooperation.

For the development of infrastructural facilities and better port management to improve and facilitate land import-export activities with neighboring countries, Bangladesh Land Port Authority was established by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority Act, 2001 (Act No. 20 of 2001). The authority started the operational activities of the land ports in 2002.

Currently, under this authority, 24 important customs stations have been declared as land ports by the Government. Necessary infrastructure has been built to develop 13 customs stations as fully functional land ports. Among them, 8 land ports namely - Benapole, Burimari, Akhaura, Bhomra, Nakugaon, Tamabil, Sonahat and Gobra-kura-Karaitali land ports are being managed by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority. For the rest 5 land ports namely- Banglabandha, Sonamsjid, Hili, Teknaf and Bibirbazar land ports, operators have been engaged on BOT (Build, Operate & Transfer) basis to facilitate infrastructure construction and port management. Development activities of the remaining 11 land ports are ongoing.

The land ports in Bangladesh encompass the land customs station, border protection and other inspection agencies responsible for the enforcement of the country's laws pertaining to such activities. They serve as a point of contact for travelers entering or leaving the country and are engaged in preventing the entry of illegal immigrants, collecting taxes, preventing the entry of harmful plants, animal pests, and human and animal diseases, inspecting export and import documents, registering valuable items being temporarily taken out of the country, and conducting business. Land ports are spread across the country connecting the border of surrounding countries like India and Myanmar. The location of the land ports in Bangladesh is illustrated in the Table following:

Table 2: Details of operational and proposed land ports of Bangladesh

Sl. No.	Land Port	Date of Declaration	District	District on the opposite side	Management/Status
1	Benapole	12 Jan 2002	Sharsha, Jashore	24 Pargana, West Bengal	BLPA
2	Teknaf	12 Jan 2002	Teknaf, Cox's Bazar	Maungdaw, Myanmar	Build, Operate, Transfer (BOT) (United Land Port Teknaf Ltd.)
3	Banglabandha	12 Jan 2002	Tetulia, Panchagarh	Fulbari, Jalpaiguri	BOT (Banglabandha land port link limited)
4	Sonamasjid	12 Jan 2002	Shibganj, Chapai Nawabgaj	Mahadipur, Maldah	BOT(Panama-Sonamasjid Port Link Limited)
5	Hili	12 Jan 2002	Hakimpur, Dinajpur	South Dinajpur, West Bengal	BOT(Panama-Hili Port Link Limited)
6	Bhomra	12 Jan 2002	Sadar, Satkhira	24 Pargana, West Bengal	BLPA
7	Darshana	12 Jan 2002	Damurhuda, Chuadanga	Krishnanagar, West Bengal	BLPA (Not yet operational)
8	Birol	12 Jan 2002	Birol, Dinajpur	Goura, West Bengal	BOT (Birol Land Port Limited) (Not yet operational)
9	Burimari	12 Jan 2002	Patgram, Lalmonirhat	Mekhaljigonj, West Bengal	BLPA
10	Tamabil	12 Jan 2002	Goainghat, Sylhet	Dawki, Meghalaya	BLPA
11	Akhaura	12 Jan 2002	Akhaura, Brahmanbaria	Agartala, Tripura	BLPA
12	Bibirbazar	18 Nov 2002	Sadar, Cumilla	Sunamura, Agartala	BOT (Beximco Port Ltd.)
13	Biloniya	23 Feb 2009	Biloniya, Feni	Biloniya, Tripura	BLPA (Not yet operational)
14	Gobarakura and Karitali	14 Jun 2010	Haluaghat, Mymensingh	Tura, Meghalaya	BLPA
15	Nakugaon	30 Sep 2010	Nalitabari, Sherpur	Dalu, Meghalaya	BLPA
16	Ramgarh	07 Nov 2010	Ramgarh, Khagrachari	Sabroom, Tripura	BLPA (Not yet operational)
17	Sonahat	25 Oct 2012	Bhurungamari, Kurigram	Sonahat, Assam	BLPA
18	Tegamukh	30 Jun 2013	Barkal, Rangamati	Demagri, Mizoram	BLPA (Not yet operational)
19	Chilahati	28 Jul 2013	Domar, Nilphamari	Cooch Behar, West Bengal	BLPA (Not yet operational)
20	Daulatganj	31 Jul 2013	Jibon Nagar, Chuadanga	Mazdia, Nadia	BLPA (Not yet operational)
21	Dhanua Kamalpur	21 May 2015	Bokshigonj, Jamalpur	Mohendragonj, Meghalaya	BLPA (Not yet operational)
22	Sheola	30 Jun 2015	Bianibazar, Sylhet	Sutarkandi, Karimganj	BLPA (Not yet operational)
23	Balla	23 Mar 2016	Chunarughat, Hobiganj	Paharmura, Tripura	BLPA (Not yet operational)
24	Bholagonj	29 Jul 2019	Companygonj, Sylhet	Cherapunji, Meghalaya	BLPA (Not yet operational)

Source: BLPA Data

All of the land ports are situated near the Zero-Line of the international boundary. The locations of the land ports along with the counterpart stations of the neighboring country on the other side of the border are shown in the Bangladesh map in the following figure:



Figure 1: Map showing land port locations of Bangladesh¹

¹ BLPA Annual Report 2021-22

1.3 Objective of the study

To facilitate effective cross border trade operations, modernization of border management procedure aiming at a clear, concise, transparent framework is required. However, it requires an in-depth analysis of present land port management and international standards and best practices that are critical for border operations. This study has therefore aimed to conduct a study to do an elaborate analysis of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management and hence the major objectives of the studies are as follows:

1. To Identify the current status of the Bangladesh Land Port Management including international trade procedure, transport formalities, documentations and related issues;
2. To identify the major institutional weakness for Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border management in Bangladesh including Implementation Gaps and Procedural Hindrances Identified;
3. To identify the current co-ordination mechanism at the border point and one stop service for the Land Port Management and developing SOP that covers both export and import point of view;
4. To identify the international standards, best practices and technologies elsewhere in terms operation of the Land Port to facilitate better management at the borders;
5. To identify Requirements of Legislative, Administrative and Policy Reforms;
6. To identify the adjustments or modifications that are required for making the Bangladesh Land Port management efficient, effective and harmonized for trade facilitation.

1.4 Rationale of the study

For meeting the goals of trade facilitation with low cost of doing business through paperless cross border trade and to increase the efficiency in cross border trade, initiatives including better cargo handling, improved storage facility and efficient custom station management, efficient port operations and management both in Land or Seaport also need to be ensured. It implies standard operating procedure would reduce the hurdles of logistic support in 24 lands ports of Bangladesh while reducing the regulatory expenses through paperless trade or simplifying commercial invoices, inspection certificates, and quality control certificates both for exporters and importers.

The Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) does not make any clear compiled policy and regulatory guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) regarding Cross Border Land Port Management and modus operandi of international trade, transport formalities, procedures and documentations. Accordingly, the land port management as part of the country's overall trade economic advancement now need to adopt a broad, comprehensive approach relevant to international good practice.

Trade across the border will gain in terms of higher predictability and speed of operations and lower transaction costs, resulting in more competitive exports on global markets. For countries as a whole, reducing unnecessary delays and costs attracts investments, and supports growth and job creation. In order to facilitate effective border operations, there is a need to have an enabling environment that involves different types of interventions and activities addressing the various dimensions of the government. This includes modernization of border management procedure aiming at a clear, concise, transparent framework. However, it requires an in-depth analysis of present land port management and international standards and best practices that are critical for border operations.

1.5 Scope of the study

Land ports are one of the key routes of exports and imports of Bangladesh. As land ports are facilitating trade through regional connectivity via land routes trade, current procedures, responsible bodies, coordination status, and possible best practices need to be investigated and explored for ensuring and revamping facilitation measures in the current land ports. Based on the objectives the scope of this study included reviewing the current status of Bangladesh's land port management where export-import procedures of the land ports, transportation formalities, documentation requirements, and time consumption in the land port trade were examined. For determining the major institutional weakness for Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border management the study put effort into identifying major institutions related to Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border management in Bangladesh, gaps between laws that govern the identified institutions and their implementation, and procedural hindrances in cross-border management. The study scope also covered the Coordination mechanism, one-stop service, and SOP aspects of land ports including the current co-ordination mechanism at the border point, status of the one-stop service for the Land Port Management, and review of the status of automation, and lack thereof in the context of inter- and intra-institutional coordination. Incorporating the category of the mode of operation of the land ports in the SOP, a possible Standard Operating Procedure, covering both export and import point of view was also proposed. In order to replicate best practices to ameliorate current procedures, the study reviewed international standards, best practices, and technologies used elsewhere in terms of operation of the Land Port where some best practices in compliance with the international standards and technology used can be referred to as best practice for land port management were probed. Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) is currently in charge of governing the land ports of Bangladesh and the study scope also incorporated legislation, administrative procedures, and policies that govern the land port management and reform requirements in these areas. Recommendation of adjustments and modifications that are required for making the management of the Land Ports of Bangladesh efficient, effective and harmonized for trade facilitation were made in respective areas based on the objectives of the study.

1.6 Methodology

The methodology of the study involves the following:

1. A desk review of all existing literature like relevant rules/regulations/policies and journal articles, etc.;
2. Quantitative Survey, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Public Consultations with policy level officials, think tanks, academia and other trade related agencies as decided by the client; and
3. Data Analysis, using available data from acceptable national (Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh Bank, National Board of Revenue, etc.) and international (UN Comtrade, UNCTAD, World Bank, etc.) sources., for a reasonable time frame of the most recent 5 years in the least.

The sequential steps that have been followed are mentioned below:

- (1) **Review of Existing Literature:** Available literature including the documents like BLPA annual reports, Customs reports, BBS reports, relevant journal articles and regulatory related documents of different countries have been reviewed. Moreover, BFTI's experts reviewed official reports, published papers and policy documents of the GoB, think-tank organizations and other international bodies, as available, have been analyzed.
- (2) **Field Test:** To find out the actual barriers to Standard Operating Procedure of Land Port, Trade Facilitation Issues and complexities in export import procedure, a field test in a land port was done as an instrument to validate the questionnaire for the survey. The field test was run on Akhaura land port where different port stakeholders like importers, exports, C&F agents, port authority, truck drivers were consulted with. The primary questionnaire was tested and verified by these (8-10) stakeholders.
- (3) **Finalization of Questionnaire for conducting quantitative Survey:** Structured questionnaires were designed for primary data collection from the relevant authorities as per the discussion with the implementing agencies while the testing of the question was also done by the consultant organization. Finally, **201 Quantitative surveys** have been conducted in five ports for the study to evaluate the issues of land port operating system and Cross Border Land Port Management system.
- (4) **Field Survey:** The survey data collection (quantitative) was conducted with concerned officials of port's authorities, major exporters and importers who conduct their business through the ports and other stakeholders of the ports. The total number of total relevant stakeholders was estimated at roughly 510. Considering the 5 (five) participants from each relevant stakeholder, the total population size, $P= 2550$. A total of 55 participants have been considered for qualitative data collection and 200 participants for a quantitative survey is 10%

of the total population. So, the sample size estimated for this study was $n=255$. The number of total relevant participants was 201 and survey data was collected from users and stakeholders of the five land ports. The five ports are Benapole land port, Bhomra land port, Sona Masjid land port, Akhaura land port and Banglabandha land port. Sample distribution for conducted quantitative survey is available in **Appendix-3**. Survey questionnaire is available in **Appendix-1**.

- (5) **Observation Method:** The study used observation method to realize trade procedures in land ports and issues, activities tied with land port trade. Observation method is described as a method to observe and describe the behavior of a subject and it involves the basic technique of simply watching the phenomena until some hunch or insight is gained. In the 5 land ports selected for this study, the study team observed port management activities and trade procedures for gaining insights.
- (6) **Key Informants Interviews (KII):** A round of exploratory interview was conducted for the study with the representatives of relevant stakeholders that included the government institutions, business associations, chambers, think-tank organizations, etc. Semi-structured interviews were used via purposeful rather than random sampling method. Appropriate measures were taken to avoid any risks of bias through sampling, response and the behavior of the interviewer. Three common techniques were used to conduct key informant interviews: telephone, email and face-to-face Interviews. When KIIs were conducted, a mixed methods evaluation strategy was adopted to produce a satisfactory analysis. All selected questionnaires were evaluated by the relevant experts. For the study, the questionnaire was evaluated by the relevant expert. Here, **21 KIIs** were conducted to assess standard land port operating system for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters. KII questionnaire is available in **Appendix-2**. Detailed information on KII participants is available in **Appendix-4**.
- (7) **Focus Group Discussions (FGD):** One FGD was organized targeting mainly the people concerned with the particular study. The FGD was held on Conference Room, Benapole Land Port, Benapole, Jashore. The participants in the FGD were 30 (thirty) in number. During discussions, participants were facilitated to discuss different aspects of the particular field amongst themselves. The **FGD** was organized in way that facilitated data generated from the survey question or secondary sources. The FGD included participants from different stakeholder groups like Custom House, Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA), DC office, BSTI, Plant Quarantine, Transport owners' Association, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Immigration Police, NSI, Exporter-Importers and C&F Agents. Meanwhile, documentation of discussions was done through video recording, audio tapes and written notes. The detailed participant list of FGD is available in **Appendix-5**

- (8) **Public Consultations:** The study conducted one public consultation with the relevant stakeholders. The participants for the PC were 36 in number. The respondent list of the PC is available in **Appendix-6**.
- (9) **Validation workshop:** For this study, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) organized a Validation Workshop on February 09, 2023. Key stakeholders related to the study presented their opinions and validated the findings of the report. The proceedings and respondent list of the validation is available in **Appendix-7**.
- (10) **Data Analysis:** All the information and data collected from various sources and through in-depth interviews, focused group discussions, public consultations, etc. with relevant stakeholders have been analyzed this particular study. As multiple methods of data gathering and analysis, covering both quantitative and qualitative data, including interviews and content analysis were applicable for the study. Here, statistical analysis was conducted using analytical software like STATA and Excel while Qualitative techniques were also used to collect and analyze in-depth/perceptual information on selected indicators related to the study. Analysis of stakeholders' perceptions about the subject matter was done from the FGD and KIIs.

1.7 Limitations

The fact that land ports were only practiced in Bangladesh, India and some regional countries was a significant drawback of this study. Although some of them may have served as border trading stations, they are mostly known elsewhere as dry ports built to service seaports. Similar to this, a small amount of literature is available that focuses solely on land ports and the administration or procedures of cross-border import and export trade. Besides the paucity of secondary data and literature, the survey data collection was difficult because of respondents' reluctance to provide required accurate information and inexpression of appropriate opinions relevant to the study.

Chapter 2: Current status of the Bangladesh land port management

2.1 Significance of land port in the current trade scenario of Bangladesh

Securing its ten-year economic journey with growth of more than six percent, Bangladesh has made outstanding progress in all areas of economic, social, and human development. Despite the COVID-19 epidemic, Bangladesh's GDP grew by 3.45 percent in FY2019–20 compared to 7.88 percent in FY2018–19. According to a rough projection, Bangladesh can achieve 7.25 percent GDP growth in FY2021–22², demonstrating the economy's robustness. GDP was US\$464.98 billion, with a US\$2824 GNI per capita in FY2021–22, up from US\$2,591 in FY2020–21.

Bangladesh's economy has benefited greatly from foreign trade, which accounts for 28% of its GDP³. The government of Bangladesh developed a strategy for the development of the manufacturing sector in the eighth five-year plan, making the export industry one of the main drivers of development with an export led growth strategy. The following table shows the import-export statistics of Bangladesh signifying the growth of trade over the years:

Table 3: Export-import statistics of Bangladesh

FY	Total Export (Value in Million US\$)	Export Growth Rate (in %)	Total Imports (Value in Million US\$)	(Value in Million US\$ Growth (%))
2016-17	38,500		48,212	
2017-18	41,254	7.15	59,027	22.4
2018-19	47,028	13.99	62,884	6.5
2019-20	39,755	-15.46	55,635	-11.5
2020-21	45,367	14.12	61,609	10.7
2021-22	60,971	34.40	91,932	49.2

Source: EPB pocket export statistics FY2020-2021

Since the volume of foreign trade is increasing over the years, and the country is on the way to graduate from LDC status, for sustaining the growth trend the government of Bangladesh is focusing on trade facilitation measures. Initiatives addressing cargo handling, improved storage facilities, and effective custom station management both in Land and Seaport are now crucial for ensuring trade facilitation with low cost of doing business through paperless cross-border trade and to increase the efficiency in cross-border trade.

Bangladesh's land ports have become much crucial for foreign trade because of their contribution in easier people and goods movement from Bangladesh to India and other nearby nations border countries. Land ports provide prospects for cross-border trade with India and other neighboring nations because of Bangladesh's special geographic location in relation to that country. Physical proximity has made it

² Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS 2021-22)

³ The World Bank- World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files

possible for neighboring nations to trade with Bangladesh in an economical, practical, and effective manner. Geographically, Bangladesh is surrounded by India to the north, north-east, and west, and by Myanmar to the south-east. The fifth-longest land border in the world between Bangladesh and India presents opportunities for both nations to establish land customs stations, ports, and international passenger terminals for trade, vehicle mobility, and passenger travel. As Bangladesh imports and exports through three routes; Sea, Land, and Airport, in these recent years, the contribution of land ports has increased gradually. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics data, the following table depicts the portion of land port trades in the total import:

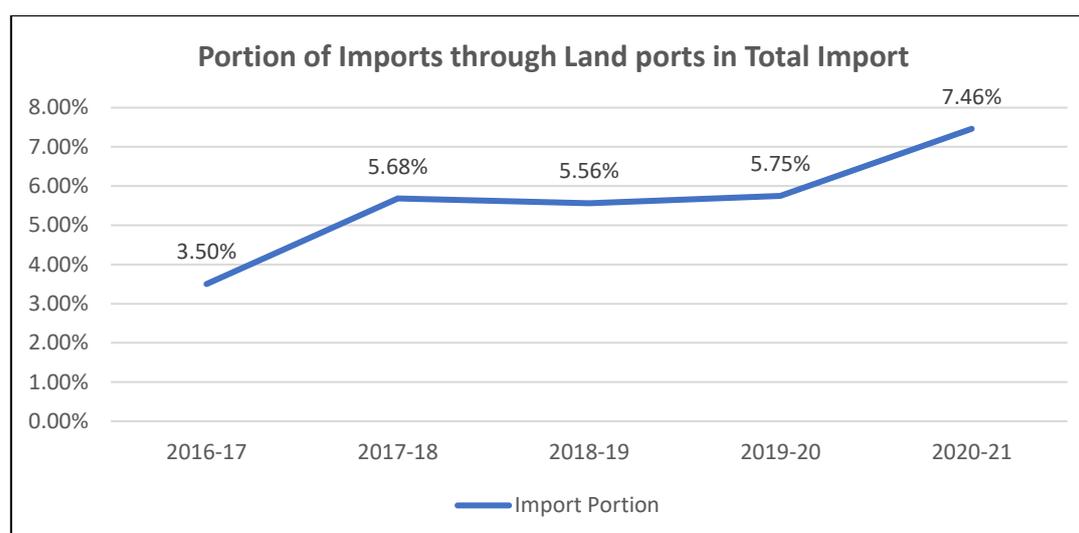
Table 4: Imports by routes

Imports by Routes (Million Tk.)					
Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Sea	45,47,015	51,98,361	54,04,720	51,28,752	61,37,846
Land	1,65,480	3,13,283	3,17,955	3,12,906	4,95,206
Total	47,12,495	55,11,644	57,22,675	54,41,658	66,33,052
Portion of Imports through Sea ports	96.50%	94.32%	94.44%	94.25%	92.54%
Portion of Imports through Land ports	3.5%	5.68%	5.56%	5.75%	7.46%

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics of Bangladesh 2020-21- BBS

This statistic indicates that in FY 2016-17 only 3.5% of the total import amount was through land ports and in recent FY 2020-21 share of land port trade in total trade amount has increased to 7.46%. The following figure shows the increasing patterns of land port imports over the last 5 years:

Figure 2: Portion of imports through land ports in total import (last 5 years)



Sources: BBS data and BFTI analysis

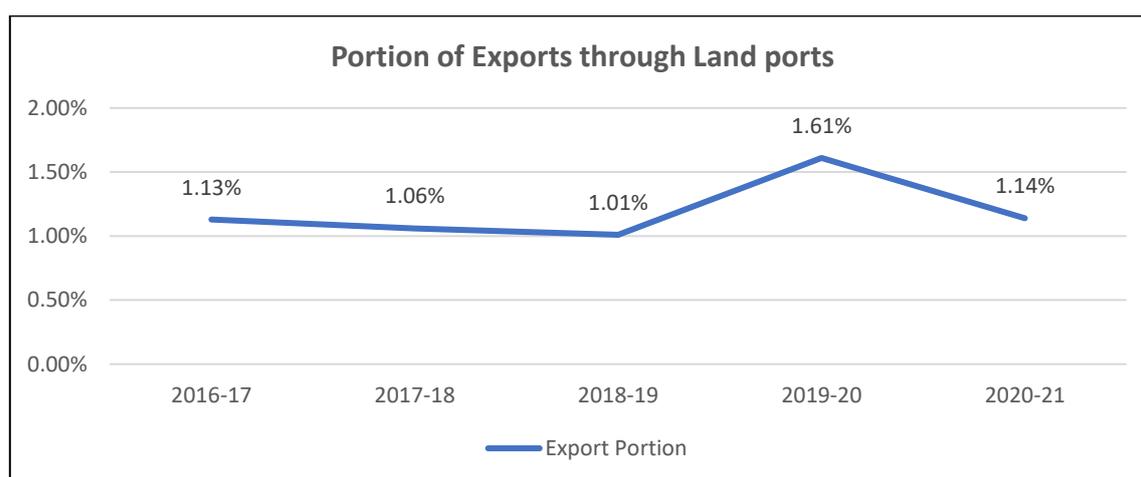
Land ports are now mostly used for importing products, however, export to close border countries is also carried out through land ports. Based on the BBS data, the table below represents statistics of exports through land ports:

Table 5: Exports by routes

Exports by Routes (Million Tk.)					
Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Sea	29,70,013	30,55,231	34,46,718	27,66,288	34,399,63
Land	33,824	32,705	34,901	45,380	39,927
Portion of Export through Sea ports	98.87%	98.94%	98.99%	98.39%	98.86%
Total	30,03,837	30,87,936	34,81,619	28,11,668	34,79,890
Portion of Exports through Land ports	1.13⁰%	1.06⁰%	1.01⁰%	1.61⁰%	1.14⁰%

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics of Bangladesh 2020-21- BBS

Figure 3: Portion of exports through land ports in total exports (last 5 years)



Sources: BBS data and BFTI analysis

This statistic indicates that although imports through land ports increased slightly over the years, the exports remained almost constant.

Land ports are now also significant means for regional trade growth especially in the SASEC sub region. From the geographically point of view Bangladesh is positioned to serve as a vital entry point to nations like India, Nepal, Bhutan, and other East Asian nations. By enhancing the trade, transit, and logistics networks in the region, Bangladesh can potentially develop into a major economic force. However, because of various tariff and non-tariff restrictions, this benefit is still a long way off. The problem of inadequate infrastructure availability, weak road system, a manual and paper-intensive checking procedure, and various office hours for the ports are added to this. However, besides serving the Indian market, the land ports of Bangladesh could be gateway for exports of Bangladeshi goods to other regional markets like Nepal and Bhutan.

With a vision of efficient, safe and environment-friendly state-of-the-art international land port management, BLPA is working on expanding the export-import through the land ports securing trade facilitation as well. Form the 12 operational land ports data, the statistics shows gradual growth of land ports over the year.

Table 6: Land port trade statistics

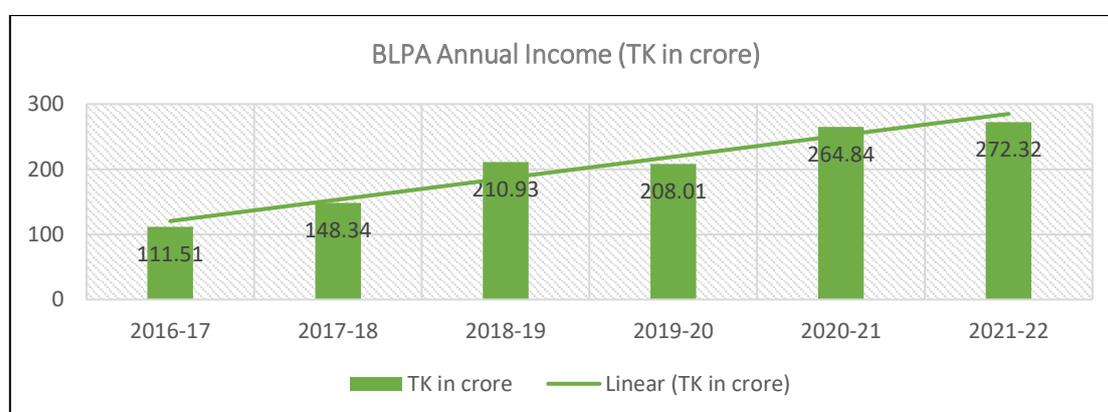
Sl. No.	Financial Year	Import (Million MT)	Export (Million MT)	Total (Million MT)
1.	2016-17	14.038	0.926	14.964
2.	2017-18	20.17	1.056	21.226
3.	2018-19	20.321	1.344	21.665
4.	2019-20	14.108	1.077	15.185
5.	2020-21	19.14	1.123	20.263
6.	2021-22	20.007	1.289	21.296

Source: BLPA annual reports

The table indicates that in FY 2016-17 12, export imports through the operational land ports amounted to a total of 14.964 million metric tons whereas, in FY 2020-21, the volume increased to 20.263 million metric tons indicating a 33.44% increase. In FY 2019-20 total trade volume dropped because of the pandemic but the FY before recorded most trade volumes, however, the latest year’s data indicates recovery growth from the pandemic and sustained growth of land port trades.

BLPA data indicates both the number of exports and imports handled and the associated revenues have continuously increased. During the fiscal year (FY) 2016–2017, the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) earned about Tk 1.12 billion. However, the income keeps growing, posting profits of Tk 1.48 billion, Tk 2.11 billion, Tk 2.08 billion, and Tk 2.65 billion in the fiscal years 2018 through 2021. The most recent FY2021-22 saw earnings of Tk 2.72 billion, according to official BLPA statistics⁴. The following graph shows the gross income statistics of BLPA in previous year which signifies the trade growth in land ports:

Figure 4: Income statistics of BLPA (last 6 years)



Source: BLPA annual reports

⁴ BLPA Annual Report (2022)

The figure indicates that despite a jolt in the income of BLPA due to the pandemic in FY 2019-20 the trend line is still pointing toward a linear increase in its income over the years.

Although all statistics show positive potential for the land ports in coming years, problems like space shortage, infrastructure issues, workforce capacities, traffic congestion, etc. are threatening the future prospects of land ports in terms of achieving trade facilitation objectives.

2.2 Overview of land ports of Bangladesh

Lands ports are mainly border between two countries having land customs station (LCS) and integrated check post (ICP) to facilitate movement of import and export cargo laden and empty trucks/vehicles. Bangladesh government declared land ports are 24 in number. Of them, 13 land ports are in operational. Out of the total 12 operational land ports, only 7 ports such as Benapole, Burimari, Akhaura, Bhomra, Nakugaon, Tamabil and Sonahat are now being governed, monitored, managed and operated under the direct supervision of the Bangladesh land Port Authority (BLPA). The rest 5 ports like Sonamasjid, Hili, Banglabandha, Teknaf and Bibirbazar are operated through private port operations on build operate and transfer (BOT) basis. Among the remaining 12 land ports, 11 are now and under construction which are as follows Birol, Darshana, Bilonia, Dhanua, Ramgarh, Tegmukh, Chilahati, Daulatganj, Sheola, Balla, and Bholaganj. Development of Gobrakura Kraitali Land port is almost completed, and the port is waiting to be officially inaugurated. As land ports possess vast opportunities to expand regional trade, the Government is also taking steps to strengthen the land ports to facilitate trade with neighboring countries⁵.

2.2.1 Land ports trade statistics (BLPA)

As land ports of Bangladesh play a vital role in the field of Import & Export trade, structures of the land ports are designed considering the significance of the activity executed through the port concerned. Based on the size and capacities of handling traded goods, some land ports are more significant in regional trade. Statistics on the transaction (export & import) and income level is presented for BLPA operated 7 land ports in the table below:

Table 7: Import-export statistics of 7 land ports operated by BLPA

Name of Land port	Year	Volume of import (in lakh MT)	Volume of export (in lakh MT)	Amount of Income (In crore TK)
Benapole land port	2016-17	13.93	3.25	43.97
	2017-18	19.88	3.53	48.73
	2018-19	21.81	4.01	82.37
	2019-20	20.38	3.17	83.776
	2020-21	27.78	2.97	82.97
	2021-22	22.13	4.19	73.79

⁵ JICA- Preparatory Survey on Matarbari Port Development Project in the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Name of Land port	Year	Volume of import (in lakh MT)	Volume of export (in lakh MT)	Amount of Income (In crore TK)
Burimari land port	2016-17	43.93	0.93	27.51
	2017-18	70.49	1.21	46.24
	2018-19	82.23	1.47	57.3
	2019-20	32.84	1.18	47.645
	2020-21	46.14	1.71	66.75
	2021-22	33.91	1.90	55.47
Bhomra land port	2016-17	22.55	1.27	16.87
	2017-18	46.56	1.20	21.04
	2018-19	22.02	3.12	18.74
	2019-20	25.16	2.06	19.494
	2020-21	24.10	2.16	31.7
	2021-22	32.59	2.62	39.38
Nakugaon land port	2016-17	1.23	0.00	0.69
	2017-18	0.09	0.01	0.11
	2018-19	0.66	0.01	0.68
	2019-20	0.85	0.01	0.864
	2020-21	1.52	0.00	1.59
	2021-22	2.76	0.00	2.89
Akhaura land port	2016-17	0.00	2.15	0.06
	2017-18	0.00	2.02	0.05
	2018-19	0.00	2.10	0.2
	2019-20	0.00	1.42	0.297
	2020-21	0.00	1.32	0.37
	2021-22	0.96	0.91	0.90
Sonahat land port	2016-17	0.00	0.00	0
	2017-18	0.00	0.00	0
	2018-19	1.36	0.00	3.73
	2019-20	2.04	0.06	2.948
	2020-21	7.11	0.17	10.34
	2021-22	9.17	0.19	14.08
Tamabil land port	2016-17	0.00	0.00	0
	2017-18	7.82	0.02	6.46
	2018-19	18.56	0.01	15.26
	2019-20	14.80	0.01	12.455
	2020-21	12.52	0.01	20.94
	2021-22	31.64	0.01	29.30

Source: BLPA annual reports

These statistics show that although total import-export volume is higher in Burimari and Bhomra land port, amount of income is highest in the Benapole land port which is the most significant land port in Bangladesh in terms of trade and passenger transit. In the recent years, trade volume also increased in Sonahat and Tamabil land ports. Bhomra land port is also experiencing consistent trade volume and income growth.

2.2.2 Land port trade statistics (BOT)

Land ports like Sonamasjid, Hili, Teknaf, Banglabandha, and Bibir bazaar are operating on the basis of build-operated & transfer (BOT) systems with very limited facilities compared to the previously described ports. These ports are managed by private operators.

These BOT based ports are currently managed by following operators:

Table 8: Name of the operators of BOT based land ports

Land Port	Operator	Lease Duration
Sonamasjid Land Port	Panama Sonamasjid Port Link Ltd.	25 years
Hili Land Port	Panama Hili Port Link Limited	25 years
Banglabandha Land Port	Banglabandha Land Port Ltd	25 years
Teknaf Land Port	United Landport Teknaf Ltd.	25 years
Bibirbazar Land Port	Shefferd Comilla Land Port Ltd.	25 years

Source: BFTI findings

These private operators are responsible for building required infrastructure in the ports, such as office building, port yard, godown, weighing machine and tower, besides making security arrangement and installation of other equipment needed to run the ports effectively. Under the BOT contract, operators will be required to finance, procure, construct, and operate the port facilities for 25 years after the contract. The following table shows their import-export and income statistics in recent years:

Table 9: Trade statistics of 5 BOT operated land ports

Name of Land port	Year	Volume of import (in lakh MT)	Volume of export (in lakh MT)	Amount of Income (In crore TK)
Sonamasjid land port	2016-17	27.63	0.15	3.82
	2017-18	26.73	0.12	3.83
	2018-19	23.78	0.15	3.4
	2019-20	13.09	0.13	2.385
	2020-21	33.29	0.19	8.4
	2021-22	28.81	0.20	9.22
Hili land port	2016-17	24.37	0.05	5.86
	2017-18	16.44	0.16	6.08
	2018-19	13.79	0.37	6.91
	2019-20	18.06	0.22	7.716
	2020-21	21.23	0.27	9.12
	2021-22	18.73	0.15	8.56

Name of Land port	Year	Volume of import (in lakh MT)	Volume of export (in lakh MT)	Amount of Income (In crore TK)
Banglabandha land port	2016-17	6.01	0.07	0.24
	2017-18	12.07	0.69	0.47
	2018-19	17.97	0.43	3.15
	2019-20	11.86	1.13	2.326
	2020-21	16.93	1.12	3.55
	2021-22	16.55	1.64	3.63
Teknaf land port	2016-17	0.72	0.00	2.6
	2017-18	1.60	0.01	4.75
	2018-19	1.04	0.01	3.68
	2019-20	1.98	0.01	6.508
	2020-21	0.75	1.35	3.58
	2021-22	2.33	0.11	9.23
Bibirbazar land port	2016-17	0.00	1.35	0.02
	2017-18	0.00	1.58	0.01
	2018-19	0.00	1.70	0.02
	2019-20	0.00	1.34	0.017
	2020-21	0.02	1.28	0.02
	2021-22	0.49	0.97	0.04

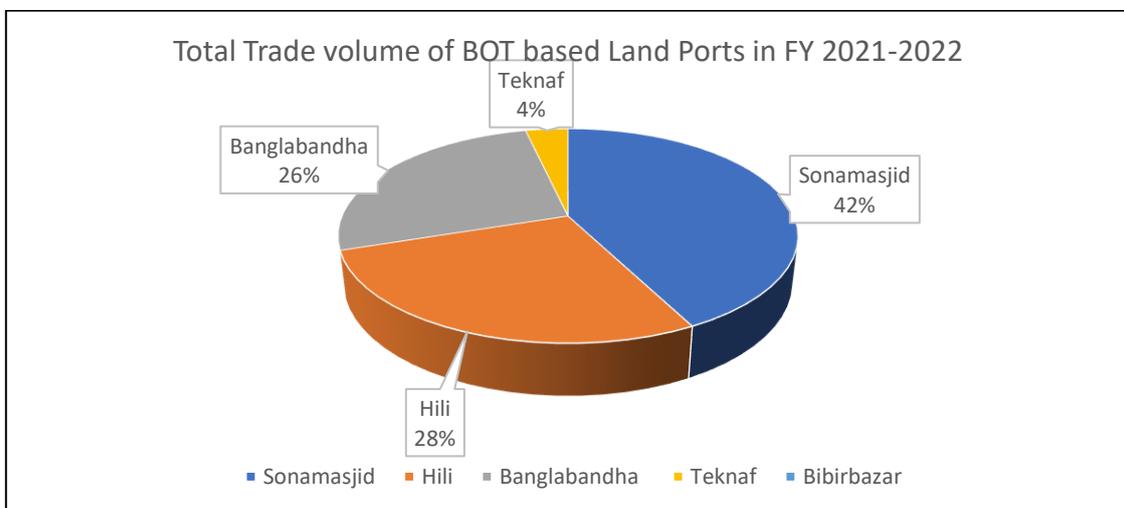
Source: BLPA annual reports

This statistic indicates that Hili, Banglabandha, and Sonamasjid account for most imports and exports among the BOT-operated land ports. Also, over the last 6 years, these three ports have managed to sustain growth in their annual income.

Among the BOT based land ports, Sonamasjid, Banglabandha and Hili land ports hold the most trade volumes in the recent years.

The total trade volume for the FY 2021-22 of these ports can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 5: Total trade volume of BOT based land ports in FY 2021-2022



Source: BLPA data

The significance of the operational, functional and effective activities of some land ports in respect of conductive export & import can never be ignored but owing to poor infrastructure (insufficient & tenuous), backward communication, transportation network, lack of modernization, huge traffic congestion, the land ports' operational efficiency cannot be improved & developed. All these together cannot keep pace with the demands and required standard resulting in the fruitful operation of these land ports. Operational inefficiency in the field of land ports is not only due to internal reasons but also due to some external reasons like congestion in India, prolonged commodity, clearance certification process of India. For instance, In Benapole land port almost a large number of trucks carrying exporting goods remain amassed everyday but only a few number trucks are allowed to be cleared from the Indian side and the rests have to wait in Bangladesh part creating huge traffic congestion which ultimately damages the quality of goods and increases the exporting cost due to extra fare charges to be paid to the transportation agency for delayed delivery of goods.

Over the last few years' land ports of Bangladesh have seen growth in trade. Land ports of Bangladesh play an important role by facilitating movement of goods and passengers to and from Bangladesh to India and other neighboring countries. Due to Bangladesh's unique geographical position with India, land ports bring opportunities for cross-border trade with the latter and the other neighboring countries.

2.2.3 Land Ports explored under this study

The study explored five land ports of the country. Among the BLPA-operated 7 ports, this study surveyed and explored the trade scenario of Benapole, Bhomra, and Akhaura land ports. Among the BOT operated 5 land ports, the study surveyed and examined the trade functionalities of Sonamashjid and Bangalbandha port. These land ports are represented in the following table:

Table 10: Land Ports Explored Under this Study

Sl.	Land Port	Operated by
1	Benapole	BLPA
2	Bhomra	BLPA
3	Akhaura	BLPA
4	Sonamashjid	BOT
5	Bangalbandha	BOT

The detailed status of these five ports is described in the following:

Benapole Land Port

The biggest land port in Bangladesh is the Benapole Land Port, and it is situated in the Jessore District's Benapole Town in Sharsha Upazila. Through the Benapole-Petrapole border, this port is utilized to export and import goods to India. Bangladesh Land Port Authority is in charge of managing this port. Benapole land port used to handle significant portion of the total foreign trade through land ports in Bangladesh but now it has been bested by other land ports.

Geographically Benapole is a major strategical point for border trading between India and Bangladesh owing to its proximity to Kolkata. Benapole began operating officially

as a land custom station in 1978 on land that was acquired earlier under the Bangladesh Warehouse Cooperation. Under the Customs Act, 1969 (SRO 493/D/CUS/79), Benapole LCS was declared as a Warehousing Station. After the dissolution of the Warehousing Corporation in October 1979, the management of the Benapole customs station was entrusted to the Bangladesh Jute Corporation (Defunct Cell) of the Ministry of Jute. In 1984, Mongla Port Authority was entrusted with the management and supervision of Benapole Customs Station.

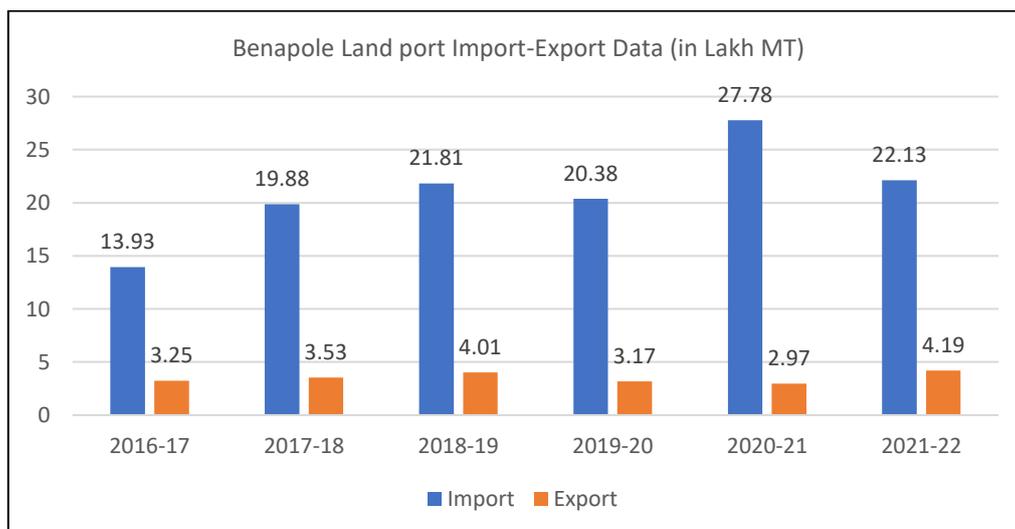
Primarily Benapole land port was a Land Customs station and gradually it turned into a Customs Division (1984) and later Custom House (1997) in response to its rising importance as in terms of import volume. In 2009, the newly constructed building of Benapole Customs and Immigration Check post came into operation.

The distance from Benapole border to the capital city Dhaka is about 240 km and from Kolkata is about 84 km. This route is accessible for passenger to Bangladesh and to India. Benapole land customs station was declared as land port on January -2002 and the as a land port its operational activities started were started on February 2002. Benapole is a principal land port having 86.68 acres land area with 40,000 metric ton storage capacity.

Its Infrastructure encompasses 32 warehouses, 5 warehouse-cum-yards-, 2 open stack yards, 1 transshipment yards, 5 transshipment sheds, 5 weighbridge scales (100 mt), 2 truck terminals (1 for import + 1 for export terminals), 1 international passenger terminal, 1 international bus terminal, 4 standby power generator, 1 fire hydrant, 2 water reservoir, 1 administrative building, 2 office buildings, 2 residential buildings, 3 dormitories, 1 rest house, 1 mosque and other necessary facilities.

It also employs 120+ administrative personnel, 250+ security personnel and more than 2000 handling labors. This port is one of the busiest land ports compared to other land port mentioned.

Figure 6: Import-export statistics of Benapole land port (last 6 years)



Source: BLPA Annual Report

Benapole land port export-import data shows a continuous growth of import volume over the last 6 years since a large portion of imports from India is carried out through this port. However, the export volume of this port is almost stagnant over the last 6 years.

KII findings revealed that major import of this port includes Cotton, chemical, motor car, motorcycle, tire-tube, machinery & spare parts, food and all other types of importable goods including yarn (excluding yarn and powdered milk imported under bond license by 100% export oriented net garment industry company with customs bond license).

Major export of this port includes jute & jute goods, fish, soap, plastic goods, battery, construction materials etc. including all types of exportable products.

For Bangladeshi export trucks coming back from India, the Bangladeshi side is requesting a new gate at Petrapole. Only two gates are open at the moment connecting the Benapole and Petrapole land ports. One of the gates is used for travel by passengers and the return of full trucks to India, while the second gate is utilized for the importation of goods from India on one side of the road and the entry and exit of Bangladeshi export cargo on the other side of the road.

Currently, a single road is used for both import and export commodities, this frequently leads to congestion, particularly when a vehicle breaks down in the middle of a shipment, which halts the flow of cargo. A second freight gate is being built at Petrapole to remedy the problem.

Petrapole-bound vehicles must wait in a long line at Kalitala, which is part of the Bongaon municipality, in recent years. Despite Bangladesh having a bigger capacity for handling trucks, only 350–450 trucks are permitted to enter the country due to the high expense of parking. For Bangladeshi importers, this adds time and expense.

In Benapole land port, congestion occurs when 300 to 400 vehicles enter the port. Congestions become apparent due to customs clearance and port fee payment processes for a large number of vehicles. Benapole land port was not developed in a planned way as it is located on an international highway which creates traffic congestion for the port incoming and outgoing vehicles. However, 25 acres of new land are now being acquired for developing vehicle containers in the Benapole port. Moreover, more land acquisition efforts are going on for developing yards, and chemical storage. A project of 300 crore taka for making a cargo vehicles terminal in 75 Bigha land for Benapole port is going on. Also, India is looking forward to opening a common gate at the Benapole border point with Bangladesh and Bangladesh has agreed to develop the gate. Also, a second gate will be developed with a cargo terminal, connecting 4 lanes of the road for traffic movement from and to India.

Bhomra Land port

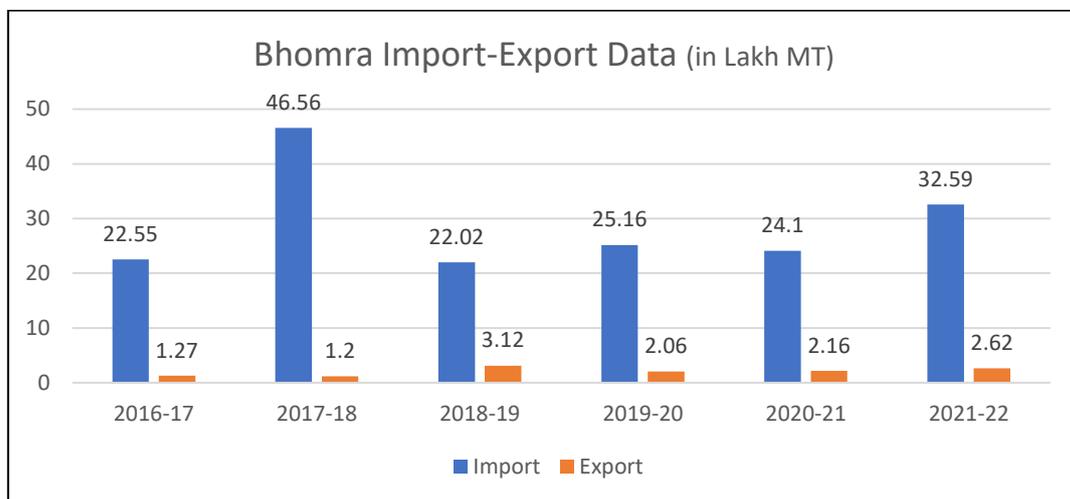
Bhomra land port is located on Bhomra border under Satkhira sadar upazila. It is a check point and a key land port between Bangladesh & India. This port facilitates the import-export activities through the border routes between India and Bangladesh. The distance Bhomra land port to the capital city Dhaka is about to 285 km and to Kolkata about 60 km. After the full completion of construction of Padma Bridge, the trade and

commerce are likely to increase to a great extent through this port. Bhomra was notified in as an LCS on 02 June 1990, this land customs station was declared as land port in January 2002 and operational activities of the land port were started on May 2013. After the completion of construction of the Padma Bridge, the trade and commerce of this port is expected to increase through this port. This port encompasses an area of 25.5648 acres and storage capacities of 1600 mt.

Infrastructure facilities of this port is not equal to the Benapole land port however, it has 2 warehouses, 4 open stack yards, 337290 square feet transshipment yards, 1 transshipment sheds, 3 weighbridge scales (100mt), 1 standby power generator with power house (100kv), 1 fire hydrant system, 1 administrative building, 1 dormitory, 1 barrack house, 3 toilet complexes and other necessary facilities like administrative building, lighting, security posts, observation tower, boundary wall, drainage etc.⁶

Importable items of this port includes cattle, fish fry, fresh fruits, plants, seeds, wheat, stone (stone and boulders), coal, chemical fertilizer, china clay, wood, timber, limestone, onion, pepper, garlic, ginger, ball clay, useable raw cotton, rice, lentils, quartz, fresh flowers, khail, wheat bran, maize, rice bran, soybean cake, dried fish (excluding packaged), turmeric, live fish, frozen fish, betel, fenugree (FENUGREE SEEDS) spices, cumin, motor parts, stainless steel ware, radioTV parts, marbles slabs, tobacco data (imported as raw Material by established VAT registered biri manufacturers) dry tamarind, alum, aluminum tableware, kitchen ware, fish feed, agarbati, dry palm and adhesive etc. Exportable goods of this land port include all kind of exportable products.

Figure 7: Import-export statistics of Bhomra land port (last 6 years)



Source: BLPA Annual Report

Import-export statistics of this land port indicate volume consistency over the years, like in FY 2017-18 import volume raised almost double compared to previous years but since then the import volumes and export volumes are almost constant with a slight increase in FY 2021-22.

⁶ Bangladesh Land Port Authority- Overview of Current Land Ports

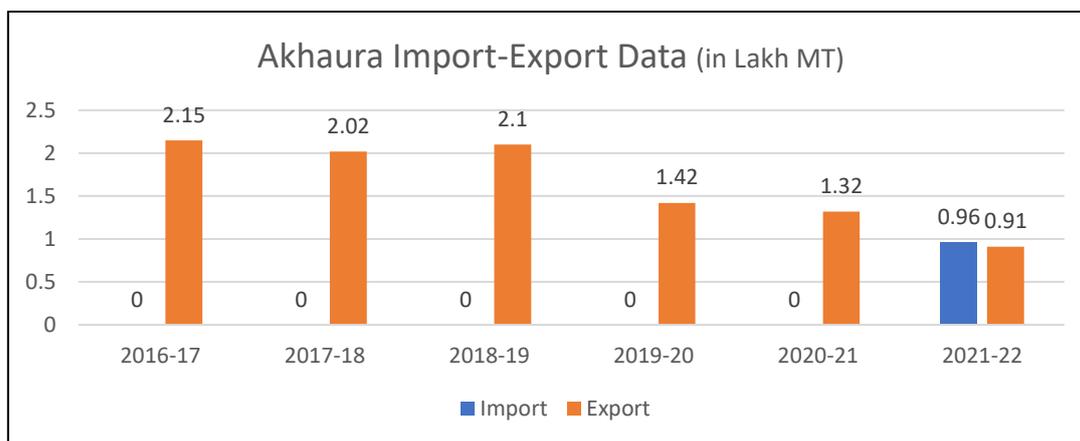
Akhaura Land Port

Akhaura land port is located on the Akhaura border under upazila of Brambhanbaria district. Opposite to Akhaura land port Ramnagar border under Agartala district lies India. There are opportunities for import-export trade in seven states of India through this route. In order to facilitate the import-export activities through land routes, Akhaura land customs station was declared as land port on January 2002 and operational activities of the land port were started on August 2010. Distance between Dhaka & Akhaura land port is 133 km. Land area of Akhuara land port is 15.00 acres with 200 mt. storage capacities. This land port has excellent rail and road connections to other regions of the nation, including the nation's capital.

Akhaura land port lack many necessary infrastructures and facilities compared to Benapole and Bhomra land port. It possesses infrastructures like 1 warehouse, 1 open stack yard, 1 transshipment yards, 1 weighbridge scales (100mt.), 1 truck parking yard (72411 square feet), 1 standby power generator with power house, 1 administrative building, 1 toilet complex and other necessary infrastructures. Exports have decreased a lot in recent times via this land port. This port route is also used by passengers for transit to go to India⁷.

Usually, importable goods of this port are cattle, fish fry, fresh fruits, plants, seeds, wheat, stone (stone & boulders), coal, chemical fertilizer, china clay, wood, timber, limestone, onion, pepper, garlic, ginger, ball clay, quataz, dry fish, satkara, agarbati, cumin etc. mainly bamboo, turmeric, watch, ginger, marble slab, fruits are also imported. This port exports all types of exportable goods, however, processed stone, bricks, tiles, fish, cement, battery, furniture, glass sheet are its common export products.

Figure 8: Import-export statistics of Akhaura land port (last 6 years)



Source: BLPA Annual Report

Trade statistics of this port show that the import volume of this port is very insignificant compared to other ports, but some export activities are well noticeable in

⁷ Akhaura Land Port: A Major Opportunity for Bangladesh and Northeast India. available at <https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-akhaura-land-port.pdf>

this port. Recently the import volume of this port has reduced⁸ and export experienced an increase in the FY 2021-22.

Sonamashjid Land Port

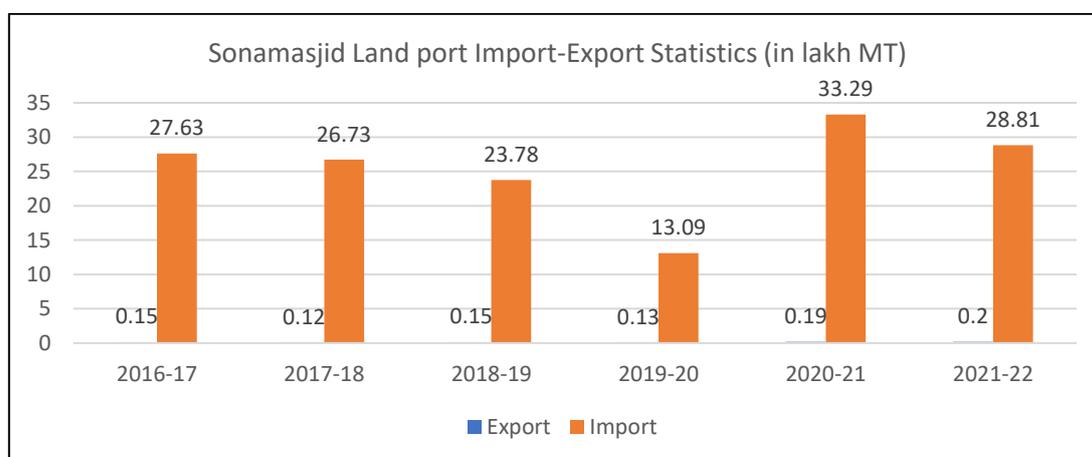
Sonamashjid Land port is located in Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi division of Bangladesh. From the Bangladesh side this connects Shibganj, Chapai Nawabganj with India’s Mahadipur, Maldah, West Bengal. This LCS started its operations as a land port in 2006 through a concession agreement with the Panama Sonamosjid Port Link Ltd operator. With 19.13 Acre of land and 1000mt. storage capacity, this land port has the potential to handle a large amount of import-export. Shibganj upazila sadar is located around 324 miles from Dhaka City, while Sonamasjid Land Port is located about 19 km from Shibganj upazila sadar. The land port has excellent rail and road connections to other regions of the nation, including the nation's capital.

This port currently has 2 warehouses, 1 transshipment shed, 1 transshipment yard, 2 open stack yards, 2 truck parking yard, 3 weight bridge scales (100 mt), 1 standby power generator, 1 administrative building, 1 dormitory, 1 barrack houses, 1 toilet complex, security post, observation tower, boundary wall and other necessary infrastructures.

Importable products of this port include all kinds of papers and paper boards except duplex board, newsprint, craft paper, including cigarette paper, yarn, powdered milk, juice, all other types of imported products except tobacco data (imported as raw Material by established VAT registered biri manufacturers), all other types of importable products. This port can export all types of export products.

Currently, it handles stone, corn, rice, wheat, onion, fruits, fly ash type import products and jute & jute goods, cement, and battery type export products. Sonamosjid Land Port offers numerous opportunities for agri-product export. The lack of quarantine facilities on the Indian side, however, makes it difficult for Bangladeshi exporters to export agricultural products. In the recent FY the port’s revenue and import trade volume have significantly increased. The following figure shows the export-import statistics of Sonamasjid port in recent years:

Figure 9: Import-export statistics of Sonamasjid land port (last 6 years)



Source: BLPA data

⁸ Imports through Akhaura land port falls- The Business Standard (2022)

Export-import statistics of this land port show that the volume of import trade was declining till FY 2018-19 and went lowest in the pandemic year of FY 2019-20. However, the port dealt with the highest number of imports in FY 2020-2021 and FY2021-22 also shows higher volume compare to pre-pandemic-stricken years.

Banglabandha Land Port

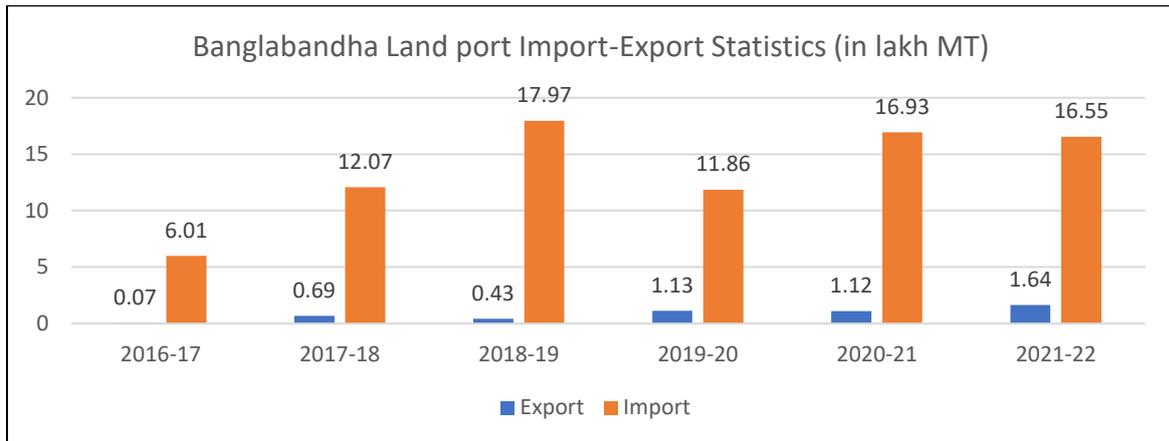
Banglabandha port is popularly known as the Northern Gateway of Bangladesh situated in Panchagarh district with a border of West Bengal of India. This place's importance increased since it is very close to Nepal and Bhutan. Banglabandha land port is located in Panchagarh district of Rangpur division. From Bangladesh's side, it connects Tetulia, Panchagarh with Fulbari, Jalpaiguri, and West Bengal of India. This port started its operational activities in 2014 through a concession agreement with Banglabandha Land Port Ltd. operator. The port holds a land area of 10.48 acres and a storage capacity of 500 mt. The distance between Banglabandha Land Port is approximately 41 km and 454 km, respectively, from Tetulia Upazila Sadar and Dhaka City. This land port has excellent rail and road connections to other regions of the nation, including the nation's capital. Passengers can travel to Bangladesh and India via this route. In the fiscal year 2019-20, an average of 5,812 passengers per month traveled from Bangladesh to India.

This port holds infrastructural facilities like 1 warehouse, 1 open stack yard (48800 square feet), 1 truck terminal-, 2 weight bridge scales, 1 standby power generator, 1 administrative building, 1 dormitory, 1 barrack house, 1 customs godown, 1 toilet complex, security post, observation tower, boundary wall and other necessary infrastructures. Besides, 2 warehouses, 1 open stack yard, 1 transshipment shed and internal road are under construction.

This port can import goods from Nepal and Bhutan except yarn and potatoes based on the NBR notification requirements. Stone, motor parts, timber and fruits are imported from India through this port. Its usual imported products include lentils, wheat, onion, and fruits and exported products include jute, glass sheet, medicine, and food products. This port can export any types of exported goods. Banglabandha port is one of the strategic ports of Bangladesh, which connects India, Nepal, and Bhutan in a very short distance and has the potential to increase trade with regionally connected countries.⁹ Despite the non-prevalent ASYCUDA system and the use of a manual operational system, Banglabandha port has seen positive growth. The following figure illustrates its trade statistics:

⁹ Regional Connectivity Through Banglabandha Port: Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh- BUFT Journal of Business & Economics.

Figure 10: Import-export statistics of Banglabandha land port (last 6 years)



Source: BLPA data

These statistics reveal that import volume was rising constantly in the Banglabandha port. However, due to the pandemic situation, import amounts were reduced for FY 2019-20 but saw growth again in FY 2020-21 and FY2021-22. The export volume of this port is also rising over the years.

