

Bangladesh Reform Watch

A Citizen's Initiative for a Country in Transition

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Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ

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1. Evolution of Our Thoughts

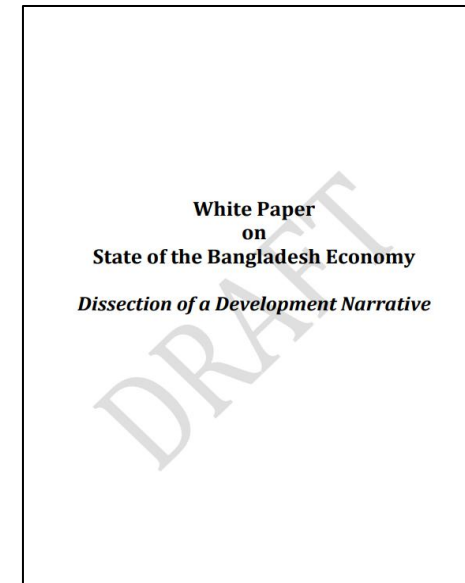
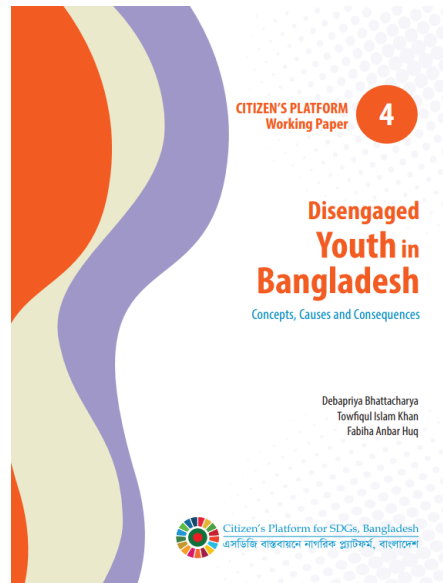
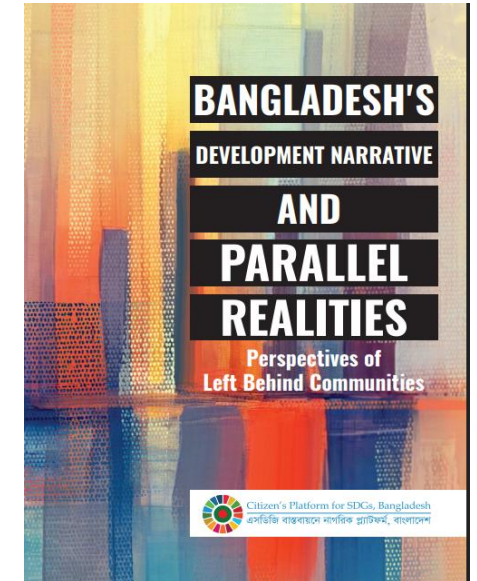
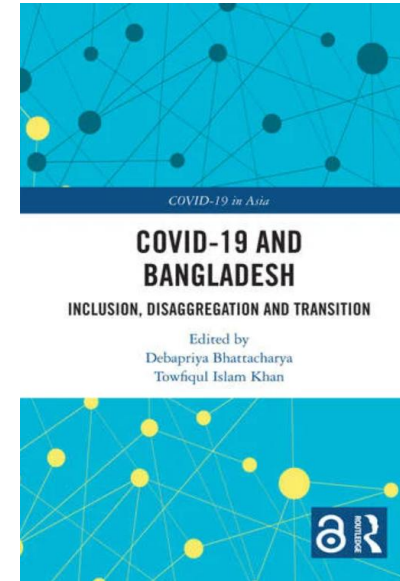
Our specific interventions over the years

Generating evidence and data to articulate the interests and concerns of disadvantaged communities and suggest/promote remedial policy measures/policy reforms in favour of the disadvantaged population groups

Creating a conducive space for enhancing interactions between the policy/political actors and citizens (and/or their representatives) with a view to protecting the democratic accountability process

Strengthening the institutional capacity and collective solidarity of the CSOs and entities representing the disadvantaged communities

making the LNOBs more visible in the policy realm and sustaining their voices in the uncertain (or evolving) civic space

[illegible]

