



KUSHTIA

Citizen-centric e-Service Design

Consultation Report | January 2026

Contents

Executive Summary	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Background & Objectives.....	3
3. Highlights from Presentations	4
3.1 Keynote Presentation.....	4
3.2 District Presentation	5
4. Summary of Thematic Group Discussions	5
4.1 Digital Infrastructure and System Integration	5
4.2 Human Capacity and Digital Literacy	6
4.3 Governance, Accountability, and Service Delivery.....	7
4.4 Inclusion, Access, and Citizen Trust.....	8
4.5 Localization, Innovation, and Sustainability	8
5. Recommendations	9
6. Highlights from Speeches and Reflections	12
6.1 Compassion as the Core of Public Service	12
6.2 Grounding Digital Reform in Citizen Experience and Project Overview	13
6.3 Digital Services as a Continuous Journey.....	13
6.4 Reducing Time, Cost, and Visits	14
6.5 Citizen Feedback as the Basis for Better Policy	14
7. Conclusion	14
Annex A: Event Agenda	16
Annex B: Participant Composition and Thematic Focus.....	17

Executive Summary

The District Consultation on **Citizen-Centric e-Service Design (CCeD)** in Kushtia was held on December 8, 2025, as part of the **E-ffective Governance** project. This initiative, funded by the European Union, is co-hosted by the **District Administration**, the **ICT Division**, and the **Cabinet Division**, with implementation led by the **British Council** and the **e-Governance Academy (eGA)** of Estonia.

The event convened district and upazila leadership, ICT personnel, and frontline providers to diagnose where digital public services fail in practice. Rather than focusing on technical successes, the dialogue centred on high-demand services characterized by:

- **Process Friction:** Frequent delays, repeat visits, and unclear requirements.
- **Operational Gaps:** Heavy reliance on data dependencies and informal workarounds.
- **Frontline Realities:** The disconnect between central system design and the daily experience of service delivery.

Core Findings

- **Upstream System Fragility:** Participants identified that root causes of frontline failure often lie in **backend instability** and fragmented land records, which are beyond the control of local offices.
- **Governance & Accountability Gaps:** There is a critical need for **clear escalation protocols** and focal points, as officials currently lack the discretionary authority to resolve digital stalls.
- **The Literacy-Intermediary Link:** Low digital confidence among citizens, particularly in **char and remote rural areas**, creates a heavy reliance on third-party intermediaries who can exploit system complexity.
- **Training vs. Troubleshooting:** Existing capacity-building efforts often focus on basic digital literacy, leaving frontline staff and **UDC entrepreneurs** without the applied skills needed to troubleshoot real-world system errors.
- **Fragmented Interoperability:** Standalone portals require repeated entry of identical information, increasing the administrative burden on citizens and the likelihood of data inconsistencies across agencies.

Recommendations & Path Forward

Key recommendations focused on **strengthening system reliability** and backend stability, clarifying institutional roles and **discretionary authority**, and shifting training toward **scenario-driven troubleshooting**. Participants also proposed formalizing **feedback loops** between the district and national policy levels, simplifying service workflows to reduce citizen burden, and recognizing UDCs as integrated components of the service delivery ecosystem.

The consultation concluded with a shared understanding that meaningful improvement will require moving beyond surface-level digitization toward coordinated reforms across **service rules, institutional roles, and delivery support structures**. The findings and recommendations from this workshop will guide the ongoing CCeD process under the E-ffective Governance project to ensure inclusive, responsive, and sustainable digital service reforms in Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

The District Consultation on Citizen-Centric e-Service Design (CCeD) in Kushtia was convened to gather grounded, district-level insights into the design, delivery, and actual usage of digital public services. Organized under the "E-effective Governance: Accelerating E-Government and Digital Public Services in Bangladesh" project, the consultation aimed to ensure that national digital transformation efforts are rooted in the daily experiences of citizens and frontline service providers.

The consultation was designed as a working dialogue. It provided a purposeful space for stakeholders to speak frankly about how digital governance functions on the ground. Participants were encouraged to confront the digital divide, interrogate gaps in transparency and cybersecurity, and reimagine how technology can serve people equitably.

Officials and citizens laid bare the hidden hurdles, such as fragmented platforms and scarce local IT support, that often undermine progress. By fostering dialogue across administrative levels and sectors, the workshop sought to strengthen a shared understanding of responsive service delivery and identify practical pathways to turn citizen-centric ideals into everyday reality.

2. Background & Objectives

The CCeD initiative supports the Government of Bangladesh's commitment to building a public administration that is digitally enabled, responsive, and centred on the needs of its people. It aligns with national digital transformation priorities by emphasizing usability, inclusion, accountability, and trust. This initiative reflects a growing recognition that effective digital governance requires institutional coherence and local ownership to bridge the gap between policy ambitions and the lived reality of citizens.