2.2.4 Port wise importable goods and restricted goods:

Table 11: Port wise banned goods

Ports	Importable and Restricted Goods
Benapole	All importable goods except Yarn and powdered milk. (Excluding yarn imported under bond license by 100% export-oriented net textile industries having a customs bond license)
Bhomra	livestock, fish, fresh fruits, plants, seeds, wheat, stones (stone & boulders), coal, chemical fertilizers, china clay, wood, timber, limestone, onion, chilli, garlic, ginger, ball clay, raw cotton, rice, lentils, quartz, fresh flowers, paddy, wheat bran, maize, rice bran, soybean cake, dried fish (except packaged), turmeric, live fish, frozen fish, betel nut, fenugreek (fenugree seeds), fish, sugar, spices, cumin, motor parts, stainless steel wire, radio tv parts, marble slabs, tobacco data (imported as raw material by established mooshak registered biri manufacturing industries), dry oil, alum, aluminum of tableware, kitchenware, fish feed, agarbatti, shoe sole, dry tamarind, adhesive, fly ash, fresh and dry fruits, all kinds of fresh vegetables, dry chillies, green chillies, coriander, fire clay, thin clay, sand stone, marble chips, dolomite, phlogofite, talc, potash, felspar, granulated slag, soda powder, sesame, mustard, ready-made garments, imitation jewelry, betel nut, hardware, granite slabs.

Ports	Importable and Restricted Goods
Burimari	<p>a) All goods produced and processed in Nepal and Bhutan (except cotton and potatoes) subject to fulfillment of the conditions laid down in Notification No. 346/D/CUS/77, dated: 24/05/1977 of the National Board of Revenue;</p> <p>b) Duplex paper, newsprint, kraft paper, all types of paper and paper board including cigarette paper, powdered milk, tobacco (excluding tobacco stalks imported as raw material by established musak registered biri producing industries) radio TV parts, cycle parts, formica sheets, ceramics all types of imported products except wire, sanitary wire, stainless steel wire, marble slabs and tiles, mixed fabrics.</p>
Akhaura	<p>Livestock, Fish, Fresh Fruits, Plants, Seeds, Rice, Wheat, Stones & Boulders, Coal, Fertilizers, China Clay, Wood, Timber, Limestone, Onion, Pepper, Garlic, Ginger, Ball Clay, Quartz, Dried Fish, Satkara, Agarbati, Cumin, Rubber (Raw) Maize, stones & boulders, Soybean seeds, Bamboo products, Arjun Flower (Broom), Betel, CNG, Spare parts, Cashew Nuts, Paper, Sugar, Generators, broken glass, chocolate, baby wipers, confectionery products and bitumen.</p>
Nakugaon	<p>a) All goods (except cotton and potatoes) produced and processed in Nepal and Bhutan subject to fulfillment of the conditions laid down in Notification No. 346/D/CUS/77, dated: 24/05/1977 of the National Board of Revenue;</p> <p>b) Livestock, fish, fresh fruits, plants, seeds, wheat, stone. (Stone & Boulders), Coal, Chemical Fertilizers, China Clay, Wood, Timber, Limestone, Onion, Pepper, Garlic, Ginger, Ballclay, Quartz.</p>
Tamabil	<p>All products (except cotton and potatoes) produced and processed in Nepal and Bhutan subject to fulfillment of the conditions stated on 24/05/1977.</p> <p>b) All other imported goods including cattle except fish, yarn, powdered milk, sugar and potatoes (HS Code 0701.90.19 and 0701.90.29)</p>

Ports	Importable and Restricted Goods
Sonamashjid	All types of paper and paper board including duplex paper, newsprint, kraft paper, cigarette paper, yarn, powdered milk, juice, tobacco (except tobacco stalks imported as raw material by established Mushok registered biri producing industries) and all other imported products.
Hili	All types of paper and paper board including duplex paper, newsprint, kraft paper, cigarette paper, yarn, powdered milk, juice, tobacco (except tobacco stalks imported as raw material by established Mushok registered biri producing industries) and all other imported products.
Banglabandha	<p>a) All goods produced and processed in Bhutan (except cotton and potatoes) and all goods produced and processed in Nepal subject to fulfillment of the conditions laid down in Notification No. 346/D/CUS/77, dated: 24/05/1977 of the National Board of Revenue including acrylic yarn imported by bonded companies (except cotton and potato).</p> <p>b) Duplex paper, newsprint, kraft paper, all types of paper and paper board including cigarette paper, fish, cotton potato (HS Code 0701.90.19 and 0701.90.29), powdered milk, juice, tobacco from India All types of imported goods/goods (except tobacco stalks imported as raw material by established Mushok registered biri producing industries), Radio-TV parts, Cycle parts, Motor parts, Formica sheets, Ceramic ware, Sanitary ware, Stainless steelware, Marble slabs and tiles, Mixed fabrics.</p>
Teknaf	All types of importable products except yarn, powdered milk, sugar and potatoes (HS Code 0701.90.19 and 0701.90.29)
Bibirbazar	Livestock, fish fry, fresh fruits, plants, seeds, rice, wheat, stones (stone & boulders), coal, fertilizers, china clay, wood, timber, limestone, onion, pepper, garlic, ginger, ballclay, quartz, betel, CNG spare parts, dried fish, raw leather, various spices, cumin, corn, satkara, agarbatti, arjun flower (broom), cashew nut, paper, sugar, generator, broken glass, chocolate, baby wiper, confectionery and bitumen.

Ports	Importable and Restricted Goods
Shonahat	Stone, coal, fresh fruits, maize, wheat, rice, sorghum, garlic, ginger, onion.

Source: BLPA data

For other proposed ports, except products non-importable set by the national board of revenue, any other products can be imported. Also, all of these land ports can export all types of exportable products. Some ports are not fully utilized because of their shortage of testing and quarantine facilities which limits their ability to import different goods.

Presently, apparel makers can import yarns through one land port – Benapole. RMG owners import yarn through Benapole land port to meet shorter lead times, but existing regulations prohibit partial imports there. lion's share of Bangladesh's yarn import is made from India only through the Benapole land port. As a result, RMG owners are facing difficulty since there is no scope for importing yarns through railways. Allowing other land ports to import yarn from India can help facilitate trade as well as reduce cost of production for export oriented RMG goods. Still there is no SRO that allows import of yarn through other land ports. Moreover, fumigation facilities are also required in other key land ports.

2.2.5 Ranking of land ports

Average total trade volume wise ranking of land ports is illustrated in the following table:

Table 12: Ranking of land ports

Land Ports	Average total trade volume (last 6 Years) In lakh MT FY2016-17 to FY 2021-22	Rank based on Average total Trade Volume
Burimari	52.99	1
Bhomra	30.90	2
Shonamashjid	25.71	3
Benapole	24.51	4
Hili	18.97	5
Banglabandha	14.41	6
Tamabil	14.23	7
Shonahat	3.35	8
Akhaura	1.81	9
Teknaf	1.65	10
Bibirbazar	1.46	11
Nakugaon	1.19	12

Source: BFTI analysis

This table indicates that based on the average of last 6 years total export-import volume, Buriamari land port handled the highest amount of import-export volume. Second is the Bhomra land port and Shonmashjid, Benapole, Hili, Banglabandha are third, fourth, fifth and sixth respectively. This analysis reveals that Burimari land port has been handling the highest amount of export-import goods since FY2017.

Burimari land port in Lalmonirhat has emerged as the busiest land port in the country in terms of facilitating foreign trade, as it has handled the highest amount of goods and trucks over the last few years. The second busiest port in Bangladesh is now Bhomra land port in Satkhira. However, according to data from the Bangladesh Land Port Authority, Benapole land port in Jessore, the largest port in the nation, has placed third when it comes to enabling the export and import of products during the previous several years.

The Burimari port has become the busiest for handling products in the current era, according to the BLPA data, despite the fact that Benapole is the greatest land port in terms of its capacities. Historically, Bangladesh's Benapole land port handled between 70 and 80 percent of all international trade through its land ports. But in the fiscal year 2021, the Burimari land port authority at the nation's northern border handled 4.78 million tonnes of cargo for import and export (FY2021). The Bhomra land port authority handled 3.62 million tonnes of goods in total throughout that time. The Sonamasjid Land Port Authority, which handled 3.35 million tonnes of cargo in FY2021, ranked third among land ports in terms of volume.

On the other hand, in FY2021, 3.07 million tonnes of goods passed via the Benapole port and the land port stood 4th ranking. In addition, the Hilli land port has been ranked fifth after clearing 2.15 million tonnes of cargo in FY2021¹⁰.

However, the average total income in the last 6 years' data shows that Benapole land port has the highest level of income throughout the years and ranked top compared to other land ports. The following table depicts the ranking of land ports based on income:

Table 13: Ranking of land ports based on income

Land Ports	Average Income (Last 6 years) in crore taka FY2016-17 to FY 2021- 22	Rank Based on Average Income
Benapole	69.27	1
Burimari	50.15	2
Bhomra	24.54	3
Tamabil	14.07	4
Hili	7.37	5
Shonamashjid	5.18	7
Shonahat	5.18	6
Teknaf	5.06	8

¹⁰ Burimari Bangladesh's busiest land port in handling foreign trade- The Financial Express (2022)

Land Ports	Average Income (Last 6 years) in crore taka FY2016-17 to FY 2021-22	Rank Based on Average Income
Banglabandha	2.23	9
Nakugaon	1.14	10
Akhaura	0.31	11
Bibirbazar	0.02	12

Source: BFTI Analysis

Based on this table, Burimari ranked second and Bhomra ranked third and Tamabil and Hili land ports ranked fourth and fifth respectively. The income-based ranking also indicates the average income is less for the BOT-operated land ports compared to the BLPA-operated land ports.

2.2.6 Comparison of BLPA and BOT operated land ports:

Based on the 5 years average trade volume growth rate, BLPA operated and BOT operated land ports are compared in the following table:

Table 14: Comparison of BLPA and BOT based land ports (trade growth)

Land Ports (BLPA)	Average Growth Rate (last 5 Years)	Land Ports (BOT)	Average Growth Rate (last 5 Years)
Burimari	-7%	Shonamashjid	16%
Bhomra	18%	Hili	-2%
Benapole	11%	Banglabandha	33%
Tamabil	63%	Teknaf	40%
Shonahat	110%	BibirBazar	3%
Akhaura	0%		
Nakugaon	133%		

Source: BFTI analysis

This table data shows the growth rate of land ports in terms of total trade volume. Although Burimari is one of the top-ranked land ports, it shows an average negative growth rate due to declining trade volume in FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 compared to previous years. Hili land port is handling almost the same amount of trade volume for the last 5 years, whereas in some years, trade volume shrunk which generated negative average growth. Shonahat and Tamabil land Ports are operating for 3 and 4 years respectively and their trade volume is rising so the growth shows an unusual rate. As Shonahat and Nakugaon have very insignificant trade volume compared to other BLPA-operated land ports, except these two land ports, the average growth of the rest five land ports is 17% whereas the average growth of five BOT-operated land port is 18%.

Within the top 5 land ports of Bangladesh in terms of trade volume, Shonamashjid and Hili Land Port (BOT operated) stood in third and fifth place respectively. However, a comparison on BLPA and BOT based land ports in terms of average income is presented in the following table:

Table 15: Comparison of BLPA and BOT based land ports (average income)

Land Ports (BLPA)	Average Income of last 6 years (FY2016-17 to FY 2021-22) (In crore taka)	Land Ports (BOT)	Average Income of last 6 years (FY2016-17 to FY 2021-22) (In crore taka)
Burimari	50.15	Shonamashjid	5.18
Bhomra	24.54	Hili	7.37
Benapole	69.27	Banglabandha	2.23
Tamabil	14.07	Teknaf	5.06
Shonahat	5.18	BibirBazar	0.02
Akhaura	0.31		
Nakugaon	1.14		

Source: BFTI analysis

This table indicates that the income level is significantly higher of BLPA operated ports compared to the BOT operated land ports.

These land ports are compared on the basis of average trade volume handling in the table below:

Table 16: Comparison of BLPA and BOT based land ports (average trade volume)

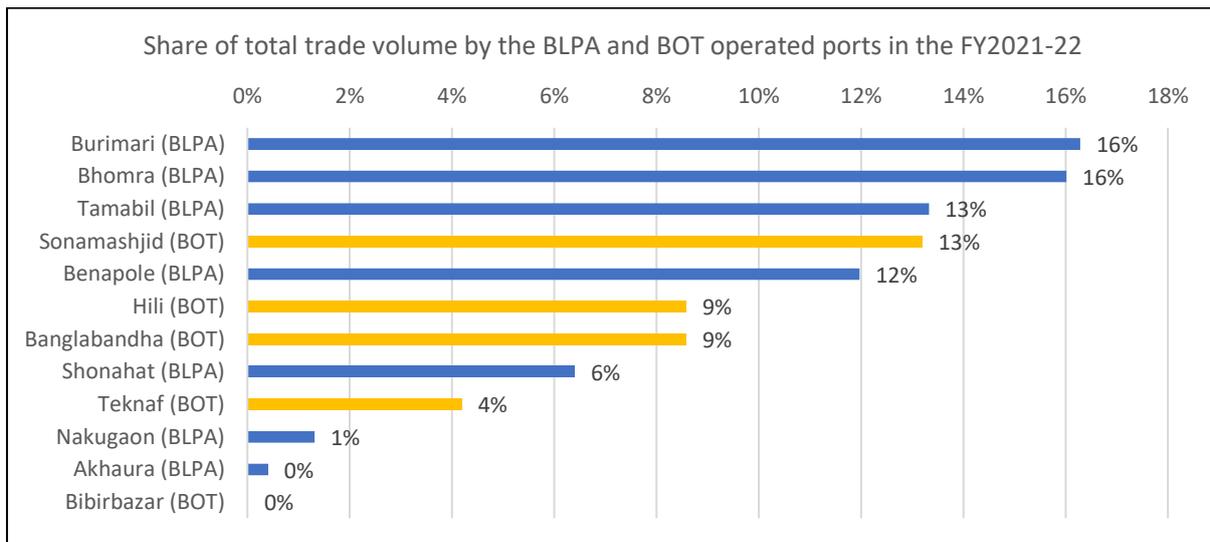
Land Ports (BLPA)	Average trade volume of last 6 years (in lakh MT) (FY2016-17 to FY 2021-22)	Land Ports (BOT)	Average trade volume of last 6 years (in lakh MT) (FY2016-17 to FY 2021-22)
Burimari	52.99	Shonamashjid	25.71
Bhomra	30.90	Hili	18.97
Benapole	24.51	Banglabandha	14.41
Tamabil	14.23	Teknaf	1.65
Shonahat	3.35	BibirBazar	1.46
Akhaura	1.81		
Nakugaon	1.19		

Source: BFTI analysis

Trade volume data also indicates that BLPA-operated ports are handling more export-imports compared to the BOT-based ports. Among the BLPA-operated land ports, Burimari, Bhomra, Benapole and Tamabil have significant trade volumes whereas from the BOT-operated land ports, Shonamashjid, Hili and Banglabandha have noteworthy amounts of exports and imports.

The share of total trade volume by the BLPA and BOT operated ports in the FY2021-22 can be examined in the figure below:

Figure 11: Share of total trade volume by the BLPA and BOT operated ports in the FY2021-22



Source: BFTI analysis

This figure indicates that total 35% of the land port trade was performed by BOT operated ports whilst rest were through BLPA operated land ports.

In a Build-Operate-Transfer or BOT) type of arrangement, the concessionaire undertakes investments and operates the facility for a fixed period of time after which the ownership reverts back to the public sector. In this type of arrangement, operating and investment risks can be substantially transferred to the concessionaire.

BOT is a common form of PPP in all sectors in Asian countries. For instance, The Bangkok Mass Transit System Public (BTS), the elevated train system in Bangkok, is an example of BOT project.¹¹ The project was implemented under a 30-year BOT concession agreement between the concessionaire and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (the city Government). The BOT systems focus more into the efficiency gains, rather than focusing on the expansion of the infrastructure which achieve the best value for money for the government and prevent the overspending. This system enables governments to transfer the cost and risk of big, important infrastructure projects to a specialist private entity, which has the potential to make lots of money from it if it turns into a success before handing it back. However, the analysis of land ports data indicates that BOT operated ports are not performing up to the mark of BLPA operated land ports. In this regard, a handling company can be formed with closely tied government and private sector coordination to operate the land ports efficiently.

¹¹ Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT), A Primer to Public-Private Partnerships in Infrastructure Development- ESCAP

2.3 Procedures for trade in land ports

Cross-border trade including export and import has different procedures in land ports. The detailed procedures are illustrated in Chapter 4 (4.3 Standard operating Procedure...). the basic steps and procedures involved in the land port trades are outlined in this section.

In case of **import**, procedures of port can be different from port to port. However, the major steps of the Import procedures are described in the following:

1. On arrival of import cargo at Zero Point of the border area, BGB collects Car Pass from the carrier;
2. Entry of Car Pass and information about truck and driver in the ledger at Tong House at the Zero Point;
3. Entry of import cargo at the gate of BLPA and weighing of loaded truck at the Weigh Bridge;
4. Submission of Car Pass by the C&F Agent to the Customs and subsequent processing by Customs;
5. Unloading of import goods and loading to warehouse or Bangladeshi trucks;
6. Submission of Bill of Entry to Customs Clerk and entry in the Customs Ledger; and assigning Bill of Entry ('C') number to the Entry;
7. Examination of Import goods as per declaration by Customs officials (examination by Customs Intelligence where necessary) and testing of sample by BSTI or Plant quarantine;
8. Assessment of duties and taxes by Customs officials;
9. Payment of duty and taxes;
10. Providing Customs release order;
11. Completion of BLPA release procedures including payment of port charges; and
12. Final exit of import goods from Land Port.

For importing goods into Bangladesh through land ports, C&F agents submit their manifest data to the customs authority. Once the submission is accepted, the nominated C&F Agent (or the importer himself) completes the goods declaration (popularly known as Bill of Entry or B/E) from their own premises and submits the goods declaration to Customs systems through ASYCUDA World. The declaration or B/E must be made in a specific format, known as Single Administrative Document (SAD).

The Prescribed Bill of Entry and Bill of Export Form Order, 2001 issued by the NBR outlines the documentary submission requirements. Once the duties and taxes are assessed by Customs, the importer (or his C&F agent) pays duties and taxes. On payment of duties and taxes assessed, Customs issues release order for clearance and after completion of port formalities, goods are cleared.

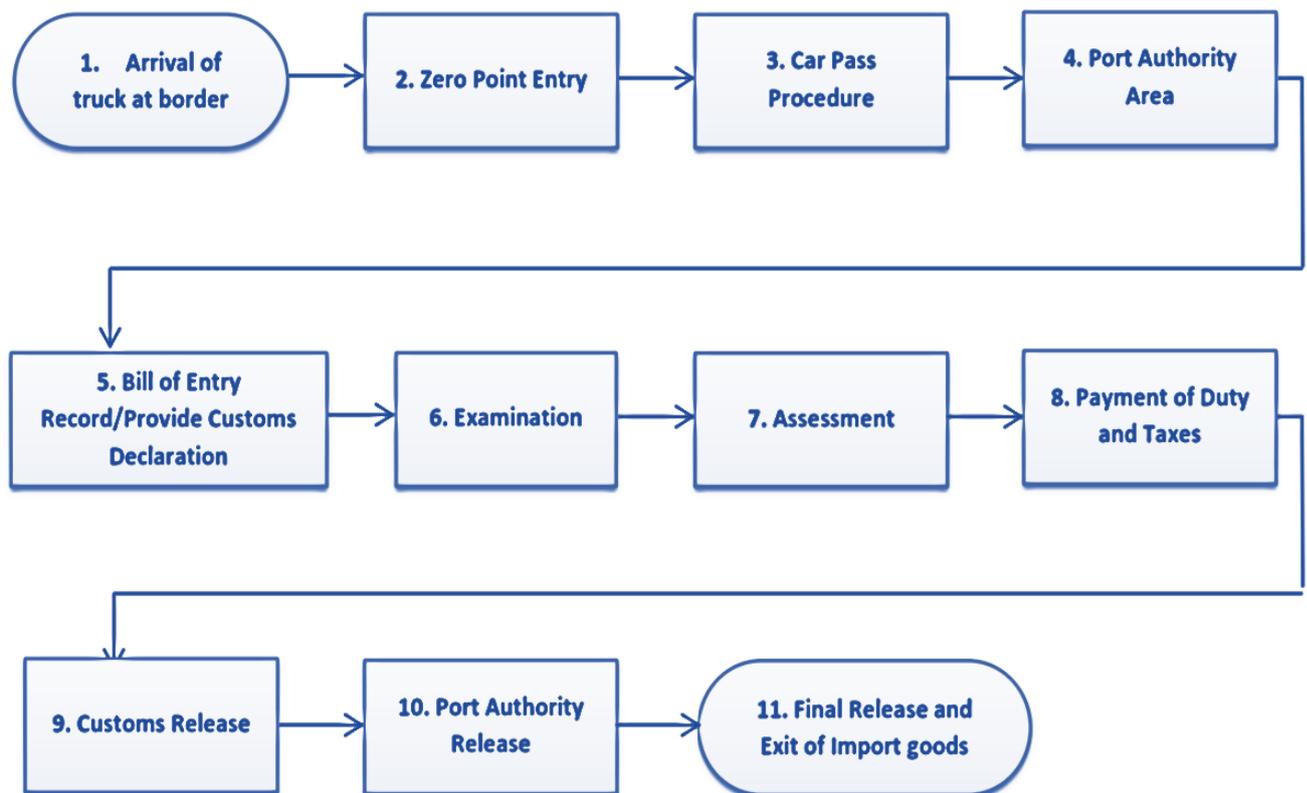
Some goods require special requirements for instance, quarantine requirements (such as certification from quarantine, fumigation, etc.) must be followed in order for imported animals, plants, and plant products to be cleared by customs. When importing raw cotton grown and packaged in the Western Hemisphere, fumigation is required.

Customs authorities may make a provisional assessment of the consignment in situations where it is not possible to determine the amount of customs duty that may be due on any imported goods right away because the goods need to undergo a chemical test or another type of test, a further investigation for purposes of assessment, or all the necessary documents have not been provided. In these situations, the importer must provide an unconditional bank guarantee or security deposit from a scheduled bank in an amount (as determined to be sufficient by Customs) for the payment of any excess duty that may become due after the final assessment. This requirement does not apply to goods entered for warehousing. The final assessment in this situation must be finished within 120 working days after the date of the preliminary assessment.¹²

According to Section 82 of the Customs Act of 1969, an import consignment may be sold at public auction if it is not cleared within 21 days (of the date of unloading at a Customs center) or 30 days (of the date of unloading at a customs port, land customs station, or customs-inland container depot).

Following flow chart shows summary of the procedures of imports in land ports:

Figure 12: Import procedure in land ports



Source: Time Release Study on Burimari, and Banglabandha Land ports- ESCAP

¹²Procedures of Import- Custom House, Benapole Land Port

The recent TRS of Benapole land port shows the following steps involved in the import of goods through the port:

Customs Clearance Process - Import (Benapole Land Port)

1. The import cargo arrives at the Indian side (Petrapole) and truck driver comes to the zero point (known as 'no man's land') along with necessary documents (CARPASS, manifest, shipping bill, etc.) and hands it over to the BGB.
2. After endorsing, Bangladesh Customs returns three copies of the submitted car pass to the border man to send it to India.
3. Indian Customs keeps one copy of the car passes, and the Indian driver is allowed to enter Bangladesh along with the rest of the two car passes.
4. Indian truck enters Bangladesh through the entry point. The driver submits the CARPASS to the Customs at the Tong House. Customs registers CARPASS data in Bangladesh Customs Office Management (BCOM) software and attaches a barcode sticker on the CARPASS.
5. Customs inputs manifest data to the ASYCUDA World System.
6. Vehicles are marked for weighing. Before weighing, vehicles with selective goods are brought for scanning under BCH risk management protocol.
7. Cargo-loaded trucks proceed to the Truck Terminal of India (TTI) in Bangladesh, where the port authority provides shed posting.
8. After unloading goods to the pre-designated sheds, Indian trucks leave Bangladesh.
9. C&F Agents collect manifests from the BCH manifest branch.
10. After collecting manifest, C&F Agents submit manual B/Es to Customs for initial approval to proceed further.
11. C&F Agents submit initially approved B/Es to Direct Trader Input (DTI) clerks.
12. DTI clerks input data into the ASYCUDA World System and provide a printed copy (in a file) to Customs brokers.
13. C&F Agents submit files to the ASYCUDA-designated ARO (Assessment) for assessment (if Yellow) or for examination referral (if Red).
14. After checking the file and supporting documents, ARO (assessment) signs and returns the file to the C&F Agents either with an assessment proposal (if Yellow) or with a proposal for examination (if Red).
15. C&F Agents submit the file to RO (assessment). After checking and verification of the documents, RO (assessment) marks the file for examination (if system generated RED or manually selected under risk management) to RO/AC/DC (Examination) according to the types of goods declarations or initiate the procedure of assessment the B/E (if Yellow). For Red -lane B/E, follow Step 16-28; for Yellow-lane B/E, follow Step 21-28.
16. RO/AC/DC (examination) assigns an ARO for examination.
17. C&F Agents submits the file to the assigned ARO (examination).
18. ARO examines the consignment and collects samples for further examination, if required. OGA examination takes place either simultaneously or sequentially.

Customs Clearance Process – Import (Benapole Land Port)

19. ARO (examination) prepares the examination report and marks to the RO (examination).
20. RO/AC/DC (examination) approves the examination report and refers the file to RO (assessment).
21. C&F Agents submits the file to RO (assessment). RO (assessment) marks the file to ARO (assessment) for the assessment proposal. After verifying the file and supporting documents, ARO makes an assessment proposal to RO, AC/DC, and JC/ADC/Commissioner (if required) for approval. This step is the same for both RED and YELLOW lane B/Es.
22. RO/AC/DC/JC/ADC/Commissioner approves the assessment proposal with or without further observation. After finishing the assessment or required amendment as per the assessment proposal of the B/E, RO issues an assessment notice for payment.
23. Importer or C&F Agent (on behalf of the importer) pays duty and taxes at the Bank (Cash or electronic).
24. C&F Agent collects release order from Customs treasury branch.
25. C&F Agent submits paid assessment notice and release order to the Deputy Traffic Manager (DTM) of the port authority.
26. Importer or C&F Agent (on behalf of the importer) pays port dues and receives loading order and gate pass.
27. C&F Agent submits gate pass and loading order to the Shed-in-charge, loads the truck, and exits the shed.
28. After the verification of documents at Customs Gate Control-9 (CGC-9) or BASHKAL gate (final exit), the truck gets finally released.

Source: *Comprehensive TRS (2022)*

The **processing of export** consignments at the Land Ports is less difficult than the processing of imports. The main components of this process are the submission of the Bill of Export, entry in the ledger and processing, customs examination and assessment, payment of any duties and taxes, customs and BLPA release, and export¹³.

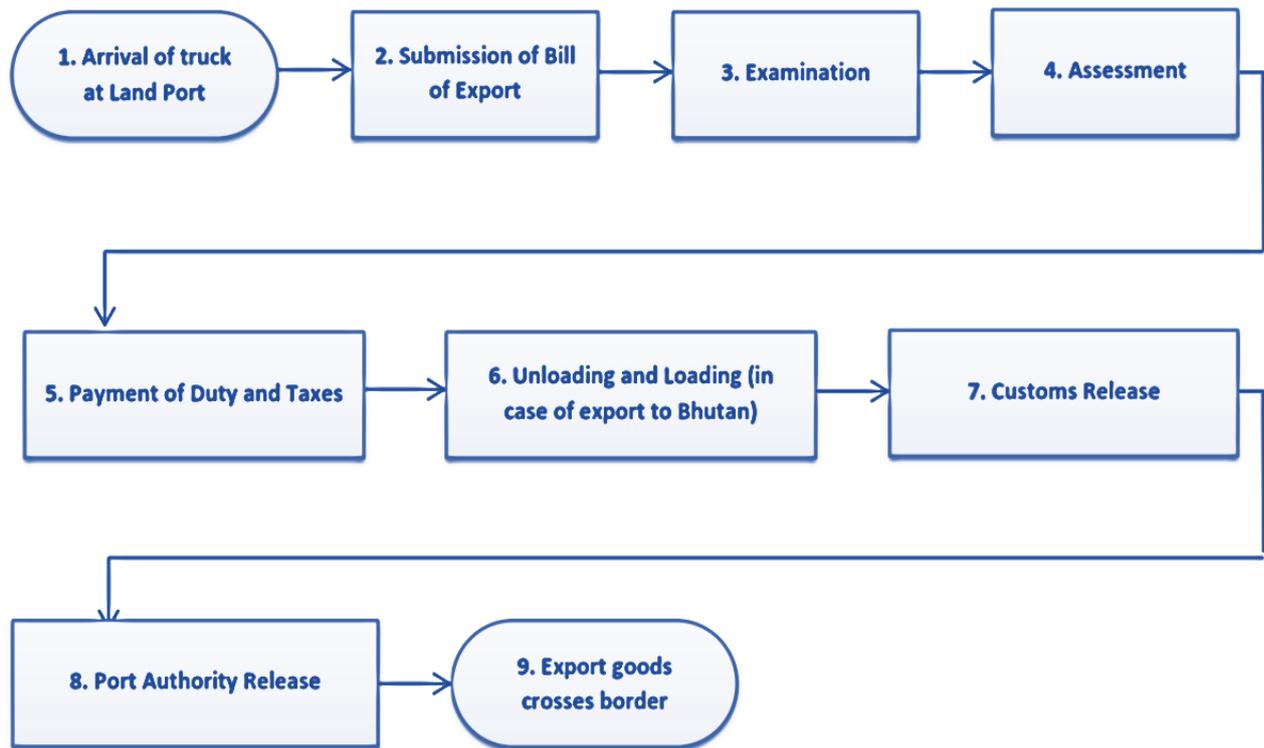
The following are the key actions of Export procedures:

- Arrival of Export consignment at the Land Port and entry at the gate.
- Submission of Bill of export and export documentation by the C&F Agent to Customs Clerk and entry in the Customs ledger;
- Customs examination and assessment;
- Payment of applicable fees, duties and taxes (if any);
- Customs and BLPA release and subsequent export
- BGB registers the cargo truck and release them for departure.

The following figure shows the overview of export procedures in the land port:

¹³ Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism in Bangladesh: Baseline study series -3, UN ESCAP

Figure 13: Export procedure in land ports



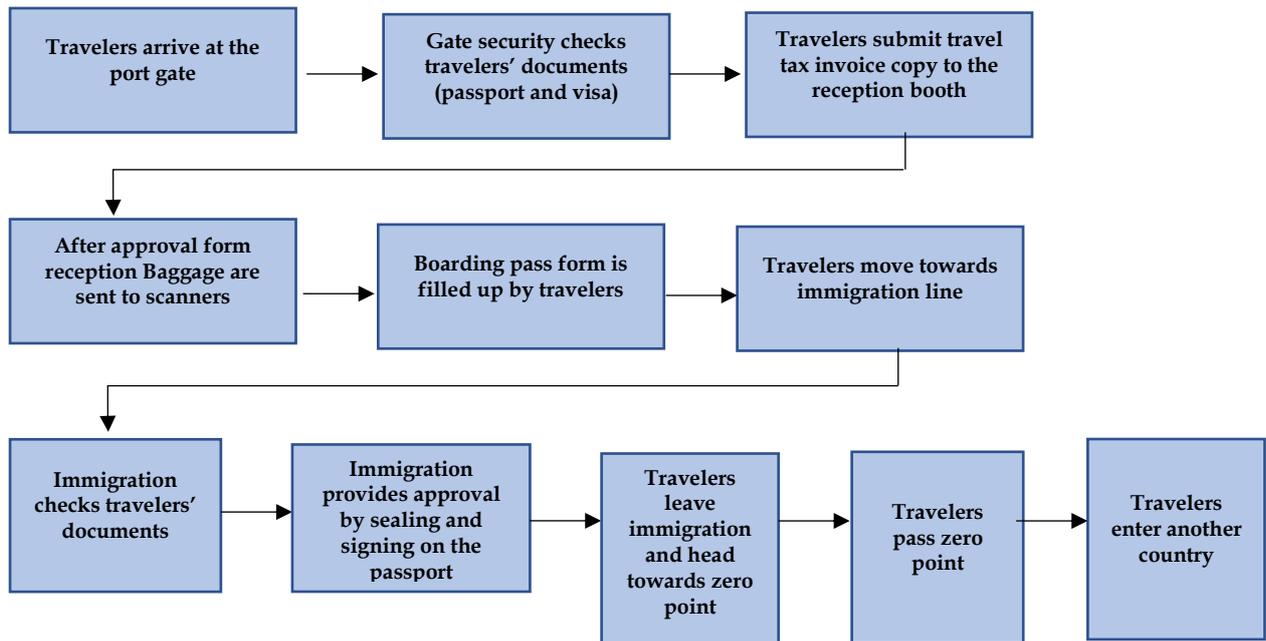
Source: Time Release Study on Burimari, Banglabandha and Benapole Land ports- ESCAP

According to Section 131 of the Customs Act of 1969, export clearance from Customs is necessary for export through land ports. Section 131 states that commodities cannot be loaded into containers, shipped overseas, or otherwise exported unless an export declaration, also known as a Bill of Export or Shipping Bill, is filed to Customs in the appropriate format and is authorized by the Customs authority. The statement includes information on the items' description, value, exporters' names, foreign purchasers' and importers' names, and transit companies' names. Exportable items are loaded into containers and crammed onto a ship, aircraft, or truck after filing the proper paperwork and having the export declaration approved by the customs authority following a documented check and physical verification of export consignments. Once the ship, vehicle, or airplane leaves the port and the customs officer in charge (PO-on-Board/gate division officer in charge) stamps on the back of the second copy of the shipping bill (as "shipped on board"), export is said to have been successfully completed. It should be noted that a gate division officer may inspect the products before they are transported to the port area in cases where commodities are loaded into containers at private ICDs or exporters' facilities.¹⁴

Land ports of Bangladesh also allows travelers or passengers to cross border and travel to another landlocked country. **The passenger travel procedure** in case of traveling to another country from Bangladesh through the land ports is shown in the following figure:

¹⁴ Procedures of Export- Custom House, Benapole Land Port

Figure 14: Immigration procedure in land ports



Source: BFTI findings

Travelers using land ports to visit India, Myanmar or Nepal arrive at the port gate where security checks every passenger to detect trespassing or unwanted entry. After verifying the passports and visas of the travelers, they are granted entry to the port. After entering the port travelers need to submit their tax invoice copy to the reception center where checking the documentation again travelers are forwarded to fill up a boarding pass. After filling up the boarding pass travelers move towards the immigration line and if all relevant documents check out well, immigration provides approval and allows travelers to head towards the zero point. Once travelers pass zero point, they enter another country's border where visas and passports are rechecked by foreign country authorities and after verifying relevant documents, travelers are granted access to that country.

2.4 Transport formalities and management systems in land ports

All of the land ports of Bangladesh are situated near the Zero-Line or point of the international boundary. At present total number of functional land ports in Bangladesh is 12 in number and they handle transports with due formalities in cross border trade.

The mode of transport of commodities from and to Bangladesh is illustrated in the table below:

Table 17: Border trade transport system in land ports

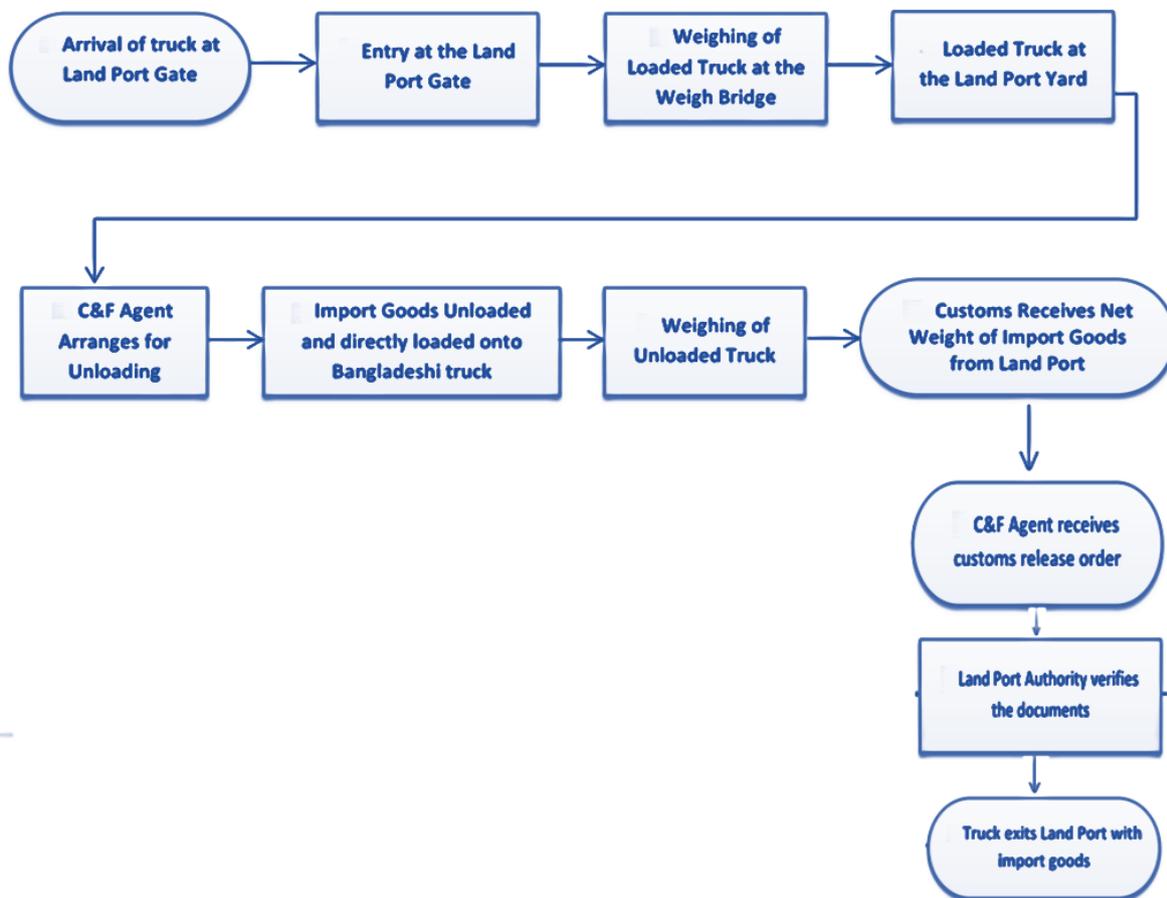
Bangladesh ⇌ India
Bangladesh ⇌ India ⇌ Nepal
Bangladesh ⇌ India ⇌ Bhutan
Bangladesh ⇌ Myanmar

Source- UNESCAP: vision of the role of dry ports in the development of national transport system.

In case of importing through land ports when a truck or cargo vehicle arrives at the border from India, Nepal or Buhtan, car pass is submitted at zero point, then the car pass information is recorded in the ledger and C&F agents collect the car pass after that. After receiving the car pass by customs, C&F agents submit all import documents, customs check and vary the documents and when everything checks out, the car pass gets approved by the customs. However, except these documentary formalities, after arriving and granting entry to the land port gate, loaded transport is weighted at weigh bridge and then moved to the land port yard where C&F agent arranges unloading and imported goods are unloaded to Bangladeshi trucks and after weighting again, customs check the necessary assessment and inspection documents, and after paying required fees, loaded trucks are granted permission to leave.

The transportation formalities or management system can be illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 15: Transport formalities in land ports (Import)



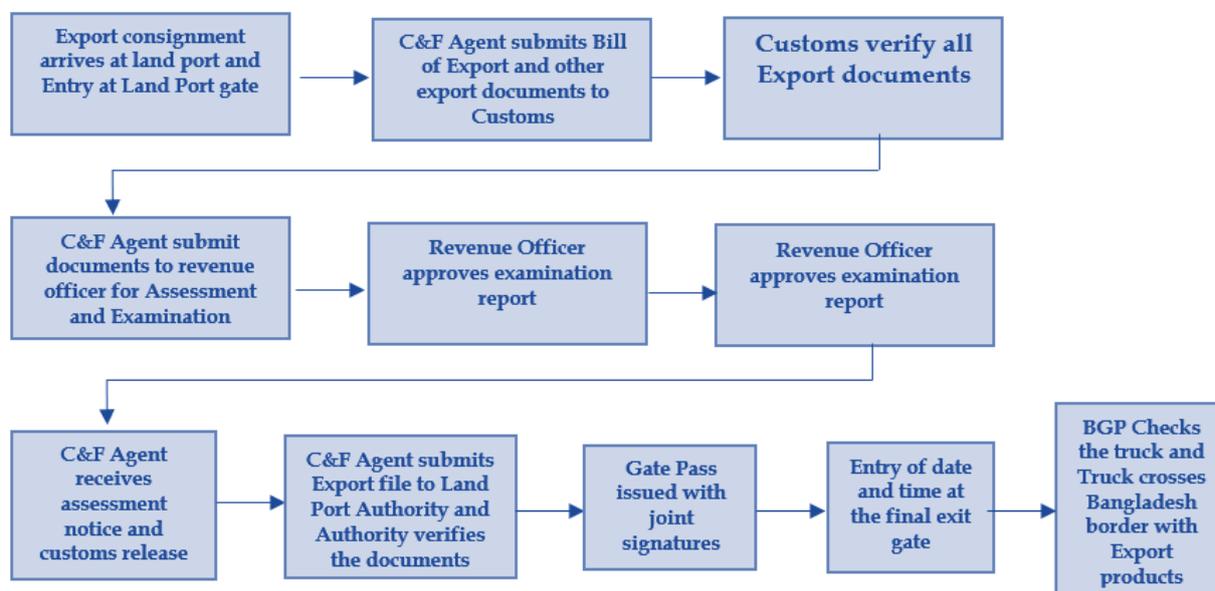
Source: TRS Study, ESCAP

While exporting products to cross-border countries, when the Export consignment arrives at land port and Entry is given at the Land Port gate, C&F Agent submits Bill of Export and other export documents to Customs and Customs verify all Export documents. After proper assessment and examination by the revenue officer, C&F Agent receives the customs release order and submits Export file to Land Port

Authority. Once Land Port Authority verifies the documents, Gate Pass is issued and Truck crosses Bangladesh border with export products.

These formalities can be summarized in following diagram:

Figure 16: Transport formalities in land ports (Export)



From the following **KII findings**, more depth transport formalities can be understood:

- BGB completes the registration process by verifying the paperwork and invoice of an Indian truck driver. The registration process as a whole take, on average, five minutes. After completing the BGB registration process, the Indian truck enters the customs manifest registration. The truck departs for the weigh station after manifest registration and all the data has been entered into the customs operating system.
- After submitting the required paperwork, a custom operator weighs the truck and provides the weight-related documents for entering the information.
- The truck enters parking after being digitally weighted with the necessary paperwork.
- A C&F agent begins filling out the bill of entry form after entering the parking area with the required paperwork. Following completion of the BOE form, a RO and an ARO inspect and evaluate the truck, and the ARO provides customs with an inspection report. If the assessment is accurate, a subsequent evaluation for product match-up and a subsequent psychical inspection are conducted, and an ARO provides a report. A final report is submitted after the psychical inspection is finished. The Tax is chosen and updated in the BoE form based on the final report. After receiving a BoE number and necessary documentation, C&F agents pay the tax. One copy of the assessment report is kept by the Bank. After the banking process is finished, a R number is generated following the conclusion of the banking process.

- Upon receiving the R number, the unloading process starts.
- The truck empties the imported goods, presents the required paperwork, exits the customs area, and arrives at zero point. The truck leaves the border area once it reaches zero.
- Bangladeshi truck arrives at a specific port area after unloading the goods, finishes the required paperwork, obtains an exit pass, and departs the port area.
- Along with these, presentation of import documents is manually completed, and for completing the weighing process of trucks usually A semi-digital scale is used for the weight measurement.

For export, from the KII findings, following formalities are revealed:

- A C&F agent begins filling out the bill of entry form after entering the parking area with the required paperwork. Following completion of the BOE form, a RO and an ARO inspect and evaluate the truck, and the ARO provides customs with an inspection report.
- After the examination and inspection processes are completed, a car pass is given for trucks to move on.
- The trucks wait in line and once the paperwork and invoice are approved, BGB completes the registration process by releasing the trucks and trucks move on to Indian border through the zero point.

2.5 Types of documentations used in land ports

In land ports of Bangladesh various formal documents are used for trade or export and import. Usually for an exporter, following documents are used for full export operations through land ports¹⁵:

Table 18: Required documents in land ports (export)

1. Bill of Exports	11. Certificate of Origin (CO)
2. Bank Certificate	12. Cost breakdown, Undertaking from the Exporter
3. Local business Association/ Chamber Membership Certificate.	13. SAFTA CO (for cross border trade)
4. Export Registration Certificate (ERC)	14. TT (Telegraphic Transfer)
5. EXP form (export permission form)	15. VAT Certificate
6. Pro forma Invoice	16. Truck Receipt
7. Commercial Invoice	17. Gate Pass
8. LC (letter of credit)	18. PRC (Proceed Realization Certificate)
9. Packing and Weight List	19. SPS Certificate
10. Custom clearance certificate	20. Health Certificate

Source: Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism in Bangladesh- Baseline Study- ESCAP and ADB

¹⁵Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism in Bangladesh- Baseline Study- ESCAP and ADB

With the Bill of export, following specific documents are required in land ports¹⁶ for custom clearance certification:

- Export L/C; if there is no export L/C, Export Contract or Purchase Order or Export Guarantee approved by the negotiating bank.
- Commercial invoice containing detailed description of goods and signed by the exporter.
- Packing list containing quantity, weight and packing information.
- EXP form certified by Authorized Dealers (ADs) to ensure the realization of export proceeds.
- Certificate of Origin of export goods (issued by EPB or Chamber of Commerce and Industry).
- VAT registration certificate.
- Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) issued by Income Tax Department.

Based on specific product category, additional documents can be required like:

- ERC for jute, jute goods and tea.
- Consignment wise export permit issued by the Bangladesh Tea Board for export of tea.
- Approval of the Ministry of Industries in the case of export of Urea fertilizer produced in all factories except KAFCO.
- 'No objection certificate' from the Ministry of Information in the case of export of entertainment programs, music, drama, films, documentary films etc. in the form of audio cassettes, video cassettes, CDs, DVDs etc.
- Utilization Declaration for export of RMG under bonded warehouse or Utilization Permission for export of other goods under bonded warehouse.
- Phytosanitary certificate for agricultural goods (such as vegetables, corns etc.) as per the requirement of the country of export (issued by the Plant Protection Wing of the Department of Agriculture Extension).
- Quality control certificate in case of export of products for which such certificate is obligatory (e.g. quality control certificate by the Department of Fisheries is necessary as per the requirements of the country of destination for frozen fish).
- NOC from the CCI&E and Bangladesh Bank to allow exports on an export-cum-import or returnable basis.
- Bank guarantee equaling the value of goods to be exported on an export-cum-import or returnable basis.

¹⁶ Import Export Process- Customs House, Benapole.

Process wise documentation requirement in the land ports for exports are illustrated in the table below:

Table 19: Procedure wise documentation requirement (Export)

Procedures	Document Required	Detailed list of Documents
Transport goods to Port of Departure	11	Bill of Export, ERC, TT Copy, CO Certificate, SAFTA CO, Pro forma Invoice, Commercial Invoice, Packing and Weight List, Truck Receipt, Copy of ExP Form, VAT Certificate
Provide Customs Declaration	11	Bill of Export, ERC, TT Copy, CO Certificate, SAFTA CO, Pro forma Invoice, Commercial Invoice, Packing and Weight List, Truck Receipt, Copy of ExP Form, VAT Certificate
Customs Inspection and Clear Goods	11	Bill of Export, ERC, TT Copy, CO Certificate, SAFTA CO, Pro forma Invoice, Commercial Invoice, Packing and Weight List, Truck Receipt, Copy of ExP Form, VAT Certificate
Handover Export Documents to Representative of Importer	12	Bill of Export, ERC, TT Copy, CO Certificate, SAFTA CO, Pro forma Invoice, Commercial Invoice, Packing and Weight List, Truck Receipt, Copy of ExP Form, VAT Certificate, Gate Pass
Border Crossing of Export goods	12	Bill of Export, ERC, TT Copy, CO Certificate, SAFTA CO, Pro forma Invoice, Commercial Invoice, Packing and Weight List, Truck Receipt, Copy of ExP Form, VAT Certificate, Gate Pass
Sending Signed Documents back to Exporter	6	Bill of Export, Pro forma Invoice, Commercial Invoice, Packing and Weight List, Truck Receipt, Original ExP Form
Receive Advance Payment by TT	2	Application for TT, Pro forma Invoice, Copy of ERC
Obtain Proceed Realization Certificate (PRC)	6	Bill of Export, Pro forma Invoice, Commercial Invoice, Packing and Weight List, Track Receipt, Original ExP Form

Source: Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism in Bangladesh, Baseline Study, ADB 2017.

This table shows the number of documents requirement in different stages of export and the redundancy in the long documentation processes.

In case of full import operations, typically following documents are used in land ports:

Table 20: Required documents in land ports (Import)

1. Custom Transit Declaration	12. Certificate of Origin (CO)
2. Local business Association/ Chamber Membership Certificate.	13. Customs transit declaration
3. Import Registration Certificate (IRC)	14. Bank NoC (no objection certificate)
4. Import permit	15. Phytosanitary certificate
5. Bill of Entry	16. Quarantine certificate
6. Pro forma invoice	17. Radio activity test certificates
7. Weighment slip	18. Insurance Certificate
8. Car pass	19. Truck Receipt
9. LCA (letter of credit authorization) document	20. Gate Pass
10. Commercial Invoice	21. Health Certificate
11. Packing and Weight List	

Source: Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism in Bangladesh- Baseline Study- ESCAP and ADB

For the custom release of the goods in land ports, following specific documents are necessary:

- Letter of Credit (L/C).
- Invoice
- Bill of Lading/ AWB/ Truck Receipt/ Railway Receipt
- Packing List
- “Country of Origin” Certificate (except coal and export-oriented garments industries)
- Insurance policy/cover note
- VAT/BIN Certificate

Based on goods categories, additional documents mentioned in the bellow can be also required:

- A certificate from the BSTI is necessary to clear 55 items for which BSTI certification is mandatory, as per Import Policy Order, 2015-2018 Para 26(28), if the import consignment does not have a certificate from an accredited laboratory in the exporting country.
- Radioactivity test report from the concerned authority of the exporting country for food items (Import Policy Order, 2015-2018 Para 16).
- Clearance certificate(s) from the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission for food items to the effect that the radioactivity level found in the imported food-stuff is within the acceptable limit.
- Pre-shipment Inspection test report for milk food products and powder milk, coal and hard coke, Break Acrylic (HS 39.15 and 3915.90), M.S. Billets (7207) and for items where the value of a single item authorized for import by public sector agencies is Taka fifty lac or above.

- Approval letter of the Chief Inspector of Explosives of the Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources for import of explosives (Import Policy Order, 2015-2018 Para 26).
- Copy of intellectual property certificate (attested by the IPR holder of the branded goods) in the case of import of branded goods registered under any law related to IP in Bangladesh [Para 5(6) of Import Policy Order, 2015-18].

Procedure wise, the documentation usage in importing goods through land ports are described in the following table:

Table 21: Procedure wise documentation requirement (Import)

Procedures	Document Required	Detailed list of Documents
Border crossing of import goods	2	Car pass, customs transit declaration
Obtain quarantine certificate	3	Filled application form, import permit, phytosanitary certificate (exporting country) and truck receipt
Provide customs declaration	18	Bill of entry, car pass, customs transit declaration, LC copy, LCA copy, pro forma invoice, commercial invoice, Country of Origin certificate, phytosanitary certificate, packing and weight list, track receipt, marine cover note/insurance certificate, bank NoC Quarantine certificate, copy of IRC, import permit, weighment slip, Radio Activity Test certificate
Customs inspection and clear goods	18	Bill of entry, car pass, customs transit declaration, LC copy, LCA copy, pro forma invoice, commercial invoice, Country of Origin certificate, phytosanitary certificate, packing and weight list, track receipt, marine cover note/insurance certificate, bank NoC Quarantine certificate, copy of IRC, import permit, weighment slip, Radio Activity Test certificate. (All the documents are not required for all goods)
Transport goods to importer's warehouse	2	Gate pass and signed bill of entry
Establish payment guarantee by opening LC	5	Application for LC, LCA, pro forma invoice, copy of IRC, import permit, insurance cover notes
Make payment for import goods	5	Commercial invoice, packing and weight list, country of origin certificate, truck receipt, and phytosanitary certificate and any other document required by LC
Submission of customs-certified Bill of Entry	1	Customs-certified Bill of Entry

Source: Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism in Bangladesh, Baseline Study, ADB 2017.

2.6 Time required for export and import in land ports

The generation of wealth, and subsequently economic growth and progress, depends heavily on international trade. A major interest in trade facilitation has been sparked by rising trade volumes, declining tariff levels, the availability of cutting-edge technology to greatly enhance the management of cross-border commerce, and company just-in-time production delivery requirements. Delays in the delivery of goods hinder trade facilitation, discourage foreign direct investment, cost importers and exporters money, and ultimately hurt consumers.

In order to identify bottlenecks in the trade flow process and take the necessary steps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of border procedures, time release studies, a strategic and globally recognized tool, are used to measure the actual time needed for the release and/or clearance of goods, from the time of arrival until the physical release of cargo¹⁷. So far there have been four Time Release Studies on Benapole, Burimari and Banglabandha land ports.

From the TRS of Benapole Land Port in 2022, the average time required to complete the import clearance process starting from arrival of the truck at the Benapole port to the final release of the goods is 10 days 8 hours 11 minutes (maximum time 35 days 8 hours 26 minutes, minimum time 1 hour 39 minutes). The average release time (ART) for the consignments going through RED and YELLOW lane is 12 days 0 hour 18 minutes and 9 days 14 hours 27 minutes, respectively.

At Benapole, total 248 B/Es were taken as samples across the surveyed commodities – food, pharmaceuticals, garments raw materials and capital machineries. The samples were categorized as per the number of first appraisalment (RED lane) and second appraisalment (YELLOW lane) consignments. RED lane B/Es or consignments mean the B/Es or consignments to which first appraisalment was conducted irrespective of the system-based selection (RED and YELLOW lane). Similarly, YELLOW lane B/Es or consignments mean the B/Es or consignments to which second appraisalment was conducted irrespective of the system-based selection (RED and YELLOW lane). Following table shows the average, minimum, and maximum time of releasing goods in Benapole land port:

Table 22: Product category wise release time (Benapole land port)

Category	Average release time	Minimum time	Maximum time
All samples	10d 8h 11m	1h 39m	35d 8h 26m
RED	12d 0h 18m	1h 39m	35d 8h 26m
YELLOW	9d 14h 27m	6h 19m	33d 22h 16m

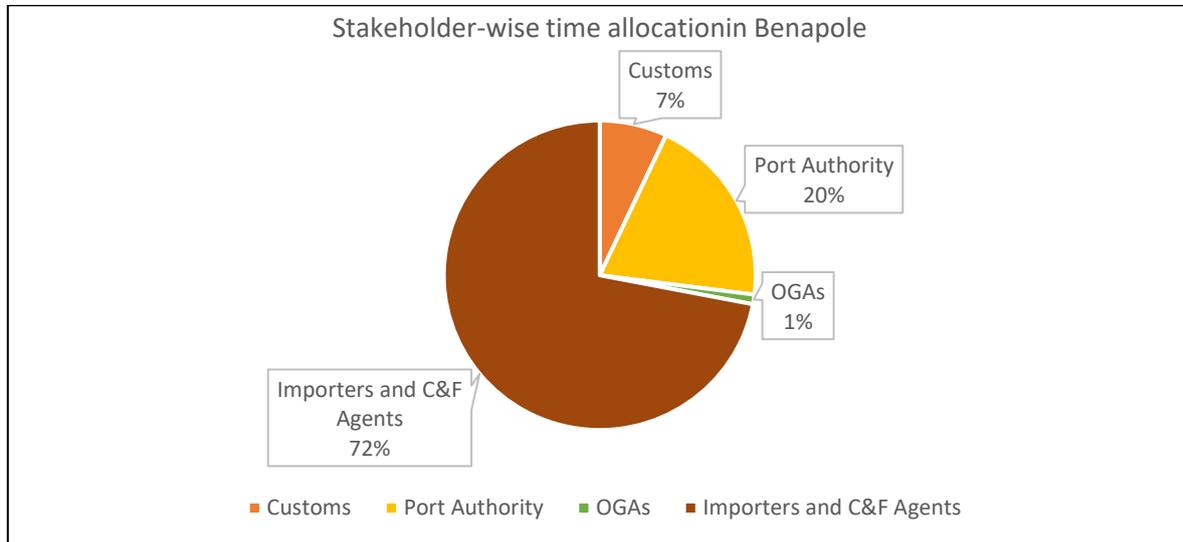
Source: Comprehensive TRS 2022, NBR

This table data indicates that for all sample release time can range from 1 hour 39 minutes to 35 day 8 hours and 26 minutes.

¹⁷ Time Release Study- World Customs Organization

However, most of this time lag is occurs from the Importers, Custom Brokers and C&F agents' ends, for instance the following figure shows percentage of average time spent with different agencies of a port while releasing goods:

Figure 17: Stakeholder-wise time allocation in Benapole land port

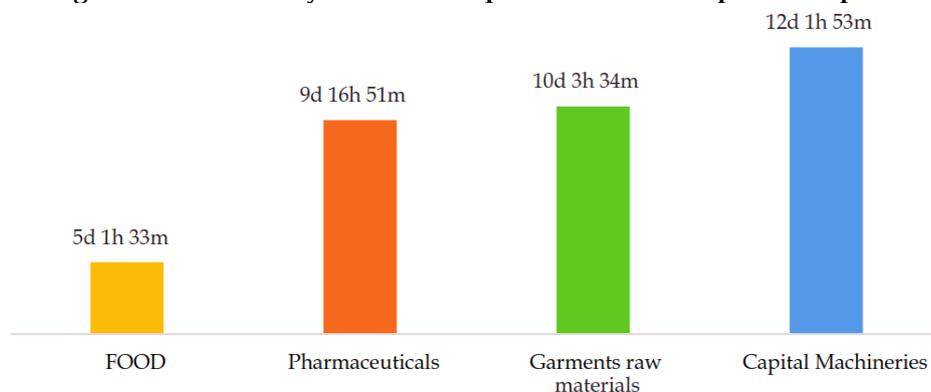


Source: Comprehensive TRS 2022, NBR

This figure shows that 72% time is spent on Importers and custom brokers' end where 1% by other government agencies, 20% by Port Authority and 7% by customs.

This customs led TRS study revealed reasons behind high time share of C&F agents or importers. The average time increases a lot for C&F agents' or importers' activities like delaying in submitting hardcopy of the required documents to Customs, taking more time in paying duty and taxes, taking more time in BOE submission, taking additional time to come to the assessment group of Customs office, delaying in providing the detailed packing list, waiting at tuck terminal for securing posting in the desired shed and so on. Commodity wise time requirements of Benapole Land port is shown below:

Figure 18: Commodity wise time requirements of Benapole land port



Source: Comprehensive TRS 2022, NBR

This figure represents that capital machineries, garments raw materials, and pharmaceuticals have higher release time compared to food items.

From the TRS of Benapole land port in 2013, it was revealed that, it takes 5 days, 18 hours, and 24 minutes on average in Benapole to release all sorts of goods after import. This was the average of the cargo processed using standard processes and the cargo processed using streamlined procedures. The time required for import cargo subject to standard clearance procedures is 6 days, 23 hours, and 0 minutes; for import cargo subject to streamlined clearing procedures, the time required was 1 day, 1 hour, and 26 minutes. For export cargo, the typical release period was 4 days, 5 hours, and 26 minutes¹⁸.