1. Evolution of Our Thoughts

Pre-July Uprising Initiatives

- COVID-19 and Bangladesh: Inclusion, Disaggregation and Transition
- Bangladesh's Development Narrative and Parallel Realities
- Citizen's Agenda 2023: Towards a Different (a set of policy briefs)
- National Budget Analysis through LNOB Lenses
- Social audits on investing in Public Primary Education
- Analysing the persistent challenge of 'youth disengagement'
- Identifying youth priorities on policymaking of Bangladesh

How we have arrived at



Bangladesh Reform Watch

Post-July Uprising Initiatives

- Post-uprising formal and informal stakeholder discussions on civic space and policy activism
- "White Paper on State of the Bangladesh Economy: Dissection of a Development Narrative"
- Social audits on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions
- People-centric Reform for Good Governance- establishing strong demand for institutional reforms to empower citizens
- Bringing LNOB perspectives to the forefront of Bangladesh's VNR Process
- Analysing Bangladesh Economy 2025-26: Policy Reforms and National Budget
- Foresight Analysis on democratic transition and reform delivery

2. Bangladesh's Reform Legacy

Bangladesh is not new in the reform realm.

- ❑ Reforms in the immediate post-independence era
- ❑ Liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation of the late 1970s and early 1980s
- ❑ Enactment of the Local Government Reorganisation Ordinance (LGRD) in 1982 led to the conversion of thanas into upazilas, among others
- ❑ Structural adjustment programmes and poverty alleviation efforts of the 1990s
- ❑ Emphasis on digitalisation since 2010

2. Bangladesh's Reform Legacy

Some successful reform examples-

- i. Introduction of **social protection scheme** – e.g., The 'Elderly Allowance' programme introduced in the 1996-97 financial year to provide social security through public provisioning.
- ii. **Counter-cyclical measures** – e.g., the **1998 Bangladesh flood was one of the most devastating floods** of the 1990s during Finance Minister S.A.M.S. Kibria's tenure.
- iii. Introduction of **VAT** (value added tax) by Saifur Rahman as the Finance Minister for the first time in Bangladesh in 1992 as a part of expanding the tax net and economic rehabilitation.
- iv. Adoption of a **managed floating exchange** rate regime on May 30, 2003, under Finance Minister Saifur Rahman.

3. Current Reform Experience

1. Several Commissions, Committees and Task Forces were formed to work out the reform measures
2. A Task Force Report identified the low-hanging fruits re reforms
3. About a couple of hundred reform measures were identified, which could be implemented through regulatory actions and executive measures
4. The Chief Advisor's office instructed ministries and divisions to promptly implement the reform proposals that can be carried out independently, without requiring further approval
5. The Chief Advisor's office also published a booklet on June 15, 2025, named "Reforms by the Interim Government"

6. July Declaration on 5 August 2025

3. Current Reform Experience

Did these satisfy the necessary requisites for successful reforms?

- ☐ Strong demonstrated will of the regime in favour of reforms
- ☐ Clear and shared vision of the leadership regarding reforms
- ☐ Competent and coordinated delivery of the reform measures
- ☐ Effective strategic communication regarding agenda and delivery
- ☐ Mobilisation of stakeholder alliance in support of reforms
- ☐ Accessible real-time system regarding implementation monitoring and impact assessment
- ☐ Reflecting the concerns and aspirations of the LNOBs and the core values of anti-discrimination

Possibly not . . .

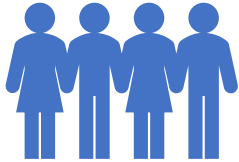
4. Why the 'Bangladesh Reform Watch'?

- A citizen-led '**Bangladesh Reform Watch**' is established for articulating an inclusive reform agenda, tracking its delivery and strengthening accountability of the implementation process.
- The core objective of the initiative is to provide constructive inputs in this process of national transition and strengthen accountability in view of the consequent policy and institutional changes.
- It is expected to eventually contribute to safeguarding the civic space and universal human rights of the citizens (especially those who are facing deepened marginalisation) in this evolving electoral context.