Kushtia district was selected as a pilot for this initiative because it serves as a microcosm of the broader socio-geographic challenges facing digital inclusion in Bangladesh. The region, characterized by riverine char lands and dispersed rural settlements, contends with fragile connectivity and frequent power disruptions that often curtail consistent digital access. The primary goal of the consultation was to capture both institutional and citizen perspectives to guide the adaptive reform of digital services across sectors such as land administration, health, identity, and transport. Specifically, the consultation sought to:

- **Map field-level experiences** and challenges in accessing and delivering e-services.
- **Identify gaps** in system usability, data integration, and service accessibility.
- **Prioritise citizen and service provider feedback** to inform future design improvements.
- Generate **actionable recommendations** for strengthening coordination, accountability, and local ownership; and
- Build a shared understanding of how **national digital platforms** can better respond to **local contexts**.

3. Highlights from Presentations

3.1 Keynote Presentation

Making Digital Services Work for Citizens

Dr. Shahab Enam Khan, Professor, Jahangirnagar University

In his keynote presentation, Professor Shahab Enam Khan acknowledged the scale of progress achieved, including the rapid expansion of online public services, but cautioned that availability does not automatically translate into effective citizen experience. Drawing attention to the citizen journey, he explained how disruptions at different stages, such as access, submission, verification, and feedback, create friction that undermines trust and pushes citizens back toward manual or intermediary-led processes.

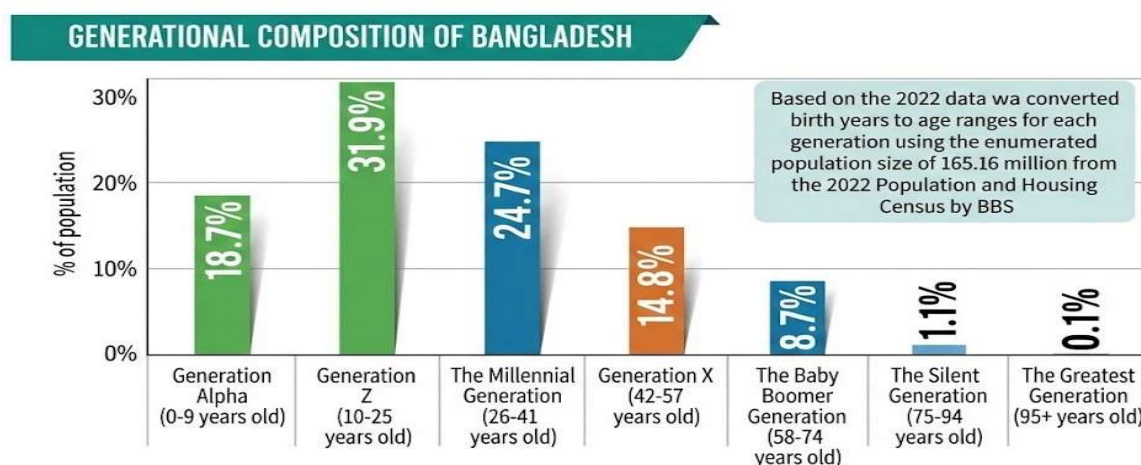


Figure 1: Generational composition of Bangladesh from the keynote presentation

He traced Bangladesh’s digital transformation journey from the inception of the Digital Bangladesh vision in 2009 to the emergence of the Smart Bangladesh agenda. He highlighted key milestones in this evolution, such as the establishment of UDCs in 2014, the expansion of mobile financial services in 2018, and the introduction of hundreds of online public services by 2021.

He emphasized that many digital systems remain vendor-driven and insufficiently accountable, weakening sustainability. Concluding his presentation, he stressed that technology alone cannot transform governance and argued that trust, accountability, and coherent data governance are the true foundations of citizen-centric digital public services.

“Digital transformation represents more than technological modernization—it embodies a fundamental reimagining of the social contract between government and citizens. When designed with equity, accountability, and user needs at the center, e-services can democratize access to governance and reduce structural inequalities,” he said.

3.2 District Presentation

Overview of Digital Public Services in Kushtia

Md. Abuzor Rahman, District ICT Officer (Programmer), Kushtia

In his district-level presentation, Md. Abuzor Rahman provided an overview of the digital public service ecosystem in Kushtia, highlighting both national platforms and district-level implementation realities. He outlined key systems supporting service delivery, including information portals, internal government platforms, and major citizen-facing services such as digital land services, e-passport, BRTA services, and integrated government service portals. He emphasized that these platforms have reduced processing time and physical visits in many cases, reflecting tangible progress in digitalization.

“Digital platforms can reduce visits in Kushtia only when local offices have reliable connectivity and citizens understand how to use the services.”

At the same time, he noted that the effectiveness of these services depends heavily on citizen awareness, reliable infrastructure, and frontline capacity. Connectivity gaps, system downtime,

and limited digital literacy continue to affect service outcomes, particularly at the union and upazila levels. He concluded by underscoring the importance of coordination, capacity building, and user-focused improvements to ensure that digital services deliver consistent and meaningful benefits to citizens.