The major share of the clearance time is taken up mainly by one step – truck arrival to B/E hardcopy submission. The corresponding time for capital machineries is 12 days 1 hour 53 minutes, the longest release time among the surveyed commodities. Release time for capital machinery increases because customs has to physically examine 100% consignments for commodities such as capital machinery, electrical appliances, non-bonded garments materials, etc. also, for capital machineries importers usually take more time to make payments which increases trade time. This is mainly because they have to source large amount of funds for such payments.

The TRS study conducted for Benapole in 2023 revealed that the average time taken in Benapole for release of all types of cargo at import was 5 days, 18 hours and 24 minutes and the average release time taken for export cargo was 4 days, 5 hours and 26 minutes. However, The TRS study conducted for Benapole land port in 2013 doesn't provide reliable findings compared to the new TRS of Benapole in 2022. The previous TRS didn't follow the international standards of TRS and lacked all the stakeholders' inputs. The recent TRS 2022 should be taken as the base TRS and comparing it with the next TRS scheduled to be conducted after 2 years from 2022 will reveal time requirements updates. Comparing the new Export TRS and Benapole's counter port in the Indian side, Petrapole, a statistic can be presented below:

Table 23: Comparison of release time

Particulars	Average time
Average release time In Benapole Land port (2022)	10 days, 8 hours, 11 minutes
Average release time In Petrapole Land port (2022)	1 day 7 hours and 18 minutes

Source: BFTI analysis

This table shows that from 2014 to 2022 with the increase in trade volume, the time to release export cargo in Benapole land port has increased from 4 days to 10 days. Also, the average release time for Petrapole land port in India is 4 days and 15 hours approximately¹⁹ whereas, for Benapole in 2022, it is 10 days and 8 hours approximately.

Time Release Study (TRS) at Banglabandha Land Border Crossing Station, Bangladesh Following the Guide to Measure the Time required for the Release of Goods prepared

¹⁸ Bangladesh Time Release Study Benapole (2014)- NBR

¹⁹ National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2022- Department of Revenue, Government of India

by WCO in 2017²⁰, revealed that average time taken for release of all types of exports cargoes amounts to approximately 1 hour 45 minutes, which includes, among others, 1 hour 23 minutes for customs procedures and 12 minutes for port authority clearance procedures. The average time taken for release of all types of import cargoes amounts to approximately 6 hours 34 minutes, which includes, among others, 4 hours 23 minutes for completing the procedures at port authority area-weighing and unloading, 2 hours 45 minutes for completing customs procedures, 14 minutes for completing banking procedures and 18 minutes for completing port authority clearance procedures. This report finds high efficiency in import and export process but cautions that such high efficiency may be explained by very low traffic volume during the study period.

Results of similar TRS study on Burmari land port²¹ showed that the total time needed to release all export commodities was roughly 2 hours 14 minutes, which included, among other things, a 1 hour 13-minute wait for customs clearance and a 31-minute wait for port authority clearance. The total amount of time required on average for the release of all types of import cargoes is 5 hours 12 minutes, which includes, among other things, 2 hours 36 minutes for finishing the procedures at the port authority area—weighing and unloading—3 hours 14 minutes for finishing customs procedures, 18 minutes for finishing banking procedures, and 44 minutes for finishing port authority clearance procedures. The results demonstrated that, as a result of the study period's low export-import volume, processing times for both imports and exports were brief.

TRS findings also shows comparative scenario of Bangladesh land ports' average time requirement against Bhutan and Nepal. For instance, a comparison of TRS findings with other landlocked countries are presented in the table below:

Table 24: Comparison of TRS findings

<p>Bangladesh: The 2016 TRS shows average transit time for cargo processing from arrival in customs to release: (i) Burimari: 5 hours 11 minutes 46 seconds for import, and 2 hours 14 minutes 26 seconds for export; and (ii) Banglabandha: 6 hours 34 minutes 24 seconds for import, and 1 hour 45 minutes 45 seconds for export.</p>
<p>Bhutan: Average transit time from arrival in customs area at Phuentsholing Customs House to release from customs area, 2016 TRS shows (i) export: 13.33 minutes; (ii) import from India: 58 minutes (taxable goods); 28 minutes (nontaxable and/or exempted goods); and (iii) import from third country: 16 hours (taxable goods), 6 hours 50 minutes. (nontaxable/exempted goods)</p>

²⁰ Time Release Study of Banglabandha Land Border Crossing Station, Bangladesh (2017)- ESCAP (United Nations)

²¹ Time Release Study of Burimari Land Border Crossing Station, Bangladesh (2017)- ESCAP (United Nations)

Nepal:

2016-time release study survey shows the average time taken between entry of the cargo vehicle to its exit from inland container depot as follows:

(i) Mechi: 18 hours 58 minutes (import) and 18 hours 28 minutes (export).

(ii) Biratnagar: 1 day, 4 hours, 20 minutes (import) and 2 hours 1 minute (export).

Source: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal: South Asia Sub Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Trade Facilitation Program- ADB

This comparison indicates that Bangladesh's release time is relatively better than Nepal's since the release time for Burimari and Banglabandha is lower than Mechi and Biratnagar. However, Bhutan has comparatively better release time since Phuentsholing Customs House can resale goods earlier than Burimari and Banglabandha.

The logistic performance index also shows the time parameter of trade Bangladesh compared to relevant countries. The Logistics Performance Index is a dynamic benchmarking tool designed to assist nations in identifying opportunities and difficulties they have in their performance on trade logistics and what they can do to enhance their performance²². 160 different countries can be compared using the LPI 2018. The following table shows the comparison of Bangladesh in terms of LPI 2018 performance with the ASEAN countries:

Table 25: Comparison of LPI Index of Bangladesh with ASEAN countries

Countries	LPI Rank	LPI Score	Customs	Infrastructure	International shipments	Logistics competence	Tracking & tracing	Timeliness
Singapore	1	4.3	4.2	4.6	4	4.4	4.4	4.3
Philippines	43	3.3	2.8	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.9
Malaysia	26	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
Thailand	34	3.5	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5
Indonesia	61	3	2.8	2.9	3	2.9	3	3.3
Viet Nam	43	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.3
Bangladesh	88	2.6	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.4	3
Cambodia	115	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.7
Lao PDR	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.8	2.4

Source: The World Bank

According to the Timeliness criteria of the LPI index 2023, Bangladesh's standpoint is at the bottom level compared to the ASEAN countries. Singapore, Philippines, and Malaysia hold the top three positions in the timeliness of shipments in reaching their destination within the scheduled or expected delivery time.

The international score uses six key dimensions to benchmark countries' performance and also displays the derived overall LPI index. The logistics performance (LPI) is the weighted average of the country scores on the six key dimensions: Efficiency of the clearance process (i.e., speed, simplicity and predictability of formalities) by border control agencies, including customs; Quality of trade and transport related

²² The World Bank, About LPI. Viewed at- <https://lpi.worldbank.org/about>

infrastructure (e.g., ports, railroads, roads, information technology); Ease of arranging competitively priced shipments; Competence and quality of logistics services (e.g., transport operators, customs brokers); Ability to track and trace consignments; and Timeliness of shipments in reaching destination within the scheduled or expected delivery time. The scorecards demonstrate comparative performance of all countries (world), regional and income groups²³.

²³ The World Bank, retrived from - <https://lpi.worldbank.org/international/scorecard>

Chapter 3: Major Institutional Weakness for Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border Management

3.1 Major institutions related to trade facilitation and cross-border management in Bangladesh

Trade facilitation means the streamlining, standardized, and harmonization of the processes and information flows involved in moving goods from supplier to buyer and processing payments. Trade facilitation's main objective is to make international trade (imports and exports) safer, faster, cheaper, and more predictable. Focusing on the simplification and harmonization of formalities, procedures, and the information and document exchange connected to them among the numerous supply chain participants trade facilitation aims to make international trade easier and speedier. The related information flows are just as crucial to the trade facilitation process as the actual movement of items in a supply chain. Additionally, it includes all governmental organizations that interfere with the movement of products as well as the many commercial organizations that operate²⁴. From the government sector following institutions are related to the trade facilitation in Bangladesh²⁵:

Table 26: Major institutions related to Trade Facilitation

<p>Ministry of Commerce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) • Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) Wing • World Trade Organization (WTO) wing • Imports and Internal Trade (IIT) Wing • Office of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCI&E) • Office of the Register of Joint Stock Companies (RJSC) and Firms • Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC)
<p>Ministry of Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Board of Revenue (NBR)
<p>Ministry of Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI)
<p>Ministry of Shipping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) • Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) • Mongla Port Authority • Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA)
<p>Road Transport and Highways Division</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Railway (BR) • Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA)
<p>Department of Agricultural Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Quarantine Wing
<p>Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission</p>
<p>Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock</p>

Source: South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment

²⁴ Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide- United Nations

²⁵ Trade and Transport Facilitation Audit Bangladesh Country Report- South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), 2017

From government to operational level service-related cross border management organizations in land ports, major trade facilitation related institutes can be classified into the two clusters as service providers (supply side) and service receivers (demand sides). These clusters are represented in the table below:

Table 27: Major institutions related to Trade Facilitation and Cross-Broder Management in land ports

Service providers (Supply side)	Service receivers (Demand side)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Board of Revenue (NBR) 2. Customs 3. Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) 4. Port Operator 5. Certification and Quality Control Authorities (BSTI, Plant Quarantine and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission) 6. Bank 7. Transport and Logistics Company 8. Immigration 9. Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 10. Department of Livestock 11. Department of Fisheries 12. Bangladesh Railway (BR) 13. Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) 14. Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) 15. Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) Wing 16. World Trade Organization (WTO) wing 17. Imports and Internal Trade (IIT) Wing 18. Office of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCI&E) 19. Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exporters 2. Importers 3. C&F Agents

Source: BFTI Analysis

Service provider organizations or institutions related to Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border management in Bangladesh are:

The National Board of Revenue (NBR)

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is the apex authority for tax administration in Bangladesh. Administratively, it is under the Internal Resources Division (IRD) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF). NBR is responsible for formulation and continuous re-appraisal of tax-policies and tax-laws, negotiating tax treaties with foreign governments and participating in inter-ministerial deliberations on economic issues having a bearing on fiscal policies and tax administration. The main responsibility of NBR is to collect tax revenues (primarily, Value Added Tax, Customs Duty, Excise Duty and Income Tax). It works with three tax-type wings namely, Customs Wing, VAT Wing and Income Tax Wing. There are two more wings named IT wing and Research & Statistics wing under NBR.

Customs

One of the three tax collection wing that report to the National Board of Revenue is Customs. The VAT and Income Tax are the other two wings. Planning, formulation, implementation, and reevaluation of policies on customs-related issues are all tasks that fall under the purview of the Customs wing. Its main functions are-

- Collection of duties and taxes at the import stage
- Protection of domestic industry
- Trade liberalization
- Facilitation of trade
- Prevention of smuggling
- Interdiction of prohibited goods narcotics and objects detrimental to national security prevention of money laundering.

The Customs Wing oversees the operations of Customs stations and provides field offices with guidance and interpretations. Offices under the Customs wing carry out the NBR's policy recommendations, collect customs and taxes from importers, implement pertinent laws and regulations, and ensure trade facilitation²⁶. There are several operational land Customs stations as well as six Custom Houses (Chittagong, Dhaka, Mongla, ICD Kamalapur, Benapole, and Pangaon). There are also two Customs Bond Commissionerates (Dhaka and Chittagong), one Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate, one Customs Valuation and Internal Audit Commissionerate, and one Customs Valuation and Investigation Directorate. Although there are 57 land custom stations, so far selected 24 operational Land Customs Stations have been declared as Land Ports. In land ports, customs duties, VAT, supplemental duties, and other taxes and fees imposed on imported or exported products are primarily assessed and collected by the customs authorities. Smuggling prevention, Imports and Exports (Control) Act implementation, and Foreign Exchange Regulation enforcement are some of its ancillary duties. The customs authority also upholds the security measures mandated by several regulations as part of its other responsibilities. Customs also responsible for activities like inspecting consignments documents and assigning duty, ASYCUDA recording, advance ruling services and release orders issuance.

Bangladesh Land Port Authority

BLPA was established as a statutory regulatory agency in 2001 under the BLPA Act. The goal of BLPA is to make land-based export-import activities faster and easier while also ensuring their safety, efficiency, and sustainability. Its goals include improving storage facilities, developing and modernizing infrastructure, and ensuring effective freight handling. The Authority's general operations are governed and overseen by a Board. Additionally, an advisory committee headed by the state or federal minister of shipping gives the land ports the required guidance for their growth and overall development. According to the Act, the BLPA's primary duties are:

- Drafting regulations for the establishment, administration, growth, operation, and maintenance of all land ports;
- Appointing operators to receive, maintain, and send cargoes at a land port;

²⁶ Custom Wing- NBR

- Creating a schedule of tariffs, tolls, rates, and fees applicable to port users with the government's previous consent;
- Signing contracts with anybody to achieve the Act's goals;
- Build, maintain and repair roads near to borders to facilitate the transit of commodities, and provide the yards and shade needed for the temporary storage of cargo and loaded trucks, etc.

The designation of 12 land ports marked the beginning of BLPA's operations. 12 additional land customs stations have since been designated as land ports. BLPA is working to develop infrastructural facilities of the land ports. BLPA aims to establish efficient, safe and environment friendly world class land port. BLPA is also engaged in promoting export-import trade through the use of modern technology in cargo handling, storage and infrastructural development of land ports. For instance, automation System is being implemented at the land ports in phases with a view to building Digital Bangladesh and has been executed at Benapole Land Port. Additionally, Burimari Land Port is now implementing the e-port management system as part of e-service initiative. For other land ports, the initiative to implement automation has also been accepted.

Certification and Quality Control Authority

For importing or exporting goods, different certificates are required from respective authorities. VAT certificate, country of origin certificate, phytosanitary certificate, No Objection Certificate, customs transit declaration, Quarantine certificate, import permit, IRC, ERC, ISO certificates are collected from various authorities and certification boards like BSTI, Plant Quarantine, Banks, Customs, Office of the chief controller of Imports and Exports, Export Promotion Bureau, chambers of commerce and so on.

However, the designated quality-control authority of Bangladesh is Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI). **BSTI** is engaged in testing of products, standardization of goods and services, adoption of national standards, implementation of the international system of weights and measures, promotion of quality assurance initiatives and provision of testing facilities for goods and services. The institution playing an important role in developing and promoting industrial standardization all over the country and preparing the country in meeting the international standards properly. BSTI provided a number of certificate related to export and import especially Issuance of clearance of imported goods, Clearance of imported weights/weighing instruments, measuring instruments and related parts and Issuance/renewal of Halal certificate related SPS and TBT issues.

Plant Quarantine is another important authority associated with foreign trade as it regulates the import of plants or plant products, beneficial organisms and packing materials for preventing the introduction of quarantine pests into Bangladesh from other countries. As a WTO signatory, Bangladesh is required to abide by the WTO-SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures) Agreement in order to conduct activities involving the import and export of plants and plant products. When it comes to protecting Bangladeshi agriculture, plant quarantine is active in the ports to assure the prevention of quarantine pest introduction with the importation of plants and plants' products, beneficial organisms, and packing materials. Additionally, it serves as a

regulatory body to promote and maintain the export of plants, plant products, beneficial organisms, and packaging materials in accordance with international agreements and the phytosanitary criteria of the importing country. Under the direction of this Plant quarantine wing of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), the introduction of the e-phytosanitary certification system and modernization of the quarantine laboratories at plant quarantine stations are being carried out in order to bring Bangladesh's plant quarantine activities up to international standards.

Another noteworthy testing agency is **Atomic Energy Commission**. Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) was established in 1973 as a multidisciplinary R&D organization with the view of promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Bangladesh. From the very beginning of its formation, BAEC started R&D works in areas covering physical science, bioscience, engineering and nuclear medicine for human welfare and economic uplift of the country. Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) provide Radiation Certificate for permitting import of radioactive material and Nuclear Reactors & its parts entering through ports.

Port Operators

A port operator is an organization or port authority that has a contract with the port authority to move cargo through a port at a predetermined minimum rate of productivity. They could be privately or state-owned-run, especially for port authorities. Operator's work involves reducing the amount of time a transport spends in port, and overseeing the transportation of cargo containers between, lorries, and freight trains as well as streamlining the flow of commodities through customs. Gantry cranes, berths, canals, roads, storage facilities, communication equipment, computer systems, and dockworkers' union contracts all are managed and upgraded by operator to maintain efficiency. In addition, the port operator oversees leasing, safety, and security. Five of the declared land ports – Benapole, Bhomra, Burimari, Akhaura, and Nakugaon – are operated by the BLPA under its own management. Sonamosjid, Hili, Teknaf, Bibirbazar, and Banglabandha Land Ports, on the other hand, are run on a BOT (Build, Operate, and Transfer) basis by Private Port Operators. Additionally, a Private Port Operator has been chosen to design and run the Birol Land Port. Panama Sonamasjid, Hili Port Link Ltd, United Land Port Teknaf Ltd Banglabandha Land Port Limited are some of the private operators who are currently running the respective land ports.

Bank

Banks facilitate cross border trade by providing financing and guarantees to importers and exporters. They can offer additional assistance in setting up outside financial institutions to repatriate early payments, including agreements to pay for exports under open account. LC documentation facilities, NOC (No Objection Certificate) type documents are provided by banks and most transactions of land port trades are carried out through banks. Distance and availability of sufficient commercial banks can make cross border trade challenging, for instance the nearest bank of Burimari land port is about 2 km faraway which hinders its trade convenience.

Immigration

A salient feature of land ports is immigration offices that facilitates cross border movement of people. Besides transit visa and VOA facilities, immigrations check posts

also sustain integrity of port security by preventing trespassing. Between Benapole and Petrapole, there is a border checkpoint on the land route. 10,000 passengers pass via this path on average, and under customs inspection, a number of reformations are brought in. With a proper job schedule immigration system is currently broker-less after 47 years of liberation. Once a location of numerous troubles, land port immigration centers are now a place to breathe with trust and rest while entering and leaving India while passenger harassment was a common occurrence here. Beside Benapole, Akhaura, Banglabandha, Burimari, Shonamashjid, Bhomra ports now have immigration office facilities. Immigration systems in the land ports are bound to follow following immigration rules:

1. The Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary) Order 1972
2. Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary) Rules 1978
3. The Bangladesh Passport Order, 1973
4. Bangladesh Passport Rules, 1974
5. The Passport Act, 1920
6. Passport Rules, 1955
7. The Passport (Offence) Act, 1952
8. The Emigration Ordinance, 1982
9. The Foreigners Act, 1946
10. The Foreigners Order, 1951
11. The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939
12. The Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1966
13. The Bangladesh Control of Entry Act, 1952
14. Registration of Foreigners (Exemption) Order, 1966
15. The Emigration Rules 2002
16. Recruiting Agent's Conduct and License Rules 2002
17. Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000 (Act no. 8 of 2000)

Source: Bangladesh Immigration Police

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) is a renowned, exemplary, and heroic paramilitary force. Known professionally as the "ever vigilant sentinels of the border," BGB is in charge of securing the Bangladeshi border, conducting anti-smuggling and anti-narcotics operations, stopping the trafficking of women and children, stopping various transnational crimes, and maintaining internal security. The force's tasks and responsibilities have grown significantly now, and operating tactics now take into account multiple factors. BGB is governed by the Ministry of Home Affairs the force has special jurisdiction in National border patrol, security, and integrity. Since land ports are tied with the borders, Additionally, this group is in charge of preventing smuggling and other border crimes. BGB also checks goods and consignments that enter or exit the country through the borders and hence has a role in the trade operation of the land ports.

Transport and Logistics Company

A crucial part of foreign or cross border trade is transport and logistics. Companies of these sectors ensures flow of goods and supply chain efficiency for enhancing trade

performance in terms of costs, time and quality. Lack of harmonization of transportation and storage facilities and their unavailability can be impediment to smooth country transit. The most crucial issues associated with road transport surround trade facilitation issues and border crossing efficiency²⁷. A lot of freight forwarding and logistic companies work in land ports but their service performances are often subjected to infrastructural capacities of ports.

C&F Agents

Clearing and forwarding (C&F) agencies are professionals at facilitating the clearance of products through customs procedures, working with the carrier, and managing all shipping and delivery-related tasks. Services provided by C&F agents are:

- Transportation of goods to docks and arrangement of warehousing at port.
- Providing Warehousing facilities before the goods are transported to ports. Arrangement for loading of goods on board.
- Preparation and processing of shipping documents, Bills of Lading, port Receipt, Export Declarations, Consular Invoice, Certificate of Origin, etc.
- Forwarding of banking collection papers.

A lot of C&F agents work in land ports of Bangladesh and their role is considerable in smooth trade processes and cross border trade facilitation.

Exporter and Importer

Exporters and importers are the service receivers of the land ports and the trade facilitation initiatives are taken to help make trade across borders (imports and exports) faster, and cheaper and more predictable, whilst ensuring its safety and security. Usually, exporters and importers use the services of C&F agents. Simplifying and harmonizing formalities, procedures, and the related exchange of information and documents between the various partners in the supply chain can help importer-exporters or traders to maintain and enhance their trading activities seamlessly. However, knowledge gap in trade procedures and customs formalities often hinder trade facilitation measures. Implementing trade facilitation reforms entails a number of direct benefits for a country's human and institutional development through associated investments in capacity-building and public sector reforms²⁸.

Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)

Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Bangladesh under the Ministry of Commerce is a government agency of the country, entrusted with the responsibilities of promoting export of the country. For export growth EPB carries out a wide range of activities like coordinating export development efforts at different sectors and production levels, formulating and adopting of policy and program for active promotion of exports, Coordinating, monitoring and evaluating national export performance and analyzing export trends. EPB also issues GSP, SAFTA, APTA related CO certificates. In land port trade, EPB is actively engaged in export promotion and facilitating trade across ports for instance some new business owners from Chapai Nawabganj and Bogra have begun exporting their goods as a result of promotional actions done by the Export

²⁷ Role of Transportation and Logistics on International Trade- USAID

²⁸ Trade facilitation and development- Driving trade competitiveness, border agency effectiveness and strengthened governance- UNCTAD, 2016

Promotion Bureau, Rajshahi. These exporters are presently exporting Readymade garments, Jute and jute goods, Nylon, Water pump, Impeller, Pump shaft, round coupling flinch, Grand flinch, Bearing guard etc. under SAFTA scheme to India. The existing issue with shipping these goods to India via Benapole and Sonamaszid land port has been resolved. Also, to address the current issues with rubber export from Bangladesh to India, the Export Promotion Bureau engaged with the Bangladesh Forest Development Corporation, Bangladesh Rubber Board, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and Rubber Garden Owners Association. In order to remove obstacles to the export of rubber from Bangladesh to India, EPB informed the Ministry of Commerce and the National Board of Revenue to permit Petrapole Land Port as well as Nava Sheva and Chennai ports in India. It also requested that the H. S. Code of Rubber be harmonized.²⁹

FTA wing Ministry of Commerce

One of the crucial departments under the Ministry of Commerce is the Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) Wing. It is in charge of regional, multilateral, bilateral, and free trade agreements with other nations. Protecting national interests and ensuring increased market access for Bangladeshi exports to other nations are the main goals of this wing. Bangladesh has already been associated with some Regional Trade Agreements and Bilateral Trade Agreements with different countries for enhancing its trade. Some of its key trade agreements that includes landlocked countries are South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA and Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). With suitable policies and efforts, role of FTA wing is crucial in regional trade development and facilitation with border countries like Nepal, Bhutan, and India under different trade agreements.

World Trade Organization (WTO) wing

The WTO wing, established under the Ministry of Commerce, conducts activities under the World Trade Organization (WTO) by maintaining regular contact with the Bangladesh Mission in Geneva on all matters related to the WTO. Among these activities, assisting in the enforcement of WTO rules in the field of international trade, working to increase overall capacity in WTO related matters, working to achieve more market benefits including preserving the country's interests in the international trade system, participating in negotiations by determining the country's position on various issues. , regular exchange of views on various issues with stakeholders, completion of studies, surveys, surveys or needs assessments on various issues of international trade. Also, this wing is involved in activities related to increasing market access (especially tariff-free and quota-free) for goods and services under the WTO, acting as a “National Inquiry Point” to provide information on Sanitary Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) Measures and Rules-Regulations of Bangladesh as per the requirements of other countries, performing functions related to trade facilitation, protecting the interests of domestic industries under WTO rules and so on.

²⁹ EPB Annual Report (2020-21)

Imports and Internal Trade (IIT) Wing

IIT wing is involved in functions related to formulation, amendment and implementation of import policy orders. This wing is also responsible for carrying out following activities:

- Regular reviewing and revising of list of prohibited and import restricted products.
- Performing functions relating to import contracts;
- Regulating procedures relating to determining the manner of importation of goods under the Special Trade Agreement (STA).
- Liaising with National Board of Revenue on imposition, remission and reduction/increase of import duty
- Clearance of goods under baggage rules.
- Engaging in Tariff Policy and Tariff Valuation and operational functions of Tariff Commission.
- Providing permission to import goods by diplomatic/foreign beneficiaries or individuals/missions, various institutions and so on.

Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC)

BTTC's main duty is to formulate recommendations for policies that will protect domestic industries, foster a healthy environment for industrial production, make the best use of industrial resources, encourage exports of domestic products, take action to stop unfair trade practices like dumping when importing and selling foreign goods, and expand domestic industries' access to international, regional, and national markets. Any issue the government refers to must be investigated by the Commission. When carrying out its duties, the Commission must take four crucial factors into account: the market economy, the economic environment, bilateral and international trade agreements, and public opinion.

BTTC carries out studies and formulates policies for rationalization of tariff, liberalization of import regime and development of an incentive structure for strengthening the domestic production and export base. A list of prohibited items and a list of restricted items are both included in the government's import policy (that can be imported only on under certain specified conditions). The Commission keeps an eye on the output of industrial units that are protected by such prohibitions and restrictions. If the items' quality declines, their prices are not kept at a reasonable level, or if production levels falter and underutilize available capacity, the Commission may recommend to the Ministry of Commerce that the prohibition be lifted. The Commission keeps an eye on the costs of the prohibited or restricted goods. BTTC can influence the trade aspects like import, export, restricted items in the land port trade.³⁰

Office of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCI&E)

CCI&E mainly provides direct assistance to the Ministry of Commerce in the formulation and publication of import policy orders and its implementation. Also, some of the key functionalities of this department are:

³⁰ Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, viewed at- <http://www.btc.gov.bd/site/page/2832fd79-43d1-487c-ad53-e86dcb620665/->

- Issuance of Indenting Certificate in favor of Importers, Exporters and indentors (Registration) Orders, 1981, suspension / revocation of Registration Certificate for non-regulatory work;
- Supervision of registration and renewal fee collection and collection and storage of related statistics;
- Work related to preparation of Parliamentary Q&A on import and export
- Work related to import permit/export permit/clearance permit/import permit/export work import permit on return basis;
- Work related to issuance of permits for international and regional fairs;
- Work of Committee on Import Trade Control Schedule (ITC);
- Analysis of import and export information and notification accordingly;
- Resolve issues arising from importers with customs authorities on other issues including disputes over HS code numbers, product classification or details;
- Provide any complex explanation that arises regarding the provisions of the import policy order and so on.

Bangladesh Railway (BR)

The government-owned rail transportation company in Bangladesh is titled Bangladesh Railway. The Directorate General of Bangladesh Railway is in charge of managing, operating, and maintaining all of the nation's railroads. Bangladesh Railway has a total of 2955.53 km of routes. As railways are an important land transport system for connecting one end of the country to another, the overall development of railways plays an important role in the economic development of the country. Stakeholders expressed that the railway can be crucial for the transport of goods through borders and within the country. Railway connections with the landlocked countries can help develop efficient transport and logistics management. For instance, traders hope that by the proper development and utilization of Benapole-Petrapole railway not only will there be a manifold increase in import trade, but also new opportunities for the export of domestic products to India will be created.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA)

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) is a statutory government body under the Department of Road Transport and Highways. Notable activities of BRTA include issuance and renewal of driving license of motorists, issuance and renewal of instructor license, driving school registration, issuance of motor vehicle registration, issuance and renewal of Tax Token, issue and renewal of ridesharing enlistment certificate, transfer of ownership of motor vehicle, issuance of fitness certificate and Renewal, Renewal of Route Permit Certificate issue, issuance of Government Motor Vehicle Repair Inspection Report, Accident Vehicle Inspection etc., which are directly related to road safety. BRTA's rules & regulations impact land port transport management and logistics service providers as well as all traders.

Department of Livestock

The Livestock department under the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock is one of the service providers and regulatory agencies of the livestock sector in Bangladesh. The services of the Department of Livestock extend to the farmyard to ensure the safe supply of animal protein. The Department of Livestock has dedicated itself to

improving livestock production, entrepreneurship and skill development, aquaculture development, value chain management, and market management of aquaculture products ever since it was established. Additionally, import and export certificates are issued by the livestock department. Department of Livestock Services has offices in every Upazila in Bangladesh. From where citizens get livestock services and veterinary services. This department is engaged in providing following actions required for livestock related trades:

- Issuance of license for import, storage and marketing of fodder (Category-II).
- Issuance of No Objection Certificate of Import/Export of Animal feed materials, vaccines
- Issuance of No Objection Certificate for Import of Cow, Buffalo, Goat, Sheep, Camel, Dumba, Rabbit, Embryo, Frozen Semen
- Issuance of No Objection Certificate for export of Cow, Buffalo, Goat, Sheep, Camel, Dumba, Rabbit, Embryo, Frozen Semen
- Issuance of no-objection certificate for import of chicks (including turkeys).
- Issuance of veterinary health certificate sanitary certificate in case of import and export of animals and animal products
- Issuance of no-objection certificate for import and export of domestic animals
- Chemical Analysis of Animal Feeds

Department of Fisheries

Department of Fisheries, Fish Inspection and Quality Control Wing (FIQC) is committed to good professional practices and to the quality of its performance according to provisions provided by the “Fish & Fish Product (Inspection & Quality Control) Rules, 1997” Amended 2008, 2014 & 2017. Regional Competent Authorities (RCA's) updates its resource's & skill by proper training as per needs and committed to continually improve the effectiveness of the management system. This department provides certificates like Issuance of no-objection letter of import of Juvenile fish/PL/Fish, Issuance of No Objection Certificate for Import of Fish Feed/Fish Feed Materials/Fisheries/Fish Hatchery Materials and Issuance of no-objection letter for import of fishing nets.

Land ports are good means of regional connectivity and trade growth as the trade between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal grew six times from 2015 to 2019, the unexploited potential for regional trade is estimated at 93 percent for Bangladesh.³¹ However, BLPA's vision include facilitating export-import through land routes through infrastructure development, efficient cargo handling, improvement of storage facilities, fostering public-private partnership for effective and better service delivery. Trade facilitation objectives in land ports can be achieved successfully only when issues of importers and exporters are addressed and resolved in relevant ports.

³¹ Regional Trade and Connectivity in South Asia Gets More Than \$1 Billion Boost from World Bank-The World Bank

3.2 Identified institutional weakness for Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border management

The coordination of numerous tasks, such as security, immigration, customs, plant and animal quarantine, etc., as well as the supply of auxiliary services like storage, parking, banking, and foreign exchange, among others, are not handled by a single body in Bangladesh's land ports so gaps exist in various laws and implementation of different relevant institutions. For instance:

- Regarding the relevance of the Act to the International Treaties and Conventions and its applicability, it should be noted that Bangladesh is a signatory to the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and the WCO's Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC). The majority of TFA and RKC policies have to do with facilitating commerce and customs. Bangladesh has pledged to gradually put the TFA and RKC measures into effect. To put these steps into action, the government has already started. However, as stated in the TFA's Article 21 guidelines, there is no provision for the establishment and administration of a fund for women's empowerment.
- As it was already mentioned, the main purpose of the Bangladesh Land Port Authority Act 2001 was to establish the Bangladesh Land Port Authority in order to oversee foreign trade through the nation's land ports. As a result, the Act has no direct relationship to the conventions and accords relating to commerce. However, of the 38 measures recommended by the TFA/RKC, 37 have to do with customs management and just one has to do with trade facilitation. The BLPA has made significant strides toward putting trade facilitation into effect in the land ports.
- The performance of logistics depends on the hiring, development, and retention of qualified individuals at management and operational levels. Two significant barriers to the hiring of young talent are highlighted as operational logistics professionals' low status and prestige and the low compensation that are offered. However, recent advancements in information technology and logistics need the development of new skills that the current workforce frequently lacks. Due to a dearth of vocational institutions, training for logistics positions is frequently only available through brief on-the-job training by coworkers during routine operations. Personnel development and the connection between individual performance and that of the team, as well as to the organization's overall effectiveness and capacity to carry out its mission, are therefore of highest importance.

Some gaps between these identified institutions' policy and implementation based on the KII result can be illustrated in the table matrix:

Table 28: Weaknesses of the major institutions involved in the cross-border management

Institutions	Weaknesses
Bangladesh Land Port Authority	Lack of sufficient roads, parking space, crane, forklifts, modern weighting scale, scanner, warehouse, shed and accommodation facilities and skilled manpower in land ports. Security issues (insufficient illumination facilities, CCTV cameras in bypass road)
Customs	Lacks full automation system and sufficient manpower.
Certification and Quality Control Authority	Lacks logistic supports to provide full services, also testing facilities and accredited labs are not located near land port proximity.
BGB	BGB cargo and passenger checking takes long time.
Immigration	Lack of proper queue management, waiting room and other facilities for passengers.
Operator	Lacks capacity in providing security and automation system services.
C&F Agent	Knowledge insufficiency on HS code, Advance ruling and other Custom measures.
Transport and Logistics Company	Lacks coordination between C&F agent and labor unions, syndicate issues.
Importer-Exporter	Lacks trade knowledge and coordination with land port authority, customs and Bank.

Source: KII findings

3.3 Procedural hindrances in cross border management

Importing and exporting through land ports are bestowed with different procedural hindrances. Some noticeable hindrances in the trade procedure including customs inspection, assessment and other activities are:

- In the assessment process of trade, decisions made by the Assistant Revenue Officer are always forwarded to the Revenue Officer, while judgments made by the Revenue Officer are frequently forwarded to the Assistant Commissioner. Higher echelons of management may also be consulted on decisions made by the assistant commissioner. This reflects a duplication of work in the Customs procedures.
- Since few border agency employees wear uniforms, it becomes difficult to distinguish between border management employees and traders or other members of the general public.
- C&F Agents have direct access to Customs officers who are involved in the evaluation, classification, and valuation processes directly.
- The process of unloading an Indian vehicle and then putting the product onto a Bangladeshi truck is time-consuming, labor-intensive, and expensive for the

merchant. By enabling inland in bond movement, this phase might be all but avoided.

- Other governmental organizations carry out their examination whenever it is convenient for both them and the C&F agents. These are not always carried out simultaneously with Customs.
- The simultaneous unloading from the Indian truck, inspection, and loading into the Bangladeshi vehicle particularly occurs in the case of truck shipments of perishable goods.
- Both online and manual registers are kept in these customs stations or ports, notwithstanding the introduction of ASYCUDA World at several land ports. One of the main issues preventing ASYCUDA World from being effectively operationalized is a lack of consistent internet access.
- The release procedures can occasionally take longer due to a lack of coordination between Customs and other border agencies in concluding inspections of import shipments. For instance, even after inspection, many Importers and C&F agents do not pay their duties timely which increases the overall release time.
- Land ports can't be kept open 24/7 for full fledge immigration service because the Indian side usually closes immigration processes after 5 pm. Also, the time required for trade in land ports can be affected by the service time and operating hours of land ports. For instance, Petrapole and Benapole port authorities decided to keep the port open 24/7 but service provider offices like quarantine, and banks are not kept open 24/7.
- Congestion occurs because only 5–10% of vehicles enter Bangladeshi land ports between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm; the remainder arrive after 2:00 pm. Export transports from Bangladesh must wait in line because respective Indian offices close at 6:30 pm
- Customs laboratories are not available in any land port except Benapole. Absences of laboratories makes examination process of chemical products lengthy and strenuous
- The land ports have yet not seen full automation. Automation capacity of agencies at land ports and customs are not often parallel. Due to a lack of proper automation, there is a huge line even for paying the terminal charge. Also, IGMs are submitted electronically in seaports and airports but not inland ports.

From the KII findings, cross border management in case of trading or export-imports, following procedural hindrances can be noticed:

Table 29: Import-export procedural hindrances

Activities	Challenges
1. Document collection and preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation process is lengthy and time consuming. • The present documentation processes are atavistic and not up to the mark for trade facilitation standards. • Poor internet and networking system • Lack of automation system in documentation process

Activities	Challenges
2. Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of proper transportation system in the port area • The paucity of space in the port area. • Lack of inter border coordination • Lack of skilled manpower • Lack of coordination among the service providers in Land port • Fire stations, Hospitals, and accredited labs or testing facilities are far from Port premises.
3. Expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to syndicate problems in the border region, expenditure frequently increases. • Documentation costs frequently change • Due to the prolonged documentation procedure, expenditure frequently increases.

Source: KII findings of BFTI

Hindrances in testing Procedures:

- BSTI provides two types of clearance certificates, one is temporary clearance, and another is final clearance. Final clearance is issued after laboratory testing.
- There is a specific timeline (maximum 8 days, minimum 72 hours for some) for testing and providing certificates for 69 products.
- Sample for testing is usually carried or sent to the Dhaka labs by the client that increases trade time.
- C&F agents often provide misdeclaration which creates problems for BSTI to provide timely testing result.
- Testing takes time because there is a specific time requirement for some testing procedures. For instance, fumigation takes a minimum of 3-5 days.
- Some products only require “Eye Inspection” which may take 10 minutes only. Some products require microbial tests that take around 7 days of time.
- In case of exports, perishable goods are often eye-inspected which takes 10 minutes to 1 hour. In case of import, seeds that require germination take 3 to a maximum of 7 days for completing the testing facilities.

The field visit and KII revealed that laboratory facilities, technical support, and logistic support at the plant quarantine station at the land port were not up to the standards. From field visit, it was found that the logistic support provided to the technical officers for transportation, communication and late night stay at workplace is not satisfactory at the plant quarantine stations of the land port. Currently, because of lack of manpower a dedicated official from the plant quarantine wing needs to take minimum four days even more to give the import permit, export PC certificate and release order. To fully understand the sampling and processing good, the adequate workforce and special officer employment is critical concern. On the other hand, stakeholders informed about the higher service fees amounting 200 taka for online application of PC Certificate and Import Permit whereas the certificate fees are around 50 taka. The inadequate logistic and technical staff support specially in different plant quarantine stations especially in Bhomra, Akhaura and other land ports create extra barrier to facilitate export.

Besides, additional hindrances in the port management activities are:

- Implementation of infrastructure development initiatives are not sufficient as per requirement of service standard.
- Security system is not robust due to insufficient CCTV cameras.
- Time requirement for detention vehicles to release is high and importers have to pay large amount of demurrage.
- The weigh scale is misplaced and reweigh the same shipment again consumes release time.
- Fire stations and accredited labs or testing facilities are far from ports and not up to required standards that hinders port procedures.
- Parking facilities are very limited for inbound or outbound transports so transportation delays trade procedures in the port.
- Ports cannot stay fully operation 24/7 due to manpower shortage.
- There is problem in existing software for recording entry-exit vehicle tracking system. It only records entry time but not departure time that hinders tracking of shipment.
- The Plant quarantine certificate is issued from Dhaka; IP certificates cannot be obtained promptly which increases time delay in trade.
- Lack of token system for the passengers and manual que management at immigration creates congestions in immigration procedure.
- Lack of proper one stop service center and help desks.
- BGB checking is done thrice and the checking time by BGB is much time consuming. These unnecessary checking procedures hinder time efficiency.
- In export, when Bangladeshi drivers reach India, the Indian authority takes much time to check trucks and divers which delays the land port trade.
- Some consignments are delayed in port release due to the BSTI laboratory testing time requirements.
- After the assessment, for duty, there is now an e-payment system available since 1st January 2022 and it takes a maximum of one and half a minute to pay duty tax. However, after the assessment of duty, duty payers often pay after 2 or more days for various reasons that increase the time of goods release.
- From the bill of entry to the issue of the release order, Customs usually takes a maximum of one day time, but this process gets delayed due to delayed payments by the importers or C&F agents.
- Although Banks have interconnectivity with Customs and ASYCUDA, the ASYCUDA system is not available in all land ports, so online system does not work there and hard copies of documents are still required there.
- Export permission form (EXP form) is digitalized and its hardcopy is not usually required but in the land ports, still, the practice of hardcopy submission is apparent.

Some trade, customs, documentation, immigration, and port agency/stakeholders related procedural hindrances are:

- Absence of an elaborate policy, a detailed procedural guideline and a strategic management plan on Risk Management (RM), Customs tends to examine a large number of consignments
- Needless formality in documentation exists.
- There are numerous document submission requirements without any justification.
- The majority of the time, border agents (BGB, customs, BLPA) reject copies of documents and only accept originals.
- Perishable products are handled specially by customs for quicker release in all land ports, albeit very few facilities for preservation are available for storing perishable commodities prior to release.
- According to customs rules, if products are not released by the importers/exporters within 30 days, those goods will be auctioned. However, many goods are still kept in the land port yard which reduces space in the yard.
- There are no Authorized Economic Operator mechanisms, which would allow reputable traders to complete transactions more quickly.
- Regarding the movement of persons and products across borders, different border authorities have varied responsibilities. These requirements range from controls on revenue assurance, migration, phytosanitary, radiological, transport, and food safety. Due to the fact that these organizations frequently operate independently, they frequently conduct several inspections of the same products and subject traders to a great deal of harassment.
- Immigration facilities often face congestion due to lack of proper que management systems. Long queue in immigration causes due to lack of automation.
- Travelers coming from India to Benapole ports has to face 3 times BGP checking. Once in zero-point entry, once after the immigration process and once at Amrakhali region while selecting appropriate transport. This multiple checking creates hassles for travelers.
- A transshipment yard is not available in Petrapole which creates problem for exporting and importing perishable goods.
- In proportion to the volume increase in the land ports, manpower and service standards have not improved proportionally.
- Land port-related services are not available on the weekend in Bangladesh (Friday, and Saturday) and on Indian weekend (Sunday). This weekend problem reduces service time in the land ports.

Identified key weaknesses of the Land ports

Based on the KII, FGD and PC, some major weaknesses of the land ports are:

- Long and time-consuming documentation process lacking proper automation system.
- Insufficient infrastructural capacities (lack of sufficient roads, parking space, crane, forklifts, modern weighting scale, scanner, warehouse, shed and accommodation facilities).
- Lack of coordination between Land Port Authority, Customs, C&F Agents, and other border agencies.

- Incapacity to stay fully operational 24/7 due to manpower shortage.
- Lack of automated data sharing system among different agencies.
- Fire stations, Hospitals, and accredited labs or testing facilities are far from Port premises.
- Absence of One Stop Service center and help desks.
- Lack of proper queue management, waiting room and other facilities for passengers.
- Unavailability of seamless Internet connectivity in the port premises.
- Security issues (insufficient illumination facilities, CCTV cameras in bypass road). Inefficient traffic system, parking system and vehicle tracking system.
- Lack of intra agency and cross border coordination.

Chapter 4: Coordination Mechanism, One stop Service and Standard Operating Procedure

4.1 Coordination mechanism at the border point

WTO's Agreement on Trade Facilitation Article 8: Border Agency Cooperation dictates that "Each Member shall ensure that its authorities and agencies responsible for border controls and procedures dealing with the importation, exportation, and transit of goods cooperate with one another and coordinate their activities in order to facilitate trade." Also, Each Member shall, to the extent possible and practicable, cooperate on mutually agreed terms with other Members with whom it shares a common border with a view to coordinating procedures at border crossings to facilitate cross-border trade. Such cooperation and coordination may include: (a) alignment of working days and hours; (b) alignment of procedures and formalities; (c) development and sharing of common facilities; (d) joint controls; (e) establishment of one stop border post control.

Coordinated Border Management (CBM) can be a resolution for better coordination that prescribes a coordinated approach by border control agencies, both domestic and international, in the context of seeking greater efficiencies over managing trade and travel flows, while maintaining a balance with compliance requirements. While many organizations and documents refer to this as "Integrated Border Management", the World Customs Organization (WCO) prefers "Coordinated Border Management" as it gives prominence to the principle of coordination of policies, programs and delivery outcomes whilst avoiding any perception of favoring a single solution. This paper does not propose the adoption of any model for a coordinated border management system as it is the responsibility of the government concerned to determine what system is most appropriate for its nation. The model itself is not the integral issue but rather the greater understanding of the risk environment involved and the recognition of the unique contributions each agency brings to managing the border and developing an approach that delivers higher levels of synergies between them.

At the level of both the federal government and individual border agencies, CBM can result in numerous advantages and benefits. Governmental design and implementation of a CBM system can lead to more efficient service delivery at the border by reducing conflicts and redundancies between various agencies' policies, missions, and mandates. As a result of adopting a comprehensive strategy to border management, it will improve the government's capacity to handle strategic challenges across the border agency sector. All functions and duties inside border agency will benefit from such a comprehensive approach. CBM can result in resource savings through economies of scale brought about by shared usage of ICT systems and their development, cross-training, and pooling of resources.

The national states should have complete control over the framework of laws, rules, and policies that apply to their area for cross-border administration. Hence, various national requirements and concerns are typically reflected in border control systems. All government agencies whose policies include border management functions and

interventions must be taken into account equally and participate in the formulation of cooperative solutions/policies/services provided at the border in order to fully realize the potential advantages from the CBM.

Customs, security, immigration, and port authority and phytosanitary inspection services are usually the main agencies operating at the border. However, in addition to the main border agencies there are also many other governmental bodies who play a role or have a stake in the border process. For Bangladesh, the list of government stakeholders incorporates state bodies in the fields of:

- Ministry of Home Affairs for border management measures (BGB)
- Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges for transportation measures
- Ministry of Railways for transportation measures
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs for diplomatic relations affairs
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures
- Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock for SPS measures
- Ministry of Food for SPS measures
- Ministry of Industries for TBT measures
- Ministry of Agriculture for SPS measures
- Ministry of Finance for economic affairs
- National Board of Revenue for customs affairs.
- Ministry of Commerce for trade related affairs.
- Ministry of Shipping for land port management (BLPA).
- Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission

In addition to government stakeholders, the various private sector partners have an important role and need to be included in the cooperation in realizing the benefits of the CBM. Besides the government ministries and agencies, private organizations like trade bodies, transportation and logistics companies, freight forwarding companies, C&F agents, importers and exporters are also engaged in port operational activities and Institutional coordination is essential for successful trade facilitation given its multidimensional and complex components³². They should also be included as part of the cooperation. From the perspective of broader border management, stakeholders such as civil society in general and NGOs should also be included as part of the cooperation as they are lay contributors to and users of border agency services and have a significant influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of any border management system.

Governments and the business community should recognize the importance of trade facilitation in the formulation of trade policies and work to create a National Trade Facilitation Body (NTFB) that embraces the perspectives of all parties involved and strives for consensus, collaboration, and joint action³³. With the right coordination, the public and private sectors can work together to develop policies that will completely remove or significantly reduce the obstacles to efficient and successful trade procedures.

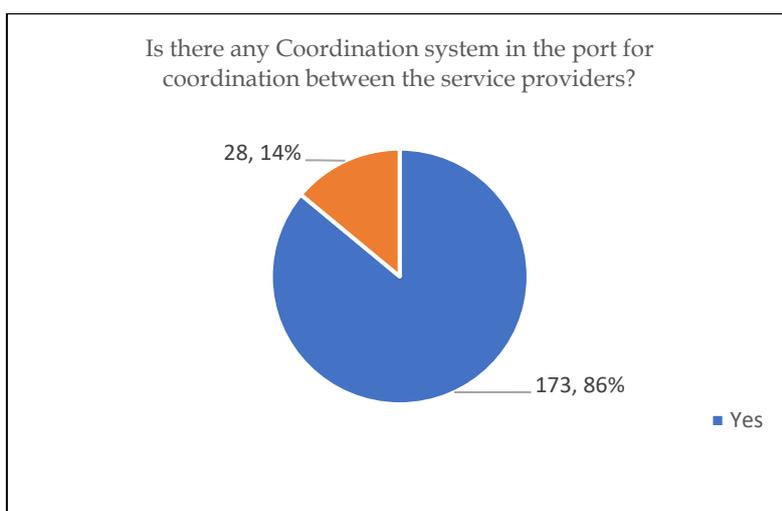
³² Trade Facilitation for A More Inclusive and Connected Asia and Pacific Region- Asian Development Bank (ADB)

³³ National Trade Facilitation Bodies: Recommendation no. 4- UNECE

Besides the government ministries and agencies, private organizations like trade bodies, transportation and logistics companies, freight forwarding companies, C&F agents, importers and exporters are also engaged in port operational activities and Institutional coordination is essential for successful trade facilitation given its multidimensional and complex components.³⁴

In the survey of study, Respondents were asked if there was any coordination system present in the ports for coordination between the service providers and the majority (173, 86%) responded affirmatively. The following table shows the details of the responses:

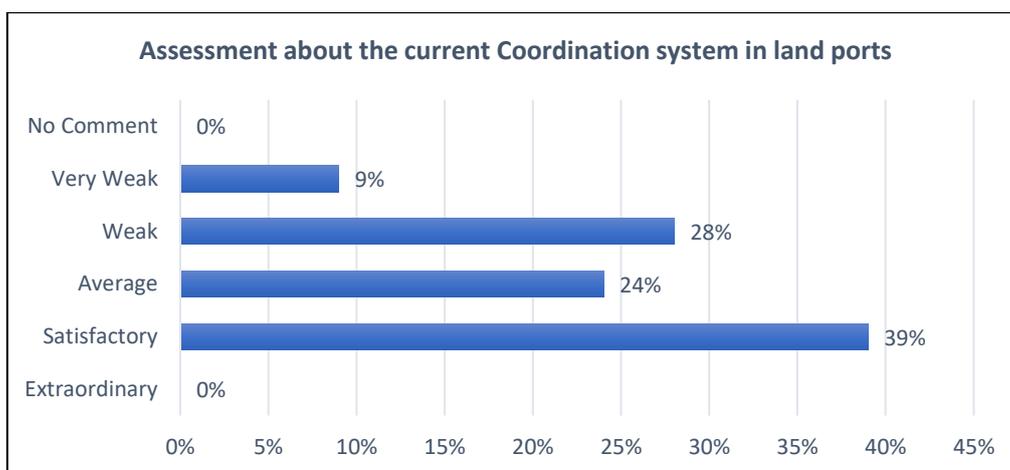
Figure 19: Responses on coordination system of land ports



Source: BFTI Field Survey

Of the respondents who responded affirmatively, a substantial portion (39%) evaluated the coordination system as satisfactory. 24% believe the system is average and 28% of the respondent evaluated the coordination system as weak.

Figure 20: Assessment about the current coordination system



Source: BFTI Field Survey

³⁴ Trade Facilitation for A More Inclusive and Connected Asia and Pacific Region- Asian Development Bank (ADB)

As the survey findings showed a positive picture of coordination in the land ports, KII and focus group discussions also backed the same conclusion. Stakeholders revealed that interagency coordination is improving as customs and BLPA are working side by side without any reluctance. However, agencies like BSTI, plant quarantine, banks, BGB, etc. are still not in the digital loop of the coordination which impedes the data sharing and process streamlining efforts. Moreover, as the agencies are governed by their own agendas and mandates, the efforts of coordination often fall short. For instance, Container movement through Benapole is still under consideration because trade bodies and the ministry of rail need to agree on introducing this facility. Moreover, Indian-side approval is also required for shipping containers and cargo through railways to develop separate yards and warehouses for train transport facilities. These situation calls for legally binding measures or policy and regulatory framework development and reforms for obligatory coordination.

4.1.2 Interagency and Intra-agency coordination

Good inter-agency coordination is essential to effective border management. For example, if the frontier and customs services operate at the border crossings on a daily basis (24/7), the other agencies must also do likewise. Lack of such coordination and juxtaposition of working hours will be detrimental and can lead to doling up border clearance and may add substantially to the costs of the importer/exporter.

Intra-agency coordination is also equally important. The failure for the same agency with various posts and offices spread around the country, either at border posts or inland offices, failing to harmonize their procedures or failure to receive pertinent information from each other, can lead to incompetency of actions taken. Prompt communications and exchange of information will play a positive role not only for officials of controlling government agencies involved in border management but also for the trading community. The detailed aspects of inter and intra agency coordination in the borders or land ports are delineated in the following discussions.

Intra-agency coordination: The idea of intra-agency coordination or cooperation is to coordinate efforts inside a single organization, either vertically between headquarters and local branches or horizontally between local branches and border crossing offices or stations. Horizontal intra-agency cooperation can be encouraged by the creation of intranet networks, cross-training, employee rotation between departments, and the creation of collaborative task teams. Vertical cooperation would ideally be two-way: headquarters would set goals and objectives and then inform local branches of those priorities and objectives. In exchange, the branches would provide progress updates and recommendations for enhancing the general policies. The groundwork for more extensive cooperation is established by addressing intra-agency issues, as it is difficult for any organization to effectively collaborate with external stakeholders if it has internal issues. Therefore, dismantling departmental silos and fostering a culture of

cooperation within the confines of one organization is the obvious first step in coordinated border or land management.³⁵

Intra-service cooperation refers to cooperation between units within a government and includes two different aspects. The vertical aspect of intra-service cooperation refers to the coordination and cooperation between the different administrative levels from the state body to the units working at the borders, whereas the horizontal aspect relates to the cooperation between various units at the different levels of the agency.

A number of agencies actively provide services in the land ports. Due to the insufficiency of intra-agency coordination, customs' examination and assessments approaches may take time, issues like misdeclaration may create time lags due to poor information flow in the organizational chain, plant quarantine/BSTI certificates may take a long time due to the submittal of sample to head office from port offices and receipt of reports vice versa. In order to improve the efficiency of these service agents in ports, intra-agency coordination needs to be enhanced through intranet network development, cross-training, departmental employee rotation, and task team collaboration.

Inter-agency coordination: Inter-agency coordination means cooperation at local, regional and central levels between ministries or state bodies with different tasks related to border management. At the operational level, this concerns relationships among a broad range of border agencies that play a role in controlling cross-border trade and travel. In many countries, primary agencies present at the borders include customs, border guards, immigration authorities and transport security agencies. However, also police organizations, health authorities, and phytosanitary and veterinary controllers, among others, take part in border management. Typical areas of customs- border guard inter-agency cooperation can include strategic planning, communication and information exchange, coordination of workflow of border crossing points, risk analysis, criminal investigations, joint operations, control outside border control points, mobile units, contingency/emergency, infrastructure and equipment sharing, and training and human resource management. Governmental inter-agency cooperation occurs between border control agencies and ministries and policy making bodies that are responsible for oversight and financing of border management activities.³⁶

In case of land ports of Bangladesh, at the national level inter-agency cooperation and coordination can include many different components. Arrangements such as the Single Window or integrated procedures and risk management systems (including the use of joint ICT systems) would represent more sophisticated way of cooperation between the different border agencies. For example, integrated forms of cooperation, such as coordination of inspections and control procedures, would also have beneficial impact and constitute first steps towards more advanced cooperation. In the land ports of Bangladesh, following agencies are apparent in operations:

³⁵ Cross-border Research Association, CBRA- Border Agency Cooperation, viewed at <https://www.cross-border.org/2016/02/20/border-agency-cooperation-part-3-of-3/>

³⁶ Cross-border Research Association, CBRA- Border Agency Cooperation, viewed at <https://www.cross-border.org/2016/02/20/border-agency-cooperation-part-3-of-3/>

Figure 21: Agencies engaged in cross-border trade

Agencies engaged in cross-border trade procedure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Board of Revenue (NBR) ▪ Customs ▪ Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) ▪ Port Operator ▪ Certification and Quality Control Authorities (BSTI, Plant Quarantine and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission) ▪ Bank ▪ Transport and Logistics Company ▪ Immigration ▪ Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) ▪ Department of Livestock ▪ Department of Fisheries ▪ Bangladesh Railway (BR) ▪ Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) ▪ Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) ▪ Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) Wing ▪ World Trade Organization (WTO) wing ▪ Imports and Internal Trade (IIT) Wing ▪ Office of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (CCI&E) ▪ Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) ▪ Trade bodies ▪ Exporters ▪ Importers ▪ C&F Agents

Inter-agency Coordination among these agencies is crucial for smooth border management and services. When data sharing and service flows are streamlined through the coordination among these agencies, trade and immigration processes can be effective in terms of time, cost, and convenience. Lack of coordination among these agencies hinders smooth trade facilitating measures, for instance, Container movement through Benapole is demanded by the port users but is still under consideration because trade bodies and the Ministry of rail need to work coordinately on introducing this facility.

The implementation of inter-agency arrangements can be done achieved in many different ways. The cooperation between border agencies often occurs on a voluntary and ad hoc basis as suddenly occurring challenges are tackled by ad hoc joint actions such as the planning of traffic flows in peak times or employing more resources in areas appearing to be bottlenecks etc. Different border authorities often use MOUs as the basis of their cooperation between themselves. However, more advanced arrangements between agencies usually require sufficient legal basis to act and may

require legal amendments to various national laws.³⁷ Among the different agencies of the land ports, creating coordination committees, digital data sharing (like creating a digital channel of data sharing including customs, BLPA, testing agencies, banks, etc.), and integrated office location (pairing, one-stop service) can be effective for ensuring interagency coordination.

4.1.3 Areas of coordination

There are four areas of coordination and cooperation by border governing agencies or land port service agencies. They are technical area, operational area, legislative area and institutional area.³⁸

1. **Technical:** Increasing the connectivity and interoperability of information and communication technology systems both within and between businesses is frequently required for this. Since they allow for the automatic transmission of electronic trade information among border control agencies, single window systems are typical results of technical collaboration. The UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, also known as UN/CEFACT, is a significant global institution that promotes connection among nations as well as between private sector and public sector partners. For example, UN/CEFACT creates and upholds universally acknowledged standards for EDI messaging.
2. **Operational:** Coordination of inspection and auditing tasks among border control authorities is a major concern here. The advantages of coordinated actions are clear: arranging relevant controls in one location and at the same time decreases the administrative burden and delays that traders and traveler encounter at borders. Coordination of the operating times and days of the customs offices on both sides of a border is a straightforward but effective example of operational integration. Operational integration also includes exchange of customs intelligence and other information, mutual administrative support, cooperative criminal investigations, and prosecution.
3. **Legislative:** This aims to eliminate legal obstacles and ambiguities that impede border control agencies from sharing duties, exchanging information, or cooperating more deeply in any other way. In essence, political commitment and some degree of legal harmonization are necessary for the majority of forms of border agency coordination. For instance, Article 8 of the WTO/TFA to the WTO Members mandates that national authorities and agencies in charge of border controls, the importation, exportation, and transit of products work together and coordinate their efforts to ease trade.

³⁷ Stefan Aniszewski (2009) Coordinated Border Management – a concept paper, WCO Research Paper No. 2, available at- <https://www.wcoomd.org//media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/research/research-paper-series/cbm.pdf?la=en>

³⁸ Yukesh Upreti (2022) A Study of Inter-Agencies Cooperation in Border Governance of Nepal, Journal of APF Command and Staff College

4. **Institutional:** It concerns changing the responsibilities and roles of border control organizations. The annexation of US border control agencies into the Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, a body that took over the key governmental functions involved in the US non-military counter-terrorism efforts in the wake of the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks, is one example of a significant restructuring. These agencies include the US Customs and Border Protection, Transportation Security Administration, and Coast Guard.