Our core priority - voice, agency, accountability

Leave no one behind

5. Our Approach



Embedding the **perspectives of the marginalised populations** in the reform delivery process

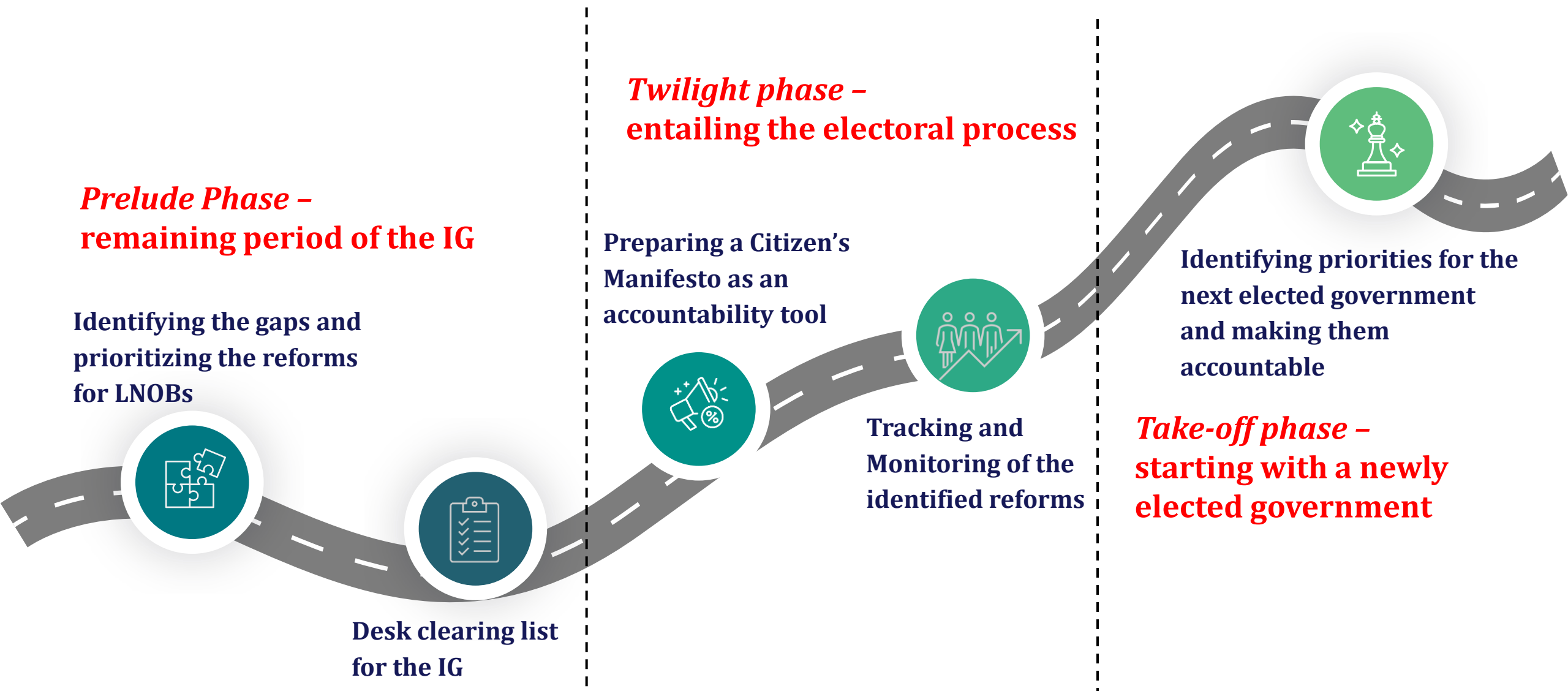


Reflecting the **sub-national and local demands** in the reform priorities

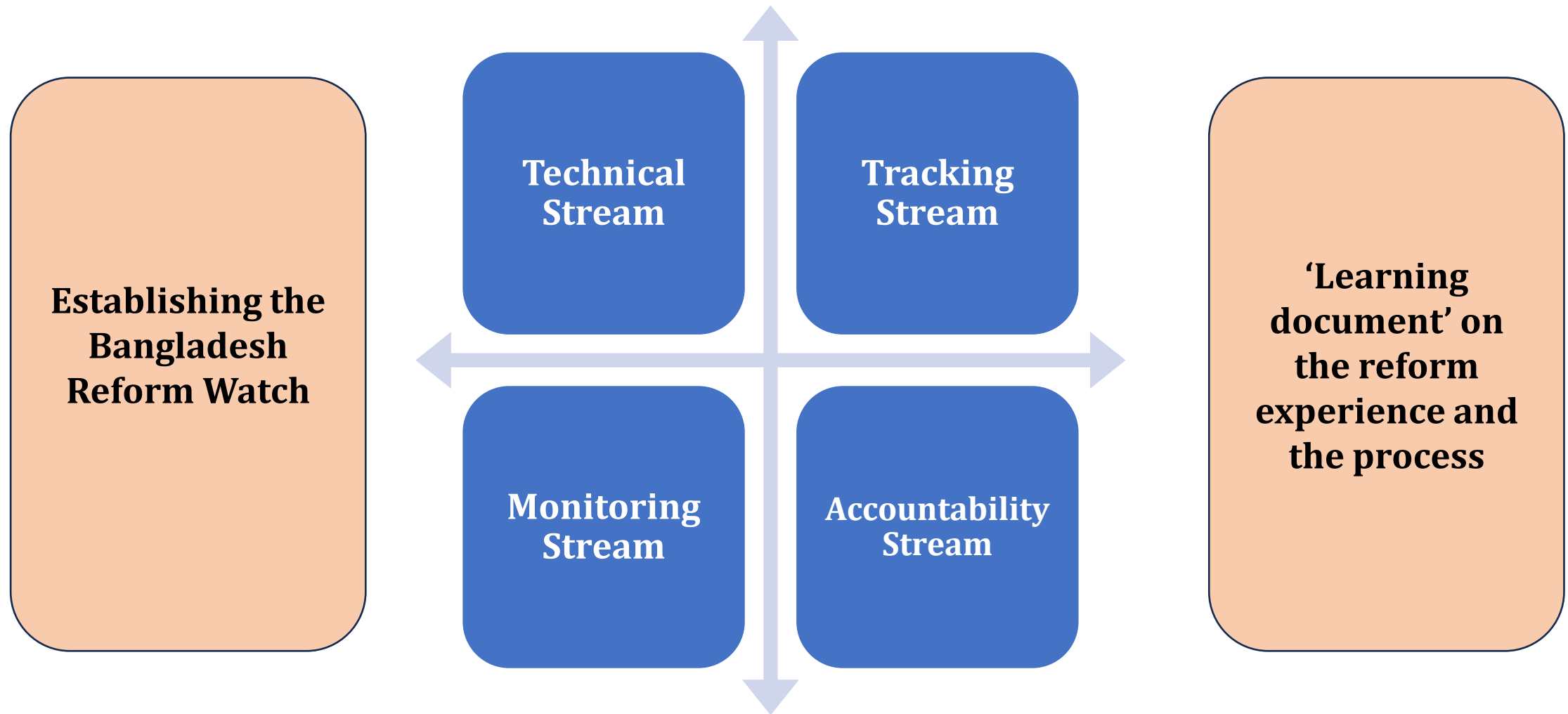


Assessing the **fiscal viability** for successful reform delivery

6. A Strategic Roadmap



7. Planned Interventions



7. Planned Interventions

Establishing the Bangladesh Reform Watch

- Scoping consultations with the supporters group, partner organisations, CSO actors and issue experts
- Formation of a technical team/working team and a network of networks
- Formation of a Reference Group of policy actors and experts
- Developing a draft scope and operational modality for the 'Bangladesh Reform Watch'

7. Planned Interventions

Technical Stream

- Developing policy notes on feasibility assessment and analysis of the implications of the critical reform delivery
- Embedding the reform priorities in the political commitment and election pledges of the major political parties
- Developing a Citizen's Manifesto
- Mid-term programme for the new government

7. Planned Interventions

Tracking Stream

- A reform tracker (digital platform) to track reform-related movements (including progress) and opinions
- Regular short-form content on social media and audio-visual documentaries that will contribute to the sustainability of the advocacy efforts