4.1.4 Resource and data sharing for coordination at border point

Following sharing options can facilitate robust coordination at the border point:

- **Sharing of information:** Data, knowledge, and intelligence can create a unified agenda for future border agency collaboration, eliminate duplication of effort (e.g., sharing audit findings), and enable operational coordination (e.g., synchronized border controls). A reliable global communication system for transferring information and intelligence, particularly seizure records, between customs officials worldwide is the WCO's Customs Enforcement Network (CEN). The Globally Networked Customs program of the WCO examines opportunities to "further "rationalize, harmonize and standardize the secure and efficient exchange of information between WCO Members".
- **Resource sharing:** This entails cooperative investments by several agencies in machinery, infrastructure, IT systems, databases, knowledge, and other common resources. Discounts on bulk purchases and increased resource utilization are likely outcomes of the joint investment efforts. For instance, the results of collaborative research and investment efforts across multiple government agencies are frequently national and regional Single Window solutions.
- **Sharing of work:** Mostly, this is about rationalizing overlapping border control formalities, actions, and restrictions. There is no need to control the same products more than once if, for example, two border control agencies agree to recognize each other's controls. Combining efforts to investigate and investigate violations also frequently enables border control authorities to make better use of their limited funding.
- **Sharing of responsibilities:** This is about coordinating and streamlining administrative and control tasks among border control agencies. Norway is a fantastic example of responsibility sharing. All other border control organizations, with the exception of the veterinary office, are represented at the border by the Norwegian Customs. Customs officials are in charge of handling normal border procedures and calling in help from other border control agencies as and when they are needed. At the Northern Scandinavian border stations, the Norwegian customs closely coordinates with the authorities in charge of the Swedish and Finnish borders. Norwegian customs officers have the power to carry out the majority of customs checks and formalities for and on behalf of their Swedish and Finnish counterparts thanks to bilateral agreements between its neighbors. For trading enterprises and the border

control agencies in the three nations, the collaboration reduces border crossing times and administrative expenses.

4.1.5 Policy and legal framework for Coordination

The organizations' lack of coordination is caused by the fact that they operate under their own rules and regulations.³⁹ The idea of offering a one-stop shop under one roof is compromised by this. Additionally, a lack of coordination and limited resources among entities involved in commerce contribute to delays in the clearance of commodities. In some instances, the Departments have established separate offices, resulting in a lack of facility sharing across the Agencies and a drawn-out approval process for dealers. Although there is some automation involved in the submission and processing of customs declarations, much of the overall process is still paper-based and inefficient, adding to the complexity and delay of border clearance and acting as a costly barrier to the competitiveness of the private sector, adversely affecting trade and investment.

Inter-departmental coordination becomes crucial and needs to be further reinforced because numerous different entities under various ministries are directly involved in the process. There are no provisions in the BLPA Act that would help with inter-departmental collaboration in land ports. Additionally, the BLPA is not given such authority. At the same time, it's critical to reconsider the functions performed by various departments, especially if there is a chance to return to the conventional functions performed by other ministries and departments.

As efficient and effective coordination among all relevant government agencies and authorities, and good collaboration between the public and private sectors are crucial for the formulation and implementation of facilitation measures⁴⁰, all parties or stakeholders must be involved for a land port to be effective, including representatives from customs, taxes, immigration, border security forces, food safety departments, banks, and transportation and storage authorities. In the long run, procedure simplification can save time and money by lowering processing requirements.

Policy and legal frameworks need to be revised in accordance with the dire need for inter and intra-agency coordination. The coordination mechanism must involve all the stakeholders and a committee or focal point may be formed for ensuring the coordination measures and monitoring the interagency coordination amongst the service providers of the land port. Laws should define how each agency will be tied to another and to what extent they should share information. BLPA acts, customs acts, BSTI, plant quarantine, atomic energy acts etc. may be revised incorporating scopes of coordination in terms of data sharing and process streamlining for facilitating cross-border trade.

From the KII findings, following steps can be conspired to increase the coordination mechanism at the land ports or border point:

³⁹ Md. Alamgir, Chairman, Bangladesh Land Port Authority, "Land ports in Bangladesh: Prospects and challenges", the Financial Express, June 18, 2021

⁴⁰ Study on National Coordination Mechanisms for Trade and Transport Facilitation in The UNESCAP Region

- Modification of BLPA, Customs policies, rules, and regulations is needed to increase coordination among different parties.
- Establishment of a permanent or stable method of coordination system between the existing interagency is necessary.
- Inter ministry coordination is poor and it should be significantly improved for the improvement of the local port authority.
- For increasing coordination mechanism (eg. Joint customs authority, communication) with neighboring countries (India, Nepal, Bhutan) in terms of land port management, Private stakeholder should be involved during JCC (Joint Consultative Commission) meeting with neighboring countries.

4.1.6 Cross-border coordination and issues

Cross border coordination may take place locally at both sides of a border. One Stop Border Posts, or OSBPs, are excellent instances of this kind of cooperation. OSBPs are border crossings that are jointly controlled by two neighboring countries. Collaboration at One Stop Border Posts can take many different forms, including standardization of documents, collaborative or mutually accepted rules, shared infrastructure maintenance, data and information sharing, infrastructure investments, and so on. Operational agreements between the customs offices of Norway, Finland, and Sweden demonstrate sophisticated international cross-border collaboration that helps trading firms and border control agencies save time and money.

However, cross border issues can limit the coordination capabilities of two countries. Lack of sufficient infrastructures can be impediment for cross border coordination. Some of the mentionable issues in the coordination are:

- Shipments or trucks leaving India often have to wait in line because of poor roads and sluggish vehicle registration processes in the land ports of Bangladesh that creates congestion of trucks problem.
- Stakeholders expressed that the handling capacity of both Bangladesh and India across the Benapole–Petrapole border is asymmetrical. Parking syndicates that operate in the border area benefit from the delay in clearing the customs for loading and unloading of cargo. Moreover, though the Petrapole land port on the Indian side has been modernized, Benapole lacks matching standards. Also, no officer is posted at Agartala LCS to issue SPS certificate despite huge volume of trade carried through this station which creates trade lag due to Indian-side border issues. This is also apparent for other land ports as Indian assessment officers are located far away from ports so cargo assessment takes time and increases trade time.
- In the Petrapole land port of India, trucks carrying exported goods from India are prioritized rather than trucks carrying exported goods from Bangladesh because Bangladesh’s import volume from India is higher compared to the export volume to India.

- Land ports can't be kept open 24/7 for immigration because the Indian side usually closes immigration processes after 5 pm.
- Indian-side approval is also required for shipping containers and cargo through railways and discussions are going on in this regard. Separate yards and warehouses for train transport facilities should be developed.
- Bangladesh-India joint declaration was made on trade facilitation so that no infrastructure development should be impeded in the port area and both countries should cooperate with each other regarding this issue. However, the bureaucratic process for communication with the Indian side takes much time which hinders the timeline of the port infrastructure development process. So intergovernmental cooperation becomes inevitable to resolve such issues.
- There is no LCS on the opposite side of Bhomra Land port. Time requirement for releasing goods increases as customs station is far away from Indian side border.
- Only 5-10% of vehicles enter the Bangladeshi land ports from 09.00 am to 02.00 pm but the rest of the vehicles arrive after 02 pm, which creates congestion. Indian officers close their offices at 6.30 pm and therefore, exporter vehicles from Bangladesh have to wait in line, causing congestion. This timing situation vehicles arrival should be made effective.
- There is no quarantine or testing facility on the Indian side of the Akhaura land port which creates perishable goods trading difficult.
- Goods exported to Nepal via India are often impacted by the Indian side inspections and processes.

Moreover, ASYCUDA and Indian Customs system are different which may hinder data sharing and electronic coordination. For instance, The Indian Customs EDI System (ICES) is designed to exchange/transact customs clearance related information electronically using Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). A large number of documents that trade, transport and regulatory agencies (collectively called Trading Partners) are required to submit/ receive in the process of live customs clearance are now being processed online. ICES is now operational at 252 major customs locations handling nearly 98% of India's International trade in terms of import and export consignments.⁴¹ On the contrary, customs of Bangladesh use BCOM software (Bangladesh Customs Office Management Software) and ASYCUDA to fulfil import, export and transit related information and procedures.

Visible infrastructural development (i.e. connectivity infrastructure; railroad and waterways, land ports, water ports) and invisible infrastructural development (such as reformed policies, procedures, and regulations), development of Border Agency Cooperation (BAC) can be remedies for ensuring cross border coordination.

⁴¹ Government of India, Indian Customs EDI System. Retrieved from- <https://ices.nic.in/ices/aboutus>

Moreover, issues of crossborder coordination can be presented in the joint working group meeting with the India. There are four joint working groups (between Bangladesh and India) on trade, land port customs, and inland water protocol. These meet periodically to discuss bilateral issues. Trade related and other cooperation issues can be resolved in these meetings for ensuring better cross border coordination. Also, regular joint working group (JWG) meeting on security and border management can help ensure better security and risk management at the border point for cross border trade and immigration.

4.2 Status of the one stop service for the land port management

One-stop service centers integrate a variety of services, and portals by the government or other relevant agencies at a focal point. In ports, one-stop service usually refers to the integration of services like customs, port authority, testing facilities, banks, etc. under one roof. The KII findings revealed that the land ports of Bangladesh are already taking measures to integrate different service providers of the ports under one rooftop. Moreover, new land ports are now being designed and developed with a one-stop service center building comprising all relevant service providers.

For example, BLPA has taken a project for developing Ramgarh land port with one stop service facilities. This project includes One Stop Port Building for Ramgarh land port with a four storied building, having 6000sqm area. The ground floor consists of separate immigration facilities for Passengers coming from Bangladesh & India, Office area, and medical check-up area for passengers coming from India. This medical facility is also accessible from the operational area, as well as other facilities from a separate entry for first-aid and urgent medical needs.

The office is connected to the operational area via pavement, and connected to the upper floors via office lobby. Upper floors of this building houses offices for BLPA, Admin, Customs, BGB, Immigration, Traffic, IT & Server etc. along with meeting & Conference room.⁴² Newly proposed land ports are also being planned and developed with similar models for facilitating one stop integrated services. A one-stop service system will offer a variety of services so that clients will not need to visit many locations or seek assistance from numerous organizations.

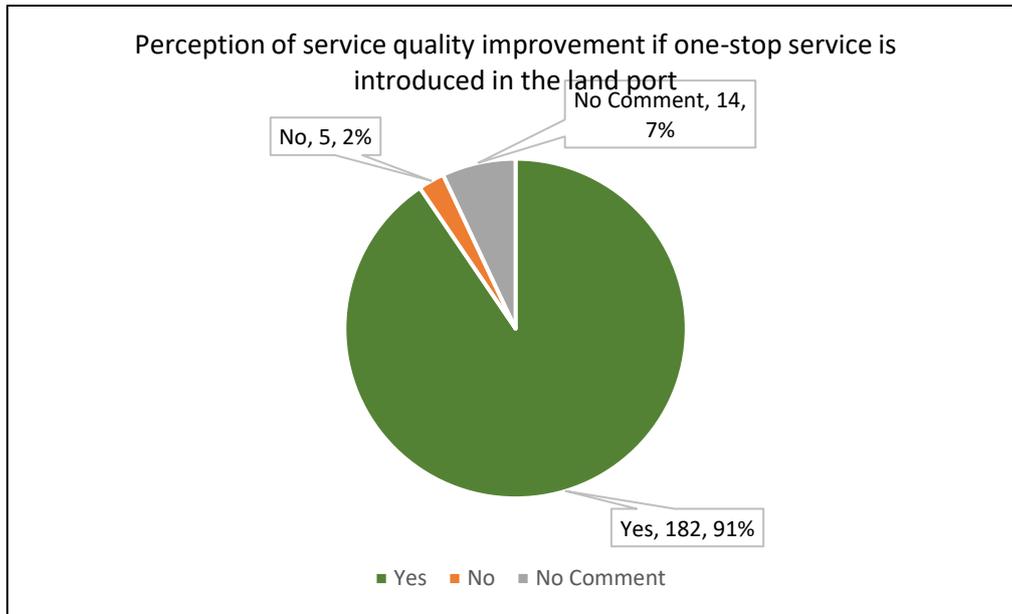
In order to facilitate service, ensure transparency and accountability, and establish good governance to provide better services to port users and common passengers, the government has decided to conduct integrated services under one umbrella involving and coordinating all stakeholders in the land port. In the meanwhile, Benapole, Burimari, Banglabandha, and Teknaf land ports offer a One Stop Service system.⁴³ It will be gradually implemented in all land ports to further enhance the business environment.

⁴² Ramgarh Land Port, One Stop Port Building, viewed at- <http://www.symbiotic.com.bd/project/ramgarh-landport-one-stop-port-building/>

⁴³ Land ports in Bangladesh: Prospects and challenges- The Financial Express (2021)

The survey conducted for the study asked the respondents whether the quality of service will improve if one-stop service is introduced in the land port, the majority (91%) of the participants responded positively. Following graph shows the responses in detail:

Figure 22: Perception of service quality improvement if one-stop service is introduced in the land port



Source; BFTI Field Survey

Once Stop service can speed up the trade procedures and facilitate importers-exporters with convenience flow of information. The benefits of one stop service underlies in:

- Reduction of time to register import-exports and obtain relevant licenses and permits
- Improved collection of trade taxes associated with efficiency gains
- Increased transparency in the trade processes including certification/assessment processes.
- Efficient trade procedures that facilitate international trade, investment, and economic growth.
- Increased service quality
- Increased processing or procedural speed.
- Better utilization of government resources by port agencies.
- Promotion of better connectivity and international relations between countries.

The stakeholders of the land ports also revealed that for technical and procedural preparations of land ports to introduce one stop service following things needs to be done in launching one stop service at land ports:

- ICT and infrastructure development is required before introducing one stop service.
- Skilled man force is required to operate one stop service

- Coordination between land port authority and customs.
- Coordination of all parties is a must for One Stop Service (OSS).
- Separate One-stop service center for Import/Export and for passengers should be implemented.

4.2.1 National Single Window

A comprehensive form of one stop service for traders include National Single Window (NSW). Bangladesh submitted its WTO TFA (World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement) instrument of ratification in September 2016 with which it committed to implementing 37 measures of facilitating legitimate trade. The National Single Window is under Article 10.4, that states "members shall endeavour to establish a single window." The most commonly accepted definition of a Single Window (SW) is the one provided by UNECE Recommendation No.-33 that describes the SW as "a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single-entry point to fulfill all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements." "If information is electronic, then individual data elements should only be submitted once".⁴⁴

For National Single Window Implementation and Strengthening Customs Modernization, The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received an USD 150 million Credit from the International Development Association (IDA) - a member of the World Bank Group - for financing the cost of the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project 1(BRCP-1), being jointly implemented by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA), National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Ministry of Commerce. NBR is now applying a part of the IDA Credit for procuring the services of a National Procurement Consultant (NPC) for its Project Implementation Unit (PIU). By increasing connectivity, removing logistical bottlenecks, and encouraging the use of contemporary approaches to border control and trade facilitation, the project development objective seeks to improve the environment for trade.

The Government of Bangladesh has committed to the implementation of a National Single Window (NSW) system and the accompanying reform and modernization of customs and other border control agency needs in accordance with international standards following the WTO Trade facilitation agreement. When fully operational, the system will enable traders to submit all import, export, and transit data needed by customs and other important regulatory agencies through a single electronic gateway rather than repeatedly submitting the same data to various government agencies, many of which still heavily rely on paper-based processing systems.

⁴⁴ United Nations, Trade Facilitation and Implementation Guide- The Single Window concept, viewed at- <https://tfig.unece.org/contents/single-window-for-trade.htm>

The Ministry of Finance's Internal Resource division's NBR, the project's lead implementation agency, oversees the project's overall implementation, management, and monitoring.⁴⁵ As a part of One stop Service System, NBR's national single window project is under way and once initiated it will benefit Bangladeshi traders significantly by reducing time and cost of trading. The average processing time for imports and exports is expected to be reduced substantially. With the implementation of NSW traders will be able to submit all of their trade-related documentation on a single digital platform rather than depending on numerous government agencies, which will reduce paperwork and facilitate trade substantially.⁴⁶ The NSW and the AW, on the other hand, have a number of overlapping modules that may result in duplication of the same system, according to a comparison study by the National Board of Revenue (NBR). While the NSW project also has a significant purpose to establish connectivity, the majority of governmental agencies, other regulators, off-docks, stakeholders, and customs houses are already connected under the AW system.⁴⁷ Although ASYCUDA world is now implemented in many land ports, the NSW will further enhance trade efficiency.

With implementation of National Single Window for trade in Bangladesh, 319,000 traders (exporters and importers) are expected to be benefitted from reduced time and cost for trade in the fifth year of the operation of the solution. During the same year, the average processing time for import is expected to be reduced to 122 hours and average processing time for export is expected to be reduced to 88 hours.

Complying with trade facilitation agenda, NSW is being implemented which will facilitate import and export. However, not all port processes like shed management, warehouse management etc. are pertinent to be included in the NSW. National Single window will help coordinate customs, land port authority, certification authority and importers exporters with data sharing and paperless trade facilities. So far 39 institutions have signed MoU for NSW. Among 21 of them are CLPA (certification, license and permitting authority). Many of these institutions/agencies do not have sufficient automation. Along with custom modernization, each of the agencies or stakeholders needs to be modernized or automated to be connected with customs and NSW. The following figure depicts the concept of NSW in the country:

⁴⁵ Available at- https://nbr.gov.bd/uploads/tender-notice/TOR_NPC.pdf

⁴⁶ NBR appoints Pricewaterhouse Coopers to implement National Single Window- The Business Standard, August 2022

⁴⁷ Overlapping of Asycuda system with NSW project features detected- The Financial Express, February, 2022

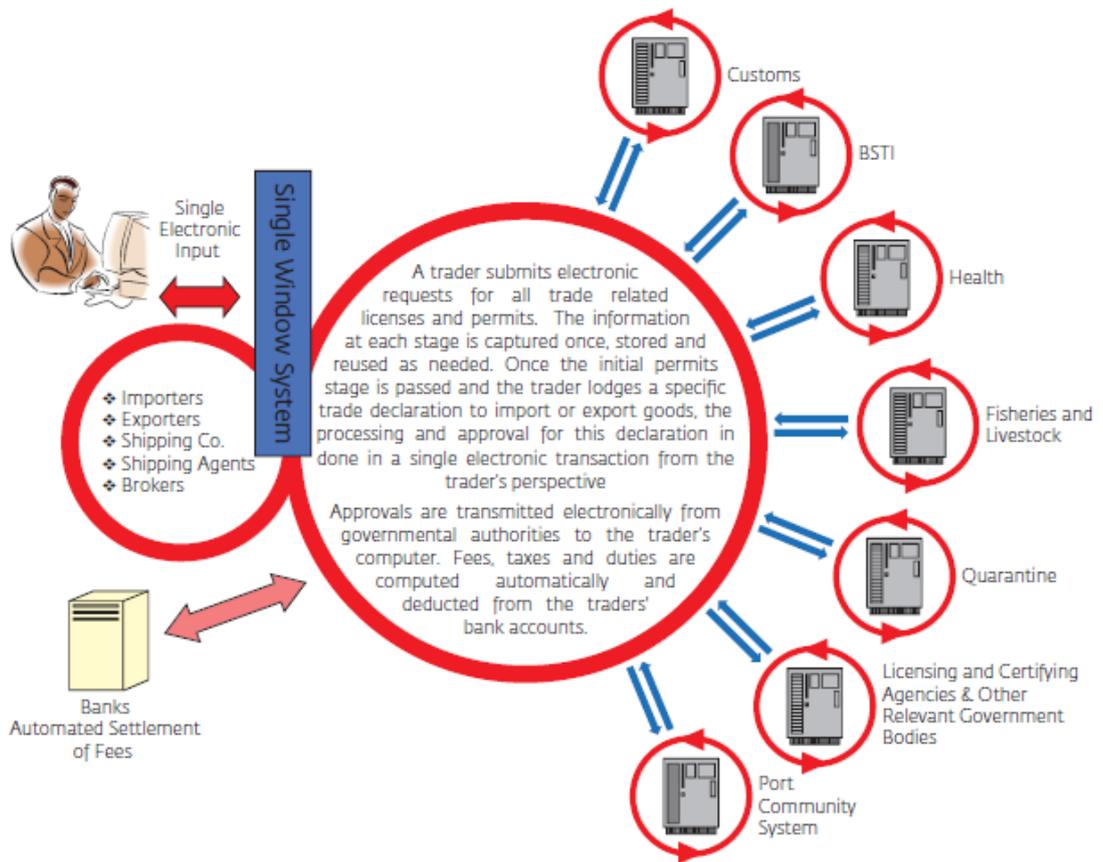


Figure 23: National Single Window concept

One of the pressing issues for full NSW implementation is the lack of interoperability. Interoperability is a characteristic of a system to work with other systems. Since agencies included in the NSW have different existing procedures and many of them lack proper automation, timely implementation of single windows becomes withered.

4.3 Standard operating procedure for port management

Background

Institutional coordination of different organization/stakeholder involved in the process of improving and developing the functional effective role of land ports is a must. As such, the stakeholders like land port authority, customs, land & railway transportation agency, bank, insurance, quarantine certificate issuing authorities BGB & C&F agent, immigration exporters & importers have to play a significant role in augmenting operational, functional & efficient activities of the land ports.

A standard operating procedure is a set of instructions that describes the step-by-step process that must be taken to properly perform a routine activity. SOPs should be followed the exact same way every time to guarantee that a system remains consistent and in compliance with industry regulations and necessary standards.

Standard operating procedures provide the policies, processes and standards needed for the organization to succeed. They can benefit an authority by reducing errors,

increasing efficiencies and profitability, creating a safe work environment and producing guidelines for how to resolve issues and overcome obstacles. Land ports confront some challenges/impediments which include coordination gap in different agencies lack of proper infrastructure, lack of modernization of customs procedure, all land ports are not connected with ASYCUDA facilities of customs, external congestion, prolonged commodity, clearance certification, lack of efficient SOP in the land ports etc. In order to address the above challenges on SOP regarding land ports is of utmost importance now. Moreover, complying with the trade facilitation objectives and developing paperless trade systems, digitalized standard operating procedures can be a way to overcome the county's bottlenecks in the land port trading system.

The South-Asian Sub- Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) has been designed to augment/increase regional prosperity, to expand economic opportunities and ensure a better quality of life for the people belonging to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Myanmar & Sri Lanka. The aim of SASEC countries is to boost intra-regional trade and cooperation in south Asia by developing the connectivity and expanding trade & commerce with the south east Asia through Myanmar, China. Having considered all these issues and economic aspects in regard to SASEC countries as guideline as to standard operating procedure (SOP) needs to be made that can efficiently, effectively and functionally facilitate as well as improve the export-import activities with the neighboring countries through land ports.

The standard operating procedure can be prepared for movement of import & export cargo loaded and empty trucks among the territories of the countries concerned through land ports in order to implement the required compliance by all the official & staff designated here accordingly.

The study explored five land ports namely Benapole land port, Bhomra land port, Shona Masjid land port, Akhaura land port and Banglabandha land port for identifying the standard procedures of import, export and immigration in those ports. Although operating procedures vary from land port to land port, investigating the procedures of these ports, and through key informant interviews, focus group discussion and public consultation, the current standard operating procedure of the land ports are outlined in the following section.

Land Port-wise, standard operating procedures will vary. A comprehensive Time Release Study at the Benapole was conducted under the Customs Modernization Strategic Action Plan 2019-2022 of the National Board of Revenue (NBR).⁴⁸ Bangladesh Customs, with collaborations of the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) through the Global Trade Facilitation Programme (GTFP), conducted the study that revealed the steps or procedures of exports through the Benapole land port. However, these steps differ across land ports. This study, considering the 5 land ports of Bangladesh, generated an outline of standard operating procedure, however for some land ports, additional processes can be there and for some, few processes can be exempted. The general idea

⁴⁸ Comprehensive Time Release Study 2022, NBR

of the standard procedure is to follow a set of uniform procedures with lean processes for time efficiency and seamless service ensuring trade facilitation.

The key processes involved in the import and export through land port are summarized in the following tables:

Table 30: SOP for import and export in land ports

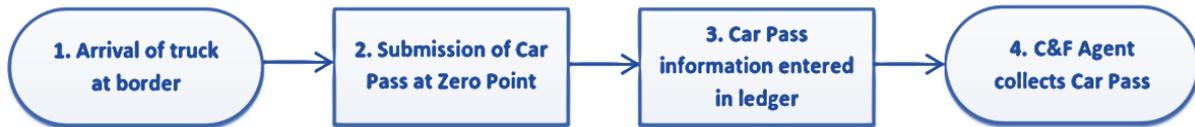
Import	
Sl.	Processes
a.	Zero-point Entry
b.	Car Pass Procedure
c.	Entry into Port Authority Area
e.	Bill of Entry Record/Provide Customs Declaration
f.	Examination
g.	Assessment
h.	Testing and Certification process
i.	Payment of Duty and Taxes- Customs Release
j.	Port Authority Release- Final Exit of Import Goods

Export	
Sl.	Processes
a.	Examination
b.	Assessment
c.	Testing and Certification process
e.	Payment of Duty and Taxes (If Any)- Customs Release
f.	Port Authority Release- Border Crossing of Export Goods

Source: BFTI findings

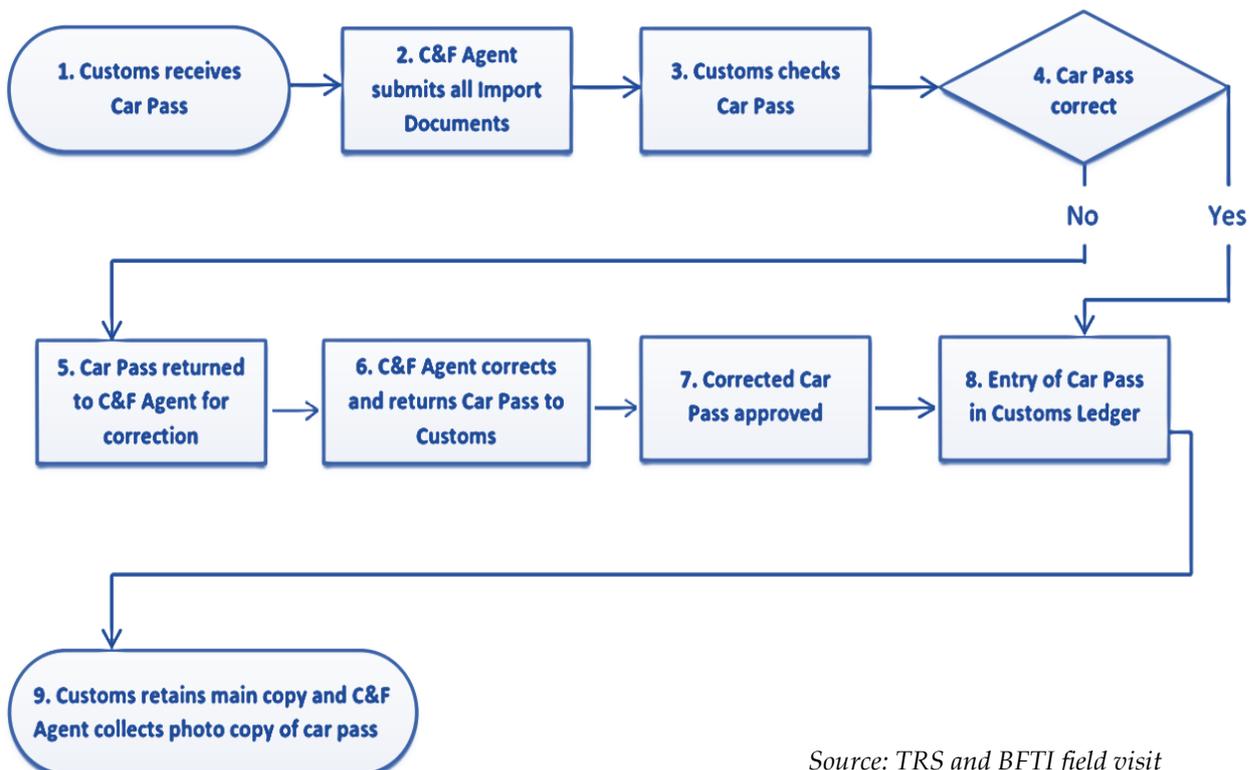
4.3.1 Import process

a. Zero-point Entry



1. When the cargo loaded truck reach at zero point, the driver driving or handling the cargo vehicle/trucks submits the car pass issued by the customs of exporting country in triplicate to the BGB posted at zero point.
2. The car pass information then entered into the ledger by the BGB. After checking and verifying the car pass by the BGB officer, the original copy is handed over to the cargo truck driver and a photocopy copy is kept by the BGB officer as an official copy.
3. C&F agent collects the main copy of the car pass and the cargo-laden truck driver is given permission to go towards the land port.

b. Car Pass Procedure



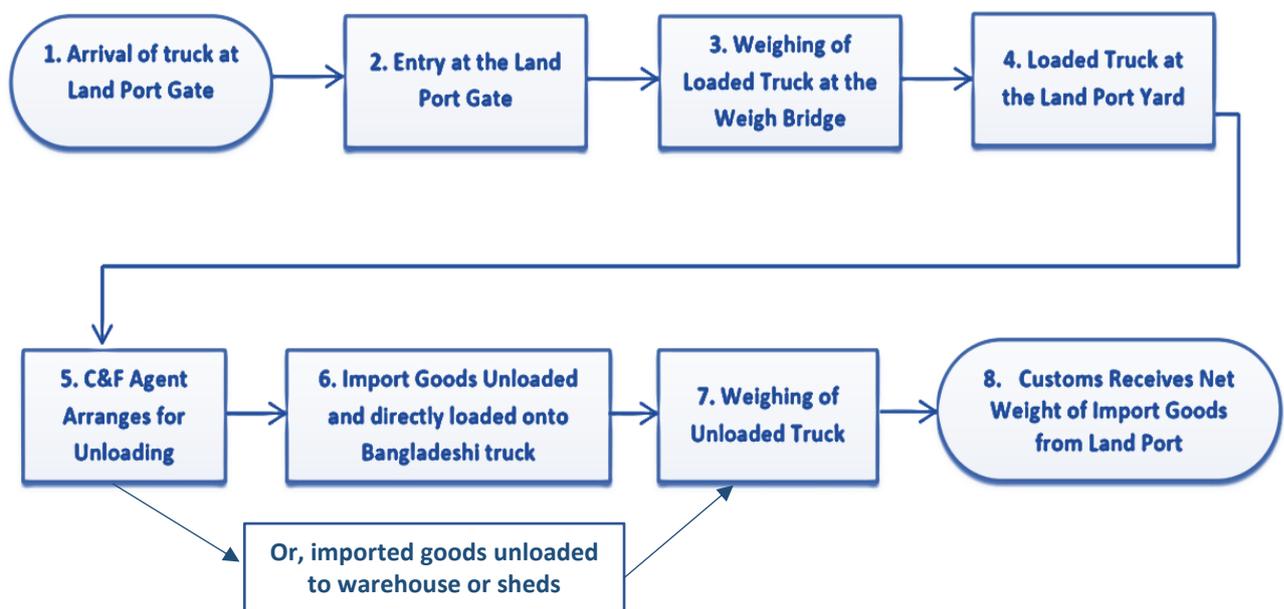
Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. After collecting the car pass, the C&F agent submits the car pass to Customs and customs checks the car pass for verification.
2. C&F agent submits all import documents including import certificate, along with details of importer/exporter (consignee/consignor), manifest, shipping bill, etc.
3. Along with other documents, customs check the car pass and provide feedback on whether the car pass is correct or not.

If the car pass is **not correct**, then:

4. The car pass is returned to the C&F agent for correcting it appropriately.
5. C&F agent corrects the car pass accordingly and returns it to Customs.
6. If everything checks out right, checking the corrected car pass, Customs will approve the car pass.
7. If the car pass is correct the first time or once customs approve the corrected car pass, Customs will enter the car pass information in its ledger.
8. Customs will retain the main copy of the car pass and return any other documents to the C&F agent C&F agent will have to keep a copy of the car pass for further use.

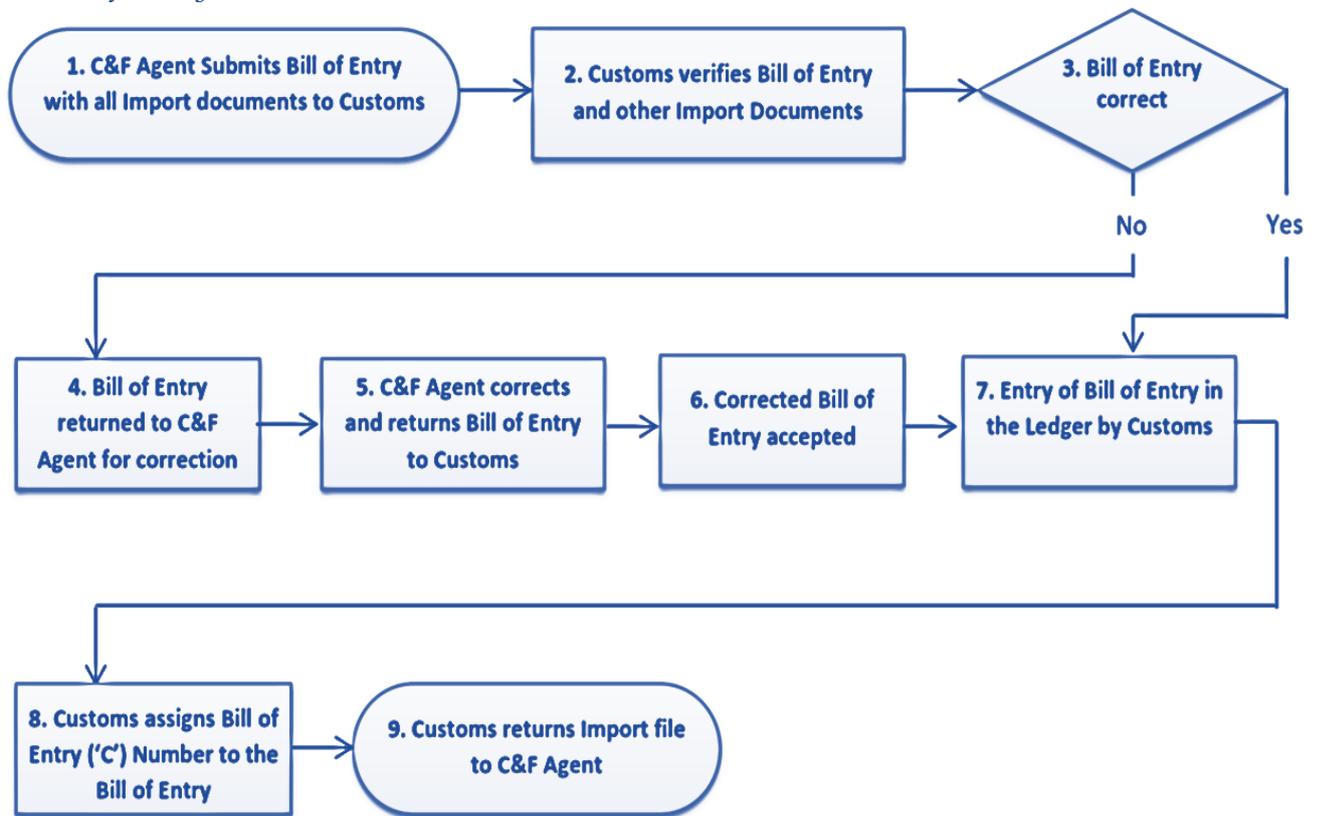
c. Entry into Port Authority Area



Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. Once Customs approves the Car pass, the cargo truck moves towards the land port and arrives at the land port gates.
2. At the gate of the land port after checking the car pass document, the cargo truck is granted access inside the land port.
3. After entering the port, cargo trucks are weighted at the weighbridge.
4. When the weighing is done cargo loaded truck can enter the land port yard for unloading.
5. In the port yard, C&F agent organizes the unloading of imported goods.
6. Imported goods are directly unloaded onto the Bangladeshi truck or at warehouse.
7. After unloading the empty or unloaded truck is weighed again.
8. By weighing loaded and unloaded trucks customs receives information on the net weight of import goods.

d. Bill of Entry Record/Provide Customs Declaration



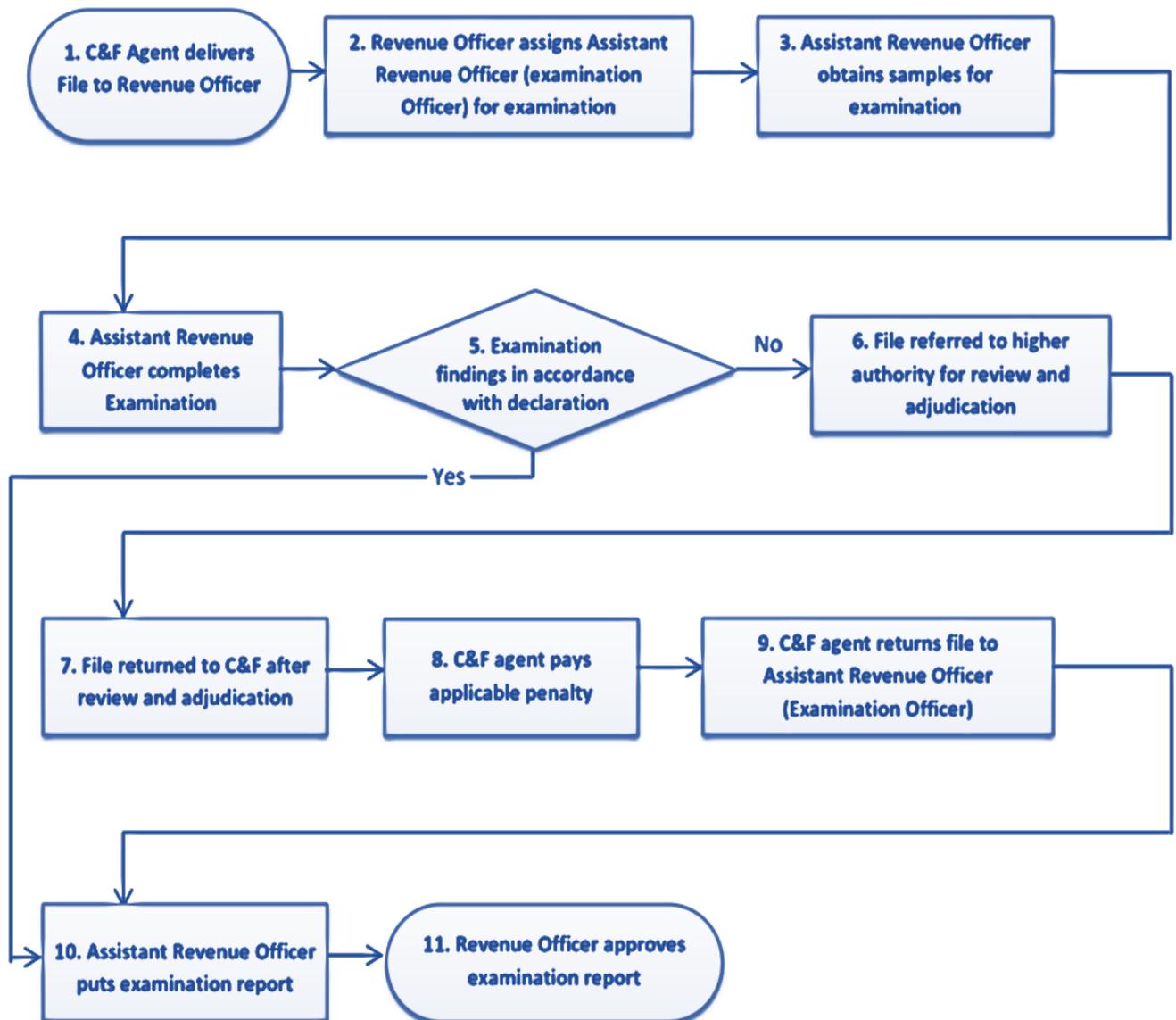
Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. For getting the custom approval for unloaded goods, the C&F agent fills up the BOE form in EDI. Then after printing it, C&F agent submits the bill of entry with all other relevant documents to the customs.
2. After receiving the bill of entry and other import documents, customs verify them.
3. If the bill of entry and other documents are correct, customs make an entry of the bill of entry in the ledger.

However, if it is not correct:

4. BOE will be returned to the C&F agent for correction
5. After correcting the BOE, C&F agent will have to submit it back to Customs.
6. Customs then approves the corrected BoE.
7. Customs makes the entry of BoE in its ledger.
8. Customs assigns a "C" number (custom reference number) in BoE.
9. Customs returns all import-related files to the C&F agent for further processes.

e. Examination



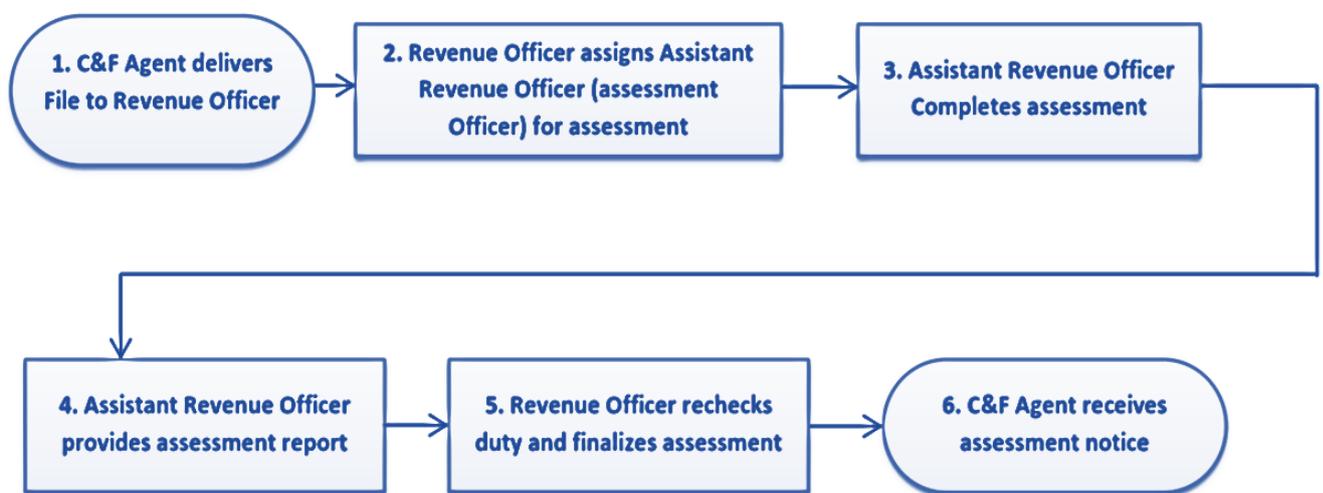
Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. After receiving declaration and other Import documents from customs, the C&F agent delivers the import file consisting Bill of import and all export related documents to the revenue officer.
2. The revenue officer assigns an assistant revenue officer (ARO) for the examination of the consignment or goods.
3. Assistant revenue officer collects sample for verifying the consignment.
4. After verifying the consignment based on the BOE and other import documents, ARO (assistant revenue officer) completes the examination.
5. If the examination findings are inconsistent with the declaration:
6. Then the file is referred to a higher authority for review and adjudication.

7. File is sent back to the C&F agent after review and adjudication.
8. C&F agent pays the applicable penalty.
9. After paying the penalty set by the review and adjudication, the C&F agent returns the file to ARO (Examination Officer).
10. ARO prepares a report outlining the examination findings.
11. Checking the report, Revenue Officer (RO) approves the examination report.

If the findings are in accordance with the declaration, then step 6-9 will not be required.

f. Assessment



Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

This process is often parallel to the examination.

1. C&F agent submits the Bill of entry and import file to the Revenue Officer (RO)
2. The revenue officer assigns an assistant revenue officer (ARO) for the assessment of the duty and tax of the consignment or goods.
3. Using the examination information, ARO completes the assessment of the duty/tax of the consignment.
4. ARO prepares and presents the assessment report to RO.
5. Revenue Officer rechecks duty and finalizes the assessment.
6. After finalizing duty, the C&F agent receives an assessment notice for payment.

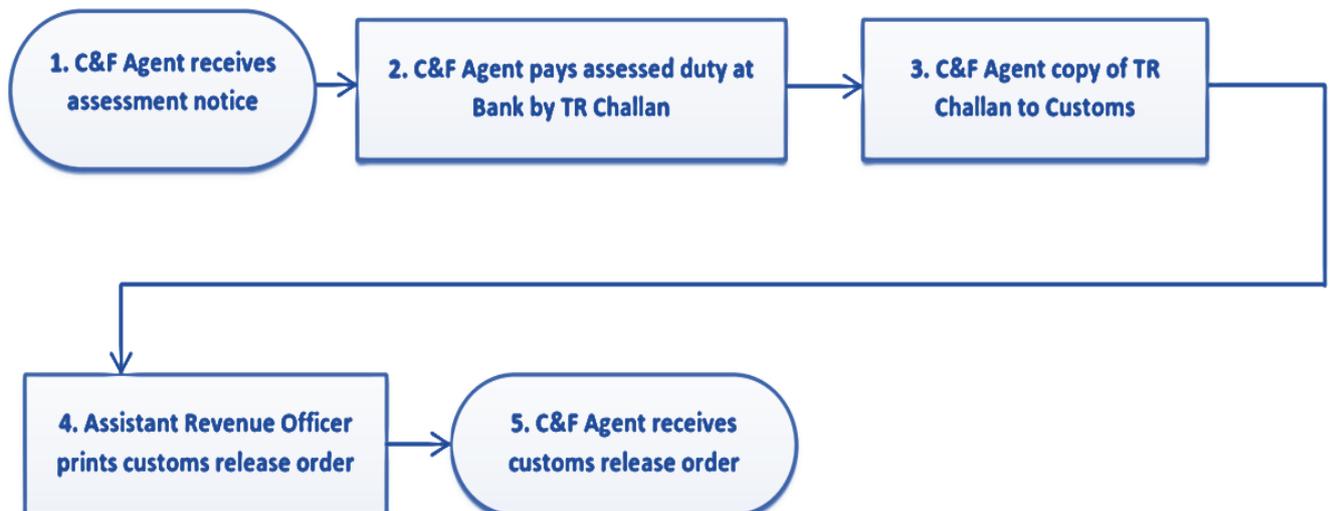
g. Testing and Certification process

For the customs clearance of imported animals, plants and plant products, quarantine conditions (such as certification from quarantine, fumigation, BSTI etc.) are observed. Testing and certification process includes:



1. For some goods, Customs inquires for appropriate testing certificates.
2. The sample is sent to the BSTI, Plant quarantine, or atomic energy commission for testing the sample. The sample is sent by the client or C&F agent to the respective testing agencies.
3. Respective authorities either test the sample by eye inspection or laboratory testing procedures based on the nature of sample. Some samples are sent to Dhaka for laboratory testing.
4. Once the testing is done certificates are provided by the respective authority and C&F agent collects them submits to the customs.

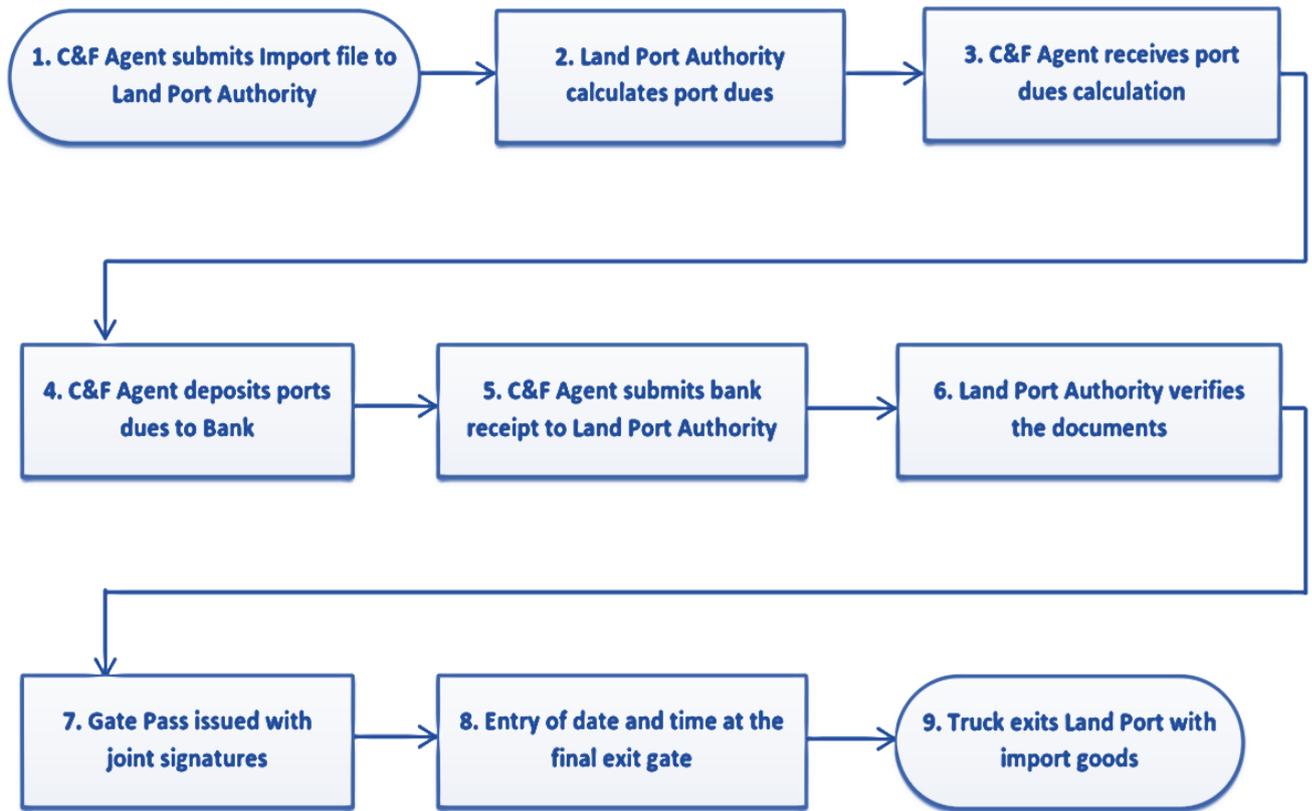
h. Payment of Duty and Taxes- Customs Release



Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. Once the duty/tax is finalized, the C&F agent receives an assessment notice.
2. C&F agent pays the assessed duty via e-payment system or TR challan at the bank
3. After payment, the C&F agent shows the TR challan or proof of payment to the customs
4. Verifying the payment and other test certificates, ARO provides an 'R' Number and prints the custom release order.
5. C&F agent collects the release order for further procedures.

i. Port Authority Release- Final Exit of Import Goods

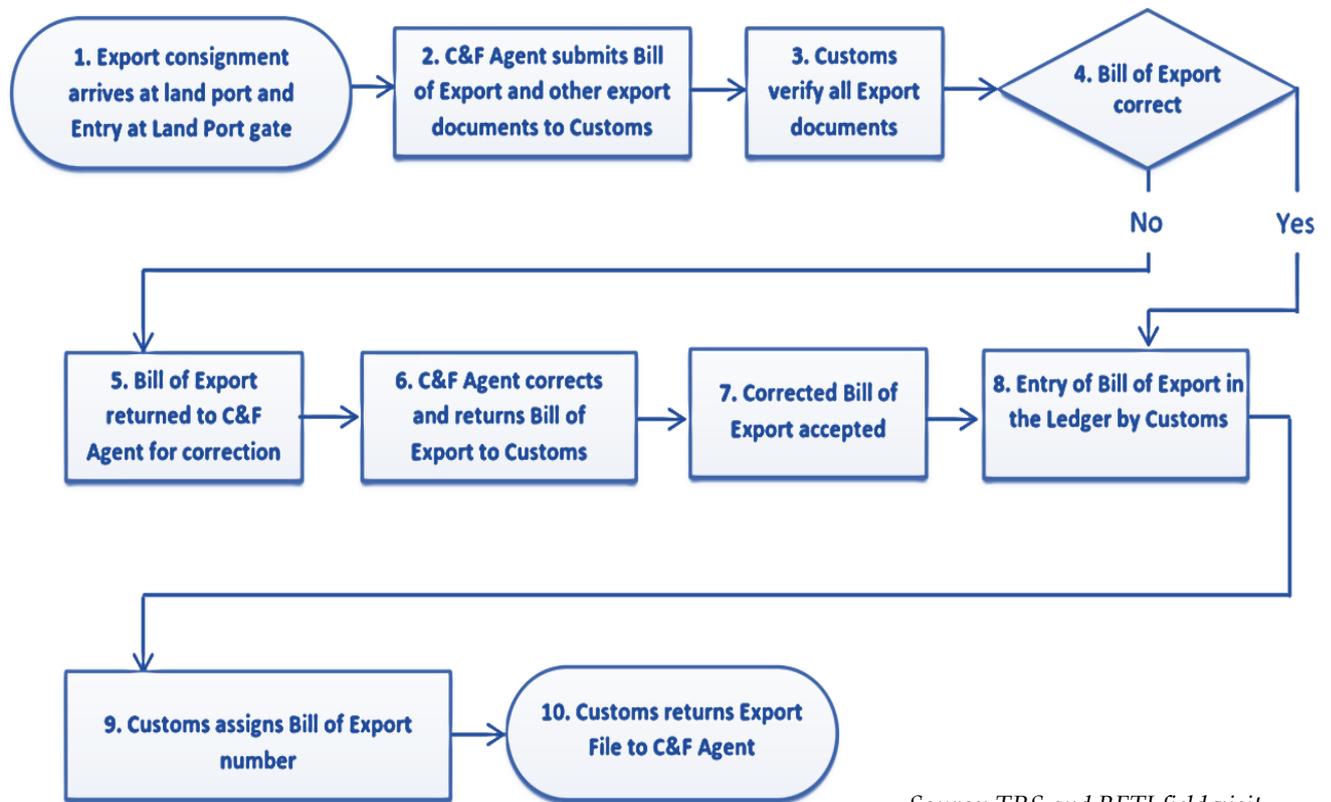


Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. After collecting the release order C&F agent submits the release order and other import-related documents to the land port authority;
2. The land port authority checks the import files and calculates port dues.
3. Calculated Port dues are then provided to the C&F for payment.
4. C&F agent pays the port dues to the bank.
5. As proof of payment, the C&F agent submits the bank receipt to the port authority.
6. Land port authority checks and verifies the payment of port dues.
7. A gate pass is issued by the port authority with the joint signature of both the port authority and customs.
8. After getting the gate pass loaded truck move towards the exit gate where the date and time of departure entry are given.
9. Finally, the truck loaded with import goods leaves the land port.

4.3.2 Export process

a. Submission of Bill of Export /Provide Customs Declaration



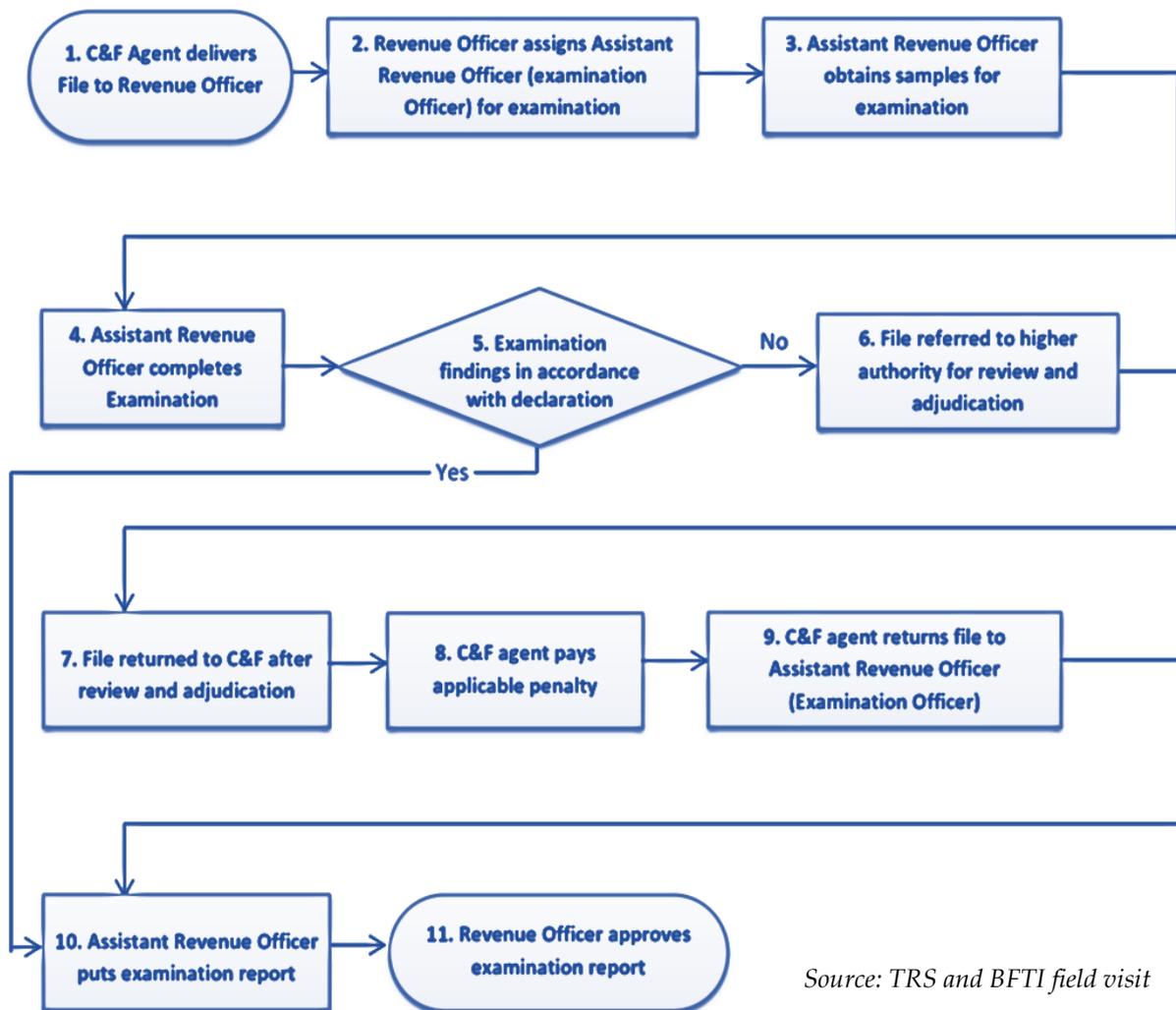
Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. Truck filled with export consignment arrives at the land port gate and enters the land port.
2. The C&F agent fills up the Bill of export form in EDI. Then after printing it, C&F agent submits the bill of export with all other relevant documents to the customs.
3. After receiving the bill of export and other export documents, customs verify them.
4. If the bill of export and other documents are correct, customs make an entry of the bill of entry in the ledger.

However, if it is not correct then:

5. Bill of entry (BOE) will be returned to the C&F agent for correction
6. After correcting the BOE, C&F agent will have to submit it back to Customs.
7. Customs then approves the corrected BoE.
8. Customs makes the entry of BoE in its ledger.
9. Customs assigns the BOE number as approval.
10. Customs returns all export-related files to the C&F agent for further processes.

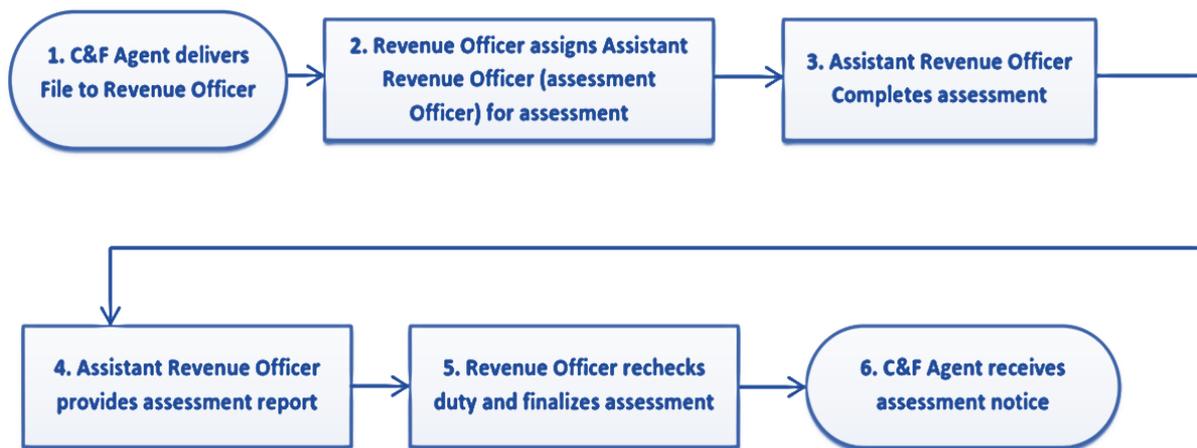
b. Examination



Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. After receiving declaration and other export documents from customs, the C&F agent delivers the export file consisting Bill of export and all export related documents to the revenue officer.
 2. The revenue officer assigns an assistant revenue officer (ARO) for the examination of the consignment or goods.
 3. Assistant revenue officer collects sample for verifying the consignment.
 4. After verifying the consignment based on the BOE and other export documents, ARO (assistant revenue officer) completes the examination.
 5. If the examination findings are inconsistent with the declaration:
 6. Then the file is referred to a higher authority for review and adjudication.
 7. File is sent back to the C&F agent after review and adjudication.
 8. C&F agent pays the applicable penalty.
 9. After paying the penalty set by the review and adjudication, the C&F agent returns the file to ARO (Examination Officer).
 10. ARO prepares a report outlining the examination findings.
 11. Checking the report, Revenue Officer (RO) approves the examination report.
- If the findings are in accordance with the declaration, then step 6-9 will not be required.

c. Assessment



This process is parallel to the examination.

1. C&F agent submits the Bill of export and import file to the Revenue Officer (RO)
2. The revenue officer assigns an assistant revenue officer (ARO) for the assessment of the duty and tax of the consignment or goods.
3. Using the examination information, ARO completes the assessment of the duty/tax of the consignment.
4. ARO prepares and presents the assessment report to RO.
5. Revenue Officer rechecks duty and finalizes the assessment.
6. After finalizing duty, the C&F agent receives an assessment notice for payment.

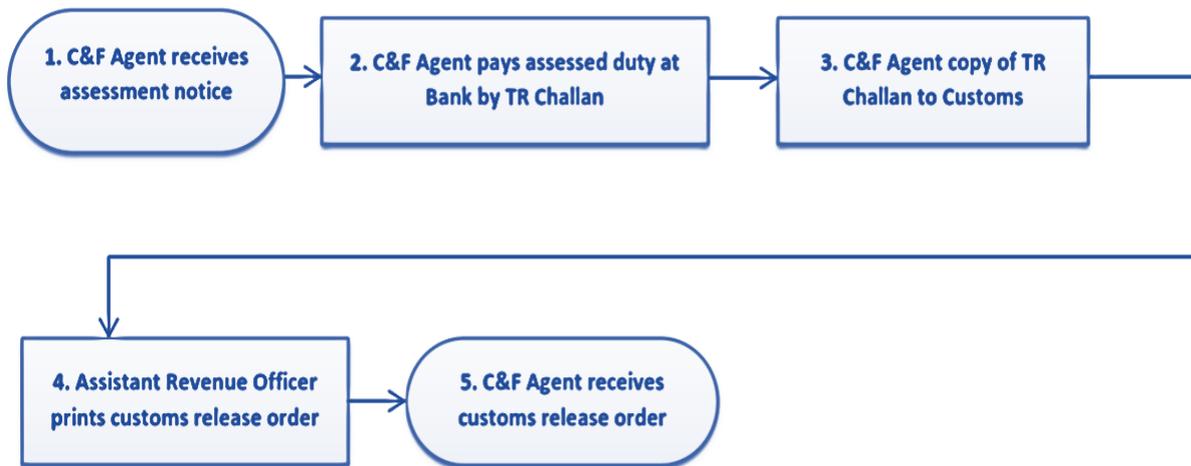
d. Testing and Certification process

For the customs clearance of imported animals, plants and plant products, quarantine conditions (such as certification from quarantine, fumigation, BSTI etc.) are observed. Testing and certification process includes:



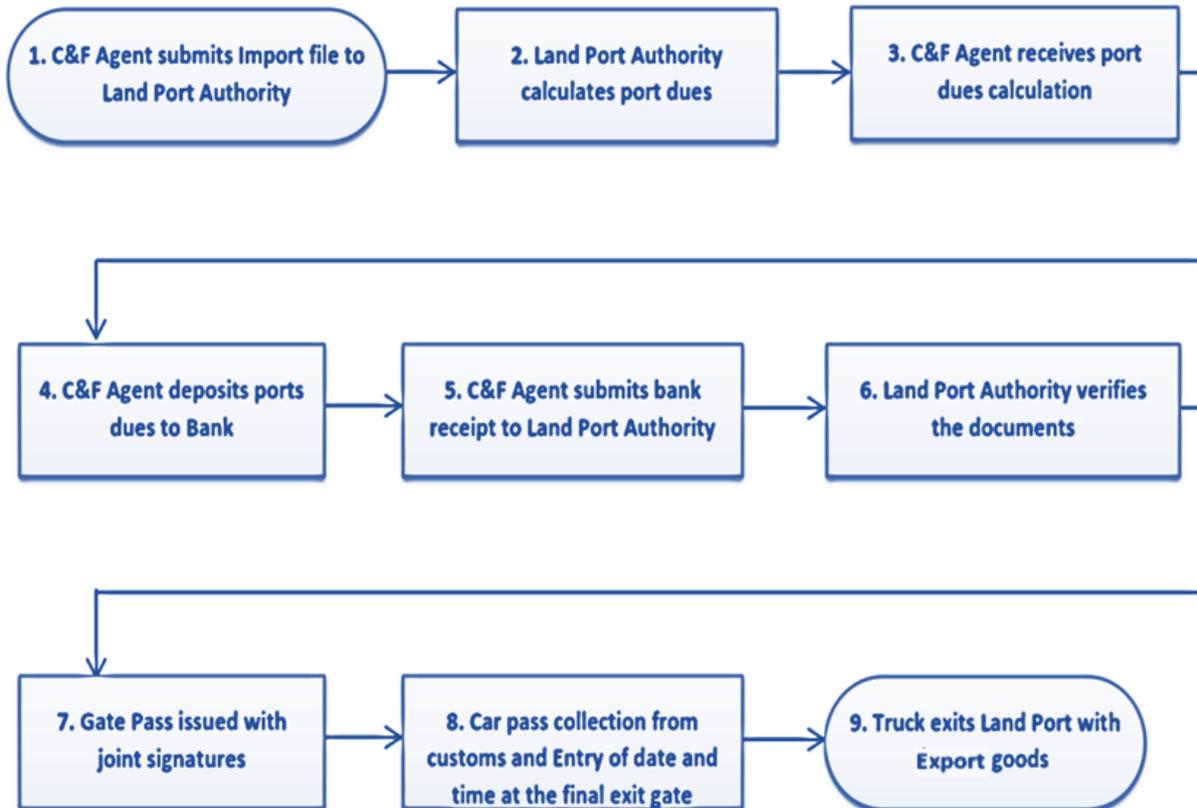
1. For some goods, Customs inquires for appropriate testing certificates.
2. The sample is sent to the BSTI, Plant quarantine, or atomic energy commission for testing the sample. The sample is sent by the client or C&F agent to the respective testing agencies.
3. Respective authorities either test the sample by eye inspection or laboratory testing procedures based on the nature of sample. Some samples are sent to Dhaka for laboratory testing.
4. Once the testing is done certificates are provided by the respective authority and C&F agent collects them submits to the customs.

e. Payment of Duty and Taxes (If Any)- Customs Release



1. Once the duty/tax is finalized, the C&F agent receives an assessment notice.
2. C&F agent pays the assessed duty via e-payment system or TR challan at the bank
3. After payment, the C&F agent shows the TR challan or proof of payment to the customs
4. Verifying the payment, ARO provides an 'R' Number and prints the custom release order.
5. C&F agent collects the release order for further procedures.

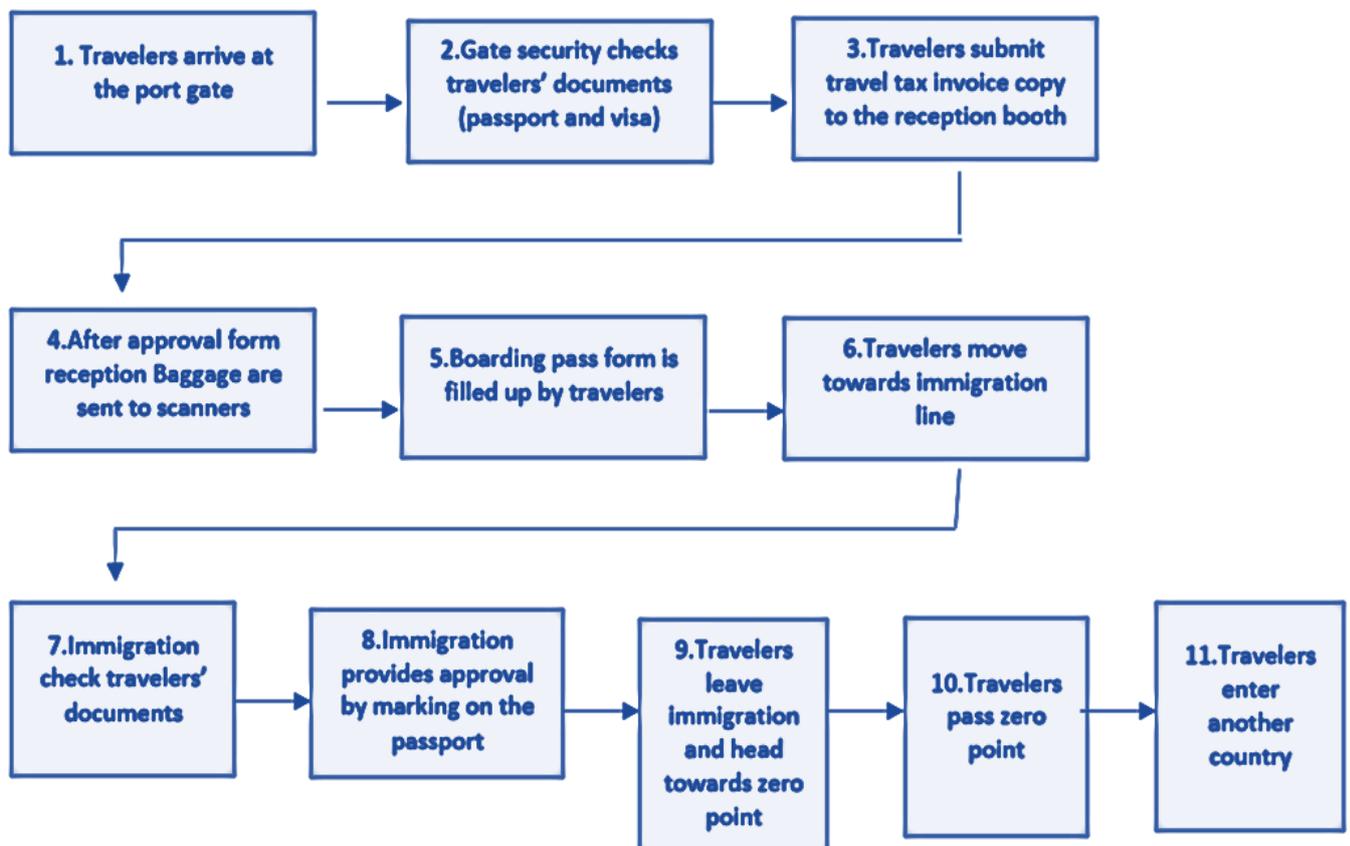
f. Port Authority Release- Border Crossing of Export Goods



Source: TRS and BFTI field visit

1. After collecting the release order C&F agent submits the release order and other Export-related documents to the land port authority;
2. The land port authority checks the import files and calculates port dues.
3. Calculated Port dues are then provided to the C&F agent for payment.
4. C&F agent pays the port dues to the bank.
5. As proof of payment, the C&F agent submits the bank receipt to the port authority.
6. Land port authority checks and verifies the payment of port dues.
7. A gate pass is issued by the port authority with the joint signature of both the port authority and customs.
8. A car pass is also collected from the customs by the C&F agent for submitting to the Indian side and after getting the gate pass loaded truck move towards the exit gate where the date and time of departure entry are given.
9. Finally, the truck loaded with export goods leaves the land port.

4.3.3 Immigration process



Source: BFTI field visit

1. Travelers intending to visit India, Myanmar, or Nepal using land ports arrive at the port gate.
2. Gate security checks every passenger to detect trespassing or unwanted entry. Traveler's documents like passports and visas are checked by security.
3. After verifying the passports and visas of the travelers, they are granted entry to the port and after entering the port travelers submit their tax invoice copy to the reception center.
4. After receiving approval from the reception center, baggage is sent to scanners for scanning.
5. A boarding pass is fulfilled by the traveler.
6. Traveler move towards the immigration line.
7. The immigration center checks traveler documents like boarding pass, passport, and visa.
8. If everything checks out well, immigration provides approval by marking the passport.
9. With the marked passport, travelers leave immigration and head towards zero point
10. Travelers pass the zero point
11. After passing the zero-point travelers enter the landlocked country.

4.4 Streamlining the existing standard operating procedure:

From the present standard operating system, the following criteria can be followed to streamline the operating procedure of land ports and ensure efficient trade time and process facilitation:

1. In the zero-point car pass entry process of export, the entry time of BGB is often high which should be reduced. Also, a single-entry system can be introduced through automation so that one entry will make the car pass available to all relevant agencies (Customs and land port authority).
2. Custom Inspection including Examination and Assessment often takes much time. Customs should make the "examination" procedure online in the land ports, where examination officers will be able to provide reports in real-time through the online system after examining a consignment and the assessment officer will receive that information promptly. This automated system will help reduce land port trade time.
3. For testing products, the sample is usually carried to the testing facilities by the client or C&F agent. In this case, an express mail system can be used where the sample will be delivered through rapid courier services.
4. Plant Quarantine or other testing authorities should be granted access to the custom database so that they can receive the information and share certificates with the customs online.
5. Eye inspection and laboratory tests depend on the consignment or product type. An emergency testing system can be introduced in this regard. Also,

specific time requirements for goods can be reduced to make testing services faster.

6. After filling up the bill of entry/export, C&F agents need to print it and use the hard copy. A lot of time is wasted in the bill of the entry submission phase. This process should be automated and made paperless.
7. C&F agents have to pay the Port dues or fees in the bank and this system is still manual. e-payment system should be introduced here for faster and easier payment.
8. C&F agent has to carry the hard copy of custom clearance certificate and submit it to the land port authority. In this case, customs can email the release order to the land port authority for eliminating hard documents submission procedures.
9. A joint signature of the land port authority and customs is required for issuing the gate pass. Since customs already provide the clearance before, in this stage, customs' signature can be removed as a redundant action.
10. In case of immigration, a port tax of 42 takas is collected from all travelers. Although an automated payment system is available for this, for the facilitation of travelers, this tax system can be removed.
11. Travelers often have to wait a long time in the immigration line. A token system should be introduced in this regard. Also, accommodation and entertainment facilities can be developed for removing congestion and making the travel experience seamless for travelers.
12. In case of travelers coming from India, BGB checks travelers thrice and while going India through land ports, BGB checks twice. This checking should be made only once for reducing travel hassle.
13. Port service agencies like Customs, BLPA, BSTI and Plant quarantine should set a specific timeline for each activity so that procedures and trade activities can be time efficient.

Chapter 5: International Standards, Best Practices and Technologies Used Elsewhere in Terms of Operation of the Land Port

5.1 International standards of land port management

In its capacity as landlords, port authorities around the world have created rules and regulation on port operations, standards, procedures, and conduct for all port users, including terminal operators and relevant agencies. On port websites, rules and regulations are made available to port users and workers. The laws, ordinances, operating methods, and standards of the industry are updated together with the rules and regulations. Primary and standard Land port features and functions that are regulated are listed in the following table. These duties differ from port to port depending on regional and municipal laws, international agreements, contracts with the private sector, and the institutional structure unique to each port.⁴⁹

Table 31: Standard and major functions, features of a port

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land and border access • Infrastructure for transport station • Road and rail network • Industrial area management • Control of vehicles entering and leaving the port • Environmental control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of dangerous cargo • Safety and security Systems • Immigration, health, customs and commercial document control • Warehouse facilities • Use of parking and sheds • Loading, discharging, storage and distribution of cargo
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Source: USAID Principles of Port Operations Regulation

Some ports regulate only certain aspects, while others fully address all aspects of port operations but standards should include comprehensive operating rules and regulations.

Ports serve as important transportation hubs that facilitate goods movement to businesses in local communities and worldwide markets. Land ports can connect goods to consumers through our highway system, railroads, air transit and domestic marine highways (water transportation routes).

A Land Port of Admission (LPOE), sometimes known as a border station, offers regulated entry into or exit from the United States for people or goods. It houses U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and other federal inspection organizations in charge of upholding relevant federal laws. For tourists and trade, LPOEs offer a combination of safety and security. In the LPOE, U.S. Customs and Border Protection enforces the import and export regulations and immigration programs of the U.S. government. The Department of Agriculture also performs inspections to protect the U.S. from potential carriers of animal and plant pests or diseases that could cause

⁴⁹ Principles of Port Operations Regulation- USAID

serious damage to crops, livestock, pets, and the environment. This search includes documents from other agencies with related immigration, border protection, and customs responsibilities. The U.S. Land Port of Entry Design Guide details the types of standards found in land ports of entry. These include:

Table 32: Features and standards of land port of entry

1. Pedestrian/Bus Passenger Queuing, Processing, and Inspection Areas
2. Commercial and Non-Commercial Vehicle Queuing, Processing, and Inspection Areas: including areas for animal and agriculture inspection and quarantine.
3. Counters/Work Areas
4. Offices
5. Laboratory (Dry)
6. Laboratory (Wet)
7. Holding Cells/Detention Areas: for holding detained travelers.
8. Private Toilets
9. Automated Data Processing Center (Mainframe)
10. Automated Data Processing Center (High PC)
11. General Storage Areas
12. Outside Parking Areas (Surface): referral, visitor, staff, and service parking areas should be separated.
13. Fitness Center
14. Dog Kennels: dogs are used to search vehicles and cargo.
15. Impoundment Areas: for seized vehicles and other large items.
16. Light Industrial Areas
17. Warehouse
18. Residences: federally-owned, permanent structures where the inspectors live or for the overnight stay of inspectors.

Source: Land Port of Entry- U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Dry ports or inland ports are can be very closely related with land ports. Dry ports could be inland terminals within a country that has a gateway port or they could be located in adjacent land-locked countries. According to the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), Dry ports was defined as: "A common user facility with public authority status, equipped with fixed installations and offering services for handling and temporary storage of any kind of goods (including containers) carried under customs transit by any applicable mode of transport, placed under customs control and with customs and other agencies competent to clear goods for home use, warehousing, temporary admissions, re-export, temporary storage for onward transit and outright export." The standard facilities provided at a dry or inland port can vary considerably.⁵⁰ Minimum facilities would provide:

⁵⁰ Handbook on Management and Operation of Dry Ports-UNCTAD

Table 33: Facilities provided in a dry/ inland port

- Customs control and clearance;
- Temporary storage during customs inspection;
- Container-handling equipment for 20-foot and 40-foot containers;
- Offices of an operator, either the site owner, lessor or contractor;
- Offices of clearing and forwarding agents;
- Complete enclosure, fencing and a security system;
- Reliable and efficient communication facilities;
- Container freight station with stuffing and unstuffing services.

Source: UNCTAD

A dry or inland port with a more comprehensive set of facilities would include:

Table 34: Comprehensive set of facilities provided in dry/inland ports

- Offices of shipping line agents;
- Railway goods office;
- Road haulage brokerage;
- Cargo packing services;
- Consignment consolidation services;
- Unit train assembly and booking services;
- Container clearing services;
- Computerized cargo-tracking services;
- Container repair facilities;
- Clearing and fumigation services (atmospheric and vacuum);
- Refer refrigeration points;
- Weigh bridges.

Source: UNCTAD

Landlocked custom station or integrated check posts are also synonymous with land ports. Based on the land ports authority of India, Land Customs Stations/ICPs/Land Ports have following standard functions:

- Develop, sanitize and manage the facilities for cross border movement of passengers and cargo.
- Systems to address security imperatives.
- Set up warehouse, roads, terminals and buildings.
- Install and maintain communication, security, goods handling and scanning equipment.
- Space and facilities to regulatory agencies, banks, Foreign Exchange Bureau, tourist info center etc.

- Co-ordination among agencies at the ICP.

They should have following standard facilities for cargo and passenger:

For Cargo	For Passenger
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Electronic Weigh Bridge ➤ CCTV Surveillance ➤ Cargo Scanner-FBTS ➤ Inspection Shed ➤ Confiscated Goods Shed ➤ Quarantine Block ➤ Rummaging Pit ➤ Public Utilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Immigration Counter ➤ X-Ray Bag Scanner ➤ Bank & Foreign Exchange Bureau ➤ Waiting Area ➤ Cafeteria ➤ Public Conveniences ➤ Health Check ➤ Trolley & Wheel Chair ➤ Prayer Room ➤ Parking & Taxi Services ➤ Shuttle Bus Service ➤ Child Care Room

Source: Land Ports Authority of India, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Dept. of Border Management, New Delhi

However, standard port operations rules and regulations address issues relevant to port operations, standards, procedures, conduct on port premises, and rules for the use of the port, in general. Port authorities, customs, and other governing bodies, operators, drivers, workers, security officials, inspectors, contractors, and every person working at the port must follow them. For individuals entering, traveling through, or working at port facilities, rules and regulations are papers that should be made available to all port employees and users in electronic format on the port website. Before using the facilities, some ports need visitors and port users to read and sign the operating rules and regulations.

Depending on its unique circumstances and requirements, each port defines and sets its own operational norms. The majority of them employ regional laws and global rules or standards from the IMO, ILO, World Bank, and ISO as a guide.

The international standards, conventions, protocols, laws, and customs that serve as the foundation for the port's operating rules and regulations are listed in the following table:

Table 35: Commonly used international agreements, laws, regulations, standards, and procedures in ports

Health and safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILO, International Labor Standards on port Workers • ILO Code of practice Safety and Health in ports • ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety • OSHA 1800 Occupational Health and safety

Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank environmental and social framework • ISO 14001 environmental management systems • ESPO green guide
Operational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security plan development • WCO Kyoto convention on simplification and harmonization of customs process • Container Security Initiative (CSI) • Customs Trade Partnership against Terrorism • Business Alliance for Secure Commerce

Source: Principles of port operations regulation- USAID

The emphasis of current best practices and standards is on operational safety, the influence of port operations on the environment, and scrutiny from environmental organizations, society, local governments, consumers, the media, and business organizations. Common concerns with regards to contemporary port operations, laws, and regulations include:

- Increased significance on environment, safety, and security;
- The new role of port authorities to incorporate the private sector in port operations;
- The use of technology in port operations as a tool to communicate efficiently with different port actors;
- The necessity to review, update, and change the current rules on a periodic basis thus treating rules and standards as a living document to recognize the evolutionary essence of the transportation industry.

In order to increase productivity, protect the environment, and ensure the security of port users, employees, traders, and other agencies, a number of port operating regulations incorporate national and international standards and laws into every aspect of port operation. Land Port authorities can communicate their power and responsibilities by using port operating rules and regulations, adopting best practices. The following general subjects and standard content that are frequently covered in port operations should be recognized by port operational rules and regulations as part of the diverse range of activities in port operations:

- **General:** An overview of the port regulations, including their objectives, definitions, operational guidelines, scope, parties subject to the rules, applicable laws, governing bodies, security measures, operating hours, and locations and facilities of the port, among other things should be made available.
- **Reporting and information requirements:** Protocols for communication, reporting of hazardous materials, waste generated by cargo loading/unloading, basic information requirements, and notifications of damages and deficiencies.
- **Traffic and port stay:** Operating rules, entry authorization, transport entering and leaving the port, assignment of parking positions, and conditions, special

instructions for inclement weather, road links to transport, manning and surveillance of port, checking, inspection rules.

- **Security and conduct in the port:** Smoking, dealing with fire and open flames, hot work, maintaining safe distances when parking vehicles or unloading cargo, bunkering, active cathodic corrosion protection, prohibited activities, hazard statement, port access control, emergency response, surveillance and security, protection of transport vehicles and port facilities, and port restrictions are just a few examples of the regulations that are applied to the port.
- **Loading, discharging and storage of cargo:** Cargo declaration, document production, storage, and cargo movement services processes are some logistic activities conducted in the port.
- **Environmental:** Protection of the environment, management of trash and cargo residues, and mitigation of pollution. Workplace safety standards, first aid protocols in ports, and administration of rescue efforts of all aspects of health and safety should be maintained.

5.2 Best practice for land port management

For improving the performance efficiencies of land ports and ensuring trade facilitation, port authorities around the world adopt standard procedures which often generate exemplary results that are contemplated as best practices for replication. Because of the limited number of land ports and lack of uniform standard procedures due to country differences, best practices are not often comprehensive, however, some observable best practices are outlined in the following:

5.2.1 Development of Integrated Check Posts (ICP)

ICPs provide numerous services like customs, immigration, border security, and quarantine under one wing and place that facilities trade procedures in the land ports. Integration of port services Development of ICPs has changed India's land port performance significantly since 2012. ICPs have revolutionized land-based trade in India and leveraging the benefits from ICPs, value of land-based trade increased to \$ 12.73 billion in 2020-21 from a \$ 4.37 billion in 2012-13. Even India's rating in terms of cross-border trading criteria increased from 109 in 2012 to 63 in 2019-20, according to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business report.⁵¹

At the border checkpoints, ICPs are intended to offer sufficient passenger and freight processing facilities all under one roof. Customs, immigration, and border security are the three-core border-related operations that ICP aspires to unify. By using monitoring mechanisms and installation technology, customs covers the clearance of cargo/goods carried by vehicles, valuable personal items of passengers, and currencies. Passports, visas, and passenger identification are all inspected during immigration. Border

⁵¹ How modernization of Land Ports has been a game changer in India's cross-border trade- Center for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE), 2022

security includes upholding security, stopping the flow of illegal guns and other lethal weapons, and giving customs and immigration back-up support.⁵²

To encourage trade, ICPs should offer facilities such warehouses and open yards for the storage of goods, parking lots for efficient truck traffic, on-site truck weighing stations, and security for the items to avoid theft at the warehouse. Immigration and customs services are both located under one roof and are facilities for people's movement. The following amenities should be present in a model ICP: waiting areas, canteens, refreshment booths, public restrooms, animal quarantine, warehouses, freight and baggage inspection yards, banks, post offices, communication facilities, tourist information centers, and taxation agencies.

It is necessary to involve a variety of stakeholders to increase the ICPs' effectiveness. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes, border guards, banks, food safety departments, warehousing authorities, plant quarantine, and other key stakeholders are among the stakeholders. The Land Port Authority of India (LPAI) was established by the Indian government to oversee ICPs. The development, sanitization, and management of the facilities at the authorized checkpoints along India's border with neighbors fall under the purview of LPAI, which is a division of the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs' Border Management Department.

The main goal of ICP is to make cross-border movement of people and goods systematic, seamless, and secure by ensuring effective passenger flow, providing sufficient passenger facilities, streamlining the process, maximizing the use of facilities, systematizing support facilities, and enhancing traffic flow.

There are currently nine ICPs operational in India at Attari, Agartala, Petrapole, Raxaul, Jogbani, Moreh, Sutarkandi, Srimantapur and PTB at Dera Baba Nanak. India has 4 major ICPs with Bangladesh which are Agartala, Petrapole, Srimantapur and Sutarkandi ICP. So far, 20 border checkpoints in India have been designated as ICPs. Among these ICPs, ICP Petrapole is the largest land port in South Asia, which is located along the international border between India and Bangladesh, at a distance of about 80 kms from the city of Kolkata. Petrapole (India)-Benapole (Bangladesh) is an important land border crossing for India-Bangladesh both in terms of trade and passenger movement. Nearly 30 percent of land-based trade between India and Bangladesh takes place through ICP Petrapole. Since its operationalization in February 2016, the ICP has been witnessing an increasing number of passenger movement with an average of 22 lakh people crossing the border post on either side each year. Petrapole ICP is now equipped with ICP/CMS web based automated operations, Electronic Data Interchange system⁵³ and overall coordinated infrastructures including passenger terminal, cargo terminal, parking area, Electric Sub-Station & Pump House, Bank Extension Counter, Public Health Office, Fumigation Shed, Quarantine Building and so on.

⁵² Neilwalker (2019) Analysing Integrated Check Post in the India's border with Bangladesh, Border security report.

⁵³ ICP Petrapole- Land Port Authority of India

5.2.2 Investment in infrastructure development and automation

Automation increases operations' dependability, predictability, safety, and competitiveness. Ports consume a lot of land, therefore automated vehicles and cranes in ports increase production and ensure more effective land usage and allocation. Modern automated machinery also helps to prevent crashes and other physical harm because they are fast, affordable, and require low maintenance. In September 2016, Singapore opened Gate 3 of the Pasir Panjang Terminal Building for containerized goods within the Singapore Port. There are eight additional flow-through container lanes accessible from the terminal. Investments in the port's infrastructure and automation were made at the same time as the port was expanded. As a result, the port's terminal handling procedures have improved, and import and export times have dropped. Also, PSA Singapore opened Tuas Port, world's largest fully automated container terminal with substantial investment in infrastructure and automation approaches. Tuas Port is augmented by cross-industry collaboration to drive collective action towards supply chain sustainability. PSA has also built up its data analytics and digitalization capabilities, allowing for flexibility and agility to respond to rapidly changing demands as it continues to develop into the 2040's and beyond.

The Janela nica Portuária II port community system, which was improved by the Port of Luanda in April 2018, enabled electronic information interchange between various agents, including the port, terminal operators, and shipping lines. As a result, the port's terminal handling procedures have improved, decreasing export and import processing times. The Port Community System PCS 1x, which acts as a centralized platform for all port transactions between government organizations, the private sector, and banks, was once also introduced by the Indian Ports Association in December 2018. This reduced the time and expense associated with meeting border and documentary requirements.

5.2.3 Simplification of Procedures

Often cutting down bureaucratic process or simplifying service processes by removing specific unnecessary requirements can improve land ports' service quality. For instance, Ukraine removed automotive parts from the list of military items that are subject to State Service inspection and control in 2018, eliminating the necessity that importers of automotive parts present a verification document from the State Service of Export Control. According to Doing Business data, Ukraine's time for document compliance and import costs have since fallen by 72 hours and \$50, respectively. By streamlining the standards for auto part conformity certification in 2019, Ukraine further cut the import turnaround time. In a similar vein, China has removed the license requirement for the import of mechanical and electrical goods as of January 1, 2019, which has speed up the process of importing auto components from Japan.

A new method for the transportation of goods in ports that complies with European norms was implemented by Ukraine. The development of an electronic community, the streamlining of control procedures, and the promotion of business-friendly conditions were all part of the Ukrainian Port Reform effort, which improved the efficiency of trade in Ukrainian ports.

5.2.4 Ensuring private participations (PPP Model)

The duration and price of cross-border trade are both influenced by private trade service providers like customs brokers, transportation and logistics firms, freight forwarders and port service providers. Lower prices and higher service quality may result from more competition among trade service providers. Due to increased competition, the cost of port and terminal handling has fallen since the Russian Federation opened a new Multifunctional Cargo Complex at the Port of Bronka in 2016. Therefore, the cost of border compliance for goods passing through the port has decreased for importers and exporters. Besides decreasing costs, PPP model can also foster better development of ports since private operators compete in delivering the best services. For instance, Port Newark Container Terminal (PNCT) is one of the largest ports in the USA with PPP-based ownership that emphasizes customer-centric comprehensive services addressing its stakeholder needs and requirements. With this approach, this port has become one of the significant ports in the New Jersey area which is even contributing positively to the state's responsive supply chain system. PPPs have the potential to deliver infrastructure projects better and faster.

Public-private partnerships ("PPPs") in ports have become a means to manage port operations more effectively, as well as to develop new port infrastructure, traditionally both exclusively government functions. Interporto Quadrante Europa one of the top dry ports in the European region developed trade efficient and client friendly practices following the PPP model.

Following PSIG-2004, the Ministry of Shipping and the Bangladesh land port authority decided to develop twelve land ports on Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis through private sector for better and efficient storage & handling of cargoes. Among initially selected twelve land ports, five land ports have been transferred under this program. Under the BOT system, BLPA acquires the land and leases it to an investor. The investor is selected through a bidding process to develop, operate and maintain the land port for 25 years. In return, the investor will pay an agreed amount of royalty (Fixed and Variable Royalty) to BLPA. At the end of the concession period, the investor will transfer the port to BLPA including all fixed and movable assets. However, considering the Tekanf and Sonamashjid port, government's PPP project findings revealed that at public- private stage moderately high cooperation leads to near success but public- private stage lower cooperation leads to a near non-success PPP project.⁵⁴

5.2.5 Reformed legislative standards

Effective and proven legislative standards of other countries can be considered as good practices for land port development and trade facilitation. Some of the good practices from to the Land Ports Authority Act of India are:

- Encouraging and improving inter-agency collaboration in the operation and management of land ports by including representatives of the relevant

⁵⁴ Second Meeting of the Infrastructure Financing and PPP Network of Asia and the Pacific- PPP Agreement Management at The Implementing Agency, PPP Authority-Prime Minister's Office (2019).

ministries or divisions that increased the Board's diversity and efficiency at decision making.

- Members of the business community, trade bodies or port users on the Board try to make decisions more user-friendly and guarantee customer satisfaction together with the efficient operation of the ports.
- The worker representation on the Board helps to improve working-class relations and give them a sense of ownership. Additionally, it is anticipated to improve the workforce by fostering inclusion, equity, and accessibility.
- To facilitate better coordination, the law becomes more useful by mentioning the duties of various organizations operating under the purview of a land port.

5.2.6 Holistic Port Management

Starting from the management of ports to design functions and port procedures with user friendly elements can result in better port efficiency in terms of trade facilitation and user satisfaction. In case of European inland ports best practices involve public-private partnerships, which enable collaboration between the public and private sectors and result in a fair distribution of each sector's objectives, benefits, and drawbacks. The best practices also incorporate multi-entity characterization that enables the development of a network system of institutions and businesses cooperating in cargo-handling procedures, the mode of transportation, and cargo units, where the potential of inland ports enables the implementation of a variety of activities/services in transportation systems (including intermodal transport), supply chains, and municipal logistics.⁵⁵ Following table summarize the best practices of Europe's best practices in port management:

Table 36: Best practices in managing inland ports in Europe

The key factor	Best practice
The ownership system	Public-Private (PPP)
Transport availability (mode of transport)	Inland, Road, Rail transport – Multimodality
Spatial layout	Dispersed
Presence of entities	Multi-entity
Trading products	Cargo
Functional correlation with other economic structures	Element of the regional socio-economic system in the network system of production centers / distribution and urban logistics
Activity functions	Transport, Industrial, Logistics and Distribution
Spatial functions	City-forming, urban, region-forming and regional

Source: *Best practices in managing inland ports in Europe- Andrzej Montwiłł (2019)*

Based on the table, the key factors and best practices are:

⁵⁵ Best practices in managing inland ports in Europe- Andrzej Montwiłł (2009), Scientific Journals of the Maritime University of Szczecin.

Public-private partnership (PPP): The simultaneous involvement in the development of an inland port of public and private sectors allows for a balanced distribution of the goals, advantages, and disadvantages of each. Organizational and financial involvement of the public sector, the goals of which include not only business but also social and national development aspects, is primarily aimed at the construction of technical infrastructure, including transport infrastructure, and the inclusion of the port organism in the socio-economic system of the region. Public sector developed technical infrastructure, and principles of local business rules are the basis for business development by the private sector, which, by representing a business approach, invests in buildings (warehouses, production, reloading, and storage), transport and transport superstructures, thus creating jobs and influencing the socio-economic development of the region.

Multimodality transport accessibility: Involvement of the public sector related to the development of infrastructure, ensuring that access to the inland port is a key activity of the sector conditioning its long-term development by including it in transport systems of various scales. The multi-branch transport accessibility allows inland ports to be part of complex transport systems, in particular intermodal transport. Therefore, accessibility for inland, road, and rail transport is the key to the development of inland ports. This allows for transport in both water-to-land and land-to-land systems, thus including the inland port in a system of network supply chains or urban logistics.

Dispersed spatial layout: Construction and development of an inland port in a dispersed system allows, on the one hand, the full exploitation of the potential of riverside areas without excessively expending the port inland, and, on the other, locating its part within or outside the agglomeration depending on whether the functional segment's scope port area is included in urban logistics or not. The areas of the inland port located in the area of cities are usually surrounded by their buildings, meaning that the movement of large streams of cargo in transit through the city contributes to the build-up of congestion and, consequently, to increased transport costs. Therefore, it is optimal to locate handling and storage terminals that generate large cargo streams and industrial enterprises in port areas and so ensuring access to them while bypassing built-up areas.

Presence of Multi-entity: The implementation of a wide range of services and production activities in the inland port area requires an expanded functional segment with a division into the sphere of management and the sphere of exploitation (and production). As indicated earlier, one of the good practices in managing inland ports is the PPP format, where the sphere of management is the domain of the public sector and the sphere of exploitation is the domain of the private sector. On the other hand, the appropriate quantitative and qualitative service of cargo and means of transport (cars, wagons, barges) requires a developed functional segment (port operators, freight forwarders, transport companies, agents, control companies, customs and phytosanitary institutions, service and supply companies) of the inland port.

Cargo as the basic trade product: Unlike passenger service, where the range of services comes down to several services, cargo handling in inland ports can include several dozen different activities / services and thus create high total value-added services. The range of services depends on the degree of development of the objective

functions of the inland port, where various processes are carried out for cargo, means of transport, and transport units.

Activity Functions: As in the case of seaports, the inland port activity can be divided into several functions, i.e., transport, production, and logistics and distribution. As part of the transport function, processes for cargo, means of transport, and loading units are carried out related to the reloading and storage of cargo and loading units. The production function includes the processing of goods at various stages of complex production. In turn, transport and logistics services for cargo related to warehousing and supply of goods are implemented as part of logistics and distribution functions. The wider range of processes implemented within individual functions, the greater the total added value created in the inland port space and the greater the port's ability to develop over the long term.

Spatial Functions: The PPP format means that the public sector is interested in the development of the inland port as an important element of the development of the social and economic system of the city and region. As a result, the port begins to affect the development of its surroundings, leading to the development of its spatial functions, where the port contributes to the development of the city and region (city and region-forming functions), and becomes an important element of the processes implemented in the agglomeration and region (urban and regional functions).

5.2.7 21st Century Border Management

The 21st Century Border Management Initiative is a bilateral cooperation mechanism with a clear goal of improving border security and promoting the economic competitiveness of North America. The Joint Declaration on 21st Century Border Management between the US and Mexico was signed in 2010. This initiative outlines several criteria for facilitating trade through border area.⁵⁶ Some of its key features are:

- **Single Entry of Trade Data and Single Cargo Inspections:** The goal of this program is to hasten the movement of people and all goods across the US-Mexico border. In the pre-screening, clearance, and inspection of people, goods, and products, both governments anticipate working together and coordinating their efforts. Intercepting harmful people, items, and contraband while reducing congestion is the goal. Additionally, this project anticipates the standardization of a single input of trade data (importers and exporters only supply information once), which would lower the administrative burden and the cost of trade.
- **Certification and food safety:** Through the National Health Service, Food Safety and Quality and the US Department of Agriculture, the Mexican Secretariat of Agriculture signed a letter of intent to formally establish cooperation for creating electronic certification systems for plants and animals that are compatible with one another. This agreement intends to ensure compliance for agricultural product import and export, improve food safety, and increase bilateral trade.

⁵⁶ The 21st Century Border Management Initiative- U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Mexico.

- **Trusted trader programmes:** A mutual recognition of trustworthy merchants' agreement was struck by the US and Mexico. The goal is to give businesses that have been approved by the relevant authority unique advantages so that their vehicles can be in front of the line at border crossings which is facilitating bilateral trade between the nations.

5.2.8 One-Stop Border Post (OSBP)

The OSBP refers to the legal and institutional framework, facility and associated procedures that enable goods, people and vehicles to stop in a single facility in which they undergo necessary controls following applicable regional and national laws to exit one State and enter the adjoining State.

An OSBP is the application of joint controls to minimize routine activities and duplications across borders. OSBP is a border management model that promotes a coordinated and integrated approach to;

- Facilitate trade, the movement of people, and improving security.
- The border crossing dwell times for travelers and transporters i.e shortens the clearance time at the border crossing points.
- Reduce logistic costs.

The OSBP concept consists of four pillars:

1. **Legal and Institutional Framework:** It is generally agreed that the application of national laws is limited to the territory of a state. OSBPs rely on the principle of extraterritorial application of laws, which allows a state to extend the application of specific national laws outside its own territory.
2. **Simplification and Harmonization of Procedures:** Implementing an OSBP requires simplifying and harmonizing border crossing procedures rendering an OSBP effective.
3. **ICT and Data Exchange:** ICT is a critical component of collaborative single window systems, simplification of documentation, border management, and modernization of customs, immigration, and related services.
4. **Hardware Infrastructure:** This includes OSBP facilities such as offices for border officials, operational equipment, warehouses, and parking.

OSBP can have 3 types of models, which are⁵⁷:

1. **Juxtaposed Model:** Under the juxtaposed model, State A and State B share facilities in the country of entry. This implies that passengers and cargo stop only once in the country of entry for both exit and entry formalities. Exit formalities must be done before undertaking entry formalities, e.g Taveta/Holili and Malaba/Malaba. All OSBP offices in Tanzania are of Juxtaposed Model.

⁵⁷ Tanzania Revenue Authority, One Stop Border Post (OSBP), viewed at- <https://www.tra.go.tz/index.php/one-stop-border-post-osbp>

2. Straddled Model: This is where a single facility is built across the border line for the two adjoining states to share. Similarly, passengers and cargo stop once but start with exit formalities before undertaking entry formalities. e.g Nemba/Gasenyi
3. Wholly located model (Single Country): It is the (common) single country model, i.e, an OSBP wholly located in one of the two adjoining states, a single shared border facility is constructed in one of the countries to house officers from both countries to carry out border controls e.g Ruhwa border station.

Chirundu Border Post is the name of the primary border crossing between the two nations. It is thought that the One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) between Zambia and Zimbabwe is the best OSBP in Africa. This OSBP serving the functions of a land port also features following trade beneficial practices:

- Shortened clearing time of under a day
- Information sharing among border agencies
- Remodeling the border's infrastructure and establishing a Common Control Zone (CCZ) would enable the Zambian and Zimbabwean border agencies to coordinate their operations at one site.
- Fewer stoppage and shorter periods of time between stops in cross-border trade and transit transactions.
- Establishment of a framework for cooperative processing and simplifying processes and systems.⁵⁸

5.2.9 Digital Transport Corridor

A Digital Transport Corridor (DTC) is a set of data-related services across physical cross-country transport corridors for end-to-end information exchange at all stages of transportation – air, road, rail and sea. This includes services and applications for supply chain stakeholders like information submission for authorities, visibility services, marketplace services, booking and ordering services, and chain composition services.

When logistics businesses move goods and services across borders, they interact with different logistics systems in different neighboring countries. This creates technical barriers hampering the instant exchange of logistics information between countries. In addition, legal frameworks for logistics processes and information systems being developed are not the same in these countries, making logistics processes even longer and more complicated. This translates into higher logistics costs, and delays in the delivery of goods and services.

The Digital Transport Corridor system can help to organize logistics processes and electronic transport data flow so that information is exchanged instantly between

⁵⁸ The One Stop Border Post Concept – A Case of Chirundu Border Post Between Zambia and Zimbabwe, Muyambango Nkwemu (2011), Zambia Revenue Authority.

logistics chain participants (traders, freight forwarders, customs, other government agencies and consumers), optimizing the flow of goods and services and saving time and money.

For instance, Digital Transport Corridor from the Baltic to the Black Sea initiative has been Initiated where to facilitate and harmonize logistic information exchange, the EU has adopted the Regulation on electronic freight transport information (eFTI) and is developing supporting acts/specifications to be followed by EU Member States, moving towards a decentralized federated network of platforms, enabling public authorities to acknowledge electronic data as legal.⁵⁹

Digital transport or freight corridor can ensure optimal data flows, increase trade visibility and transparency and help secure paperless trading system.

5.2.10 The Cross Border Transport Agreement

The Cross Border Transport Agreement between Vietnam and Laos dictates the full cooperation in Laobao-Dansavanh border crossing point for cross border trade facilitation. Some of the good practices of this initiative includes:

- Extensive involvement of the two countries' border enforcement agencies, including customs, border guard, police, immigration, and quarantine
- Enhanced compliance, quicker and simpler clearing procedures.
- Issuance of the business certificate of international transport to companies having the sufficient business condition between two countries.
- Issuance of the interstate permit to vehicle crossing the border.
- Simplified the custom, border procedure to vehicles.⁶⁰

5.2.11 Gulf Cooperation Council

For the landlocked Arab states on the Persian Gulf, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE this council provides advanced collaborative arrangements between customs administrations by forming a custom union. The Customs Union exemplifies several different forms of collaboration and best practices, including a single-entry point system for imported goods, common customs regulations and procedures, common criteria for calculating the customs value of foreign goods, etc. Additionally, there are possibilities for the interchange of customs officers and shared training programs to share experience in customs.

5.2.12 Border pass management system of Cambodia-Thailand

Cambodia's General Department of Immigration implemented a new border pass management system at the Doung International Border Control Post, in Battambang province on the Cambodian–Thai border in 2018. The system uses software developed

⁵⁹ EU4digital (2020), A Digital Transport Corridor from the Baltic to the Black Sea: it sounds ambitious but what exactly does it mean and how will it help trade? Available at- <https://eufordigital.eu/e-card/a-digital-transport-corridor-from-the-baltic-to-the-black-sea-it-sounds-ambitious-but-what-exactly-does-it-mean-and-how-will-it-help-trade/>

⁶⁰ Nguyen Van Thach, cross border transport facilitation between Vietnam and neighboring countries and ASEAN countries, ministry of transport of Vietnam.

by IOM, the UN Migration Agency. The Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) has been installed, with financial support from Canada, to allow Cambodia to more effectively manage cross-border movements of local residents and migrant workers traveling with border passes. MIDAS is a powerful border management information system that processes and records all information about border pass travellers, including their biographical data and facial images. It also provides a systematic registration of all entries and exits, allowing for analysis of statistics and trends to inform evidence-based migration policies. MIDAS helped to optimize Cambodian border control posts and border operations for effective border management, and promote orderly cross-border migration.⁶¹

5.2.13 Border Management Coordination Agency Development by Indonesia

Border management in Indonesia handled by specialized agencies, namely BNPP (Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan) at the national level, BPPD (Banda Promosi Pariwisata Daerah) Province, and BPPD Regency/City. In accordance with Law No.43/2008 on the territory of the State, each level has the authority, as well as the duties and functions like any other public institution. BNPP has limited authority coordination with other ministries and non-ministerial agencies at the central level, and vertical coordination with BPPD provincial and regency/city. In accordance with the Presidential Decree No.12 of the year 2010 on the BNPP, BNPP in performing their duties can invite and involve ministers, leaders of non-ministerial government agencies, and other officials of government agencies; in organizing tasks and functions, BNPP coordinating with the governing body at the local level; BPPD coordination between BNPP and includes coaching, facilitation and supervision; in organizing tasks and functions BPPD Province coordinated by the Governor in his capacity as representative of the Government and members of BNPP; and procedures for BNPP working relationship with the border services in the area governed by the Head of BNPP.⁶² Policy reform for border management though dedicated agency improved coordination through infrastructure development, proper the arrangement of space, efforts to increase economic growth, and efforts to improve basic services and quality of human resources of the land border area.

5.2.14 Inter-agency coordinated border management committee by Philippines

An inter-agency coordinated border management committee, a body which aims to strengthen and pass border control and management of various government agencies against illegal practices, with the member agency heads and representatives, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Border Protection in 2020. The main objectives of the MOU were to institute a systematic mechanism for sharing of information among government agencies for purposes of strengthening its border control capabilities, to eliminate/prevent smuggling activities, customs fraud, promote public health protection, fair trade practices, and sound regulatory foundation for domestic and international trade. These also promoted the spirit of

⁶¹ The International Organization for Migration (2018) available at- <https://www.iom.int/news/border-pass-management-system-facilitates-cambodian-thai-border-crossing>

⁶² Rusdiyanta, Rusdiyanta. (2017). Strengthening of the coordination of the national agency for border management (BNPP) in border management in Indonesia. *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*. 15. 515-520.

inter-agency coordination and cooperation with the end goal of maximizing utilization of data and information resources for the protection and common good of the people. The MOU was signed by 29 out of the 31 government agencies for the Inter-Agency Coordinated Border Management. It ensured the shared efforts of all government agencies to execute and maintain border protection while continuously increasing trade facilitation.

5.2.15 Authorized Economic Operators

The AEO concept is based on the Customs-to-Business partnership introduced by the World Customs Organization (WCO). Traders who voluntarily meet a range of criteria work in close cooperation with customs authorities to assure the common objective of supply chain security are entitled to enjoy benefits throughout the trade procedures. This implies that there must always be a relationship between customs and the applicant/AEO⁶³. This relationship must be based on the principles of mutual transparency, correctness, fairness and responsibility. The benefits of AEO include faster processing and clearance of cargo, deferred payment of duty, direct port delivery/entry, and benefits under Mutual Recognition arrangements (MRA). For instance, Since January 2010, Malaysian customs has operated a fully functional Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program. There are now 56 exporters, importers, and manufacturers that are AEO compliant. As an effective replicable practice AEO provided following benefits for traders for easing trade process in cross border trading:

- Submission of electronically minimum data in the form of Permission Request Slip (PRS) for customs clearance;
- Removing physical inspection (except on specific reason) on cargo i.e customs release via green lane, for import, export and bond-to-bond movement;
- Allowing deferred duty payments via electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) done periodically with the CS;
- Allowing to use the Consolidated Statement (CS) to apply for the Certificate of Origin from the Ministry of International Trade and Industries;
- Entitling the benefits offered by international customs administrations under Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) with Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD)⁶⁴.

The National Board of Revenue is currently working on developing the Authorized Economic Operator/ Trusted Traders system in Bangladesh, as part of its customs modernization program⁶⁵. The National Board of Revenue offered the coveted status only to three firms in 2019 and currently aiming to select at least 10 more firms – mainly from textile, pharmaceutical and leather sectors.

Once the AEO system is developed and fully implemented in Bangladesh, A firm with the AEO status will enjoy the privilege of carrying their goods from ports to their

⁶³ What is AEO? - Taxation and Customs Union, European Commission.

⁶⁴ Authorized Economic Operator Programme, Royal Malaysian Customs Department.

⁶⁵ Economic Operators- Custom House Benapole.

warehouses directly without physical customs inspection, which will help them save time and stay on external trade schedules. This will improve the trade time, process and overall trade efficiency in the land ports substantially.

5.2.16 Automated border management

Automated Border Control (ABC) or management is defined as the use of automated or semi-automated systems which can verify the identity of travelers at border crossing points (BCPs), without the need for human intervention. In general, an ABC system consists of one or two physical barriers (e-Gates), document readers, a monitor displaying instructions, a biometric capture device, and system management hardware and software.

In short, an ABC system performs the following tasks (the same ones as in the manual border control) with a high degree of automation:

- Check that the traveller trying to cross the border is carrying a genuine and valid travel document. This is more formally referred to as the “Document authentication process”.
- Verify biometrically that this travel document belongs to the traveller trying to cross the border. This is more formally referred to as the “identity verification process”
- Check that the traveller is indeed entitled/authorized to cross the border
- Allow/deny passage according to a pre-defined logic, sometimes requiring the intervention of the border guard operating the system
- Guarantee the security in the overall process, meaning that only a traveller who has been cleared is allowed to cross the border (i.e. no tailgating), and that travellers who have been rejected are properly handled (e.g. refused in order to be redirected to the manual control). This is typically achieved by the usage of single or double automatic barriers (e-Gates) and tailgating detection/prevention mechanisms.

In general, an ABC system involves the use of:

- Physical barriers (one or two e-Gates)
- Full page e-Passport readers: optical recognition of the biographic data page, the MRZ and a radio frequency (RF) reader for communication with the chip.
- Monitor displaying instructions.
- Biometric capture device.
- System management hardware and software.

5.2.17 Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) of the BBIN

Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) can facilitate a way for a seamless movement of people and goods across their borders for the benefit and integration of the region and its economic development. Presently the Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) of the sub-regional Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) signed on 15 June 2015 provides

with significant opportunities to utilize land borders or ports to proliferate regional trades. The Motor Vehicles Agreement was signed for the Regulation of Passenger, Personal and Cargo Vehicular Traffic between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal. The finalization of the BBIN MVA would allow the countries to move forward, in an accelerated fashion, with implementation of land transport facilitation arrangements between and among signatory countries. Eventually it would enable the exchange of traffic rights and ease cross-border movement of goods, vehicles, and people, thereby helping expand people-to-people contact, trade, and economic exchanges between signatory countries⁶⁶. With trade facilitating features like trans-shipment of goods, free transport, electronic permit and etc. BBIN can increase the use of land ports and ease trade with landlocked countries. However, the agreement will enter into force after it is ratified by all four member nations⁶⁷. So far, the agreement has been ratified by Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The lower house of the Bhutanese parliament approved the agreement in early 2016, but it was rejected by the upper house in November 2016.

5.2.18 UN TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers) system

The United Nations TIR Convention (1975) is one of the most effective international instruments, overseen by the UN. It is the only global customs transit system that provides seamless movement of goods across borders in sealed compartments or containers under customs control from the customs office of departure to the customs office of destination. The system ensures that goods travel across borders with little interference en route, maximum security and minimal customs administration.⁶⁸ The TIR streamlines border crossing procedures and reduces congestion and saves time at borders, thus decreasing costs of trade. Under the TIR, clearance of goods can be done at the final destination rather than on borders.

The TIR system plays an important role in facilitating cross border trade flows, adding considerable value to improving regional trade mechanisms. Globally, the TIR system has been a successful model for reducing trade transaction costs and facilitating higher growth of intra-regional and inter-regional trade.

Given the significance of TIR in boosting regional connectivity, and India's decision to accede to the TIR Convention, there is a compelling case for other BBIN countries to opt for TIR in the context of the current BBIN MVA. TIR can significantly improve the effectiveness and robustness of the MVA in the region by establishing effective transit procedures among the four countries and by connecting the BBIN region to other world markets.

TIR can profoundly accelerate cross border trade with neighboring countries through land ports or routes. The adoption of TIR in the BBIN MVA would facilitate

⁶⁶ Nepal Foreign Affairs, Full Text of BBIN Agreement on Motor Vehicles, available at- <https://nepalforeignaffairs.com/bbin-agreement-on-motor-vehicles-agreement/>

⁶⁷ M. Absar Alam (2021) Discussion Paper on BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement Scope for developing integrated logistics and transport infrastructure and other related services. CUTS International.

⁶⁸ European Commission, TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers, International Road Transport) available at- https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/customs-4/customs-procedures-import-and-export-0/what-customs-transit/tir-transports-internationaux-routiers-international-road-transport_en

integration between customs and other stakeholders based on mutually accepted protocols, thereby eliminating the potential risks and irregularities in the course of the clearance of traffic and transit. A fully operational TIR system has been estimated to yield economic benefits ranging from 0.14 percent to 1.31 percent of national gross domestic product.⁶⁹

5.2.19 Coordinated Border management of Singapore

Singapore's early experience in developing its National Single Window (NSW), known as TradeNet, provided it with the insight that coordinated border management (CBM) is fundamental to developing and sustaining a SW environment. Both the NSW and the CBM mind-set are complementary elements of Singapore's 'whole-of-government' (WOG) approach to providing efficient services to the trading community. One of the most noteworthy developments in recent times took place in 2003, when the government recognized the need for greater synergy, and for a reorganization of the trade and border authorities in Singapore. This resulted in the formation of the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority of Singapore (ICA) as the single command for checkpoints and border control functions, while Singapore Customs was established as the single contact point for all Customs, revenue, and trade matters. Whereas the former Customs and Excise Department was mainly focused on revenue matters, the new Singapore Customs is vested with responsibility for both revenue and trade facilitation matters. This working arrangement allows the ICA and Singapore Customs to share the responsibility of securing Singapore's borders, and yet be effective in facilitating legitimate trade.⁷⁰

5.2.20 Innovative Finnish model for border coordination

Finland is bordered by Sweden in the west, Norway in the north, and Russia to the east, while Estonia lies in the south, across the Gulf of Finland. The Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – are members of the Schengen Area, an area comprising 26 European countries that abolished passport and other types of controls at their common borders. As a result of the implementation of the Schengen Agreement in 2001 by the Nordic countries, most of Finland's land border controls are, therefore, focused on the Finnish-Russian border, which is 1,324 km long – 1,269 km runs on dry land, while the rest is covered by lakes and waterways. The two main agencies managing Finland's border are Customs and the Border Guard, and in some cases, the Finnish Police. They do this under the framework of the Police, Customs, and Border Guard (PCB) cooperation agreement. PCB agencies are all law enforcement and pre-trial investigation authorities. The PCB agencies have been cooperating since 1927. Their long history and high degree of cooperation includes established coordination mechanisms and structures at the national and regional level. This cooperation is based on legislation, with the first decree providing a regulatory basis for such cooperation being promulgated as early as 1949. The current legal basis, the PCB Act 687/2009 was passed by the Finnish Parliament in 2009.

⁶⁹ CUTS International (2017), Benefits of the TIR Convention for the implementation of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement, available at- https://www.iru.org/system/files/BBIN%20media%20fact%20sheet_0.pdf

⁷⁰ WCO- Singapore's 'whole-of-government' approach to coordinated border management: maintaining its edge amidst new challenges.

Alongside this legislation are the trilateral and bilateral agreements signed by the heads of the PCB agencies.

5.2.21 Road Cargo System (ROCARS) (Hong Kong China)

In order to keep abreast with global, regional and national developments in moving towards electronic customs clearance and enable the industry stakeholders to submit electronic advance cargo information to Customs, Hong Kong Customs (HKC), with support from the government, developed a system, namely, “Road Cargo System” (ROCARS), for customs clearance of road cargoes at all land border custom stations.