Monitoring Stream

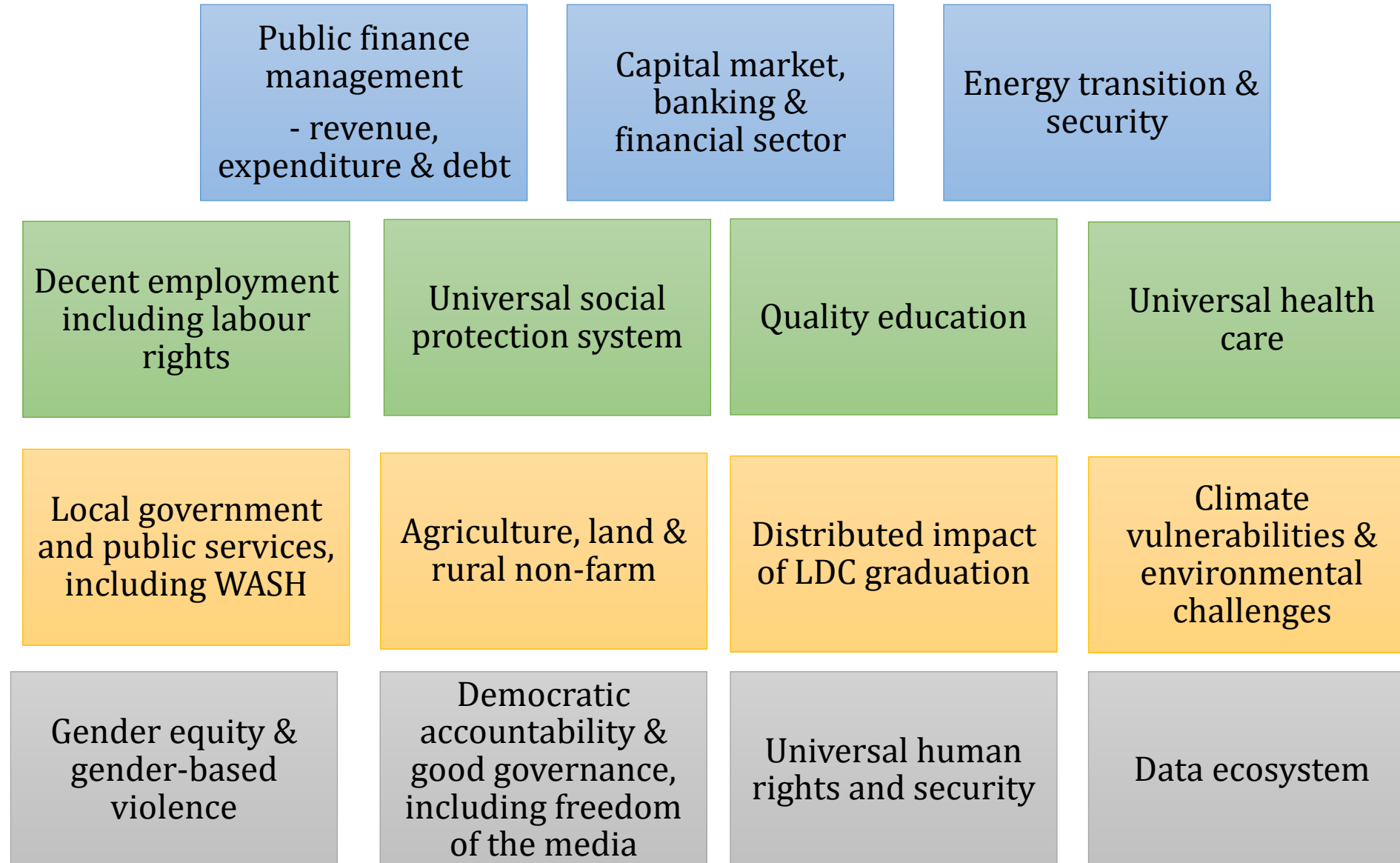
- Periodic review/appreciation of the proposed reform outcomes (on priority themes) under a dedicated exercise titled 'state of reform'
- Informal and formal sessions and consultations with stakeholder groups

7. Planned Interventions

Accountability Stream

- 100-day work programme for the new government
- Townhall Meetings during the pre- and post-elections period
- Social audits and public hearings
- Public dialogues/multi-stakeholder discussions/National Conference
- Media briefings
- Lectures for journalists on governance and reform-related issues
- Stakeholder discussions, advocacy and lobbying meetings

8. Core Issues for Bangladesh Reform Watch



9. Guiding Principles

- ✓ Pruning the recommendations of the commissions, task forces and committees of the interim regime through the lens of the marginalised population and incorporating the missing elements
- ✓ Pursuing a reform agenda focusing on areas concerning strengthening productive capacity and inclusive development to influence the electoral debates
- ✓ Embedding the anti-discrimination and equity agenda in the reform process of the new government
- ✓ Strengthening the demand side (collective citizens' voice) in shaping, delivering and monitoring the concerned reform agenda
- ✓ Building partnerships and creating a 'network of networks' for realising the shared vision of leaving no one behind

Thank You



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