Under this approach, a shipper or a freight forwarder acting as a shipper is obliged to submit a pre-defined set of cargo information to HKC through ROCARS 14 days in advance or at least 30 minutes before the cargo consignment being imported from or exported to China by truck. As an acknowledgement after successful submission of cargo information, ROCARS returns a “Customs Cargo Reference Number” (CCRN) for the cargo consignment to the shipper who should then pass it together with the cargo description to the relevant truck driver. No less than 30 minutes before the truck arriving at a LBCP, the truck driver should do the “bundling” through ROCARS (via the Internet or by phone) by providing the CCRN and his vehicle’s registration number to HKC. The ROCARS will then direct a time slot for the truck driver to cross the boundary. Under ROCARS, officials of HKC can conduct risk profiling on every cargo consignment in advance for determining whether a truck needs to be attended for inspection. When the cross-boundary trucks arrive at the LBCPs, they are only required to stop at one kiosk for immigration and customs clearance. With the introduction of one-stop clearance process, the clearance time is significantly reduced from 60 seconds to 20 seconds. This approach allowed Customs officers to conduct risk assessment on land cargo consignments based on the electronic advance cargo information. Also facilitated the introduction of one-stop customs clearance for inter-modal transshipment cargoes.

These best practices of different countries are compared and illustrated in the table below:

Table 37: Comparison of best practices in port management

Comparison of best practices in port management
<p>Integrated Check Posts (ICP) of India</p> <p>ICPs are modern border infrastructure that are central to India’s connectivity plans in the region. ICPs consist of border infrastructure for facilitation of trade and people. They also act as important centers to advance other multi-modal intra- and inter-regional connectivity initiatives. ICPs are envisioned to provide adequate passenger and freight process facilities under one roof at the border checkpoints. ICP aims to integrate three main border-related functions- customs, immigration and border security.</p>

Comparison of best practices in port management

Investment in infrastructure development and automation by Singapore.

Tuas Port, the largest completely automated container terminal in the world, was inaugurated by PSA Singapore after significant investments in infrastructure and automation techniques. Cross-industry cooperation at Tuas Port enhances efforts to support the supply chain as a whole. As PSA develops into the 2040s and beyond, its data analytics and digitalization skills have also been strengthened, giving it the flexibility and agility to respond to swiftly changing demands.

Simplification of Procedures by the Ukrainian port authority

Ukraine adopted and introduced a new procedure for the passage of goods in ports meeting European standards. Also, Ukrainian Port Reform initiative included Development of e-community, simplification of control procedures, creation of favorable conditions for business that increased the trade efficiency in Ukrainian ports.

Ensuring private participations (PPP Model) in European ports

Public-private partnerships ("PPPs") have emerged as a means of improving the management of port operations and the construction of new port infrastructure, both of which have historically been monopolized by the government. Following the PPP concept, Interporto Quadrante Europa, one of the main dry ports in the European region, created trade-efficient and customer-friendly processes.

Reformed legislative standards of India

Legislative requirements that have been proved to be effective might be regarded as best practices for developing land ports and facilitating trade. For instance, the Indian port legislative reform included increasing the diversity and effectiveness of the Board's decision-making by encouraging and improving inter-agency collaboration in the operation and management of land ports by including representatives of the pertinent ministries or divisions.

21st Century Border Management Initiative by USA and Mexico

This initiative focused on single entry of trade data and single cargo inspections, efficient certification and food safety measures, trusted trader programs and so on.

Comparison of best practices in port management
<p>One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) management by the African nations.</p> <p>The OSBP model of border management encourages a coordinated and integrated strategy to ease trade, improve security, and allow for the free movement of people. It shortens the time needed for clearance at border crossing locations by reducing dwell periods for travelers and transporters as well as overall logistical expenses. Zambia and Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Kenya OSBPs are contributing in seamless cross border trade.</p>
<p>Cross Border Transport Agreement of Vietnam</p> <p>Agreement on road motorized vehicle facilitation signed between the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Democratic Republic of Laos on 23rd, April 2009 in Ha Noi that facilitated cross border trade and simplified the custom, border procedure to vehicles facilitating bilateral trade.</p>
<p>Gulf Cooperation Council</p> <p>Landlocked gulf countries facilitated border trade through a custom union that included measures like a single-entry point system for imported goods, common customs regulations and procedures, common criteria for calculating the customs value of foreign goods, etc.</p>
<p>Authorized Economic Operators of Malaysia</p> <p>With the fully functional Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program, Malaysian customs authority has facilitated border trade by reducing processes and time requirements for special traders.</p>
<p>Border pass management system of Cambodia-Thailand</p> <p>In Battambang province, near the Cambodian-Thai border, the General Directorate of Immigration of Cambodia implemented an updated border pass management system in 2018. The system processes and records all information about border pass travellers, including their biographical data and facial images. The system resulted in optimization of Cambodian border control posts and border operations for effective border management.</p>
<p>Border Management Coordination Agency Development by Indonesia</p> <p>Border management in Indonesia handled by specialized agency named BNPP and coordination in setting program policy, budget, execution, and monitoring and evaluation of border management is devised with clear guidelines that outlines the</p>

Comparison of best practices in port management

authority of the BNPP as a coordinating body to facilitate effective border management.

Inter-agency coordinated border management committee by Philippines

Philippines formed an inter-agency coordinated border management committee consisting of 29 out of the 31 government agencies for the Inter-Agency Coordinated Border Management. These agencies include border service providers like Bureau of Customs (BOC), Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL), Environmental and Management Bureau (EMB), Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) and so on. It guaranteed that all government organizations would work together to implement and maintain border protection while continually enhancing trade facilitation.

Coordinated Border management of Singapore

The Singaporean government realized that the country's trade and border authorities needed to be reorganized in order to work more efficiently. As a result, Singapore Customs was founded as the single point of contact for all Customs, revenue, and trade-related issues, and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority of Singapore (ICA) was created as the single command for checkpoints and border control duties.

Finnish border collaboration approach

The two main agencies managing Finland's border are Customs and the Border Guard, and in some cases, the Finnish Police. The Police, Customs, and Border Guard (PCB) cooperation agreement serves as the framework for their actions. Their extensive history of cooperation includes national and regional coordinating procedures and institutions that have been in place for many years. This collaboration is based on law, and the first decree that established the regulatory framework for it was issued in 1949.

Road Cargo System (ROCARS) (Hong Kong China)

As an acknowledgment after successful submission of cargo information, ROCARS returns a Customs Cargo Reference Number (CCRN) for the cargo consignment to the shipper who should then pass it together with the cargo description to the relevant trucker. Not less than 30 minutes before the truck arriving at a land boundary control point ("LBCP "), the trucker should do the 'bundling' work through ROCARS.

From the logistics performance index score perspective, all of these countries are doing well in terms of managing better trade logistics for trade. Not only because of special practices but rather through overall logistics and trade support measures development, these countries are scoring higher in the LPI index. For instance, The LPI 2023 score of the countries analyzed for best practices are illustrated in the table following:

Table 38: LPI of the selected countries with best practices

Countries	LPI Rank	LPI Score	Customs	Infrastructure	International shipments	Logistics competence	Tracking & tracing	Timeliness
Singapore	1	4.3	4.2	4.6	4	4.4	4.4	4.3
Finland	2	4.2	4	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.3
USA	17	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.4	3.9	4.2	3.8
China	19	3.7	3.3	4	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.7
Malaysia	26	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
India	38	3.4	3	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.6
Viet Nam	43	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.3
Philippines	43	3.3	2.8	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.9
Indonesia	61	3	2.8	2.9	3	2.9	3	3.3
Mexico	66	2.9	2.5	2.8	2.8	3	3.1	3.5
Bangladesh	88	2.6	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.4	3
Cambodia	115	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.7

Source: World Bank

LPI score is generated considering several dimensions like the efficiency of customs and border management clearance, the quality of trade and transport infrastructure, the ease of arranging competitively priced shipments, the competence and quality of logistics services, the ability to track and trace consignments, the frequency with which shipments reach consignees within scheduled or expected delivery times. Countries with higher LPI score and tends to score well in all of these dimensions. For instance, Singapore's NSW system, custom modernization approaches and compliance with TFA ensured its efficient customs and border management clearance, good trade logistics and less release time. Similarly, countries with best practices like the Finland, USA, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, India etc. are better at managing efficient, customs and border management clearance systems, good quality of trade and transport infrastructure, time efficient and responsive logistic services providing proper tracking and traceability measures along with reduced time of consignment release. From the different aspects of trade following improvement in each sector, countries tend to improve their LPI score.

The table data shows the top countries with LPI scores. Bangladesh has much scope for improving the LPI score by addressing the problems of LPI dimensions and improving them. Replicating best practices from the countries can be constructive for Bangladesh to improve overall trade performance and trade facilitation aspects.

5.3 Technologies used in the operation of land ports

Modernization is crucial for ports now to ensure trade facilitation by introducing easier and digitalized transparent processes. As a result of daily processing and traffic, the land ports continue to encounter new difficulties. Inventory control and warehouse logistics can all be made better with the help of technologies and automation. Digitalized technologies can assist in automating the loading, dispatching, and transportation of goods as well as parking lot optimization and traffic flow. For port management and port users, sensors, cameras, drones, and other technology can automatically collect and disseminate data on the weather, traffic, and pollution. By streamlining processes, technologies can make procedures of ports swifter and user friendly. Some of technologies use in the land ports are explored below:

Integrated Check Posts (ICP) integrated with Land Port Management System (LPMS)

ICPs includes Land Port Management System (LPMS) that provide numerous integrated and automated facilities such as customs, immigration, border security, and quarantine, among others, within a single facilitation zone. ICPs help save time by allowing customs and immigration authorities to work together in the same building to clear passengers and cargo more quickly. ICPs are reducing stay time and trade transaction costs to promote cross-border trade and people-to-people contacts, and they work to adopt the best international practices. ICPs provide secure, seamless, and efficient platforms for cargo and passenger movements. In neighbor country India, since the initiation of ICP in 2012, 2012, the ICPs have helped streamline cross-border trade and passenger flows through the modernization of border management infrastructure⁷¹. In Benapole land port, a similar technology of LPMS (Land Port Management System) has been implemented to automate the port and increase its efficiency. This system usually integrates myriad other systems like Weighbridge entry sub-module Transshipment Module for Perishable Goods Posting Branch Module, Warehouse Cargo Entry/Exit (Inventory) Module, Assessment and billing module, Bank sub module with payment integration, Maintenance Module, Master Data Module, Reporting Module, Financial accounting information system and so on.⁷²

ASYCUDA World

The UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) is an integrated customs management system for international trade and transport operations in a modern automated environment. ASYCUDA system is available in almost every port and land ports of the world. ASYCUDA helps to improve revenue collection by modernizing customs operations. It drastically cuts transaction time and costs and

⁷¹ Linking land borders: India's integrated check posts- The Hindustan Times, August, 2021

⁷² Land Port Management System- Datasoft

increase trade efficiency as well as competitiveness. It also enhances security by expediting the processes for cargo control, goods transit, and clearance, and aid fighting against corruption by increasing transaction transparency⁷³. Almost every Land port and customs station in the Bangladesh is covered under ASYCUDA world system.

Port Automation

Automation technology refers to shifting of manual documentation and checking activities into automated and digitalized forms. Automation of port equipment helps minimize downtime, boost security, and assure effective cargo handling Port planning and scheduling that is precise and uses autonomous information exchange systems less operations are needed for transferring containers. Automated systems assist in gathering data from carriers, logistic providers, and port operators to make proper decisions. Support structure like automated vehicles registration and monitoring operations result in lessen traffic, with having a positive influence on the environment, and increased safety. For instance, Brisbane AutoStrad inland port or terminal in Australia reaped benefit from fully automated system and increased its truck handling capacities.

Port automation is the application of integrated technology to create intelligent solutions for the effective management of trade and traffic flows on the port, consequently enhancing port capacity and efficiency.

Cloud-based software is typically used by smart ports (also known as automated ports) to help create the operational flows that make the port run efficiently. At the moment, most ports across the world have some level of technological integration, if not full management. However, as a result of international government initiatives and the exponential rise in marine traffic, there has been a progressive increase in the number of smart ports.

Some automation approaches in the smart port management are:

- **Digital Connectivity:** Ports can be physically and digitally integrated with the larger supply chain network through digital connectivity. Digital connectivity with important industry sectors can boost productivity among supply chain participants, such as vehicles, cargo owners, and logistics service providers, and aid in coordinating cargo flow in a safe and intelligent way. Enhancing regulatory effectiveness and allowing fast information sharing and data flow among port users and stakeholders, locally and beyond the region, depend heavily on the development of an advanced digital infrastructure.
- **Satellite Tracking (GPS):** Smart and automated ports can offer real-time tracking and reporting of all types of cargo or containers through GPS system.
- **Automatic Truck Identification:** Automatic truck identification system can automatically monitor the progress through the terminal, identify what is coming in and out of the terminal and identify what truck is being handled by the Container Handling Equipment (Weight scale, crane etc.). Using adhesive

⁷³ Customs automation – ASYCUDA- UNCTAD

tags with unique identification, RFID system can be used to identify and track trucks or cargo vehicles.

- **Internet of Things (IoT):** Internet of Things (IoT) is one of vital things which can be quite useful in digitizing delivery processes and cargo/shipment monitoring. At the Hamburg port, this is in use. By utilizing comparable technology, it transformed itself into a "smart port" that now uses sensors and geo-referencing techniques to keep an eye on all the assets, including cranes, warehouses, and roads. Another instrument that simplifies handling containers is the High Bay Storage (HBS) system. A normal yard's capacity can be increased by three times with this automated container handling software, which can stack containers up to 11 stories high. Due to its emphasis on real-time communication, block chain is another significant technology that has the potential to digitize port supply chains.⁷⁴
- **Digital warehouse management system (WMS):** WMS enables the reduction of transient and monetary losses during warehouse operations. It enables ports to maintain a consistent reporting system and work with a single range of products for all of the terminal's warehouses. It offers effective receiving, storing, and shipping operations in bulk terminals, ports, and temporary storage facilities for general cargo as well as enables rapid searches for products, whether they are in containers, sheds, bulk carriers, or general cargo. An automated warehouse management system keeps track of all requests, invoices, CMRs (container movement requests), and other pertinent papers as well as the statuses and histories of the movement of cargo lots through the port. Under overall layout of the WMS system, all data of the warehouse goods into the library, delivery of cargo from storage, loading, inventory, goods location adjustment, the site location commodity query, etc. can be obtained in large quantities and transmitted real-time and two-way.⁷⁵ For instance, up in Scotland, the Grangemouth port, Scotland's largest container port located midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh has been using WMS for efficient cargo management.

IoT, sensors, RFID, QR code and wireless communication technology

These technologies are now currently used in many dry or inland ports and they offer real-time tracking and tracing in ports, automatic identification of units at gates, and consignment security. By delivering alerts for risky situations and the safety of perishable goods, they ensure cargo security.⁷⁶ They also use real-time data to optimize mode selection. These technologies are used to streamline the port calling process by giving stakeholders access to real-time information from trucks to track shipping process efficiently. Also, driver identification method can be used in

⁷⁴ Osama Rizvi, Automation of Ports - Global Supply Chains, available at <https://www.datasciencecentral.com/automation-of-ports-global-supply-chains/>

⁷⁵ Dong, Xisong & Xiong, Gang & Yuantao, Li & Xiujiang, Guo & Yisheng, Lv. (2013). Intelligent ports based on Internet of Things. Proceedings of 2013 IEEE International Conference on Service Operations and Logistics, and Informatics, SOLI 2013. 292-296. 10.1109/SOLI.2013.6611428.

⁷⁶ Digitalization and Automation in Intermodal Freight Transport and Their Potential Application for Low-Income Countries- Helen et al (2022), Future Transportation Journal

combination, for instance, using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and Barcode QR cards that the driver swipes for obtaining the access permission to the terminal area.

Web-based platforms, AI, cloud computing, and big data

These technologies are currently used in ports to broadcast schedules and give stakeholders a clear presentation of the necessary data and processes. They facilitate quick and reliable decision-support systems, enabling the best chain when choosing a shipping service, and offer sight of the products in transit. Additionally, they offer a consolidated and quick method for booking trucks or cargo as well as decision making convenience for logistics providers.

Electronic data-sharing tools

These technologies are apparent in many inland ports because these provide easy and quick port administration in port calling, customs declaration, clearance notification, Port-EDI for a one-stop service (single window) facilities. These technologies also help exchange booking and boarding instructions between consignee and freight forwarders. For instance, Thanaleng dry port or land port in LAO PD using one stop service center for facilitating trade processes.

Automated/ Intelligent Warehouse Management System

By the means of RFID technology, data acquisition and processing can be fast, accurate, achieved, and warehouse business processes can be optimized. Then, the customs supervision warehouse goods out of warehouses are intelligent real-time monitored, to improve the speed and efficiency of supervision customs clearance, and to reduce the cost of warehousing. In addition, the system computer is interacted with 3D virtual reality technology, to real-time, dynamically display warehouse, and support immersion-style roaming goods locating hidden features to facilitate authority to understand the situation of the goods in a warehouse, and greatly improve work efficiency, reduce operating costs.⁷⁷

Surveillance technology

Surveillance technologies are installed in every land port and from CCTV to cargo scanner, and thermal imagers and sonar type can ensure the safety of cargo under port process and also identifies plate numbers of trucks entering port. They Ensure cargo safety throughout the chain and chain control security of cargo and drivers in inland transport.

Terminal Operating Systems (TOS)

Terminal operating systems manage the movement of containers at cargo terminals. Authority of cargo terminals use TOS software to monitor a range of activities across an entire port or inland terminal and maximize efficiency when loading and unloading cargos. These systems help terminal authority coordinate complex daily logistics involving ships, trains, trucks, cranes, various types of cargo, and port workers. Cargo terminal professionals use a TOS to track the movements of cargo containers, optimize space allocation in the yard, and make decisions based on real-

⁷⁷ Intelligent Ports Based on Internet of Things- Dong Xisong (2013)

time information about terminal operations. Terminal operating software helps streamline all the load-unload, yard, and gate operations in the port.

The most apparent technologies in the land ports around the world can be summarized in the table below:

Table 39: Technologies used in land ports

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internet of Things (IoT) ▪ Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) ▪ Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID) ▪ Terminal Operating System (TOS) ▪ Integrated Check Posts (ICP) ▪ Land Port Management System (LPMS) ▪ Multi-agent systems (MAS) ▪ Xray Cargo scanner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AI and cloud computing ▪ Sensors and Big data management ▪ Electronic data-sharing tools ▪ Block-chain technologies ▪ Enterprise Management System (EMS) ▪ Automated weighing, billing, payment and monitoring systems. ▪ Automated/ Intelligent warehouse monitoring system.
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In case of land ports of Bangladesh, based on the KII responses, the technology usage is illustrated in the table below:

Table 40: Technologies used in land ports of Bangladesh

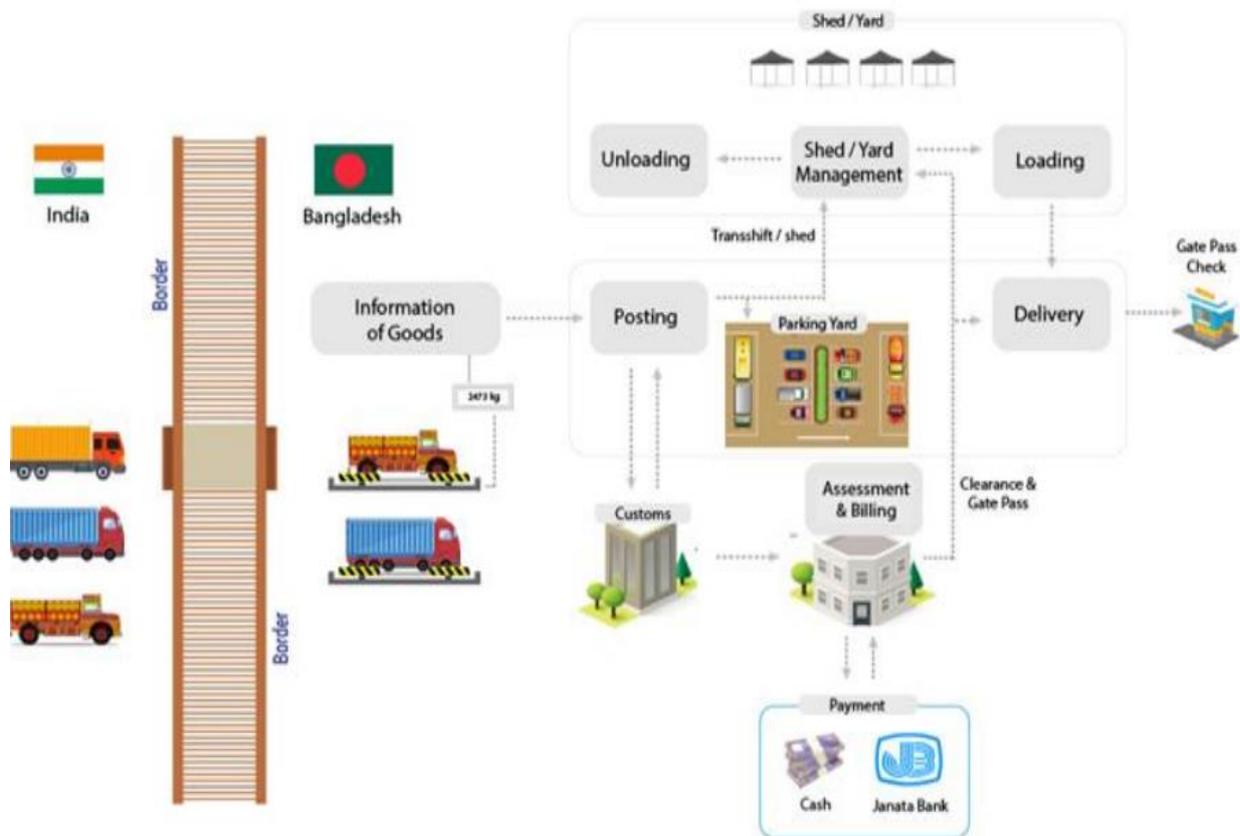
SL	Services	Technology used
1.	Loading/unloading of goods	Manually, Forklift Crane
2.	Product weighing	Semi digital and digital Weighing Machine
3.	Customs Clearance	ASYCUDA, Manually
4.	Collection of customs duties by the bank	E-payment
5.	Traffic management	Manually
6.	Determination of port charges	Manually, Semi Digital system
7.	Product storage	Cold storage, Warehouse
8.	Storage of perishable goods	Cold storage and transshipment yard
9.	SPS/ Quarantine activities	Lab Test
10.	Security and Safety	BGB, Ansar, CCTV Monitoring system, Immigration Police, Dog squad

Source: KII by BFTI

In terms of technology, Bangladesh is lacking a lot of updated systems compared to the globally best land ports. For instance, the application of integrated LPMS or RFID scanning is still missing. Also, automated warehouse systems, X-ray cargo scanning, and terminal operating systems types technology are yet to be implemented which can substantially improve the operational efficiency of land ports.

BLPA has launched an e-port management system in land ports of Bangladesh to automate the ports and their procedures. So far, the system has been proposed to be installed at 12 land ports out of 24 in the country which are under the supervision of Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA). This system can render port services online and also ensure automation of billing, posting of goods, issuance of gate pass of BLPA, online delivery, online monitoring and report, online payment system and others' information about Indian truck drivers and clearing and forwarding agents.⁷⁸ In order to bring mobility in import and export trade at the land port and to ensure transparency and accountability, the pilot program of e-Port Management System with the technical/consultant support of Aspire to Innovate (A2I) at Burimari Land Port under the e-services has been initiated. The 'e-Port Management System' has been set up by the Bangladesh Computer Council for testing and hosting at the National Data Center. This will ensure 100 percent security of information. The service is providing 16 people-friendly services at Burimari land port and will serve about 65,000-70,000 people a year. The E-Port system is represented visually in the following:

Figure 24: Proposed E-port diagram



Source: BLPA

⁷⁸ BLPA Annual Report 2021-22

At present E-port management is apparent in Benapole land port where warehouse management to shading facilities and different port processes have been eased with digitalized systems. The e-port management system has been initiated preliminary in Burimari and Tamabil land, the project is also being pilot tested in Bhomra land port.

Moreover, following automation initiatives taken by the BLPA are worth mentioning:

- The Bangladesh Land Port Authority's headquarters currently host the live server where the e-filing procedure is carried out. Benapole, Bhomra, Burimari, and Tamabil land ports will gradually begin e-filing operations.
- After the pilot program of the e-Port Management System with the technical assistance of Aspire to Innovate (A2I) at the Burimari, the live program has been launched in the Burimari Land Port where activities are being carried out digitally to facilitate services and e-services in order to bring dynamism to import and export processes at the land port and to ensure transparency and accountability. Though this system, the existing services of land ports and citizen services will be completed through e-services. As a result, port authorities, C&F agents, importers and exporters will benefit and service users will reduce their TCV (time-cost-visit) and increase import-export at land ports.
- Under the Annual E-Governance and Innovation Action Plan for the financial year 2021-2022, Indian cargo vehicle entry data and product weight data processing at Sonahat land port has been automated on a small scale.
- A program titled Swisscontact Digitalization of the Border procedures at Bhomra Land Port has been taken up with the funding of Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF).
- With the help of ADB (Asian Development Bank) a project is undertaken that aims to implement full automation at Tamabil and Akhaura land ports which was approved via The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on 01/06/2022.
- "Improvement of security System for Benapole Land Port" program is ongoing with the financing of the World Bank.

Chapter 6: Findings from Survey, KII, FGD and Public Consultation

The Study conducted a survey, and FGD and some KIIs as well as one public consultation to find more insights on compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters. The insights gathered from these approaches are presented in the following section.

6.1 Survey insights

A total of 201 participants from Benapole land port, Bhomra Land Port, Shona Masjid Land port, Akhaura land port and Banglabandha land port were surveyed for the study. Participants or respondent's category is presented in the table below:

Table 41: Sample distribution (Respondent's Category)

Respondent's Category	Freq.	%
C&F agent	45	22%
Importer - Exporter	42	21%
Bangladesh Land Port Authority	14	7%
Customs	15	7%
Operator	2	1%
Certification and regulatory authority	12	6%
Bank	11	5%
Transport and logistics companies	18	9%
Driver	15	7%
Port workers	16	8%
Immigration	6	3%
BGB	5	2%
Total	201	100%

Respondents were selected from different sectors where C&F agents account for 22% of the respondents and 21% of the respondents were importer-exporters. The survey also included respondents from transport and logistics companies (9%), Customs (7%), Bangladesh Land Port Authority (7%), port workers (8%), Certification and Regulatory Authority (6%). Banks official, drivers, operators, immigration officials, respondents from BGB also participated in the survey.

Findings

Respondents were asked to mark the Efficiency level of 8 categories of service providers (Port authorities, Operator, Customs, Bank, Workers, Standard Testing Authority, Transportation, BGB) for assessing their views on land port efficiency in trade facilitation and inter-port management. A fair number of respondents (39%) expressed satisfaction with port authorities' services while a majority (43%) of the respondents evaluated their services as average. 38% and 32% of the respondents viewed the services of customs and banks as satisfactory. Standard testing authority, transportation and BGB services were found satisfactory by 26%, 24% and 38% of respondents respectively. Most of the respondents evaluated services of transportation agencies, standard testing authority port workers as average.

Table 42: Port users' views on land port efficiency in trade facilitation and inter-port management (Efficiency of relevant service providers)

Port users' views on land port efficiency in trade facilitation and inter-port management	Extraordinary	Satisfactory	Average	Weak	Very Weak
Port authorities	3%	39%	43%	13%	2%
Operator	0%	14%	47%	38%	0%
Customs	0%	38%	30%	18%	14%
Bank	0%	32%	33%	23%	11%
Workers	0%	28%	37%	35%	0%
Standard Testing Authority	0%	26%	32%	32%	10%
Transportation	0%	24%	43%	33%	0%
BGB	0%	38%	34%	21%	7%

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of port services in case of imports and some import pertinent aspects were presented to them to express their perspectives.

A significant portion of respondents (42%) thought that the process of cargo truck arriving in the port of Bangladesh from the port of India/Nepal/Bhutan is satisfactory. A majority (61%) thought the quality of the existing presentation of import-related documents process was average. The weighting process was found average by 50% of the respondents while the truck parking system was evaluated as weak by most (43%) of the respondents.

A substantial portion of respondents (43%) expressed satisfaction with the discharge of imported goods from the customs area. The departure of empty trucks and Discharge of goods imported from the customs area was found satisfactory by 47% and 43% of the respondents. 39% of the survey participants denoted Risk Management - Food, Animal and Plant Quarantine systems as satisfactory and 49% of them found the process of arrival of Bangladeshi trucks to carry imported goods satisfactory. Details responses are presented in the table following:

Table 43: Quality of land port services in case of import

Quality of land port services in the case of import	Extraordinary	Satisfactory	Average	Weak	Very Weak
The process of cargo truck arriving in the port of Bangladesh from the port of India / Nepal / Bhutan	0%	42%	36%	17%	5%
Presentation of import related documents	0%	39%	61%	0%	0%
The weighing process is complete	0%	40%	50%	9%	1%
Truck parking	0%	35%	10%	43%	12%
Unloading goods from the truck	0%	40%	28%	28%	4%
Departure of empty truck	0%	47%	29%	19%	5%
Discharge of goods imported from customs area	1%	43%	54%	2%	0%
Risk Management - Food, Animal and Plant Quarantine	1%	39%	45%	12%	3%
The process of arrival of Bangladeshi trucks to carry imported goods	0%	49%	45%	6%	0%

Survey respondents were presented with 8 criteria to provide their ratings in order to assess the quality of land port services in the case of export. 61% and 38% respondents marked the process of delivery of export goods to the port and Product weighing process as satisfactory. Discharge of goods for export from custom areas was found satisfactory by 65% of the respondents. 43% respondents found Risk management system as satisfactory while a large portion (64%) denoted the system of submission of export documents to the customs authorities as satisfactory. Most of the respondents (63%) are satisfied with the movement of freight trucks from the port of Bangladesh to the port of India and the car pass system. However, only 33% respondents marked the departure of Bangladeshi trucks after unloading export goods at India/Nepal/Bhutan ports as satisfactory while 43% of the respondent evaluated storage facilities for Bangladeshi products in India/Nepal/Bhutan as weak and very weak. Detailed response numbers are illustrated in the following table.

Table 44: Quality of land port services in case of export

Quality of land port services in the case of export	Extraordinary	Satisfactory	Average	Weak	Very Weak
The process of delivery of export goods to the port	4%	61%	33%	2%	0%
Product weighing process	2%	38%	52%	6%	2%
Discharge of goods for export from custom areas	1%	65%	34%	0%	0%
Risk management	2%	43%	46%	5%	4%
Submission of export documents to the customs authorities	3%	64%	33%	0%	0%

Quality of land port services in the case of export	Extraordinary	Satisfactory	Average	Weak	Very Weak
The truck of goods goes from the port of Bangladesh to the port of India and the car pass system	1%	63%	29%	7%	0%
Departure of Bangladeshi trucks unloading export goods at India / Nepal / Bhutan ports	2%	33%	43%	14%	9%
Storage facilities for Bangladeshi products in India / Nepal / Bhutan	2%	18%	37%	22%	21%

In response to the evaluation of other land port services like the process of getting passengers, passenger arrival and Confiscated/ Abandoned Product Management, a majority (53%) of the respondents was satisfied with the process of getting passengers, and a significant number of respondents (60%) also find the process of passenger arrival satisfactory. However, in case of Confiscated/Abandoned Product Management, 46% respondents expressed satisfaction. Following table represents the elaborated responses of survey participants:

Table 45: Quality of other land port services

Quality of other land port services	Extraordinary	Satisfactory	Average	Weak	Very Weak
The process of getting passengers	0%	53%	39%	6%	2%
The process of passenger arrival	0%	60%	34%	5%	1%
Confiscated / Abandoned Product Management Process	0%	46%	41%	12%	1%

Respondents were asked if there was any coordination system present in the port for coordination between the service providers and the majority (83%) responded affirmatively. The following table shows the details of the responses:

Table 46: Coordination system in the port for coordination between the service providers

Coordination system in the port for coordination between the service providers	Freq.	%
Yes	173	86%
No	28	14%
Total	201	100%

Of the respondents who responded affirmatively, a substantial portion (39%) evaluated the coordination system as satisfactory. 39% of them believe the system is average and 28% of the respondent evaluated the coordination system as weak.

Table 47: Assessment about the current coordination system

Assessment about the current Coordination system	Freq.	%
Extraordinary	0	0%
Satisfactory	67	39%
Average	41	24%
Weak	49	28%
Very Weak	16	9%
No Comment	0	0%
Total	173	100%

When participants were asked whether the quality of service will improve if one-stop service is introduced in the land port, the majority (91%) of the participants responded positively. Table below shows the responses in detail:

Table 48: Perception of service quality improvement if one-stop service is introduced in the land port

Perception of service quality improvement if one-stop service is introduced in the land port	Freq.	%
Yes	182	91%
No	5	2%
No Comment	14	7%
Total	201	100%

The survey respondents valued Infrastructure development, port efficiency enhancement, Increasing the quality of logistics and transportation services, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), Automation, and reinforced transportation safety for making Bangladesh's land port more efficient. Table below shows their top picked options:

Table 49: Necessary things to be done for making Bangladesh's land port more efficient

Sl.	Necessary things to be done for making Bangladesh's land port more efficient	Responses
1	Infrastructure development	196
2	Increase port efficiency	177
3	Increasing the quality of logistics and transportation services	131
4	SOP	130
5	Automation	108
6	Strengthen safety in transportation	107
7	Customs process development	78
8	Development of multimodal transport system	76
9	Others	76
10	Reduce the number of required documents	49

6.2 Insights from KIIs, FGD and Public Consultation

Stakeholders of the land ports provided valuable insights into different areas of port operation, management, and services. The detailed findings of the KIIs, FGD and PC is available at **Appendix-8**. Summary of their inputs, expressions, and opinions are presented in different thematic areas in the following section:

Challenges in terms of documentation, time and cost involved in exporting and importing through land ports:

<p>Challenges in Document collection and preparation</p> <p>The stakeholders revealed that documentation process in the land ports is lengthy and time consuming. Lack of automation system in documentation process also hinders paperless trade. Moreover, poor internet and networking system create digital documentation system more cumbersome</p>
<p>Time efficiency challenges</p> <p>Time requirement in the export imports increases due to shortages of the proper transportation system in the port area, paucity of space in the port area, lack of inter-agency, inter-border and intra-agency coordination.</p>
<p>Trade cost challenges</p> <p>Due to syndicate problems in the border region, expenditure frequently increases and prolonged documentation, export-import procedures also increase the total cost of trades.</p>

Weaknesses of institutions involved in the management of land ports:

Institutions/Agencies	Weakness/issues
Bangladesh Land Port Authority/ Port Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stakeholders expressed that land ports lack sufficient infrastructure and space, for example there are not enough warehouse, shed and weighing scale facilities, trollies, cranes and forklifts and existing ones do not function well, also lighting, electricity, internet services and security is not up to the mark in the land ports. Based on the opinion of the stakeholders, some activities managed by the land port authority are inefficient. Like land ports cannot maintain 24/7 trade functionalities because of human resource shortages, existing software for recording entry-

Institutions/Agencies	Weakness/issues
	<p>exit vehicle tracking systems is problematic, duty-free products stay for a long-time creating congestion for other shipments and so on.</p>
Customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders revealed that Customs rules and regulations are not updated and shared with port users over time. • In the Land ports, software and automated systems are frequently not recognized or accepted by customs. For instance, Customs does not utilize scanners at land ports. • Bill of entry submission takes much time in customs. This paper has to be printed which increases the time and documentation requirements in trade. • Stakeholders expressed that customs automation is not integrated with other agencies like bank, BLPA, testing and certification agencies, hence, information sharing is not sufficient with other agencies.
C&F Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C&F agents lack knowledge on custom rules and regulations and they do not receive proper training. Because of knowledge insufficiency Sometimes, they have to pay a 200% fine for mis-declaring the product HS code. Also, C&F agents frequently make inaccurate declarations, which makes it difficult for BSTI to deliver testing results on time.
Transport and Logistics Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and logistics service providers often face contentious situation due to lack of coordination between C&F agent and labor unions • Insufficient truck terminal facilities inside the port hinders their service level. • Syndicate problem within the transportation service providers creates higher trade cost for the importer-exporters
Certification and Quality Control Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing authorities or agencies like BSTI, Plant quarantine, or atomic energy commission lack sufficient manpower and logistic support management to send the sample for testing and sample for testing is usually carried or sent to the Dhaka labs by the client • Some consignments are delayed in port release due to the BSTI laboratory testing time requirements.

Institutions/Agencies	Weakness/issues
	<p>Like, perishable goods are often eye-inspected which takes 10 minutes to 1 hour. In case of import, seeds that require germination take 3 to a maximum of 7 days for completing the testing facilities. These time requirements increase the overall time of the trade.</p>
Immigration	<p>Port stakeholders' opinions on the weaknesses or issues of immigration are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration lacks sufficient manpower • The operating hours of the immigration service are not sufficient • Efforts to build awareness on paying the Travel tax, port tax, etc. online are scant. • Immigration lacks a proper queue management system. • Passenger facilities are not sufficient in the land ports.
BGB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGB checking in some land ports are repetitive • BGB checks a passenger thrice now which creates inconvenience for passengers. • Car pass entry time by the BGB and passenger checking system are much time consuming

Way forwards suggested by the port stakeholders

For improving the services of port agencies as well as trade procedures, coordination and other functionalities, stakeholders provided their opinions on myriad aspects. The summary of these findings is presented in the following table:

Topic/Area	Suggested Initiatives
BLPA/Port operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port space and shaded area, warehouse and cold storage facilities need to be enhanced. • Skilled manpower is needed in port operational sectors. Training programs are required for upskilling port employees. • Infrastructures like hospital, fire station needs to be inside or nearby port premises. • Number of vehicles scanners, trollies, cranes, forklifts, should be increased and seamless electricity and internet should be ensured. • Ensuring safety including adequate installation of CCTV cameras and lights.

Topic/Area	Suggested Initiatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper parking facilities should be developed in the land port, an 8-lane road can be effective in reducing traffic congestion.
Customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs rules and regulations need to be updated and shared with port users over time. • Customs and land port authorities can jointly organize knowledge-sharing workshops to educate port users about the rules and regulations of land ports and customs. • Bill of entry, car pass etc. other documents need to be fully automated. • Customs should increase coordination and data sharing with other port agencies.
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A token system needs to be implemented for long passenger queue management. • Rest houses, accommodation and other facilities should be introduced required for passengers. • The number of workforces needs to be increased in immigration.
BGB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive and time consuming BGB checking should be addressed to reduce the hassle of the port users.
Quarantine and Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For reducing testing lag, samples can be sent to Dhaka via an express mail transfer service, where testing will be done and reports uploaded on the website to save time, money, and boost efficiency. • Major land ports ought to have every BSTI testing facility possible. Other Land ports might start a Booth system to gather samples and deliver them to neighboring labs for analysis. • Testing facilities may have emergency and regular testing systems so that products can be tested urgently to shorten trade times.
One stop service and automation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the introduction of one-stop service center, ICT and infrastructural development are needed. • Operating a one-stop service center requires skilled personnel. • All land ports should be equipped with contemporary machinery such as cranes, unified scale systems, and scanners. • The automation process should be standard and coordinated; ideally, all agencies involved with land ports would use a single uniform program, or at the very least, the software used by various agencies would be

Topic/Area	Suggested Initiatives
	interchangeable or able to access data from other software.
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency coordination and intra-agency coordination both are required for improving the land ports of Bangladesh. • A permanent or stable method of coordination system between the existing agencies may be created. • Interagency coordination like coordination between land port authority, BSTI, Plant Quarantine and customs need to be improved. All relevant agencies including government and private should work in a coordinated way. • Cross border coordination like Coordination between Bangladesh and India should be improved. • It should be assured that coordination exists among the field-level service professionals rather than just at the top or head office level.
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure or service development activities for land ports should be prioritized based on their functionality in terms of export-import. • Since road transportation requires more time and money inland waterways may be used to link to the land port commerce logistics system. The synchronization with inland waterways can speed up and reduce the cost of trade. • For Bangladesh, smart borders, integrated border points, and data exchange best practices can be useful. For instance, Bangladesh's NBR could get data from the Indian side customs.

Chapter 7: Requirements of Legislative, Administrative and Policy Reforms Identified

7.1 Legislation, administrative procedures and policies that govern the Land Port Management

Land ports in Bangladesh are generally governed by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority and its relevant acts. The BLPA 2001 act contains the features of legislative, administrative and other policies that set the outline for governing managing the land ports. The Bangladesh Land Ports Authority Act, 2001 (Act No. XX of 2011)'s major goal is to create the Bangladesh Land Ports Authority, which will oversee all land port operations, management, development, expansion, maintenance, and related activities. With only 23 sections, the Act is condensed and simplified. The following are the key elements of the Act:

- Bangladesh Land Ports Authority Act, 2001 was published on April 16, 2001, after being approved by the President and getting passed by the National Parliament.
- The Act gave the government the authority to designate any land customs station as the land port anywhere in the nation.
- It also provided the government the authority to create a statutory organization called the Bangladesh Land Ports Authority, which will be in charge of overseeing facilities for the cross-border movement of people and goods at certain locations along the international land boundary.
- The Authority will consist of a chairperson, three full-time government representatives, three part-time representatives, one of whom will be an officer from the Internal Resources Division (IRD), and one private individual who will represent business and industry.
- The Authority may, among other things: (a) create policies for the operation, management, development, expansion, and maintenance of land ports; (b) hire private operators to receive, store, and deliver goods from land ports; (c) create a schedule of taxes, tolls, rates, and fees that can be collected from land port users with the government's prior approval.
- Any land required by the Authority shall be assumed to be required for a public purpose and shall be acquired in accordance with the provisions of the applicable law. The Authority shall have the power to enter into any contract necessary to carry out the purposes of the Act.
- The Act mandates that the government receive the Authority's program of activity and financial estimates. Additionally, it mandates that the Authority must maintain accounts, which must be audited annually.
- The Authority is permitted to impose the fees and rent specified by rules. It must set up its own finances to which all receipts must be credited.

Under the provisions of Section 10 of the BLPA Act, tariffs are fixed by the BLPA for the land ports. For Benapole Land Port and all other Land Ports, respectively, two orders are issued, each carrying a tariff schedule. Both in terms of composition and prices, the tariff schedules for the two categories varied significantly. The schedule has four sections for Benapole Land Port:

- Warehouse and Open Yard Space Charges;
- Handling Charges;
- Passenger Facilities Charges; and
- Other Charges.

Storage fees are assessed differently depending on the type of cargo, including warehouse and open yard space expenses. Loading, unloading, and stacking/restacking fees for manual work and equipment utilization are all included in handling charges. Passengers using the land port are subject to the passenger facilities charge, which includes the entry fee, waiting fee, service fee, etc. Other fees include the entry and halting cost for cars, carpenter fees, weighment fees, document fees, equipment and material hiring fees, etc. The tariff schedule for all other land ports includes several fees and charges like:

Table 50: Charges and fees in land ports

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custom Charges and fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Document processing fee (for automated Customs assessment) ➤ PSI services charge (in case of goods imported under Pre-shipment Inspection System) ➤ Merchant overtime charge (in case of overtime duties by Customs officials) ➤ Container scanning charge ➤ Transshipment fees ➤ Customs fee on transshipment under Inland Waterways Protocol between India and Bangladesh ➤ Fees for supplying copy of document ➤ Fees for supplying Customs information ➤ Fees for amendment of documents ➤ Fees for amendment of errors • Fees by Land Port Authority • Fees and Charges by BSTI • Fees and Charges by Plant Quarantine Wing • Fees and Charges by Atomic Energy Commission • Fees and Charges by CCI&E

Due to the existence of riverine routes in some of the land ports, certain additional fees are added for other ports. A noteworthy difference between Benapole and the other land ports is the tariff rate is a bit low in other ports.

The BLPA Act's Section 21 allows the government to issue regulations in order to carry out the Act's goals, while Section 22 gives the BLPA Board authority to create regulations. According to the Act's provisions, rules or regulations may be made regarding the following:

- Procedures of the Board meeting [Section 7(1)];
- Procedures and terms of appointment of private operators [Section 99(1)];
- Procedures for recruitment and terms of service of officers and employees [Section 12(1)];
- Fund management of the Authority [Section 14(2)];
- Maintenance of accounts and preparation of annual financial statement [Section 17(1)];

Furthermore, rules or regulations on additional topics related to the Act's goals may be developed. The Bangladesh Land Port Authority Employee Service Regulation, 2004, is the only regulation that the BLPA has released thus far

7.2 Recommendations on reform requirements of legislative, administrative and policy

Some proposed reformed **legislative** recommendations are:

- By integrating the BLPA's specialized duties into the nation's overall trade promotion and management process, the Bangladesh Land Port Authority Act 2001 may specify the precise role of the BLPA.
- The Board may also include representatives from trade associations, port users' associations, and worker's associations.
- By allowing women to participate in the management of the BLPA, the Board may become more gender-sensitive. It may specify a minimum percentage of women nominees for the Board, either overall or by category.
- Women business leaders from the nation can also be included in the Board as members.

In case of **administrative** decision-making process, following reform suggestions can be implemented:

- A National Committee may be established with the participation of the respective ministries/divisions, trade groups, think-tank organizations, intelligentsia, etc. to allow better coordination at the policy level.
- Creating an eco-system for the supply chain that is both ecologically friendly and technically sound at the land ports.
- Creating regional offices with sufficient staff and technical resources for relevant government agencies, such as the Export Promotion Bureau, the

Department of Agricultural Extension, the Department of Livestock Services, and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution.

- Development and maintenance of the essential infrastructure, such as office buildings, warehouse facilities, transportation networks, etc.
- For ensuring the future development of the land ports, a supportive financial structure, including a digital payment system, can be implemented.
- Land ports' banking, insurance, lodging, dining, and bathroom services should be upgraded.
- For facilitating movement within restricted areas whenever necessary, issuing an immigration pass to importers and exporters who routinely engage in international trade through a land port can be considered.

Policy level actions require following reform actions:

- Ensuring that every land port is equipped with an integrated and thorough response that involves all stakeholders in order to successfully meet the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Incorporating a corporate land port management approach with a focus on stakeholders' and port users' value creation.
- Assessing roles, functions of different parties and processes of the port for identifying non-essential procedures, and then simplifying other processes for the facilitation of port users.
- Before declaring any LCS as a land port, full feasibility analysis should be conducted.
- Each of the land ports that have already been declared can have its long-term sustainability and financial viability properly reviewed, and the right decisions can be made then.
- Training and capacity building initiatives for government employees and other stakeholders in land ports. NBR should take special measures to increase the capacity of customs officials.
- A national master plan can be developed including long-term objectives, activities, and targets for the development, management, and modernization of land ports.
- Increase the private sector's involvement in the creation of policies and the day-to-day operation of land ports.
- For managing human resources in efficiently, capacity and needs assessment should be done, a capacity-development plan should be created, and a rigorous capacity-development strategy need to be implemented.
- Providing lucrative incentive package to the land ports' technical and non-technical workers for motivation and increased work efficiency.

- Reviewing and improving importer and consumer-friendly traffic policy.

Also, for reforming the BLPA's act for port management, following requirements should be considered:

- By including representatives from important ministries including Finance, Industry, Home, Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, Road Transport, and National Board of Revenue, the Board's constitution may be altered. A representative from a trade organization, a port user organization, or a worker's association may also be present.
- To make the law more understandable, the Act's provisions relating to Board member disqualifications may be changed.
- To ensure effective coordination in the operation of various agencies in the land ports, a working group may be established locally in each land port with involvement from all parties, including the local administration.
- The Act might emphasize the placement of an Authorized Officer with magistracy authority at each land port to monitor the state of law and order there.

Chapter 8: Adjustments or Modifications Required for Making the Bangladesh Land Port Management Efficient, Effective and Harmonized for Trade Facilitation

A set of suggestions are made for the authorities' consideration to make the Bangladesh Land Port Management efficient, effective and harmonized for trade facilitation based on the information gleaned from various sources and methods are prescribed below:

8.1 Recommendations on SOP

The study recommends following SOP for the land port trade management:

Import Process

a. Zero-point entry and car pass procedure

Cargo truck loaded with goods will arrive at the border and car pass provided by the Indian customs authority will be submitted to the authority where a single entry of car pass will make it available to customs and land port authority. C&F agent will submit car pass and other relevant documents to customs, and verifying them, customs will either accept or return car pass to the C&F agent for correction. After accepting the car pass, customs will make an entry in its ledger and allow the truck to head towards the land port.

b. Entry into the port authority area

Entering the land port, the truck will be weighted at the weighbridge and after weighting, the truck will move towards the land port yard. C&F agent will arrange for the unloading of the truck, goods will be either unloaded into another truck or to the warehouse. After unloading the empty truck will be weighed again so that customs can get the net weight information of imported goods.

c. Bill of entry/ custom declaration

At this stage, C&F agent will fill up the bill of entry online and submit it with other relevant documents to the customs. If the bill of entry is not correct, customs will return it to the C&F agent for correction. If BOE and every other document check out, customs will return other documents and BOE to the C&F agent and after that examination and assessment process will commence.

d. Simultaneous examination, assessment and testing/ certification

C&F agent will submit files to the customs revenue officer for examination and assessment. At the same time, C&F agent will send a sample to the testing agencies for certification (if required). Customs will start physical examination of the consignment and assess duties of the consignment. Examination can use non-intrusive methods (if possible) and reports will be sent online real-time for assessment. Testing/certification processes will go on parallelly and when done, C&F agent will receive an assessment notice and respective test certificates. Testing authorities will submit their certification report to the C&F agent and customs via online systems.

e. payment of duty and taxes/ custom release

C&F agent will pay the duties based on the assessment notice through e-payment system. The payment slip will be submitted to customs and after verifying it, customs will issue a release order.

f. port authority release, final exit of import goods

C&F agent will submit the custom release order and other import files to the port authority and based on that port authority will calculate port charge to be paid by the C&F agents. C&F agent will pay this charge through e-payment system and provide prove of payment. After verifying it, port authority will provide gate pass and allow the loaded truck to exit the port premise. At the final gate, the time and date of departure will be recorded and truck will leave the port with imported goods.

Export Process

a. Submission of bill of export/ custom declaration

Export consignment arriving at the land port will enter the and port yard and C&F agent will fill up the bill of export online and submit it with other relevant documents to the customs. If the bill of entry is not correct, customs will return it to the C&F agent for correction. If BOE and every other document checks out, customs will return other documents and BOE to the C&F agent and after that examination and assessment process will commence.

b. Examination, Assessment and testing/ certification

C&F agent will submit files to the customs revenue officer for examination and assessment. At the same time, C&F agent will send a sample to the testing agencies for certification (if required). Customs will start physical examination of the consignment and assess duties of the consignment. Examination can use non-intrusive methods (if possible) and reports will be sent online real-time for assessment. Testing/certification processes will go on parallelly and when done, C&F agent will receive an assessment notice and respective test certificates. Testing authorities will submit their certification report to the C&F agent and customs via online systems.

c. payment of duty and taxes/ custom release

C&F agent will pay the duties based on the assessment notice though e-payment system. Payment slip will be submitted to customs and verifying it, customs will issue release order.

d. port authority release, final exit of export goods

C&F agent will submit custom release and other import files to the port authority and based on that port authority will calculate port charge to be paid by the C&F agents. C&F agent will pay this charge though e-payment system and provide prove of payment. After verifying it, port authority will provide gate pass and allow loaded truck to exit the port premise. At the final gate, time and date of departure will be recorded and truck will leave the port with export goods.

Miscellaneous Recommendations on SOP

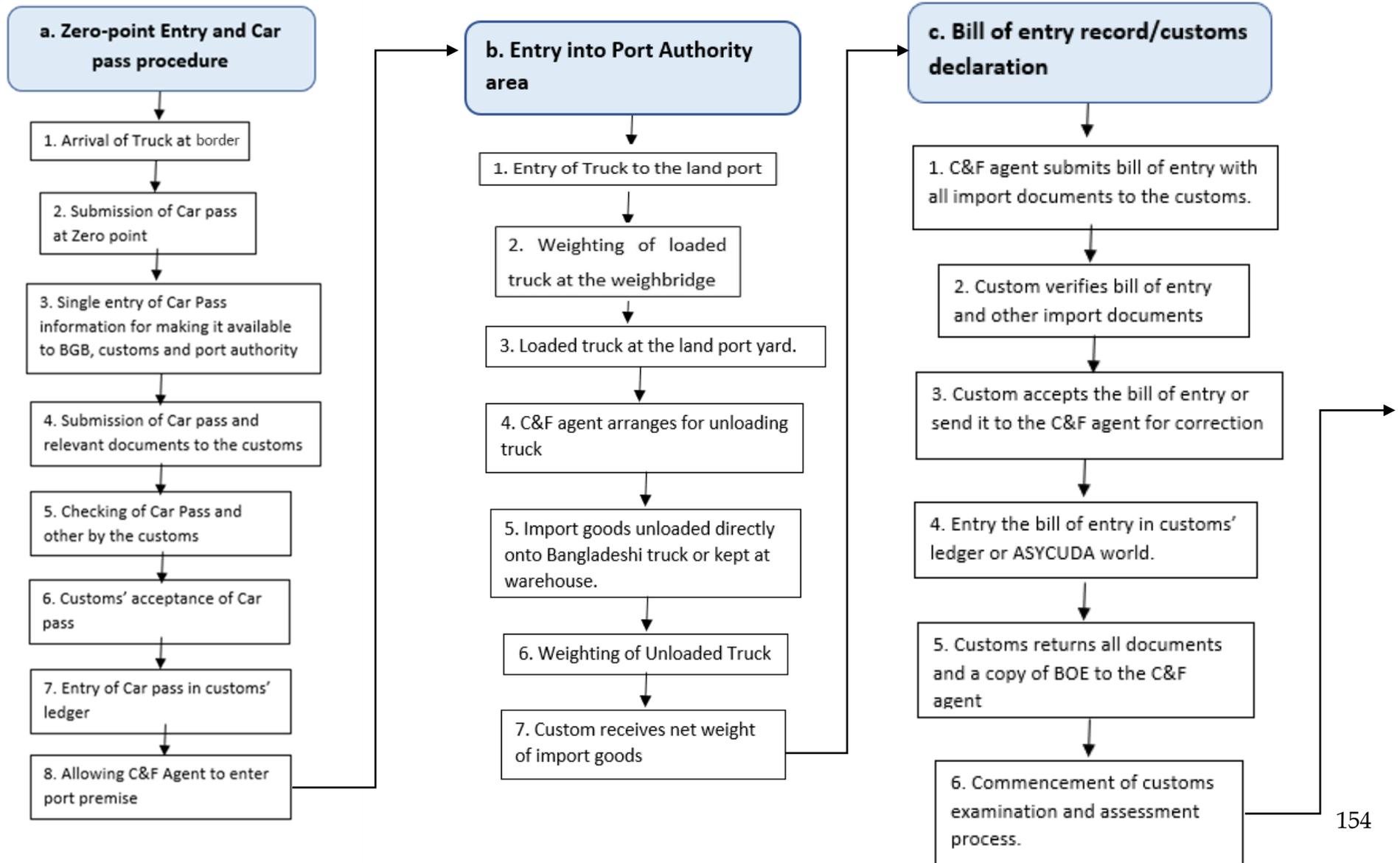
1. Each agency involved in the SOP should set a specific timeline for completing their services which will facilitate monitoring mechanisms and time efficiency in processes.
2. A single-entry system for car passes should be introduced through automation so that one entry will make the car pass available to all relevant agencies (Customs and land port authority) to eliminate the long car pass procedures.
3. Customs should make the “examination” procedure online based, where examination officers will be able to provide examination reports in real-time through the online system after examining a consignment and the assessment officer will receive that information promptly.
4. Plant Quarantine or other testing authorities should be granted access to the IGM (Import General Manifest) so that they can receive the information and share certificates with the customs online.
5. Bill of entry/export submission should be automated instead of manual submission.
6. E-payment system should be introduced to pay the port charges or fees by land port authority.
7. Customs should email the release order to the land port authority for eliminating hard copies of document submission procedures.
8. The joint signature system should be eliminated for issuing gate pass.
9. Container handling facilities should be introduced in the land ports, customs rules should be reformed in this regard and land ports’ container handling capacity needs to be developed.
10. If products are not released by the importers/exporters within 30 days, those goods will be auctioned. Customs rules in this regard should be applied accordingly.
11. NBR’s SRO regarding perishable goods should be imposed properly for handling the perishable goods appropriately.

Treatment for AEO in the SOP

3 tiers of AEO can be implemented for cross border trade facilitation. For instance, AEO-T1 status holder should be eligible for 24/7 cargo clearance, exemption from payment of merchant overtime fee, separate space in custodian’s premises and facility of Direct Port Delivery (DPD) for import and export consignments. Status of AEO-T2 certificate holder will have the facility of self-sealing of export goods without seeking case to case permission from the authority. Status of AEO-T3 will allow that if the applicant has continuously held an AEO-T2 status for two or more years, they will be issued an AEO-T3 Certificate within 30 days of applying. AEO-T3 will be the highest level of accreditation.

The flow charts of the recommended SOP are presented in the following page:

SOP for Import



SOP for Import (contd.)

d. Examination, Assessment and testing/ certification

1. C&F agent submits files to customs revenue officer for examination and assessment
2. C&F agent sends sample to the respecting testing agency for certification
3. Physical examination of the consignment by the customs
4. Duty Assessment of the consignment by the customs
5. C&F agent receives assessment, notice and respective test certificates

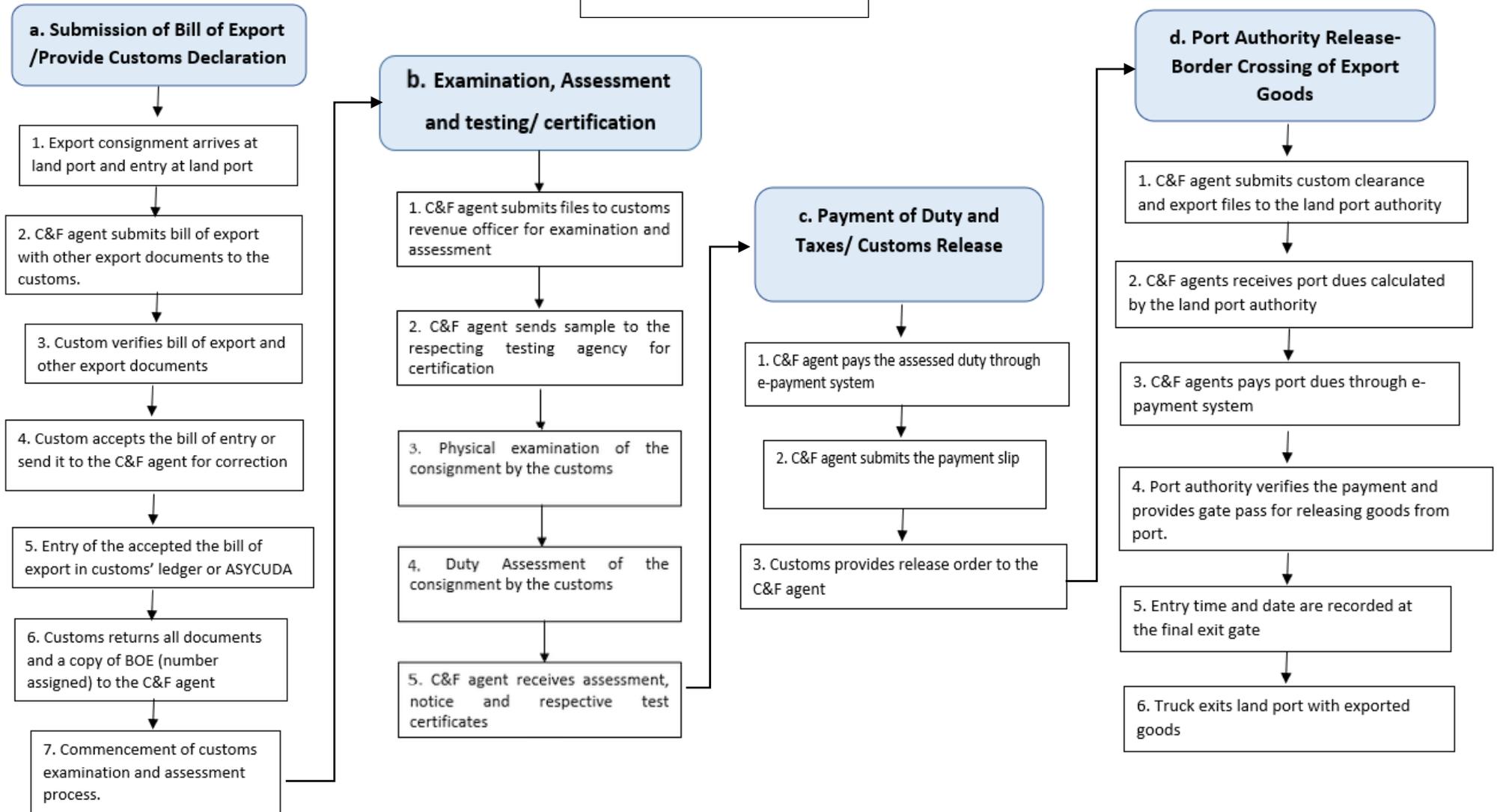
e. Payment of Duty and Taxes- Customs Release

1. C&F agent pays the assessed duty through e-payment system
2. C&F agent submits the payment slip
3. Customs provides release order to the C&F agent

f. Port Authority Release- Final Exit of Import Goods

1. C&F agent submits custom clearance and import files to the land port authority
2. C&F agents receives port dues calculated by the land port authority
3. C&F agents pays port dues through e-payment system
4. Port authority verifies the payment and provide gate pass for releasing goods from port.
5. Entry time and date are recorded at the gate and truck leaves the land port

SOP for Export



8.2 Recommendations on custom procedures

Following recommendations can be followed to streamline customs procedures in the land ports:

1. A joint signature of the land port authority and customs is required for issuing the gate pass. Since customs already provide the clearance before, in this stage, customs' signature can be removed as a redundant action.
2. Customs should set a specific timeline for examination and assessment procedures to reduce trade time.
3. E-port system should be designed with an interface to connect customs (ASYCUDA) for data sharing.
4. Customs laboratories need to be developed in all land ports for making the examination procedure of chemical and relevant products time efficient.
5. A partial shipment system should be allowed reduce congestion in the land ports. If one truck of a convoy of 15 truck is delayed due to mechanical fault or road condition, all the trucks are delayed in BOE submission because all the items are under one consignment. So specific procedure for releasing of the other trucks except the one in delayed should be made.
6. Container handling facilities should be introduced in the land ports, customs rules should be reformed in this regard and land ports' container handling capacity needs to be developed.
7. Customs rules for auctioning products should be enforced properly following a specific timeline.
8. Pre-arrival processing system is available in seaports and airports but not inland ports. Customs SRO should be changed and land ports should be allowed to utilize the pre-arrival processing system.
9. After filling up the bill of entry/export, C&F agents need to print it and use the hard copy. A lot of time is wasted in the bill of the entry submission phase. This process should be automated and made paperless.
10. C&F agent has to carry the hard copy of custom clearance certificate and submit it to the land port authority. In this case, customs can email the release order to the land port authority for eliminating hard documents submission procedures.
11. Documentation procedures in case of file submission to customs need to be phased out by removing redundancies and using automated systems instead of manual form fill-ups and file submissions.
12. When the bank opens an LC it includes checking other documents like HS code, invoice no., IRC (import registration certificate) number, LCA (letter of credit authorization) number, etc. also the LC information becomes available in ASYCUDA. So, Customs should coordinate with Banks and start assessment of goods without demanding all documents which are already referred in the LC.
13. Inspecting LC in case of import and Exp. Form (export permission form) in case of exports can reduce other documentation checking as these two documents are issued by verifying other documents.
14. Car pass is issued by the Customs should be digitalized and integrated so that C&F agents don't need to carry and submit hard copy of paper documents to the land port authority.

15. Digitalized Export permission form (EXP form) submission and acceptance need be ensured instead of hard copies.
16. The usage of ASYCUDA world needs to be fully adapted eliminating manual procedures and BCOM (Bangladesh Custom Office Management) should be used extensively for easing customs procedures in the land ports.
17. Software and automated systems used in the Land ports should be recognized or accepted by customs (e.g., Scanners).
18. Smart border, integrated border points, and data sharing type good practices can be considered, for instance, data from the Indian side can be shared with NBR of Bangladesh for seamless trade.
19. NBR and different trade bodies can work together to develop training programs for port service users. Web portals of different trade bodies can be integrated with NBR and Customs for easing trade and customs procedures.
20. Customs should implement and follow the expedited release and settlement of perishable goods rule 2021 accordingly for ensuring seamless perishable goods trade via land ports.

8.3 Recommendation for the Bangladesh Land port Authority/ Private Operators

For the Bangladesh land port authority and other operators running the BOT-based land ports, the following are the automation, transport facilitation, and infrastructure development suggestions:

8.3.1 Automation

1. An electronic or automated documentation/data-sharing system should be introduced.
2. Automated warehouse or shed management initiatives may be introduced in the land ports. Real-time space monitoring systems and WMS software can be applied in land ports for efficient shade management and congestion reduction.
3. C&F agents have to pay the Port charges or fees in the bank and this system is still manual. E-payment system should be introduced here for faster and easier payment.
4. Agreement should be made with e-payment or mobile financing service providers for paperless and queue less e-payment of terminal fees through mobile financial services.
5. For modernization, automated systems and modern equipment like digital crane, unified scale systems, and scanners should be installed in the land ports.
6. Vehicle registration, and entry-exit vehicle tracking system management software should be upgraded and modern weigh machines should be installed for accurate measurement.
7. QR code-based driver identification, cargo/vehicle scanning, terminal registration can be introduced for faster port procedures.
8. LPMS (Land Port Management System) should be introduced for digital port management.
9. OSS based digital help desk should be developed for better port services.
10. A digitalized traffic management system can be introduced in the land port area streamlining with the internet system.

11. Automated space monitoring systems like Chittagong port can be introduced in the land ports so that how much space is available in warehouses can be known easily.
12. Automation should be uniform and coordinated, it would be better if every agency related to the land ports use one uniform software or at least software used by different agencies will have some sort of interchangeability or to be able to use information available through the other software.
13. Smart ID cards for C&F agents, and for all port management officials should be ensured for clear identification of different officials of different port agencies.
14. As E-Auction system has been introduced now and for clearing warehouses in Land ports, land port authority should utilize this facility by coordinating with customs.
15. Automation should not be vendor-led, rather organizations wise as vendor-led automation involves a third party and creates more complications in usability.
16. Sufficient manpower with technical knowledge is required for running digitalized systems in the land ports.
17. Port fees and charge payments need to be digitalized by introducing paperless e-payment systems for streamlining the port procedures and reducing documentation.

8.3.2 Transport facilitation

18. Rail transportation facilities can be connected with land ports for transport facilitation.
19. Inland waterways can be considered to connect with the land port trade logistics system since cost and time requirement is higher in road transport. A synchronization with inland waterways can make trade faster and less costly.
20. Fitness-less vehicles should not be allowed to carry transport as they often create congestion and traffic problems.
21. More weigh scales should be installed for reducing congestion and weigh scales should be at the entry point instead of inside the port area so that reweighing the same consignment can be avoided.
22. For facilitating transport movement, the port authority needs to improve roads, for instance, a four-lane road construction can be effective.
23. For removing traffic jams and congestion in the port areas, respective agencies should be trained up with proper traffic management knowledge.
24. More shed and truck parking facilities need to be developed inside or outside the port premises for removing congestion problems.
25. Private parking system can be initiated for enhancing space for parking facilities.
26. A separate lane facility for immigration and departure should be introduced for risk-free passenger movement.
27. For integrated border trade management and trade facilitation in cross-border trade, a multimodal transportation system should be implemented.
28. The joint border system must be improved for easier transit through multimodal systems.
29. Extortion and other unethical subscription type issues should be addressed and stopped for smooth transportation facilities.

30. Size and number of truck terminals inside the port area should be increased.

8.3.3 Infrastructure development

31. For providing uninterrupted services, land ports and services of relevant land port agencies should be kept open 24/7.

32. For ensuring efficient operating hours, land ports can engage manpower based on peak and off-peak hours.

33. Parking areas for cargo vehicles should implement a serial-wise separate parking system for import and export vehicles. Demarcation system should be in the parking facilities.

34. Designated parking areas need to be developed. A separate parking area should be for passengers' and tourists' vehicles and buses. Another segregated parking area should be for cargo vehicles. Efforts should be given to acquire more land for building these parking spaces.

35. Number of sheds or shaded areas should be increased in the 5 land ports covered in this study.

36. A container management system with proper equipment should be introduced in major land ports to handle containers.

37. More warehouses should be developed and cold storage facilities should be made available in port areas for perishable goods.

38. Illumination facilities of the ports should be improved.

39. More vehicle scanners should be installed on the port premises.

40. More cranes, forklifts and trollies need to be arranged for ensuring better port services.

41. Internet services in the land port area should be improved, fast and flawless internet connectivity should be ensured for seamless port operations. Free internet service can be introduced for the port users.

42. 24/7 steady electricity is needed in the land ports for effective port services.

43. The number of CCTV cameras should be increased for better monitoring and proper 24/7 surveillance should be ensured.

44. Fire service stations can be relocated inside the port or closer to the port.

45. Hospital facilities within the port terminal or compound should be introduced.

46. With the growing trade, Land ports now should incorporate sufficient facilities for accommodation, food and recreation.

47. A helipad facility should be constructed in the port premise both for government and private sector for emergencies.

48. Pure drinking water services should be ensured for port users, travelers and port officials. Deep well pumps can be installed in port areas for freshwater supply.

49. Bank facilities should be made available inside the port premises.

50. Private sector's participations like private warehouse, as well as private parking systems, can be considered for utilizing port infrastructures.

51. Separate depots should be constructed for handling and storing chemical materials.

8.4 Recommendations on quarantine and testing

For the testing authorities like BSTI and Plant quarantine, following suggestions are prescribed:

1. An Express Mail Transfer Service can be used for sending samples to Dhaka where testing will be done and reports will be uploaded in the website for reducing time and cost and to increase efficiency.
2. Plant Quarantine or other testing authorities should be granted access to the customs database so that they can receive the information and share certificates with the customs online.
3. An emergency testing system can be introduced in this regard. Also, specific time requirements for testing goods can be reduced to 5-7 days from 5-22 days for making testing services faster.
4. There is a specific timeline (maximum 8 days, minimum 72 hours for some) for testing and providing certificates for products and this timeline can be reduced for some products.
5. Sample can be sent to Dhaka for testing through courier companies for faster services.
6. Major land ports should have all possible testing facilities of BSTI. Other Land ports may initiate a Booth system for collecting and sending the samples to nearby testing labs. An assessment study can be taken to assess the requirement and feasibility of establishing testing facilities in the land ports.
7. SPS certificates should be made easier for goods imported-exported through land ports. Online certification facilities need to be initiated.
8. Nearby university labs can be engaged for testing facilities.
9. Testing facilities should include both emergency and regular testing systems so that goods can be tested on an emergency basis to reduce trade time.

8.5 Recommendations on immigration service

As a key stakeholder in land port management, Immigration services can be improved through following recommendation:

1. A token system should be introduced for long queue management. With the token system, passengers will not have to stand in the immigration line rather based serial number of the token and wait time, they can pass this time in other recreational activities.
2. A separate roadway or lane should be constructed for the passengers or travellers. Parking facilities should incorporate a designated section for passenger vehicles where serial-based parking systems should be implemented. One-way movement of vehicles and separate lanes should be ensured for congestion-free vehicle movement.
3. Restrooms, Entertainment sections, and shopping malls can be constructed within the port premise to facilitate a seamless immigration system and better passenger management.
4. Passenger entry charge of 42 taka should be eliminated to reduce the congestion of passengers in the land ports.
5. Checking points or integrated checking points for passengers should be introduced.

6. International passenger terminals should be restricted for unauthorized people.
7. An online passport entry system should be incorporated for smooth transitions.
8. Different passenger terminals for sick and healthy people can be developed.
9. Labors should be allowed inside the port so that they can carry baggage for the sick and old people.
10. Banks or banking facilities should be available at passenger shed for the ease of travel tax facilities.
11. For improving the present immigration system, the number of workforces needs to be increased in the immigration.

8.6 Recommendations for BGB

1. Car pass entry time by the BGB need to be reduced.
2. BGB's cargo/vehicle checking system needs to be time-bound.
3. BGB passenger checking system need to be time efficient.
4. BGB should check a passenger only once.

8.7 Recommendations for C&F agents

1. Continuous training and promotional programs should be initiated and maintained for increasing port users' knowledge of customs rules and regulations including HS code and advance ruling systems. Business association can take initiatives for training programs in this regard.
2. C&F license should be provided after a certain period of time after evaluating necessary criteria. Experienced and knowledgeable person should be in C&F business.

8.8 Recommendations on coordination mechanism and harmonization

1. Following the TFA agreement of the WTO, Bangladesh should work on enhancing cooperation and coordination mechanism through alignment of working days and hours, alignment of procedures and formalities, development and sharing of common facilities among border agencies and, joint controls initiative and establishment of one stop border post control.
2. Following the Singapore's coordinated border management approach, formation of an Immigration & Checkpoints Authority as the single command for checkpoints and border control functions, while establishing Customs as the single contact point for all Customs, revenue, and trade matters may be effective for harmonized border management of Bangladesh. Also, the way Finland's land borders are manned by only two authorities - Customs and the Border Guard can be followed for better coordination mechanism.
3. Interagency coordination can be increased by creating a stable coordination system outlining each institution's specific roles and managerial authorities. Data sharing among the different service providers or agencies need to be enhanced through the internet and digitalized systems.
4. A coordination committee can be formed including all service providers at land port co-chaired by appropriate representative of Customs and BLPA.
5. Copies of documentation required by different agencies need to be reduced by interagency coordination, document sharing can be automated through emails.

Even the Indian side can be included in the automation system through online data exchange for paperless information sharing.

6. Automated system used by Bangladesh Bank for uploading LC related information on ASYCUDA can be used by customs and all the agencies working in the Land Port, which will reduce the number of required documents for different agencies.
7. At Zero point, a single umbrella service should be introduced. One representative from different port stakeholders or service providers should be there so that importers/exporters can get seamless services. This umbrella should be linked with automation so that each stakeholder can send and receive data seamlessly.
8. As an essential need for trade facilitation, One Stop Service should be implemented by incorporating required ICT supports and infrastructures.
9. Comprehensive coordination between land port authority and customs should be ensured and skilled manpower needs to be engaged in developing and maintaining one-stop service centers in the land ports.
10. There can be separate One-stop service centers for Import/Export and passengers.
11. Land port authority and Customs can jointly organize knowledge-sharing workshops to know and share the existing and updated rules and regulations of both parties.
12. City corporations, local authorities, Roads and Highways Department, Law enforcement, and other relevant parties should be included in the coordination mechanism.
13. For adjusting better coordination with neighboring countries, stakeholders from private sectors need to be included in country meetings like JCC (joint coordinating committee) meeting. Moreover, Problems regarding land port operations and other issues may be discussed in the Joint Working Group meeting between India and Bangladesh.
14. For implementing Standard Operating Procedures, coordinated training programs will be required. NBR and different trade bodies can work together in this regard.
15. Integrated check post-development and SOP need to be harmonized with the neighboring countries for better outcomes. This can be implemented in mutual discussion with neighboring countries through JWC (Joint Working Group) meeting between India and Bangladesh. Customs data sharing for paperless trade between the two countries may be also initiated by MRAs with the neighboring countries.

8.9 Recommendations on implementing international standards, technologies and best practices

1. Since the BOT-operated land ports are not exhibiting better performance compared to the BLPA operated port, a handling company can be developed for managing land ports following other PPP models like Build-Own-Operate (BOO), Build-Operate-Lease-Transfer (BOLT), Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBFOT), Lease-Develop-Operate (LDO), Operate-Maintain-Transfer (OMT), etc.

2. Agencies and services of land ports can be integrated following the ICP concept that describes facilities such as customs, immigration, and border security, quarantine, among others, within a single facilitation zone. Following the ICP concept of India, Bangladesh can develop Multi-Agency Service Centers in the land ports.
3. Automation is crucial for port modernization, paperless border trade, and trade facilitation. Compared with the international standards of technology usage, land ports are lagging behind. Technologies like x-ray cargo scanners, IoT-based vehicle tracking, RFID, EDI based one stop service, automated warehouse monitoring and etc. may be developed in the land ports.
4. One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) system of Zambia and Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Kenya initiatives may be considered in case of the Bangladesh-India border. As prescribed in the best practices chapter, juxtaposed model, straddled model, wholly located model can be considered for developing OSBP with India and Myanmar to facilitate cross-border trade through land ports. Single Customs inspection between two countries can be considered for such OSBP system.
5. A Digital transport corridor may be developed with neighboring countries for seamless movement of vehicles and optimal data flows that will increase trade visibility and transparency and help secure paperless trading system.
6. In the wake of untapped opportunities, speedy implementation of the MVA becomes crucial for BBIN countries. As the agreement is yet to be ratified by Bhutan's Parliament, the signing of a tripartite tool as proposed in the last BBIN meeting held in 2022 could pave way for phased implementation of BBIN MVA among BIN countries. Bhutan may join later. Speedy implementation of BBIN can help improve cross border coordination remarkably.
7. India and Bangladesh can consider the UN TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers) system as a potential alternative to the existing inter-border and multi-border transportation system to boost trade. The benefits of TIR can be presented in the TIR convention meeting.
8. Cross Border Transport Agreement of Vietnam and Laos type initiatives can be replicated to enhance integration and collaboration with the Indian side so that car pass, custom, and consignment information can be interchanged in a paperless way.
9. The AEO (Authorized Economic Operators) concept needs to be adopted more profoundly. AEO benefits can make trade procedures easy for some traders. The number of AEOs needs to be increased in Bangladesh for facilitating land port trades.

8.10 Recommendation on risk management at border point

1. IMDG Code (International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code) is not followed in most of the ports. For handling flammable, explosive products (warehousing, packaging) this code should be followed properly in land ports to minimize fire risks and accidents. Separate warehouse and shed should be made in land ports following the IMDG code.
2. Customs' automated risk management software (ARMS) should be introduced and activated as soon as possible which will help to reduce time trade time as customs will not have to interfere with all shipments.

8.11 Other recommendations for increasing land port efficiency

1. For seized/abandoned goods, port authority needs to clarify relevant rules and regulations.
2. Yarn import is only allowed in Benapole port and if three more ports namely Bhomra, Shonamashjid and Darshana can allow yarn import, the congestion problem in Benapole land port will be reduced.
3. Procedures for releasing detained vehicles need to be outlined clearly and the rate of costs or demurrages should be let known to the port users.
4. Counters in the no-man's land should be multiplied and the detention time on India-Bangladesh Border should be reduced.
5. A feasibility study should be conducted on the export-import volume and immigration amount/opportunity of the Land Customs Station (LCS) before declaring LCS as a land port.

Conclusions

Trade through the land ports is increasing over the years and with special focus on regional connectivity and trade facilitation, land ports have become important means of the country's overall trade growth. Regarding the current practices and operating procedures of the land ports, many port users and stakeholders expressed their concerns about ports' service issues and operational inefficiencies. Internal issues including lack of necessary infrastructures, communications and coordination problems, gaps in port authority and other service provider agencies and their laws and systems as well as redundant procedures are responsible for operational inefficiencies in land ports. In reality, the existing operational procedures of the land ports have not kept up with the rising demand for services. The procedures, transport formalities, and time requirements associated with the land ports presented drawbacks and more room for improvement. Procedural hindrances associated with land port authority, immigration, customs, C&F agents and other stakeholders also hinder the goal of achieving trade facilitation and ease of doing business goals. However, by identifying the bottlenecks and redundancies in the current operating procedures, and streamlining the processes in the prescribed ways, trade through land ports can be made seamless.

Bangladesh can also take lessons from neighboring countries, international standards, and best practices of land ports around the world. The Land port authority can consider implementing advanced technologies and global port management practices for removing operational and bureaucratic hindrances. Addressing the current issues on the port procedures from KII, FGD, PC, and field survey, and through realizing and devising the standard operating procedure accordingly, the port authority can increase port efficiency and contribute to trade facilitation through land ports. Relevant stakeholder organizations from the public and private sectors must be considered and included for proper coordination and cooperation in this regard.

If the aforementioned recommendations are put into practice, BLPA, which is dedicated to enhancing resources and access for the user community of Bangladesh's land ports, should be able to improve its port management and operations by devising current practices, and implementing appropriate standards of procedures for all land ports across the country.

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Appendix-1: Questionnaire of the field survey

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রণালয়

ডব্লিউটিও সেল

বাংলাদেশ রিজিওনাল কানেস্টিভিটি প্রজেক্ট-১

জরিপ পরিচালনার প্রণয়মালা- ২য় স্টাডির জন্য

(৪টি স্টাডি, পিএসসি কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত)

আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য এবং পরিবহন ব্যবস্থাপনা, পদ্ধতি, নথিভুক্তি ও সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে আন্তঃসীমানা স্থল বন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনার নিমিত্ত সংকলিত নীতি, আইনগত দিক-নির্দেশনা / প্রাথমিক পরিচালন পদ্ধতি (স্ট্যান্ডার্ড অপারেটিং প্রসেডিউর) প্রস্তুত করা।

Study 2: A compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters;

১. প্রথম অংশ: উত্তরদাতার পরিচিতিমূলক তথ্য

উত্তরদাতার নাম:..... পদবী:.....

প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম:.....

প্রতিষ্ঠানের ধরন চিহ্নিত করুন:

<input type="checkbox"/>	বাংলাদেশ স্থলবন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ	<input type="checkbox"/>	সিঅ্যান্ডএফ এজেন্ট
<input type="checkbox"/>	ট্রান্সপোর্ট ও লজিস্টিক কোম্পানি	<input type="checkbox"/>	আমদানিকারক – রপ্তানিকারক
<input type="checkbox"/>	কাস্টমস	<input type="checkbox"/>	অপারেটর
<input type="checkbox"/>	সনদপত্র ও মাননিয়ন্ত্রণকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ	<input type="checkbox"/>	ব্যাংক
<input type="checkbox"/>	ইমিগ্রেশন	<input type="checkbox"/>	অন্যান্য হলে নির্দিষ্ট করুন:
<input type="checkbox"/>	শ্রমিক		

প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকানা:.....

মোবাইল নম্বর ইমেইল ঠিকানা:.....

:.....

মন্ত্রণালয়/ বিভাগ (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে):

২. বাংলাদেশ স্থলবন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনার বর্তমান চিত্র (বন্দরের নাম)		
		(কাস্টমস+ পোর্ট/বর্ডার হ্যান্ডলিং+ অন্যান্য)
ক	আমদানি প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে কত সময় প্রয়োজন হয় (ঘণ্টা)	
খ	রপ্তানি প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে কত সময় প্রয়োজন হয় (ঘণ্টা)	
গ	আমদানি প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন (প্রতি ইউনিট) করতে কত অর্থ ব্যয় হয়?	
ঘ	রপ্তানি প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন (প্রতি ইউনিট) করতে কত অর্থ ব্যয় হয়?	
ঙ	আমদানির ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োজনীয় ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহ ও প্রস্তুত করতে কত সময় প্রয়োজন হয়?	

চ	রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োজনীয় ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহ ও প্রস্তুত করতে কত সময় প্রয়োজন হয়?	
ছ	আমদানির ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োজনীয় ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহ ও প্রস্তুত করতে কত অর্থ ব্যয় হয়?	
জ	রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োজনীয় ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহ ও প্রস্তুত করতে কত অর্থ ব্যয় হয়?	

৩. বাণিজ্য সহজীকরণ ও আন্তঃবন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনার ক্ষেত্রে স্থলবন্দরের দক্ষতা সম্পর্কে পোর্ট ব্যবহারকারীদের মতামত

অনুগ্রহ করে নিচের সেবাপ্রদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহের কর্মদক্ষতা যাচাই করুন (উপযুক্ত ঘরে টিক চিহ্ন দিন)

পক্ষ	১=অসাধারণ	২=সন্তোষজনক	৩=গড়পরতা	৪=দুর্বল	৫=খুব দুর্বল
বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ					
অপারেটর					
কাস্টমস					
ব্যাংক					
শ্রমিক					
স্ট্যান্ডার্ড টেস্টিং কর্তৃপক্ষ					
পরিবহন					
বিজিবি					
অন্যান্য থাকলে লিখুন					

৪. অনুগ্রহ করে স্থলবন্দরের সেবাসমূহের মান যাচাই করুন (উপযুক্ত ঘরে টিক চিহ্ন দিন)

ক্রমিক নং	কার্যক্রম	১=অসাধারণ	২=সন্তোষজনক	৩=গড়পরতা	৪=দুর্বল	৫=খুব দুর্বল
আমদানির ক্ষেত্রে						
ক	ভারত/নেপাল/ ভুটানের বন্দর থেকে বাংলাদেশের বন্দরে কার্গো ট্রাক আসার প্রক্রিয়া					
খ	আমদানি সংক্রান্ত নথি উপস্থাপন					
গ	ওজন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন					
ঘ	ট্রাক পার্কিং					
ঙ	ট্রাক থেকে পণ্য আনলোডিং					
চ	খালি ট্রাকের প্রস্থান					
ছ	কাস্টম অঞ্চল থেকে আমদানিকৃত মালামাল ছাড়করণ					
জ	ঝুঁকি ব্যবস্থাপনা – খাদ্য, উদ্ভিদ ও প্রাণী পৃথকীকরণ (Food, Animal and Plant Quarantine)					
ঝ	আমদানিকৃত পণ্য বহনের জন্য বাংলাদেশী ট্রাক আসার প্রক্রিয়া					
রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে						
ক	বন্দরে রপ্তানি পণ্য পৌঁছানোর প্রক্রিয়া					
খ	পণ্য ওজন প্রক্রিয়া					
গ	কাস্টম অঞ্চল থেকে রপ্তানির উদ্দেশ্যে পণ্য ছাড়করণ					
ঘ	ঝুঁকি ব্যবস্থাপনা					
ঙ	রপ্তানির নথিসমূহ কাস্টমস কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট উপস্থাপন					

চ	পণ্যের ট্রাক বাংলাদেশের বন্দর থেকে ভারতের বন্দরে যাওয়া এবং কার পাস সিস্টেম					
ছ	ভারত/নেপাল/ ভুটানের বন্দরে রপ্তানি পণ্য আনলোড করে বাংলাদেশী ট্রাকের প্রস্থান					
জ	ভারত/নেপাল/ ভুটানের বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের স্টোরেজ সুবিধা					
যাত্রী যাওয়ার প্রক্রিয়া						
যাত্রী আসার প্রক্রিয়া						
বাজেয়াপ্ত/ পরিত্যক্ত পণ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা প্রক্রিয়া						
৫. সেবা প্রদানকারী সংস্থাসমূহের মধ্যে সমন্বয়ের জন্য বন্দরে কি কোনো সমন্বয় পদ্ধতি রয়েছে?						
হ্যাঁ			না			
৬. যদি হ্যাঁ হয়, তবে বর্তমান সমন্বয় পদ্ধতি সম্পর্কে আপনার মূল্যায়ন (উপযুক্ত ঘরে টিক চিহ্ন দিন)		১=অসাধারণ	২=সন্তোষজনক	৩=গড়পরতা	৪=দুর্বল	৫=খুব দুর্বল
৭. স্থল বন্দরে ওয়ান স্টপ সার্ভিস চালু হলে সেবার মান উন্নয়ন হবে বলে কি আপনি মনে করেন?						
হ্যাঁ			না			
৮. বাংলাদেশের স্থলবন্দরকে আরও কার্যকর, দক্ষ হিসেবে গড়ে তোলার জন্য কি করা প্রয়োজন? (টিক চিহ্ন দিন)						
১) অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন ২) কাস্টমস প্রক্রিয়া উন্নয়ন ৩) প্রয়োজনীয় নথিপত্রের সংখ্যা হ্রাস ৪) অটোমেশন			৫) বন্দরের দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধি ৬) লজিস্টিক্স এবং পরিবহন সেবার মান বৃদ্ধির ৭) মাল্টিমোডাল পরিবহন ব্যবস্থার উন্নয়ন ৮) পরিবহনে নিরাপত্তার জোরদার করা ৯) SOP ১০) অন্যান্য			

উত্তর দাতার স্বাক্ষর

জরিপকারীর নাম

তারিখ

স্বাক্ষর

Appendix-2: Questionnaire for the key informant interview

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রণালয়

ডব্লিউটিও সেল

বাংলাদেশ রিজিওনাল কানেস্টিভিটি প্রজেক্ট-১

KII (Key Informant Interview) পরিচালনার প্রশ্নমালা- ২য় স্টাডির জন্য

(৪টি স্টাডি, পিএসসি কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত)

২য় স্টাডির বিষয়ঃ আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য এবং পরিবহন ব্যবস্থাপনা, পদ্ধতি, নথিভুক্তি ও সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে আন্তঃসীমানা স্থল বন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনার জন্য সংকলিত নীতি ও আইনগত দিক-নির্দেশনা /প্রামাণিক পরিচালন পদ্ধতি (স্ট্যান্ডার্ড অপারেটিং প্রসেডিউর) প্রস্তুত করা।

Study 2: A compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters;

প্রথম অংশ: উত্তরদাতার পরিচিতিমূলক তথ্য

উত্তরদাতার নাম:..... পদবী:.....

প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম:.....

প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকানা:.....

মোবাইল নম্বর:..... ইমেইল ঠিকানা:.....

মন্ত্রণালয়/ বিভাগ (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে):

দ্বিতীয় অংশ:

১. স্থলবন্দরসমূহের মাধ্যমে আমদানি করার ক্ষেত্রে ডকুমেন্টেশন, প্রযোজ্য সময় ও ব্যয়ের ক্ষেত্রে কোনো চ্যালেঞ্জ রয়েছে বলে মনে করেন কি? যদি কোন চ্যালেঞ্জ থেকে থাকে তবে কী কী চ্যালেঞ্জ রয়েছে উল্লেখ করুন?

কার্যক্রম	চ্যালেঞ্জসমূহ
১। ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহ ও প্রস্তুত	
২। সময় ব্যবস্থাপনা	
৩। ব্যয়	

২. স্থলবন্দরসমূহের মাধ্যমে রপ্তানি করার ক্ষেত্রে ডকুমেন্টেশন, সময় এবং ব্যয়ের ক্ষেত্রে কোনো চ্যালেঞ্জ রয়েছে বলে মনে করেন কি? যদি কোন চ্যালেঞ্জ থেকে থাকে তবে কী কী চ্যালেঞ্জ রয়েছে?

কার্যক্রম	চ্যালেঞ্জসমূহ
১। ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহ ও প্রস্তুত	
২। সময় ব্যবস্থাপনা	

৩। ব্যয়	
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৩. স্থল বন্দরসমূহের ব্যবস্থাপনায় যে প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ জড়িত রয়েছে তাদের কি কোনো প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক দুর্বলতা রয়েছে? থাকলে কী দুর্বলতা রয়েছে? এসব ক্ষেত্রে কীভাবে উন্নয়ন করা যায়?

পক্ষসমূহ	প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক দুর্বলতা	দুর্বলতা দূরীকরণের উপায়
• বাংলাদেশ স্থলবন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ		
• সিয়াল্ডএফ এজেন্ট		
• ট্রান্সপোর্ট ও লজিস্টিক কোম্পানি		
• আমদানিকারক –রপ্তানিকারক		
• কাস্টমস		
• অপারেটর		
• সনদপত্র ও মান নিয়ন্ত্রণকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ		
• ব্যাংক		
• ইমিগ্রেশন		
• অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করুন)		

৪. স্থল বন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনার ক্ষেত্রে বর্তমানে কি কোনো আন্তঃসংস্থা (যেমন: সিয়াল্ডএফ এজেন্ট, ট্রান্সপোর্ট ও লজিস্টিক কোম্পানি, কাস্টমস, অপারেটর, ব্যাংক ইত্যাদি) সমন্বয় পদ্ধতি (Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism) রয়েছে? সমন্বয় পদ্ধতির উন্নয়ন করতে কী করা প্রয়োজন?

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৫. স্থলবন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনার ক্ষেত্রে পার্শ্ববর্তী দেশের (ভারত, নেপাল, ভুটান) সঙ্গে কি কোনো সমন্বয় পদ্ধতি (যেমনঃ Joint customs authority, যোগাযোগ) রয়েছে? থাকলে কী ধরনের সমন্বয় পদ্ধতি রয়েছে?

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৬. পোর্ট ব্যবহারকারীদের সেবা প্রদান সহজতর করার জন্য ওয়ান স্টপ সার্ভিস একটি অন্যতম উপায়। স্থল বন্দরসমূহ প্রযুক্তি ও প্রক্রিয়াগত দিক থেকে ওয়ান স্টপ সার্ভিস চালু করার ব্যাপারে কী প্রস্তুতি রয়েছে? স্থল বন্দরসমূহে ওয়ান স্টপ সেবা চালু করার ক্ষেত্রে কী কী করা প্রয়োজন বলে মনে করেন?

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৭. অনুগ্রহ করে স্থল বন্দরে আমদানি-রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে কার্যক্রম সম্পাদনে সাধারণ প্রক্রিয়াসমূহ ও চ্যালেঞ্জসমূহ চিহ্নিত করুন-

ক্রমিক নং	কার্যক্রম	প্রক্রিয়া উল্লেখ করুন	জটিলতা/চ্যালেঞ্জসমূহ উল্লেখ করুন।
আমদানির ক্ষেত্রে			
1.	ভারত/ নেপাল/ ভুটানের বন্দর থেকে বাংলাদেশের বন্দরে কার্গো ট্রাক আসার প্রক্রিয়া-(কার পাস সিস্টেম)		
2.	আমদানি সংক্রান্ত নথি উপস্থাপন		
3.	ওজন পরিমাপ প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করা		
4.	ট্রাক পার্কিং		
5.	ট্রাক থেকে পণ্য আনলোডিং		
6.	খালি ট্রাকের প্রস্থান		
7.	কাস্টম অঞ্চল থেকে আমদানিকৃত মালামাল		

ক্রমিক নং	কার্যক্রম	প্রক্রিয়া উল্লেখ করুন	জটিলতা/চ্যালেঞ্জসমূহ উল্লেখ করুন।
	ছাড়করণ		
8.	ঝুঁকি ব্যবস্থাপনা—খাদ্য, উদ্ভিদ ও প্রাণি সংগনিরোধ (Food, Animal and Plant Quarantine)		
9.	আমদানিকৃত পণ্য বহনের জন্য বাংলাদেশী ট্রাক আসার প্রক্রিয়া		
রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে			
1.	বন্দরে রপ্তানি পণ্য পৌঁছানোর প্রক্রিয়া		
2.	পণ্য ওজন পরিমাপ প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করা		
3.	কাস্টম অঞ্চল থেকে রপ্তানির উদ্দেশ্যে পণ্য ছাড়করণ		
4.	ঝুঁকি ব্যবস্থাপনা		
5.	রপ্তানির নথিসমূহ কাস্টমস কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট উপস্থাপন		

ক্রমিক নং	কার্যক্রম	প্রক্রিয়া উল্লেখ করুন	জটিলতা/চ্যালেঞ্জসমূহ উল্লেখ করুন।
6.	পণ্যবাহী ট্রাক বাংলাদেশের বন্দর থেকে ভারত/ নেপাল/ ভুটানের বন্দরে যাওয়া- (কার পাস সিস্টেম)		
7.	ভারত/ নেপাল/ ভুটানের বন্দরে রপ্তানি পণ্য আনলোড করে বাংলাদেশী ট্রাকের প্রস্থান		
যাত্রী যাওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে			
যাত্রী আসার ক্ষেত্রে			
বাজেয়াপ্ত/পরিত্যক্ত পণ্যের ক্ষেত্রে			

৮. বন্দরে বিভিন্ন কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত প্রযুক্তিসমূহ অনুগ্রহ করে চিহ্নিত করুন-

ক্রমিক নং	সেবাসমূহ	ব্যবহৃত প্রযুক্তি
1.	পণ্য লোডিং/আনলোডিং	
2.	পণ্য ওজনকরণ	
3.	কাস্টমস ক্লিয়ারেন্স	
4.	ব্যাংক কর্তৃক কাস্টমস্ শুদ্ধ আদায়	
5.	স্ট্যান্ডার্ড টেস্টিং	
6.	ট্রাফিক ব্যবস্থাপনা	
7.	পোর্ট চার্জ নির্ধারণ	
8.	পণ্য সংরক্ষণ	
9.	পচনশীল পণ্য সংরক্ষণ	
10.	এসপিএস/ কোয়ারেন্টাইন কার্যক্রম	
11.	নিরাপত্তা	
12.	অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করে লিখুন)	

৯. স্থলবন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনায় ব্যবহৃত আন্তর্জাতিক স্ট্যান্ডার্ড, সর্বোত্তম চর্চা (বেস্ট প্র্যাকটিস), হ্যান্ডবুক, কনভেনশন বা প্রযুক্তি সম্পর্কে পরামর্শ বা সুপারিশ প্রদান করুন।

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১০. স্থলবন্দর সংশ্লিষ্ট আইন, প্রশাসন এবং নীতিসমূহে কী ধরনের সংস্কার প্রয়োজন বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

১। আইনি সংস্কার	
২। প্রশাসনিক সংস্কার	

৩। নীতিগত সংস্কার	
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১১. স্থল বন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনায় দক্ষতা উন্নয়নে বন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনার ক্ষেত্রে কী ধরনের পরিবর্তন প্রয়োজন হতে পারে?.....

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১২. সমন্বিত সীমান্ত বাণিজ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা উন্নয়নের জন্য কী ধরনের পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা যেতে পারে?

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১৩. সীমান্ত বাণিজ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা উন্নয়নে উল্লেখিত মতামত ছাড়া অন্য কোন মতামত থাকলে বলুন?

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উত্তরদাতার নাম এবং অফিসিয়াল সীল

উত্তর দাতার স্বাক্ষর
 জরিপকারীর নাম.....
 তারিখ.....
 স্বাক্ষর.....

Appendix-3: Sample distribution for conducted quantitative survey

Sample distribution for conducted quantitative survey

S. L	Name of the ports	Participants	Location	Probable Representation of participants
01.	Benapole land port	52	Jessore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Land Port Authority (7) • Transport and Logistics Company (4) • Customs (3) • Certification and Quality Control Authority (4) • Immigration (3) • Worker (5) • C&F Agent (10) • Importer-Exporter (10) • Operator • Bank (3) • Driver (4) • BGB (2)
02.	Bhomra Land Port	50	Shatkhira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Land Port Authority (4) • Transport and Logistics Company (5) • Customs (4) • Certification and Quality Control Authority (3) • Immigration (1) • Worker (5) • C&F Agent (9) • Importer-Exporter (9) • Operator • Bank (3) • Driver (4)
03.	Shona Masjid Land Port	37	Chapainabganj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Land Port Authority (4)

S. I	Name of the ports	Participants	Location	Probable Representation of participants
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and Logistics Company (2) • Customs (4) • Certification and Quality Control Authority (3) • Immigration • Worker (3) • C&F Agent (11) • Importer-Exporter (6) • Operator • BGB (2) • Bank (2) • Driver (3)
04.	Akhaura land port	26	Brahmanbaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Land Port Authority (3) • Transport and Logistics Company (5) • Customs (1) • Certification and Quality Control Authority (2) • Immigration (1) • Worker • C&F Agent (10) • Importer-Exporter (3) • Operator • Bank (1) • Driver
05.	Banglabandha land port	36	Panchagarh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Land Port Authority • Transport and Logistics Company (2) • Customs (3) • Certification and Quality Control Authority (2) • Immigration (1) • Worker (2) • C&F Agent (5)

S. L	Name of the ports	Participants	Location	Probable Representation of participants
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importer-Exporter (14) • Operator (1) • Bank (2) • Driver (4)
Total Participants		201	Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Land Port Authority (14) • Transport and Logistics Company (18) • Customs (15) • Certification and Quality Control Authority (13) • Immigration (3) • Worker (16) • C&F Agent (45) • Importer-Exporter (49) • Operator (2) • Bank (11) • Driver (15)

Appendix-4: List of respondents of key informant interviews

Serial No.	Name	Designation	Organization
1	Md. Mahmudul Hassan	Deputy Commissioner	Bhomra Land Port Authority
2	Abdul Rashid Mia	President	Custom House
3	Md. Mofizur Rahman Shojon	C&F President	Clearing & Forwarding Agent Association
4	Md. Harunor Rashid	Senior Principal Officer	Confidence Cargo Ltd
5	Titumir Rahman	General Secretary	Pubali Bank
6	Mohammad Atiur Rahman Raju	C&F President	Sonamasjid export and import group
7	Md. Mubarak Hossain Bhuiyan	C&F President	Adnan Traders
8	Md. Rezaul Karim	Additional Deputy Director	Plant Quarantine Wing
9	Alamgir Kabir	General Secretary (Importer Exporter Association)	M/S Islam Traders
10	Shafiqul Islam	Proprietor	M/S Pritom Enterprise
11	Monir Hossain Babul	Deputy Commissioner	Sonamasjid Landport, Custom Station
12	Mr. Sayed Mokaddes Hossain	Port in Charge	Banglabandha landport Ltd
13	Mr. Md. Abul Kalam Azad	Revenue Officer	Bangabandhu Custom Station
14	Shahidul Islam	Traffic Inspector	Sona Masjid Land Port Authority
15	Mr. Alimuzzaman	Traffic Inspector	Benapole Land Port
16	Mr. Md. Moniruzzaman	Assistant Commissioner	Custom House
17	Md. Amir Mamun	Assistant Commissioner	Immigration
18	Md. Jahangir Hossain Khan	Commissioner	Benapole Custom House
19	Md. Azizur Rahman	Deputy Director (Admin)	Bhomra Custom House
20	Abdul Jalil	Deputy Commissioner	Benapole Custom House
21	Md. Mostafizur Rahman	Deputy Commissioner	Bhomra Land Port Authority

Appendix-5: List of participants in the focus group discussion

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organization
01	Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin CEO	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
02	Md. Obaidul Azam International Trade Expert-2, 04 Studies	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
03	Mr. Tanvir Ahmed Deputy Commissioner	Bangladesh Custom, Benapole
04	Mr. Abdul Jalil Director, Additional Charge	Bangladesh Land Port Authority (Benapole)
05	Mr. Mamun Kabir Terafder Deputy Director	Bangladesh Land Port Authority (Benapole)
06	Farzana Islam, AC Land, Sharsha	DC Office, Jashore
07	Mr. Gobinda Kumar Ghosh Assistant Director (CS)	BSTI, Khulna
08	Mr. Hemonto Kumar Sarkar Deputy Asst. Director	Plane Quarantine Station
09	Mr. Md. Akhtar Faruque Manager (SPO)	Sonali Bank Limited
10	Mr. Md. Elias, OC	Benapole Port Thana
11	Mr. Md. Hossain Ali Foyzul Asst. Programmer (FE)	Bangladesh Land Port Authority (Benapole)
12	Mr. Atiquzzaman Shen President	Transport owners' Association
13	Md. Khairuzzaman Sr. Vice President	Benapole Clearing & forwarding Agent Association
14	Md. Kamal Uddin Shimul Vice President	Benapole Clearing & Forwarding Agent Association
15	Sub Md. Nazul Hosain Cap. Cum ICP	Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)
16	Md. Shahin Mia Subedar	Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)
17	Mr. Mohammad Raju Officer in Charge (OC) Immigration	Immigration Police
18	Mr. Hannan Bappi Jr. Officer	Pubali Bank Ltd.
19	Mr. Md. Julfikar Ali Montu President (Proposed)	Importers & Exporters Association, Benapole
20	Mr. Saddam Hossen Manager	M/S G.K. Enterprise

21	Mr. Md. Sakender Ali, Managing Director	Twenty Corporation, Benapole
22	Mr. Raton Sarker Administrative Officer	Benapole Land Port
23	Mr. Abhik Das Audit Officer	Benapole Land Port
24	Md. Fashed Hossain AD	NSI
25	Sanjoy Barai Asst. Director (traffic)	Benapole Land Port
26	Md. Tanvir	N.S. I
27	Mr. Suhen Mahmud Ripon Importer	
28	Mr. Toufiq Sub-Inspector	Benapole Port Thana
29	Mr. Rashedul Kabir Research Associate (RA)	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
30	Mr.H M Simon Research Associate (RA)	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)

Appendix-6: List of participants in the public consultation

List of Participants in the Public Consultation

SL	Name	Designation	Organization
1.	Mr. Imam Gazzali	Second Secretary (Customs)	NBR
2.	Mr. Mohammad ileas Mia	Director-1 (Deputy Secretary)	Ministry of Commerce
3.	Mr. Ashrafur Rahman	Deputy Secretary (FTA-4)	Ministry of Commerce
4.	Mr. Md. Aminul Islam	Deputy Secretary (Export-7)	Ministry of Commerce
5.	Ms. Farhana Iris	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Commerce
6.	Mr. Abdul Mannan	Senior Asst. Secretary(Macroeconomic)	Ministry of Finance (MoF)
7.	Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman	DGM (Head Office)	Sonali Bank
8.	Mr. Tanvir Ahmed	Deputy Commissioner	Customs House, Benapole
9.	Mr. Md. Mamun-Ur-Rashid Askari	Joint Chief (Current Charge)	Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission
10.	Mr. Shamimur Rahman	Deputy Secretary	FBCCI
11.	Mr. Md. Mokaddem Ahamad	Joint Director	Bangladesh Bank
12.	Ms. Salma Binte Zaman Sharna	Quarantine Pathologist	Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)
13.	Mr. Amin Hasan	Assistant secretary	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)
14.	Mr. Md. Zakirul Islam	Asst. Deputy Secretary	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)
15.	Mr. Md. Arifur Rahman	Deputy Secretary	Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)
16.	Ms. Tania Yasmin	Assistant Director	Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)
17.	Ms. Shahinur Akter	Deputy Secretary	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

SL	Name	Designation	Organization
18.	Ms. Shahnewaz Latika	DGM	International Chambers of Commerce Bangladesh
19.	Ms. Wasima Sadia	Assistant Executive Secretary	Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)
20.	Mr. Md. Jalal Uddin	AGM	Leather goods & Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB)
21.	Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman	Secretary	Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetables & Allied Products Exporter's Association (BFVAPEA)
22.	Mr. Md. Ahmedul Kabir	Senior Manager (Export)	Pran RFL
23.	Mr. Mir Sharif Ahammad	Deputy Executive Director	Walton
24.	Mr. Abu Faisal	Senior Additional Director	Walton
25.	Mr. Md. Masudul Haque Prodhan	Sr. Research Associate	Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)
26.	Mr. Nazimuddin	Research Associate	Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)
27.	Ahmed Ishmam Chowdhury	Examiner of Accounts	RJSC
28.	Mr. Khairul Alam Bhuiyan	Officer	Dhaka Customs Agents Association
29.	Md. Tazul Islam	CEO (IXpress Limited)	e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB)
30.	Ms. Farhat Mahjabin Samira	Deputy General Manager	e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB)
31.	Mr. Razibul Islam	Co-Founder & COO, Paperfly Private Limited	e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB)
32.	Mr. Md. Serajul Islam	Senior Asst. Director	Department of Fisheries (DoF)
33.	Dr. Md. Arif Hossain Mazumder	Assistant Professor	BRAC University

SL	Name	Designation	Organization
34.	Mst. Rebeka Sultna	Field Officer	BSTI
35.	Mr. Moksud Belal Siddiqui	Deputy Secretary- General	MCCI
36.	Mr. Evance Rozario	Marketing Executive	BAPA

Appendix-7: Validation workshop proceedings and participants

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1
Ministry of Commerce
Level-12 (west side) Prabasi Kalyan Bhaban
71-72, Eskaton Garden, Dhaka-1000

Validation Workshop on Study

- (i) A compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters;
- (ii) Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), coordination and notification, certification process and infrastructure for promoting trade.

Jointly Organized by: Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project (BRCP)-1, WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce

Date: February 09, 2023

Venue: Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) Conference Room

Introduction:

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) organized a Validation Workshop on 2nd and 4th studies of four under Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1 of WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce on February 09, 2023, at 09:30 AM in Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) Conference Room and Class Room 2, BFTI Dhaka.

Ms. Wahida Akter, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture graced the occasion as the Chief Guest of the validation workshop. Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI delivered the welcome remarks, and Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Director General, WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce and Mr. Md. Mijanur Rahman, Project Director (Joint Secretary), Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project (BRCP)-1 were present as special guests. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) presided over the Validation Workshop as the chairperson.

Summary of the Welcoming Session:

Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI welcomed the guest and shared the background of the studies, including the process on how data was collected and draft reports were prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders. He remarked that post LDC graduation scenario and aspiration to become a developed country was taken into consideration as policy recommendations that were proposed in the studies.

Chief Guest, Ms. Wahida Akter, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture thanked BFTI for conducting the study on SPS & TBT and SOP for Cross Border Land Port Management. She further expressed her gratitude to make the opportune for gracing the occasion as the chief guest. She informed that the traditional agriculture sector of Bangladesh had been transforming into an export-oriented sector through commercialization and pragmatic policy and fiscal support provided by the government. She also informed that Bangladesh has become self-reliant in onion production and successfully met our demand due to a strong supply chain in the agriculture sector. Citing the contribution of the Ministry of Agriculture in securing the food safety of the nation, she informed that the Ministry has expanded mustard plant production to become self-reliant in oil production. She added that now Bangladesh can almost meet up the demand for rice with our domestic production. She further informed Bangladesh needs 2.5 crore metric tons of rice yearly and we could meet the largest portion of this demand domestically. *Citing the importance of the SPS issue in trade, she urged that SPS certificates for exporting agricultural products should be upgrade to international standards so that importing countries could accept our certificate. Finally, she put emphasis on complying with SPS and TBT-related regulations to increase the export competitiveness of the agricultural product, where both Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Commerce can work together.*

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), BFTI Chairperson of the Validation workshop thanked BRCP-1 and the personnel working at the project and WTO wing, as they had trusted BFTI to conduct these studies. He informed that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Commerce had worked together to ensure the food safety of the nation during Covid-19. Addressing the significance of product diversification, he highlighted that the export basket of Bangladesh is limited to few products. In this context, the agriculture sector could contribute to product diversification as it has about 100% value added products. He expressed that if Bangladesh could comply with the SPS and TBT issues in the agriculture sector, it would **proliferate** product diversification and new market access.

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Additional Secretary & Director General, WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce informed that Bangladesh is compliant with the notification process to WTO. He further informed that the country would not need to notify WTO if she follows international product testing procedures. However, if Bangladesh sets a higher standard, then Bangladesh will have to notify WTO with scientific evidence. He further added that Bangladesh presently faces SPS and TBT-related notification processes and infrastructural challenges. Addressing the importance of Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) in trade, he informed that Bangladesh and India are working on MRA and India sent a draft agreement of the MRA, which is under the consideration. He further added that India presently accepts certificates for 21 products from Bangladesh. Regarding SPS and TBT issues, he stressed interagency coordination for resolving SPS TBT challenges. Moreover, for efficient land port management, he suggested that the SOP related study should explore the processes that can ease export-import procedures in Land ports. Moreover, he remarked that SOP should also prescribe the ways for improving interagency coordination among land ports, customs and other agencies.

Mr. Md. Mijanur Rahman, Project Director (Joint Secretary), Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project (BRCP)-1 remarked that complying with SPS and TBT conditions is a precondition for exporting/importing agricultural and other products into a foreign and domestic market. He emphasized on infrastructure development and strengthening coordination among the different related organizations, working for SPS and TBT issues. He further stressed the efficiency of the trade procedure of ports and interagency coordination among ports, customs and export-import-related agencies to ease the export-import procedure.

After the welcoming session, representative from BFTI gave presentation on the 2nd and 4th studies and the panellist and participants shared their comments, suggestions and recommendations on the same which are summarized below:

Recommendations for Study:

- (i) A compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters;

Technical Session-1

Moderator: Md. Munir Chowdhury, National Trade Expert, BRCP1, Ministry of Commerce

1st Panelist: Mr. Mohammad Jahangeer Kobir, Joint Secretary, Member (Traffic), Bangladesh Land Port Authority.

- The main objective of the BLPA is to facilitate trade for importers and exporters.
- Different land ports have different types of infrastructures and due to poor infrastructures, trade facilitation is being hamper in some land ports.
- Trade volume is the highest in the Burimari Land port but the area of Burimari Land port is only 15 acres. For the future expansion of Burimari land port, the 50-acre land acquisition process is going on.
- In Benapole land port, congestion occurs when 300 to 400 vehicles enter the port. Congestions become apparent while customs clearance and port fee payment processes for a large number of vehicles.
- Benapole land port was not developed in a planned way, as it is located on an international highway, which creates traffic congestion for the port incoming and outgoing vehicles. However, 25 acres of new land are now being acquired for developing vehicle containers in the Benapole port. Moreover, more land acquisition efforts are going on for developing yards, and chemical storage.

- A project of 300 crore taka for making a cargo vehicles terminal in 75 Bigha land for Benapole port is going on.
- India is looking forward to opening a common gate at the Benapole border point with Bangladesh and Bangladesh has agreed to develop the gate. Also, a second gate will be developed with a cargo terminal, connecting 4 lanes of the road for traffic movement from and to India.
- In the Petrapole land port of India, trucks carrying exported goods from India are prioritized rather than trucks carrying exported goods from Bangladesh because Bangladesh's import volume from India is higher compared to the export volume to India.
- Passenger queue has been minimized in Burimari land port by creating waiting room facilities for the passengers.
- Benapole has to deal with an average of more than ten thousand passengers daily which is higher than the daily average passenger handling of Dhaka airport.
- Land ports can't be kept open 24/7 for immigration because the Indian side usually closes immigration processes after 5 pm.
- Automation is still not appearing in the land ports. Customs and land port authorities, both parties need automation. Even for paying the terminal fee, there is a long queue due to a lack of automation.
- In Benapole port, an agreement has been made with Bkash for paperless and queue less e-payment of terminal fees through mobile financial services.
- BLPA received 217 crore taka from ADB for the expansion and modernization of the Akhaura and Tamabil land ports.
- Many ports do not have sufficient CCTV cameras and lighting facilities. Only Benapole has 389 CCTV cameras to monitor the whole land port.
- Bangladesh-India joint declaration was made on trade facilitation so that no infrastructure development should be impeded in the port area and both countries should cooperate with each other regarding this issue. However, the bureaucratic process for communication with the Indian side takes much time, which hinders the timeline of the port infrastructure development process. So intergovernmental cooperation is needed in this regard.
- A feasibility study should be conducted on the export-import volume and immigration amount/opportunity of the Land Customs Station (LCS) before declaring LCS as a land port.
- Container movement through Benapole is still under consideration because trade bodies and the ministry of rail need to agree on introducing this facility.
- Indian-side approval is also required for shipping containers and cargo through railways and discussions are going on in this regard. Separate yards and warehouses for train transport facilities will be developed.
- Copies of documentation required by different agencies need to be reduced, document sharing can be automated through emails. Even the Indian side can be included in the automation system for paperless information sharing.
- There is no LCS on the opposite side of Bhomra Land port.
- The study appropriately reflected the current challenges of land ports. We agree with the recommendation of the study regarding Automation and a SOP which can significantly improve the performance of the ports.

2nd Panelist: Mr. Md. Alauddin Fokir, Former Member, Bangladesh Land Port Authority, Additional Secretary, Retired.

- The study includes most of the recommendations I thought of. However, I will extend the points from my own experience.
- An electronic or automated documentation/data-sharing system should be introduced. The present documentation processes are backdated and not up to the mark for trade facilitation standards.
- Online data transfer between India and Bangladesh can be recommended for paperless trade.
- At Zero point, a single umbrella service should be introduced. One representative from different port stakeholders or service providers should be there so that importers/exporters can get seamless services.



This umbrella should be linked with automation so that each stakeholder can send and receive data seamlessly.

- The time required for trade in Land ports can be affected by the service time and operating hours of land ports. For instance, Petrapole and Benapole port authorities decided to keep the port open 24/7. But service provider offices like quarantine, and banks are not kept open 24/7. So along with the port, all services should also be made available 24/7.
- Only 5-10% of vehicles enter the Bangladeshi land ports from 09.00 am to 02.00 pm but the rest of the vehicles arrive after 02 pm, which creates congestion. Indian officers closed their offices at 6.30 pm and therefore, exporter vehicles from Bangladesh have to wait in line, causing congestion. This timing situation vehicles arrival should be made effective.
- IMDG Code (International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code) is not followed in most of the ports. For handling flammable, explosive products (warehousing, packaging) this code should be followed properly in land ports to minimize fire risks and accidents. Separate warehouse and shed should be made in land ports following the IMDG code.
- A declaration from the Ministry of Commerce should be sought to load export cargo in trains that unloads imported goods from India.
- Container handling facilities should be introduced in the land ports, customs rules should be reformed in this regard and land ports' container handling capacity needs to be developed.
- One-way movement of vehicles and separate lanes should be ensured for congestion-free vehicle movement.
- Trade with Myanmar through Teknaf land port can be mentioned in the study.
- Fitness-less vehicles should not be allowed to carry transport as they often create congestion and traffic problems.
- Problems regarding land port operations and other issues should be discussed in the Joint Working Group meeting between India and Bangladesh
- A transshipment yard is not available in Petrapole which creates a problem for exporting and importing perishable goods.
- There is no quarantine or testing facility on the Indian side of the Akhaura land port which creates perishable goods trading difficult.
- Goods exported to Nepal via India are often impacted by the Indian side inspections and processes.
- According to customs rules, if products are not released by the importers/exporters within 30 days, those goods will be auctioned. However, many goods are still kept in the yard which reduces space in the yard. Customs rules should be enforced properly in this regard.

3rd Panelist: Mr. Muhammad Safiur Rahaman, First Secretary, (Customs Modernization & Project Management), NBR

- Components of TFA implementations are reported in different categories by customs. For instance, TFA components that are completed are categorized as A, which are under work are categorized as B, and which will be done in the future are categorized as C.
- The study should review E-payment, digital linkage with customs, and bank topics and update following the Customs' review.
- Complying with trade facilitation, NSW is being implemented which will facilitate import and export. However, not all port processes are customs-related like shed management, and warehouse management.
- National Single window will help coordinate customs, land port authority, certification authority and importers exporters with data sharing and paperless trade facilities.
- So far 39 institutions have signed MoU for NSW. Among 21 of them are CLPA (certification, license and permitting authority). Many of these institutions/agencies do not have sufficient automation.
- Along with custom modernization, each of the agencies or stakeholders needs to be modernized or automated to be connected with customs and NSW.
- Customs also introduced automated risk management software (ARMS) which will help to reduce time trade time as customs will not have to interfere with all shipments.
- The study should be reviewed by NBR before finalization to remove any discrepancies in information with submitted TFA implementation reports.



- The recent Time Release Study TRS should be referred to in the study mainly instead of the old TRS as they did not follow proper methodologies.
- Customs' physical examination takes 80% of the total time taken by the customs procedures in the recent TRS.
- Physical examination and assessment cannot be done simultaneously. Either assessment or examination, one process will be followed by another.
- Assessment reports are now submitted online through ASYCUDA.
- Custom is now introducing scanning/image analysis for the examination process for quick examining shipment. A fixed container scanner will be installed in the Bhomra land port. One fixed and one mobile scanner will be installed in the Benapole land port which will reduce examination time significantly.
- The number of authorized economic operators (AEO) is now 12 from 3, moreover, 51 AEO requests are now in process of approval.
- Pre-arrival processing system is available in seaports and airports but not inland ports. Customs SRO will be changed and land ports will be allowed to utilize the pre-arrival processing system.

Mr. Md. Munir Chowdhury, National Trade Expert, BRCP-1

- The next secretary-level meeting between India and Bangladesh may incorporate land port related challenging issues for traders as an agenda for resolution. This issue should also be presented in the other joint meetings with India.
- Intra-agency and interagency coordination mechanisms should be mentioned in the study.
- Importance of the Transport Integrated Route (TIR) Convention may be mentioned in the recommendation section.
- BBIN topic should be mentioned in the study.

Dr. Mostafa Abid Khan, Senior Trade Specialist, BRCP-1

- In the case of Import and export, directly involved stakeholders like Customs, Land Port Authority, Plant quarantine wing, and BSTI should be identified for the SOP. The processes of these stakeholders should be covered in the SOP.
- NBR's SRO regarding perishable goods should be reviewed to find out whether it is effective in the case of land ports.
- IGMs (Import General Manifest) are submitted electronically in seaports and airports but not inland ports. The Indian side should be consulted for this.
- Customs testing facilities and laboratories should be checked out, in which land ports they are available (one is available in Benapole)
- Our ASYCUDA and Indian custom system are different which may hinder data sharing and electronic coordination.
- E-port management systems in Burimari port can be mentioned in the study.
- A container management system should be suggested in major land ports.
- Indian Assessment officers are located far away from ports so cargo assessment takes time and increases trade time.
- Many land port challenges issues occur due to Indian side problems, which may be mentioned.
- Reasons behind the high time requirement in capital machinery import in Beanpole land port may be explored in the study.
- Recommendations can include Pre-arrival processing which can reduce trade time significantly.
- E-port system should be designed with an interface to connect customs (ASYCUDA) for data sharing.

Ms. Nadia Binte Amin, Director, FBCCI

- The observation method is used in the study but not mentioned in the methodology.
- Total export import information (including air and Sea) may be mentioned with land port export import information.
- QR code in Automation is not much focused in the study which should be included.
- BSTI lab-related, certification information should be added.
- Container carrying facility through the railway should be included in the recommendation.
- Selecting 2022 Time Release Study as a baseline, a timeline for conducting the next TRS can be mentioned for future comparison.

Signature

Engr. Mohabbat Ullah, Director, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI)

- Weaknesses of BSTI and testing authorities should be included in the study.
- A specific timeline should be there for customs examination and assessment which will reduce trade time.

Mr. Shahidullah, Sr. Deputy Secretary, Bangladesh Plastic Good Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BPGMEA)

- Internet services are not working properly in many land ports.
- In proportion to the volume increase in the land ports, manpower and service standards have not improved proportionally which should be mentioned.

Mr. Asif Ayub, Joint Secretary General, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)

- Logistic Performance Index (LPI) of the different countries with best practices can be compared in the study.
- LPI and TRS of the ASEAN countries can be mentioned and compared in the study.

Mr. SM Zahid Hasan, Senior Executive Director, Walton Group

- Land port weekly holiday issues for traders should be addressed in the study.
- Land port-related services are not available on the weekend in Bangladesh (Friday, and Saturday) and on Indian weekend (Sunday). This holiday problem reduces service time in the land ports.

Ms. Lily Akther Banu, General Member, Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- Land ports lack automation. When LCs are issued from banks, they are physically sent by couriers instead of a digital system which takes 2 days.
- Costing information provided by C&F agents varies from C&F agent to C&F agent which should be standardized.

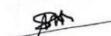
Mr. Md. Sajib Hossain, Sr. Assistant Secretary (R&D), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)

- Single Customs inspection between two countries can be a recommendation for this study.

Mr. Md. Atiqur Rahman Khan, Team Leader, 04 Studies

- The comments and suggestions received from the panellist and participants will be incorporated in the study accordingly.

The moderator thanked all the panellist and participants for their valuable inputs and recommendations for streamlining the existing operating procedure of Land Port Management. To do this reform of legislative, operational and administrative and policy are needed. He further emphasized that a well-drafted SOP for Land Port Management will provide efficient, effective and harmonized for trade facilitation. He requested all the relevant agencies for further inputs within seven working days and formally concluded the Technical Session.



Technical Session-1

Following participants were present in the validation workshop for the Study

- (i) A compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters.

Sl.	Name and Designation	Organization
1.	Mr. Md. Mijanur Rahman Project Director (Joint Secretary)	BRCP-1
2.	Mr. Md. Munir Chowdhury National Trade Expert	BRCP-1
3.	Dr. Mostafa Abid Khan Senior Trade Specialist	BRCP-1
4.	Md. Atiqur Rahman Khan Team Leader, 04 Studies	BFTI
5.	Mr. Md Julfikar Islam Keynote Presenter, Research Manager	BFTI
6.	Ms. Nadia Binte Amin Director	FBCCI
7.	Ms. Lily Akther Banu General Member	Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry
8.	Mr. Md. Sajib Hossain Sr. Assistant Secretary (R&D)	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)
9.	Rtn. Engr. Mohabbat Ullah Director	Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI)
10.	Mr. Wasfi Tamim CEO	Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCCI)
11.	Ms. Syeda Shahnewaz Lotika Deputy General Manager	International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) – Bangladesh
12.	Mr. SM Zahid Hasan, Senior Executive Director,	Walton Group
13.	Mr. Asif Ayub, Joint Secretary General	Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)
14.	Mr. Abdul Matin Senior Executive	Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association (BAPA)
15.	Mr. S.A. Wadud Secretary General	Bangladesh Fish Exporters and Importers Associations (BFEIA)
16.	Mr. Shahidullah, Sr. Deputy Secretary	Bangladesh Plastic Good Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BPGMEA)
17.	Mr. Sayed Arafat Research Officer	BFTI

Appendix-8: Findings from KII, FGD and PC

Key informant Interview

Key informant Interview conducted for this study revealed following insights: Challenges in terms of documentation, time and cost involved in exporting and importing through land ports:

Activities	Challenges
1. Document collection and preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation process is lengthy and time consuming • Poor Internet and Networking system • Lengthy procedure for LC documentation • Lack of automation system in documentation process
2. Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of proper transportation system in the port area • More time was needed than normal because to the paucity of space in the port area. • Lack of inter border coordination • Lack of skilled manpower • Lack of coordination with Land port and Customs
3. Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to syndicate problems in the border region, expenditure frequently increases. • Documentation costs frequently change • Due to the prolonged documentation procedure, expenditure frequently increases.

Weaknesses of institutions involved in the management of land ports and ways to overcome weakness in these areas:

Particulars	Institutional weakness	Ways to remove weaknesses
Bangladesh Land Port Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The port lacks infrastructure and space. • Activities in the port are inefficient. • Lack of essential machinery in the port area. • Lack of skilled manpower in the port area. • Lack of warehouse, shed and weighing scale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital weighing scales are required • Expansion of space in the warehouse and sheds are required. • Improvement of infrastructure in the port area. • Need to increase inter border coordination • Need to increased skilled manpower in the port area. • The port's capacity needs to be increased.

Particulars	Institutional weakness	Ways to remove weaknesses
C&F Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge among the C&F agents on custom rules and regulations • Lack of training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C&F agent needs to improve their capacity, training program can be initiated for this.
Transport and Logistics Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination between C&F agent and labor unions • Lack of truck terminal inside the port area • Syndicate problem in the transportation service providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need coordination between C&F agent and labor unions • Need to increase number of truck terminal inside the port area. • Subscription must be stopped • The development of a multimodal logistics system is required.
Importer-Exporter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination with land port authority, customs and Bank. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase coordination with land port authority, customs and Bank
Customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination in automation system • Everything occurs according to custom decree. • Lack of skilled manpower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The custom requires a coordinated automation system with other agencies. • Number of workforces need to be increased in the customs section for faster service.
Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of security within the port area • Lack of skilled manpower • Lack of automation system in operating • Lack of required scanning system in the land port area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase security within the port area • Need to increase skilled manpower • Automation Process is necessary for speedy delivery • Modern and coordinated scanners are required in the land ports.

Particulars	Institutional weakness	Ways to remove weaknesses
Certification and Quality Control Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation problem of plant quarantine authority • The logistic support management to send sample for testing is poor • Lack of Manpower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to relocate plant quarantine authority within the port area • Need to increase logistic support • Need to increase skilled manpower
Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination between central bank (Bangladesh Bank) and Private Bank and customs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase coordination between bank and other port agencies.
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support service in the immigration is poor. • The infrastructure facility for the passengers is poor • Immigration lacks sufficient manpower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to improve support service and infrastructure facility for the passengers.

Ways to develop coordination mechanisms (border management and with neighboring countries):

- Modification of policies, rules, and regulations.
- Establishing a permanent or stable method of coordination system between the existing interagency.
- Inter ministry coordination is poor that should be improved.
- Private stakeholder should be involved during JCC meeting with neighboring country.

Preparation for one stop service at land ports:

- ICT and infrastructure development is required before introducing one stop service.
- Skilled man force is required to operate one stop service.
- Coordination between land port authority, BSTI, Plant Quarantine and customs need to be improved.

Process and challenges in carrying out import-export operations at land ports:

Import Process:

- BGB completes the registration process by verifying the paperwork and invoice of an Indian truck driver. The registration process as a whole takes, on average, five minutes. After completing the BGB registration process, the Indian truck enters the customs manifest registration. Four copies of the manifest are produced and given an IGM manifest number after being checked for required export documentation. From the four copies of the manifest, one copy goes to BGB, one to customs, one to the land port, and one to the C&F agent. The truck departs for the weigh station

after all the data has been entered into the customs operating system.

- After submitting the required paperwork, a custom operator weighs the truck and provides the weight-related documents for entering the information.
- The truck enters parking after being digitally weighted with the necessary paperwork.
- A C&F agent begins filling out the bill of entry form after entering the parking area with the required paperwork. Following completion of the BOE form, a RO and an ARO inspect and evaluate the truck, and the ARO provides customs with an inspection report. If the assessment is accurate, a subsequent evaluation for product match-up and a subsequent physical inspection are conducted, and an ARO provides a report. A final report is submitted after the physical inspection is finished. The TAX is chosen and updated in the BoE form based on the final report. After receiving a BoE number and necessary documentation, C&F agents pay the tax. One copy of the assessment report is kept by the Bank. After the banking process is finished, a R number (custom release number) is generated following the conclusion of the banking process.
- Upon receiving the R number, the unloading process starts.
- The truck empties the imported goods, presents the required paperwork, exits the customs area, and arrives at zero point. The truck leaves the border area once it reaches zero point.
- Bangladeshi truck arrives at a specific port area after unloading the goods, finishes the required paperwork, obtains an exit pass, and departs the port area.

Export Process:

- A C&F agent begins filling out the bill of entry form after entering the parking area with the required paperwork. Following completion of the BOE form, a RO and an ARO inspect and evaluate the truck, and the ARO provides customs with an inspection report. If the assessment is accurate, a subsequent evaluation for product match-up and a subsequent physical inspection are conducted, and an ARO provides a report. A final report is submitted after the physical inspection is finished. The TAX is chosen and updated in the BoE form based on the final report. After receiving a BoE number and necessary documentation, C&F agents pay the tax.
- After the process is completed a car pass is given.
- A line of trucks awaits and once the paperwork and invoice have been approved, BGB completes the registration process by releasing the truck.

Complications/challenges in the trade and immigration process:

- Lack of wide roadways and special electricity supply line.
- Prolonged checking system of BGB and Bangladesh Customs.
- BGB checking is often more than once which increases the time of the trade.
- Prolonged documentation procedure.
- Insufficient amount of digital scale.
- Inadequate functionality of weight scale.
- Shortage of Shed and truck terminal within the port area.
- Modern instruments are missing in the land ports.
- Presentation of import documents are Manually completed.

- For completing the weighing process, a semi-digital scale is used for the weight measurement.
- Improper management system for product in case of seized/abandoned goods
- Weak immigration management system in terms of passenger handling and service delivery.
- Due to a lack of separate lane for immigration facilities and departure, passengers are at risk of accidents.

Technologies used in various activities at the land ports:

SL	Services	Technology used
13.	Loading/unloading of goods	Manually, Forklift Crane
14.	Product weighing	Semi digital and digital Weighing Machine
15.	Customs Clearance	E-payment, ASYCUDA,
16.	Collection of customs duties by the bank	Manually, E-payment
17.	Standard Testing	Lab Testing
18.	Traffic management	Manually
19.	Determination of port charges	Manually, Semi Digital system
20.	Product storage	Cold storage, Warehouse
21.	Storage of perishable goods	Cold storage and transshipment yard,
22.	SPS/ Quarantine activities	Lab Test
23.	Security/Safety	BGB, Ansar, CCTV Monitoring system, Immigration Police, Dogs

Replicable international standards, best practices, handbooks, conventions or technologies in land port management:

- One stop service
- Automation of the customs and land port procedure
- Use of BCOM (Bangladesh Custom Office Management)
- Technology based standard operating procedures.

Ways to improve efficiency in land port management

- More port space and sheds need to be added.
- Land port authority personnel need to be capacitated through various effective training.
- Skilled manpower is needed in port operational sectors.
- Development of modern infrastructures
- Ensuring safety including adequate installation of CCTV camera and lights.

Steps that can be taken to develop integrated border trade management:

- A multimodal transportation system is required.
- Adding more lanes to the roads within and outside the land ports.

- 24/7 electricity supply, accommodation facilities, and contamination-free (iron) water are required.
- Smart ID cards for C&F agents and all port management officials are required.
- The joint border system must be developed through launching multimodal transit services.

Miscellaneous opinions on the development of border trade management:

- The evolution of border trade management necessitates administrative and policy changes.
- The land port authority should consider partial shipment in special cases.

To increase the efficiency at the boarder entry point, all relevant agencies can use similar digital interface. **Focus group discussion**

Focus Group discussion for the study revealed following insights:

Issues in land ports identified by the land port stakeholders:

Procedural and infrastructural Issues

- Port Authority, Customs, and BGB entry import goods into their inbuild system separately, as a result, too much time is wasted at Zero point.
- For passing a truck, there are 5 hours needed instead of only 10 minutes from the port area.
- Detention vehicles require 35-40 days to be released and C&F agents have to pay large amounts of demurrage.
- There is a transportation syndicate problem in the bypass road in Benapole land port.
- Importers and C&F agents lack clear knowledge about the HS code of a product. Sometimes, importers have to pay a 200% fine for mis-declaring the product HS code.
- The no-man's land counter opens in delay which creates congestion for vehicles and passengers.
- Sometimes, duty-free products are staying for a long-time creating congestion for other shipments.
- The land ports cannot stay open 24/7 hours because of human resource shortages.
- There is a problem in existing software for recording entry-exit vehicle tracking systems as it only records "in" time but not "out" time.
- The Plant quarantine certificate is issued from Dhaka which creates testing lags.
- For cranes and forklifts, they do not function well and lighting is not sufficient in the port area at night.
- There are not sufficient trollies in the land port.
- The bypass road lacks sufficient security in the Benapole port.

Immigration Issues:

- BGB checks a passenger thrice now which creates inconvenience for passengers.
- Travel tax, port tax, etc. are collected online but users are not well aware.
- Tax for children is half but it has to be collected manually as there is a problem with the online system for children.

- Immigration provides service from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM but needs more time (most of the time 9:10 PM) to finish work. Now, per day 5 thousand passengers pass through the port but it was 7-8 thousand before the pandemic. Only 1.5-2 minutes per passenger time is needed but passengers need more than 1-2 hours to complete the immigration process.
- There is no queue management system or shedding facilities for the passengers.
- During the Eid festival, 10-15 thousand people pass through the port and congestion occurs.

Way forwards suggested by the Port stakeholders

Customs

- Customs rules and regulations need to be updated and shared with port users over time.
- Customs and land port authorities can jointly organize knowledge-sharing workshops to educate port users about the rules and regulations of land ports and customs.
- Washrooms and waiting rooms need to be established at the customs point.
- After a certain period of time, C&F licenses should be provided. Experienced and knowledgeable persons should be in the C&F business.

Land Port Authority (Procedural)

- Detention time on India-Bangladesh Border should be reduced.
- The entry-exit vehicle tracking system should record both entry and exit times for effective port management.
- For removing traffic jams, the Ansar battalion or relevant authorities should be trained up for traffic management.
- The land ports need to increase facilities proportionate to the crowd and trade volume.
- Empty vehicles waiting for nothing in the port need to be penalized.
- The port needs sufficient manpower for running the digital system. In this case, manpower with relevant technical expertise is needed.
- In land ports, cargo checking time should be reduced, and a shipment tracking system should be developed
- Officials in the land port need to be upskilled.

Land Port Authority (Infrastructural)

- There should be a helipad both for the government and private sector for emergencies.
- The hospital facility needs to be improved in the port area. A hospital facility within the terminal compound for any medical emergency is needed.
- School facilities for the children who are living and working here are needed. Need to have school playground facilities within the land port premises.
- Ports need 8-lane roads for trucks in and out to reduce congestion.
- Modern equipment i.e., Crane, Unified Scale system, and Scanner should be added in all land ports.
- CCTV cameras should be set up in all ports for monitoring 24/7 activities.

- In land ports, the number of working personnel needs to be increased.
- The weigh scale should be at the entry point instead of in the port area. Then they need not reweigh the same truck again.
- Port space needs to be increased
- The cold storage facility should be improved.
- Fire Service Station needs to be inside the land ports.
- Standard weigh machines should be installed as the weight varies sometimes.
- The number of counters in the no man's land should be increased and their space needs to be enlarged.
- The number of vehicle scanners should be increased.
- Parking systems need to be improved.
- the number of trollies in the land port should be increased.
- There should be waiting rooms in every land port room for the crowd.
- For fire service facilities, the water scope and sources need to develop in the premises so that the fire service professional can get easy access to the water when needed.
- There should be a help desk for visitors to ports.
- It is now important to build private warehouses in the land port.
- More road lights should be installed on the bypass road. City corporations or relevant authorities can take the responsibility for this.
- Accredited labs should be developed near land ports by private or public initiatives.
- For Bangladeshi truck parking facilities, land acquisition is very necessary now.
- Proper parking facilities should be developed in the land port area with an automated traffic system.

Immigration

- There can be a token system for long queue management in immigration and different passenger terminals for healthy, sick and old passengers.
- Need to have an online passport entry system for smooth transitions.
- 24/7 Surveillance should be ensured in the international passenger terminal.
- The international passenger terminal is needed to be restricted to unauthorized people.
- The number of passengers checking by BGB should be reduced to one.
- Advertisement or promotional activities need to be implemented for utilizing online tax.
- The laborers should be allowed inside the port so that they can carry bags and baggage for the sick and old people.
- Banking facilities should be in the same place at the passenger shed.
- Good quality rest houses should be developed for passengers on the port premises.

Coordination

- To reduce the time at Zero-point, API (Application Programming Interface) in the Land Port system need to be used so that only one organization will entry

the product information and other organization will get data automatically using API. If the system is integrated, then it will be easy for all.

- If some key information from the ASYCUDA system is shared, such as release, order no. etc. BLPA can provide faster service then.
- Coordination between Bangladesh and India should be improved.
- An online gateway system needs to be started. Coordination is a must need for One Stop Service (OSS) implementation. There can be separate One-stop service centers for Import/Export and One-stop service center for passengers.

Public consultation

Public Consultation of this study generated following remarks in different section from the relevant stakeholders:

Standard Operating Procedures

- Now globally all trade activities are digitized, and a technology focused SOP can make trade easier as well as it will reduce trade costs.
- For implementing Standard Operating Procedures, training programs will be required. NBR and different trade bodies can work together in this regard. Web portals of different trade bodies can be integrated with NBR for easing trade and customs procedures.
- Monitoring and inspection system should be investigated and SOP should include a monitoring mechanism to oversee whether inspection time is taking more than standard time.
- SOP should include how Internal workflows will be maintained, for instance, Customs is automated but land ports are not, and this situation will hinder internal workflow.
- Integrated check post-development and SOP need to be harmonized with the neighboring countries for better outcomes. This can be implemented in mutual discussion with neighboring countries through secretary or joint secretary level meeting. For instance, in case of import from India, after unloading, an empty truck should not pass through the loaded truck lane rather should use a separate lane, and the Indian authority can be consulted for this issue.

Coordination

- Integrated border management is an important issue now. Product release time is longer in land ports and as a result it increases costs, so efforts should be given to reduce this release time.
- For overcoming the challenges and bottlenecks in the land ports, close coordination is required between BLPA, BSTI, NBR and other relevant port agencies.
- Land port officials need to follow the government's mandate for providing facilities to the port users and maintain cooperation with the relevant stakeholders. However, port officials often fall short of such efforts.
- For trade growth and facilitation, all relevant agencies including government and private should work in a coordinated way.

- For developing integrated check posts in land ports, first, ports services need to be well integrated. Instead of integrated check posts, 24 land ports should be named “Multi-Agency Service Centers” since ICP is used for Indian land ports.
- Some trade and documentation procedures are repetitive in land ports which can be removed. For instance, automated system used by Bangladesh Bank for uploading LC related information can be used by all the agencies working in the Land Port, which will reduce the number of required documents for different agencies.
- Automation should be uniform and coordinated, it would be better if every agency related to the land ports use one uniform software or at least software used by different agencies will have some sort of interchangeability or be able to use information available through the other software.
- If all port agencies can be brought under one roof and a uniform software is used by every port agency, then digitalization will be smoother and internal workflow will be smooth.
- Collaborative, coordinated (system procedures) and smart border management (digitalization) are required for improving the land ports of Bangladesh. Interagency coordination and intra-agency coordination, both are required in this regard.
- Coordination should not be only at the top or head office level rather it should be ensured that coordination exists among the field-level service personnel.

Customs

- Software and automated systems used in the Land ports are often not recognized or accepted by customs. For instance, Scanners of land ports are not used by Customs.
- Bill of entry submission takes much time and this issue should be resolved.
- Customs Acts and land port acts could be reformed for better harmonization and to create a clear, transparent framework.
- Car pass is issued by the Customs and then shown to the port authority, this process can be digitalized and integrated so that importer-exporters don’t need to carry and submit paper documents.
- Customs is now trying to make the “examination” procedure online in the land ports, where examination officers will be able to provide input in real-time through online system after examining a consignment and the assessment officer will receive that information promptly.
- In case of import, car pass is issued by Indian customs, car pass includes information regarding the driver, car no., and the weight of the cargo. Drivers enter Bangladesh showing the car pass to the land port authority and the car is weighed again in Bangladesh to verify the weight and provide a weight slip. In this process, Customs examiners or Assistant revenue officers stay present. This process often varies in different ports but both customs and land port machine operators stay present in this process.

- After the assessment, for duty, there is now an e-payment system available since 1st January 2022 and it takes a maximum of one and half a minute to pay duty tax.
- However, after the assessment of duty, duty payers often pay after 2 or more days for various reasons that increase the time of goods release.
- After the payment of duty/tax, a release order is issued. Also, a gate verification process of goods and document are in place, which is reconciled to verify whether the right goods are released or not.
- Customs has now introduced e-payment and with the national single window, release orders will be automatically sent to the land port authority.
- Customs only get involved in the Export-import process when the bill of entry is entered in the ASYCUDA world.
- From the bill of entry to the issue of the release order, Customs usually takes a maximum of one day time, but this process gets delayed due to delayed payments.
- Since NSW is not fully implemented, in this interim period, customs can email the release order to the land port authority for eliminate hard documents submission procedures.
- For time efficiency, Customs has initiated a risk management Commissionerate. Risk management will be done and the goods will be cleared through Red, Green and Blue, channels. The red channel will use physical inspections. Blue channel will provide post-clearance audit for exporters whose inspection record is clean. And green channel will include Authorized economic operators which will include more and more operators.
- E-Auction system has been introduced now and for clearing warehouses in Land ports, land port authority can utilize this facility by coordinating with customs.
- If for getting an Export registration certificate, submission of membership Certificate from local business association/ chamber certificate, is needed then submission of membership certificate can be reduced from the export process.
- When IRC ERC is submitted by the Office of the chief controller of Imports and Exports (CCI&E), they check the membership certificate. So only Import Registration or Export registration certificate is enough and a membership certificate is not necessary for port trade procedure.
- A partial shipment system can also reduce congestion in the land ports.
- A 200% fine for the wrong HS code system should be changed.
- if one truck of a convoy of 15 truck is delayed due to mechanical fault or road condition, all the trucks are delayed because all the items are under one consignment. There should be some procedure for release of the other trucks except the one in delayed.
- If LC required IRC, then IRC is no more required for import file document list.
- In Sydney Airport and nearby Private container depots, Customs only checks a few containers and for their prompt checking ability, there is no congestion in these ports.
- When the bank opens an LC it includes checking other documents like HS code, invoice no. IRC number, LCA number, etc. So Customs can trust Banks and

start assessment of goods without demanding all documents which are already referred in the LC.

- Although Banks have interconnectivity with Customs and ASYCUDA, the ASYCUDA system is not available in all land ports, so online system does not work there and hard copies of documents are still required there.
- Export permission form (EXP form) is digitalized and its hardcopy is not usually required but in the land ports, still, the practice of hardcopy submission is apparent.
- Inspecting LC in case of import and Exp. Form in case of exports can reduce other documentation checking as these two documents are issued by verifying other documents.

Land Port Authority

- Automated space monitoring systems like Chittagong port can be introduced in the land ports so that how much space is available in warehouses can be known easily.
- In import, when a truck enters, only the car pass is checked by the land port authority and then the truck moves to the weighbridge. Other documents are mostly automated.
- In export, when Bangladeshi drivers reach India, the Indian authority takes much time to check trucks and divers which delays the land port trade.
- Agencies like Customs, Immigration, and C&F agents should be closely related and linked with the Land port authority.
- For import and export- Car pass, custom clearance certificate, commercial invoice, parking and weighting list are usually needed in land ports.
- Car pass integration and digitalization are required for increasing time efficiency in land port trade.
- For the Indian drivers, Terminal and accommodation facility is there but they are reluctant to use the facilities.
- In most cases, for goods imported from India, the assessment is weight-based. The land port authority manages this weighing process and helps customs by providing the information. As the coordination is now better than before, the weighting process and information dissemination have become faster as well.
- In case of goods that need to be kept in shade, there is a posting system in which a specific product will enter in which shed are mentioned. The land port authority manages this process swiftly and assessment also starts when goods are in the shed.
- Land port authority's functions include taking weight, keeping the goods in a shed or yard, and after receiving the release order, releasing the goods.
- For ensuring efficient operating hours, land ports can engage manpower based on peak and off-peak hours.
- Women members should be included in the management of the land ports.
- Port holidays need to be fixed by consulting with the Indian side to ensure uninterrupted trade.
- Roadways connecting the land ports are not up to standard which delays shipment.

- In the land ports, perishable products face issues because of a lack of cold storage and cold chain facilities.
- Along with efficiency and effectiveness, port resilience is also important now. For port resilience, communications strategy development, technological solution, and mitigation measures are necessary.
- The number of Board members of BLPA should be increased and stakeholders should be included as board members.
- Proper Human Resource Management and Accountability systems are essential in the Land Ports for developing workforce capacities.
- Bank facilities should be made available inside the port premises.
- Unnecessary and miscellaneous charges in the land ports should be addressed and eliminated.

BGB

- BGB checking in some land ports are repetitive which should be addressed to reduce the hassle of the port users.

Immigration

- For improving the present immigration system, the number of workforces needs to be increased in the immigration.
- When passengers enter the land port, only the passenger entry charge of 42 taka is received and checked. This process should be eliminated to reduce the congestion of passengers in the land ports.
- Drivers coming from India enter and exit Bangladesh without immigration documents while keeping their trucks in Benapole side of the land ports which creates a security risk.

Quarantine and Testing

- The presence of Quarantine and testing facilities is not equally important for all the land ports rather some land ports need them more. For instance, Benapole, Bhomra, Akhaura, Banglabandha, Bhomra, Teknaf land ports and other land ports that specially deal with perishable products mostly.
- An Express Mail Transfer Service can be used for sending samples to Dhaka where testing will be done and reports will be uploaded in the website for reducing time and cost and to increase efficiency.
- In case of testing facilities, except quarantine, other government testing facilities are not available in land ports.
- Some consignments are delayed in port release due to the BSTI laboratory testing time requirements.
- NSW will also include testing organizations like the atomic energy commission to share certificates and other information seamlessly.
- BSTI provides two types of clearance certificates, one is temporary clearance, and another is final clearance. Final clearance is issued after laboratory testing.
- There is a specific timeline (maximum 8 days, minimum 72 hours for some) for testing and providing certificates for 69 products and this timeline can be reduced for some products.

- Sample for testing is usually carried or sent to the Dhaka labs by the client. In this regard, to reduce time, an express system can be initiated where the sample will be sent through courier companies.
- The timeline of the specific testing period should be decreased to ensure time efficiency in the testing procedure.
- Major land ports should have all possible testing facilities of BSTI. Other Land ports may initiate a Booth system for collecting and sending the samples to nearby testing labs.
- C&F agents often provide misdeclaration which creates problems for BSTI to provide timely testing result.
- Testing takes time because there is a specific time requirement for some testing procedures. For instance, fumigation takes a minimum of 3-5 days.
- Some products only require “Eye Inspection” which may take 10 minutes only. Some products require microbial tests that take around 7 days of time.
- Quarantine should be granted access to the IGM (Import General Manifest) module for seamless information sharing.
- In case of exports, perishable goods are often eye-inspected which takes 10 minutes to 1 hour. In case of import, seeds that require germination take 3 to a maximum of 7 days for completing the testing facilities.
- Testing facilities may include emergency and regular testing systems so that goods can be tested on an emergency basis to reduce trade time.

Miscellaneous

- Land Ports should be categorized, based on functionality in terms of export-import and infrastructure or service development initiatives should be prioritized based on that.
- The importance of land ports was realized during the dreadful pandemic (COVID-19) time. Many Special goods were imported through land ports during that time.
- Among 24 land ports, 3 ports namely Benapole, Burimari and Bhomra are responsible for almost 80% of all land port trade so these 3 land ports can be well improved, most of the problems will be solved.
- Inland waterways can be considered to connect with the land port trade logistics system since cost and time requirement is higher in road transport. A synchronization with inland waterways can make trade faster and less costly.
- Neighboring countries of Bangladesh present a huge market with a 1.8 billion population which is about 25% of the global population. To capture this market, there is no alternative of making land ports efficient for growing trade.
- Recent TRS was done on the basis of 4 categories of goods and the focus should be on the major goods associated with the land ports.
- Smart border, integrated border points, and data sharing type good practices can be considered, for instance, data from the Indian side can be shared with NBR of Bangladesh.
- Smart gates or digital corridor systems of other countries should be considered for replicating the same in case of Bangladesh.
- Rail transportation facilities can be connected with land ports for transport facilitation.

- A designated agency for troubleshooting problems and providing suggestions can help in achieving trade facilitation objectives.
- Training programs can be initiated by Business associations to improve C&F agents' and importer-exporter's knowledge capacities on standard testing, HS code, and port/custom procedures.
- As a signatory of TFA and other agreements, the position of Bangladesh and countries with best practices should be compared for developing a further understating of implementation aspects of the best practices.
- RMG export-import is only allowed in Benapole port and if three more ports namely Bhomra, Shonamashjid and Darshana can allow RMG export-import, the congestion problem in Benapole will be reduced.

Appendix-9: List of relevant laws, policies etc.

Bangladesh Land Port Act 2001

রেজিস্টার্ড নং ডি এ-১



অতিরিক্ত সংখ্যা
কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত

সোমবার, এপ্রিল ১৬, ২০০১

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ

ঢাকা, ১৬ই এপ্রিল, ২০০১/৩রা বৈশাখ, ১৪০৮

সংসদ কর্তৃক গৃহীত নিম্নলিখিত আইনটি ১৬ই এপ্রিল, ২০০১ (৩রা বৈশাখ, ১৪০৮) তারিখে রাষ্ট্রপতির সম্মতি লাভ করিয়াছে এবং এতদ্বারা এই আইনটি সর্বসাধারণে অবগতির জন্য প্রকাশ করা যাইতেছে :-

২০০১ সনের ২০নং আইন

স্থলপথে পণ্য আমদানী ও রপ্তানী সহজতর ও উন্নততর করার জন্য স্থল বন্দর প্রতিষ্ঠা এবং উহার পরিচালনা, ব্যবস্থাপনা, উন্নয়ন, সম্প্রসারণ ও সংরক্ষণের জন্য স্থলবন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রতিষ্ঠাকল্পে প্রণীত আইন

যেহেতু স্থলপথে পণ্য আমদানী ও রপ্তানী সহজতর ও উন্নততর করার জন্য স্থলবন্দর প্রতিষ্ঠা এবং উহার পরিচালনা, ব্যবস্থাপনা, উন্নয়ন, সম্প্রসারণ, সংরক্ষণ ও আনুষঙ্গিক বিষয়াদির জন্য স্থলবন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রতিষ্ঠাকল্পে বিধান করা সমীচীন ও প্রয়োজনীয় ;

সেহেতু এতদ্বারা নিম্নরূপ আইন করা হইল :-

১। সংক্ষিপ্ত শিরোনাম ও প্রবর্তন।—(১) এই আইন বাংলাদেশ স্থলবন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ আইন, ২০০১ নামে অভিহিত হইবে।

(২) সরকার, গেজেটে প্রজ্ঞাপন দ্বারা, যে তারিখ নির্ধারণ করিবে সেই তারিখে এই আইন বলবৎ হইবে।

২। সজ্ঞা।—বিষয় বা প্রসংগের পরিপন্থী কোন কিছু না থাকিলে, এই আইনে-

- (ক) "কর্তৃপক্ষ" অর্থ এই আইনের দ্বারা ৪ এর অধীন প্রতিষ্ঠিত বাংলাদেশ স্থল বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ ;
- (খ) "চেয়ারম্যান" অর্থ বোর্ডের চেয়ারম্যান ;
- (গ) "নির্ধারিত" অর্থ এই আইনের অধীনে প্রণীত বিধি দ্বারা নির্ধারিত ;
- (ঘ) "প্রবিধান" অর্থ এই আইনের অধীন প্রণীত প্রবিধান ;
- (ঙ) "বিধি" অর্থ এই আইনের অধীন প্রণীত বিধি ;
- (চ) "অপারেটর" অর্থ ধারা ৯ (১) এর অধীন নিযুক্ত অপারেটর ;
- (ছ) "বোর্ড" অর্থ এই আইনের ধারা ৬ এর অধীন গঠিত বোর্ড ;
- (জ) "সদস্য" অর্থ বোর্ডের সদস্য ;
- (ঝ) "স্থল বন্দর" অর্থ এই আইনের ধারা ৩ এর অধীন ঘোষিত কোন স্থল বন্দর ।

৩। স্থল বন্দর ঘোষণা ও উহার সীমা নির্ধারণ।- Customs Act, 1969 (IV of 1969) এর section 9 এর Clause (b) এর অধীন ঘোষিত কোন স্থল শুদ্ধ স্টেশন (land customs station) কে সরকার, সরকারী গেজেটে প্রজ্ঞাপন দ্বারা, স্থল বন্দর বলিয়া ঘোষণা করিতে পারিবে :

তবে শর্ত থাকে যে, সরকার সরকারী গেজেটে প্রজ্ঞাপন দ্বারা, কোন স্থল বন্দরের সীমা পরিবর্তন ও পরিবর্ধন করিতে পারিবে ।

৪। কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রতিষ্ঠা।—(১) এই আইন বলবৎ হইবার পর সরকার, যতশীঘ্র সম্ভব, এই আইনের উদ্দেশ্য পূরণকল্পে, সরকারী গেজেটে প্রজ্ঞাপন দ্বারা, বাংলাদেশ স্থল বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ নামে একটি কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রতিষ্ঠা করিবে ।

(২) কর্তৃপক্ষ একটি সর্ববিধিবদ্ধ সংস্থা হইবে এবং উহার স্থায়ী ধারাবাহিকতা ও একটি সাধারণ সীলমোহর থাকিবে এবং এই আইনের বিধানাবলী সাপেক্ষে, উহার স্থাবর ও অস্থাবর উভয় প্রকার সম্পত্তি অর্জন করার, অধিকারে রাখার ও হস্তান্তর করার ক্ষমতা থাকিবে এবং উহার নামে উহার পক্ষে বা বিরুদ্ধে মামলা দায়ের করা যাইবে ।

৫। পরিচালনা ও প্রশাসন।—(১) কর্তৃপক্ষের পরিচালনা ও প্রশাসন একটি বোর্ডের উপর ন্যস্ত থাকিবে এবং কর্তৃপক্ষ যে সকল ক্ষমতা প্রয়োগ ও কার্য সম্পাদন করিতে পারিবে বোর্ডও সেই সকল ক্ষমতা প্রয়োগ ও কার্য সম্পাদন করিতে পারিবে ।

(২) বোর্ড উহার কার্যাবলী সম্পাদনের ক্ষেত্রে সরকার কর্তৃক সময় সময় প্রদত্ত নির্দেশনা অনুসরণ করিবে ।

৬। বোর্ড গঠন।—(১) বোর্ড নিম্নবর্ণিত সদস্য সমন্বয়ে গঠিত হইবে, যথা :-

- (ক) একজন চেয়ারম্যান ;
- (খ) তিনজন সার্বক্ষণিক সদস্য ; এবং
- (গ) তিনজন খণ্ডকালীন সদস্য, যাহাদের মধ্যে একজন আভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ বিভাগের কর্মকর্তা এবং অন্য একজন শিল্প ও বাণিজ্যে নিয়োজিত বেসরকারী ব্যক্তি হইবেন ।

(২) চেয়ারম্যান ও সার্বক্ষণিক সদস্যগণ সরকার কর্তৃক নিযুক্ত হইবেন ও কর্তৃপক্ষের সার্বক্ষণিক কর্মকর্তা হইবেন এবং সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত মেয়াদে ও শর্তাধীনে কর্মরত থাকিবেন।

(৩) ঋতুকালীন সদস্যগণ সরকার কর্তৃক নিযুক্ত হইবেন এবং নিয়োগের তারিখ হইতে দুই বৎসরের মেয়াদে স্থায় পদে বহাল থাকিবেন এবং পুনরায় নিয়োগ যোগ্য হইবেন।

(৪) চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃপক্ষের প্রধান নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা হইবেন।

(৫) চেয়ারম্যানের পদ শূন্য হইলে কিংবা অনুপস্থিতি বা অসুস্থতা হেতু বা অন্য কোন কারণে চেয়ারম্যান দায়িত্ব পালনে অসমর্থ হইলে, শূন্য পদে নবনিযুক্ত চেয়ারম্যান কার্যভার গ্রহণ না করা পর্যন্ত কিংবা চেয়ারম্যান পুনরায় স্থায় দায়িত্ব পালনে সমর্থ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত সরকার কর্তৃক মনোনীত কোন সার্বক্ষণিক সদস্য চেয়ারম্যানের দায়িত্ব পালন করিবেন।

৭। **বোর্ডের সভা**।—(১) এই ধারার অন্যান্য বিধানাবলী সাপেক্ষে, বোর্ড উহার সভায় কার্যপদ্ধতি নির্ধারণ করিতে পারিবে।

(২) বোর্ডের সভা চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত স্থান ও সময়ে অনুষ্ঠিত হইবে।

তবে শর্ত থাকে যে, প্রতি দুই মাসে বোর্ডের কমপক্ষে একটি সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হইবে।

(৩) বোর্ডের সভায় কোরামের জন্য একজন সার্বক্ষণিক সদস্যসহ অন্যান্য দুইজন সদস্যের উপস্থিতির প্রয়োজন হইবে।

(৪) বোর্ডের সভায় প্রত্যেক সদস্যের একটি করিয়া ভোট থাকিবে এবং ভোটের সমতার ক্ষেত্রে সভায় সভাপতিত্বকারী ব্যক্তির একটি দ্বিতীয় বা নির্ণায়ক ভোট প্রদানের ক্ষমতা থাকিবে।

(৫) বোর্ডের সকল সভায় চেয়ারম্যান সভাপতিত্ব করিবেন এবং তাঁহার অনুপস্থিতিতে চেয়ারম্যান হইতে এতদুদ্দেশ্যে ক্ষমতাপ্রাপ্ত কোন সার্বক্ষণিক সদস্য উক্ত সভায় সভাপতিত্ব করিবেন।

(৬) বোর্ডের কোন কার্য বা কার্যধারা কেবলমাত্র বোর্ডের কোন সদস্যপদে শূন্যতা বা বোর্ড গঠনে ত্রুটি থাকার কারণে অবৈধ হইবে না এবং তৎসম্পর্কে কোন প্রশ্নও উত্থাপন করা যাইবে না।

৮। **কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা ও কার্যাবলী**।—(১) এই আইনের অন্যান্য বিধান সাপেক্ষে, কর্তৃপক্ষ এই আইনের উদ্দেশ্য পূরণকল্পে প্রয়োজনীয় ক্ষমতা প্রয়োগ ও কার্য সম্পাদন করিতে পারিবে।

(২) উপ-ধারা (১) এর অধীন ক্ষমতা ও কার্যাবলীর সামগ্রিকতা ফুন্ড না করিয়া, কর্তৃপক্ষ বিশেষ করিয়া নিম্নরূপ ক্ষমতা প্রয়োগ ও কার্য সম্পাদন করিতে পারিবে, যথা :-

(ক) স্থল বন্দর পরিচালনা, ব্যবস্থাপনা, উন্নয়ন, সম্প্রসারণ ও সংরক্ষণের নীতি প্রণয়ন ;

(খ) স্থল বন্দরের পণ্য গ্রহণ, সংরক্ষণ ও প্রদানের জন্য অপারেটর নিয়োগ ;

(গ) সরকারের পূর্বনুমোদনক্রমে স্থল বন্দর ব্যবহারকারীদের নিকট হইতে আদায়যোগ্য কর, টোল, রেইট ও ফিসের তফসিল প্রণয়ন ;

(ঘ) এই আইনের উদ্দেশ্য পূরণকল্পে কাহারও সহিত কোন চুক্তি সম্পাদন।

(৩) কর্তৃপক্ষের দায়িত্বশীল পণ্যের ক্ষতি, ধ্বংস বা বিনষ্টের জন্য কর্তৃপক্ষ এইরূপ দায়ী থাকিবে যেরূপ Contract Act, 1872 (IX of 1872) এর sections 151, 152, 161 এবং 164 এর অধীন একজন বেইলী (bailee) দায়ী থাকেন :

তবে শর্ত থাকে যে, কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক কোন পণ্যের দায়িত্ব গ্রহণের তারিখ হইতে দশদিন অতিক্রান্ত হওয়ার পর এই উপ-ধারার অধীন কর্তৃপক্ষকে দায়ী করা যাইবে না।

৯। অপারেটর।—(১) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন স্থল বন্দরে পণ্য গ্রহণ, সংরক্ষণ ও প্রদানের জন্য প্রয়োজন মনে করিলে, নির্ধারিত পদ্ধতি ও শর্তে কোন ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অপারেটর হিসাবে নিয়োগ করিতে পারিবে।

(২) অপারেটরের দায়িত্বাধীন পণ্যের ক্ষেত্রে ধারা ৭ এর উপ-ধারা (৩) এর বিধান প্রয়োজনীয় সংশোধন সাপেক্ষে, প্রযোজ্য হইবে।

১০। কর ইত্যাদির তফসিল।—কর্তৃপক্ষ সরকারের পূর্বানুমোদনক্রমে এবং সরকারী গেজেটে প্রজ্ঞাপন দ্বারা স্থলবন্দর ব্যবহারকারীদের নিকট হইতে আদায়যোগ্য কর, টোল, রেইট ও ফিসের তফসিল প্রণয়ন করিবে।

১১। টোল ইত্যাদি মওকুফ ও আদায়।—(১) কর্তৃপক্ষ বিশেষ ক্ষেত্রে, সরকারের অনুমোদনক্রমে, ধারা ১০ এর অধীন প্রণীত তফসিল অনুযায়ী আদায়যোগ্য কর, টোল, রেইট ও ফিস সম্পূর্ণ বা আংশিক মওকুফ করিতে পারিবে।

(২) কোন স্থল বন্দর ব্যবহারকারী ধারা ১০ এর অধীন প্রণীত তফসিল অনুযায়ী আদায়যোগ্য কর, টোল, রেইট, ফিস বা অন্য কোনো পাওনা পরিশোধ করিতে ব্যর্থ হইলে উহা Public Demands Recovery Act, 1913 (Ben, Act III of 1913) এর অধীন সরকারী দাবী (Public Demand) হিসাবে আদায়যোগ্য হইবে।

(৩) স্থল বন্দরে রক্ষিত কোন পণ্য সময় মত খালাস করা না হইলে অথবা উক্ত পণ্যের কোন দাবীদার পাওয়া না গেলে কর্তৃপক্ষ Customs Act, 1969 (IV of 1969) এর বিধান অনুযায়ী উহার বিলিবন্দেজ (disposal) করিবে।

১২। কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী নিয়োগ ইত্যাদি।—(১) কর্তৃপক্ষ উহার কার্যাবলী সুষ্ঠুভাবে সম্পাদনের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় সংখ্যক কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী নিয়োগ করিতে পারিবে :

তবে শর্ত থাকে যে, সরকারের পূর্বানুমোদন ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীর পদ সৃষ্টি করিতে পারিবে না।

(২) কর্তৃপক্ষের কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীদের নিয়োগ পদ্ধতি ও চাকুরীর শর্তাবলী প্রবিধান দ্বারা নির্ধারিত হইবে।

(৩) সরকার, সর্বমুঠ পক্ষগণের সম্মতিক্রমে, কর্তৃপক্ষের কোন কর্মকর্তা বা কর্মচারীকে নিম্নবর্ণিত যে কোন সংস্থায় এবং উক্ত সংস্থাসমূহের কোন কর্মকর্তা বা কর্মচারীকে কর্তৃপক্ষে প্রেরণে নিয়োগ করিতে পারিবে, যথাঃ-

- (ক) মংলা বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ (Mongla Port Authority) ;
- (খ) চট্টগ্রাম বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ (Chittagong Port Authority) ;
- (গ) বাংলাদেশ আভ্যন্তরীণ নৌ-পরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) ;
- (ঘ) বাংলাদেশ আভ্যন্তরীণ নৌ-পরিবহন কর্পোরেশন (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation) ;
- (ঙ) বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন (Bangladesh Shipping Corporation)।

১৩। ক্ষমতা অর্পণ।—কর্তৃপক্ষ, সাধারণ অথবা কোন বিশেষ আদেশ দ্বারা, উহার যে কোন ক্ষমতা বা দায়িত্ব সুনির্দিষ্ট শর্তে চেয়ারম্যান, অন্য কোন সদস্য বা উহার কোন কর্মকর্তাকে অর্পণ করিতে পারিবে।

১৪। কর্তৃপক্ষের তহবিল।—(১) কর্তৃপক্ষের একটি তহবিল থাকিবে এবং উহাতে নিম্নবর্ণিত অর্থ জমা হইবে, যথা :—

- (ক) সরকার কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনুদান ;
- (খ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক গৃহীত ঋণ ;
- (গ) কোন স্থানীয় কর্তৃপক্ষ বা অন্য কোন ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনুদান ;
- (ঘ) কর্তৃপক্ষের সম্পত্তি বিক্রয়লব্ধ অর্থ ;
- (ঙ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক আদায়কৃত কর, টোল, রেইট ও ফিস ;
- (চ) অন্য কোন উৎস হইতে প্রাপ্ত অর্থ।

(২) কর্তৃপক্ষের তহবিলে জমাকৃত অর্থ কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংকে জমা রাখা হইবে এবং নির্ধারিত পদ্ধতিতে উক্ত অর্থ উঠানো যাইবে।

(৩) কর্তৃপক্ষের তহবিল হইতে উহার প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যয় নির্বাহ করা হইবে।

(৪) কর্তৃপক্ষের তহবিল বা উহার অংশবিশেষ সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত খাতে বিনিয়োগ করা যাইবে।

১৫। তহবিলের উন্নত অর্থ সরকারী তহবিলে জমা প্রদান।— প্রতি অর্থ বৎসর শেষে কর্তৃপক্ষ উহার তহবিলের উন্নত অর্থ এতদুদ্দেশ্যে সরকারের নির্দেশনা, যদি থাকে, সাপেক্ষে, সরকারী তহবিলে জমা প্রদান করিবেন।

১৬। বাজেট।—কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রতি বৎসর সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে পরবর্তী অর্থ বৎসর বার্ষিক বাজেট বিবরণী সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত ফরমে অনুমোদনের জন্য সরকারের নিকট পেশ করিবে এবং উহাতে উক্ত অর্থ বৎসরে সরকারের নিকট হইতে কর্তৃপক্ষের কি পরিমাণ অর্থের প্রয়োজন, উহার উল্লেখ থাকিবে।

১৭। হিসাব রক্ষণ ও নিরীক্ষা।—(১) কর্তৃপক্ষ নির্ধারিত পদ্ধতিতে ও ফরমে উহার হিসাব রক্ষণ করিবে এবং হিসাবের বার্ষিক বিবরণী প্রস্তুত করিবে।

(২) বাংলাদেশ মহা-হিসাব নিরীক্ষক ও নিয়ন্ত্রক, অতঃপর মহা-হিসাব নিরীক্ষক নামে অভিহিত, প্রতি বৎসর কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট প্রেরণ করিবেন।

(৩) উপ-ধারা (২) মোতাবেক হিসাব নিরীক্ষার উদ্দেশ্যে মহা-হিসাব নিরীক্ষক কিংবা তাহার নিকট হইতে ক্ষমতাপ্রাপ্ত কোন ব্যক্তি কর্তৃপক্ষের সকল রেকর্ড, দলিল-সম্বল, নগদ বা ব্যাংকে গচ্ছিত অর্থ, জামানত, ভান্ডার এবং অন্যবিধ সম্পত্তি পরীক্ষা করিয়া দেখিতে পারিবেন এবং কর্তৃপক্ষের যে কোন সদস্য, কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীকে জিজ্ঞাসাবাদ করিতে পারিবেন।

(৪) কর্তৃপক্ষের হিসাব প্রত্যেক অর্থ বৎসরে একবার বোর্ড কর্তৃক নিয়ুক্ত, কোন নিরীক্ষক দ্বারা পরীক্ষিত ও নিরীক্ষিত হইবে।

(৫) কর্তৃপক্ষ উক্ত নিরীক্ষককে বোর্ড কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত হারে পারিতোষিক দিবেন।

(৬) প্রত্যেক অর্থ বৎসর সমাপ্তির দুই মাসের মধ্যে কর্তৃপক্ষের হিসাব নিরীক্ষা প্রতিবেদন অনুমোদিত হইতে হইবে।

১৮। প্রতিবেদন।—(১) প্রতি অর্থ বৎসর শেষ হইবার পরবর্তী তিন মাসের মধ্যে কর্তৃপক্ষ তৎকর্তৃক উক্ত অর্থ বৎসরে সম্পাদিত কার্যাবলীর বিবরণ সম্বলিত বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদন সরকারের নিকট পেশ করিবে।

(২) সরকার প্রয়োজনমত কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট হইতে যে কোন সময় উহার যে কোন কাজের প্রতিবেদন বা বিবরণী আহ্বান করিতে পারিবে এবং কর্তৃপক্ষ উহা সরকারের নিকট প্রেরণ করিতে বাধ্য থাকিবে।

১৯। কর্তৃপক্ষের জন্য জমি হুকুমদখল বা অধিগ্রহণ।—কর্তৃপক্ষের কার্যাবলী সম্পাদনের জন্য কোন জমি প্রয়োজন হইলে উহা জনস্বার্থে প্রয়োজনীয় বলিয়া বিবেচিত হইবে এবং এতদুদ্দেশ্যে উহা The Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance, 1982 (II of 1982) এর বিধান মোতাবেক হুকুমদখল বা অধিগ্রহণ করা যাইবে।

২০। জনসেবক।—কর্তৃপক্ষের চেয়ারম্যান, অন্যান্য সদস্য, কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীগণ Penal Codo (Act XLV of 1860) এর section 21 এ public servant (জনসেবক) কথাটি যে অর্থে ব্যবহৃত হইয়াছে সেই অর্থে public servant (জনসেবক) বলিয়া গণ্য হইবেন।

২১। বিধি প্রণয়নের ক্ষমতা।—সরকার এই আইনের উদ্দেশ্য পূরণকল্পে, সরকারী গেজেটে প্রজ্ঞাপন দ্বারা বিধি প্রণয়ন করিতে পারিবে।

২২। প্রবিধান প্রণয়নের ক্ষমতা।—কর্তৃপক্ষ, এই আইনের উদ্দেশ্য পূরণকল্পে, সরকারের পূর্বানুমোদনক্রমে এবং সরকারী গেজেটে প্রজ্ঞাপন দ্বারা, এই আইন বা বিধির সহিত অসংগতিপূর্ণ নহে এই রূপ প্রবিধান প্রণয়ন করিতে পারিবে।

২৩। অসুবিধা দূরীকরণ।—এই আইনের বিধানাবলী কার্যকর করিবার ক্ষেত্রে কোন অসুবিধা দেখা দিলে সরকার উক্ত অসুবিধা দূরীকরণার্থ লিখিত আদেশ দ্বারা, প্রয়োজনীয় যে কোন ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করিতে পারিবে।

কাজী রকিবউদ্দীন আহমদ
সচিব।

Appendix-10: Terms of reference

Terms of Reference (revised)

Consultancy/Research firm for conducting 04 studies suggested by Project Steering Committee (PSC) in FY 2021-22.

Background

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received an SDR 150 million Credit from the International Development Association (IDA) - a member of the World Bank Group - for financing the cost of the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project I (BRCP-1), being jointly implemented by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA), National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Ministry of Commerce. The second component of this umbrella project is being implemented by the Ministry of Commerce as a separate technical assistance project. The overall objective of this technical assistance project is to strengthen trade related institutional capacity in order to ensure active and sustainable cooperation between multiple trade-related stakeholders and economic empowerment of women traders.

This technical assistance project consists of following three (3) components:

- Component A: Develop (pilot) programs to support female traders and entrepreneurs. This component will pilot activities to help address barriers to women becoming more integrated into regional and global supply chains and trading opportunities.
- Component B: Capacity Development Support for the National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committee. The inter-ministerial National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committee (NTTFC) has been set up to coordinate all trade and transport-related policies and activities in Bangladesh, and will also serve as the Advisory Committee for the Project.
- Component C: Improvements to Bangladesh Trade Portal and to set up a National Enquiry Point for Trade. The Bangladesh Trade Portal (BTP) was launched in March 2016. This component will support further up gradation of the BTP to expand its functionality to include information of relevance to potential Bangladesh exporters and to ensure that content is kept up to date. This component will also set up the National Enquiry Point for Trade, which will help Bangladesh to meet a key requirement of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

The Ministry of Commerce intends to apply part of the IDA Credit for procuring consultancy services from qualified research/consultancy firms or institutions/individuals to conduct three studies selected from the list of studies identified under NTTFC activities of the project (Component B). These studies aim to develop in-depth understanding about three relevant areas of trade facilitation and are directly linked with the activities of three implementing agencies of the BRCP-1 umbrella project.

Study 2: A Compiled policy and regulatory guidelines /standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to International Trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentations and related matters

In Bangladesh Land Ports are governed and managed by the "Bangladesh Land port authority" (BLPA). This Authority was established in accordance with the Bangladesh Land Port Authority Act, 2001 in order to facilitate better exportation and importation between Bangladesh and its neighbouring countries. BLPA has been active in seeking the improvement of Land routes in Bangladesh ,especially looking at infrastructure development initiatives, increase the efficiency of cargo handling , improving storage facilities and fostering public-private partnership for effective and responsive service delivery at the border. Its activities began under the regulation of the Ministry of Shipping. So far, 23 Land Customs Stations have been declared as Land Ports of which 22 are with India and only one is with Myanmar. These ports are managed by the BLPA as well as private port operators on a build-operate-transfer basis. With the goal of supporting regional connectivity, the BLPA is also active in the South Asia Sub regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) meeting and other Land Port working group meetings, sharing information on Bangladesh's ongoing projects and experiences and retaining the knowledge needed to remain at the forefront of work that advances regional connectivity.

The Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) does not make any clear compiled policy and regulatory guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) regarding Cross Border Land Port Management and *modus operandi* of international trade, transport formalities, procedures and documentations. Accordingly, given the fact that land port management as part of the country's overall trade economic advancement now need to adopts a broad, comprehensive approach relevant to international good practice In order to achieve the goal of trade facilitation there is a need to make trade across borders (imports and exports) faster, and cheaper and more predictable, whilst ensuring its safety and security. In terms of focus, it is about simplifying and harmonizing formalities, procedures, and the related exchange of information and documents between the various partners in the supply chain. There are great potential gains from trade facilitation for both governments and the business community. . Traders across the border will gain in terms of higher predictability and speed of operations and lower transaction costs, resulting in more competitive exports on global markets. For countries as a whole, reducing unnecessary delays and costs attracts investments, and supports growth and job creation.

In order to facilitate effective border operations, there is a need to have an enabling environment that involves different types of interventions and activities addressing the various dimensions of the government. This includes modernization of border management procedure aiming at a clear, concise, transparent framework. However, it requires an in depth analysis of present land port management and international standards and best practices that are critical for border operations. This study has therefore aimed to conduct a study to do an elaborate analysis of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Cross Boarder Land Port Management that will explore the answers and guide the government through preparing recommendations in the following areas of a compiled policy and regulatory guidelines of border operations:

1. What are the current status of the Bangladesh Land Port Management , which includes speedy international trade procedure, transport formalities, documentations and related issues ;

2. Major institutional weakness for Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border management in Bangladesh including Implementation Gaps and Procedural Hindrances Identified ;
3. Identify the current co-ordination mechanism at the border point and one stop service for the Land Port Management and SOP should be cover both export and import point of view and as the mode of operation varies from the one Land port to other , so there should be categorization need to be incorporated in the SOP;
4. What are the international standards , best practices and technologies elsewhere in terms operation of the Land Port to facilitate better management at the borders;;
5. Requirements of Legislative, Administrative and Policy Reforms Identified
6. What adjustments or modifications are required for making the Bangladesh Land Port management efficient, effective and harmonized for trade facilitation?