4. Summary of Thematic Group Discussions

Following the keynote presentations and opening remarks, participants were divided into thematic working groups covering land services, social and family services, health and education services, Union Digital Centres (UDCs), and identity-related services including passport and BRTA. While each group focused on a distinct service domain, the discussions revealed a high degree of convergence around recurring challenges affecting the design, delivery, and use of digital public services in Kushtia.

Rather than treating these discussions as sector-specific issues, the findings were consolidated under five interrelated thematic areas that reflect the Citizen-Centric e-Service Design (CCeD) analytical framework. Together, these themes illustrate how technical, human, and governance constraints intersect to shape citizen experience and trust in digital public services.

4.1 Digital Infrastructure and System Integration

4.1.1 System Reliability and Connectivity Constraints

Across all groups, participants emphasized that citizen-centric service delivery depends fundamentally on reliable digital infrastructure and well-integrated systems. Participants from Union Digital Centres described situations where online systems became unavailable for several hours during peak service periods, leaving citizens waiting in queues without clear information. In several cases, citizens were

asked to return on another day after traveling long distances, reinforcing the perception that “online” services are unpredictable in practice.

4.1.2 Fragmented Land Records and Verification Challenges

In land administration, participants highlighted the fragmented nature of the e-mutation process, which

“Even with e-mutation, we still must verify records across multiple offices because land databases are not fully synchronized. This delays decisions and frustrates both applicants and officials.”

combines multiple digital and manual steps across land offices, survey records, registration systems, and courts. The lack of synchronization between historical land records and digital ledgers makes verification difficult, delaying approvals and

increasing the risk of disputes. The absence of an integrated digital database for government (khash) land further complicates verification and creates space for error and contestation.

4.1.3 Lack of Interoperability Across Services

Similar challenges were reported across other service domains. Participants noted that multiple standalone portals require repeated entry of the same personal information, placing an unnecessary burden on citizens and increasing the likelihood of data inconsistencies. In the absence of interoperability, frontline offices are forced to rely on manual checks and informal coordination to complete transactions. Participants consistently stressed that system integration and data sharing are prerequisites for reducing time, cost, and the number of visits required to access services.

4.2 Human Capacity and Digital Literacy

4.2.1 Frontline Skills Gaps and Institutional Continuity

Discussions across groups underscored that digital transformation is not only a technical challenge but also a human one. Participants identified shortages of trained personnel, limited hands-on training, and frequent staff transfers as major constraints affecting the effective use of digital systems. Even where platforms exist, lack of familiarity and confidence among frontline staff reduces their ability to troubleshoot problems or guide citizens through service processes.

4.2.2 Citizen Awareness and Confidence Barriers

From the citizen perspective, low digital literacy and limited awareness emerged as persistent barriers. Many citizens are unaware of which services are available online, the correct procedures to follow, or the official fees involved. Fear of making mistakes, combined with limited experience navigating digital interfaces, discourages independent use of platforms and increases reliance on intermediaries.

Participants shared that many first-time applicants hesitate to submit online forms themselves, fearing errors that could lead to rejection or delays. As a result, citizens frequently seek help from intermediaries or UDC entrepreneurs even for simple services, increasing costs and reducing confidence in independent use.

4.2.3 Role of Union Digital Centres as Learning Hubs

Participants noted that challenges are more pronounced for elderly citizens, persons with disabilities, and residents of rural and char areas, where access to devices, connectivity, and information is limited. UDC entrepreneurs reported that citizens often approach them without knowing which service portal to use or what documents are required.

UDC entrepreneurs spend significant time explaining basic steps and correcting incomplete applications, highlighting the potential of UDCs as informal digital learning spaces.

In practice, entrepreneurs spend significant time explaining basic steps and correcting incomplete applications, highlighting the potential of UDCs as informal digital learning spaces rather than only transaction points.

Union Digital Centres were repeatedly identified as potential hubs for improving digital literacy, if entrepreneurs receive adequate training, institutional recognition, and technical support. Participants emphasized that capacity building efforts must target both service providers and citizens to reduce dependency on intermediaries and improve service outcomes.

4.3 Governance, Accountability, and Service Delivery

4.3.1 Limits of Local Authority in Centralized Systems

Governance-related issues featured prominently across all discussions. Participants expressed frustration that while they are accountable to citizens for service delivery, they often lack the authority or tools to address system-level problems such as server failures, application backlogs, or data errors. Centrally managed platforms limit the ability of local offices to respond promptly, resulting in delays that erode citizen trust.

4.3.2 Third-Party Intermediation and Equity Concerns

Several groups highlighted the continued presence of third-party intermediaries who exploit system complexity and capacity gaps. These intermediaries often prioritize influential clients, undermining fairness and equity in service delivery. Weak or opaque grievance redress mechanisms further compound the problem, as citizens rarely receive timely updates or clear explanations when applications are delayed or rejected.

Participants observed that when systems are complex or unreliable, intermediaries often step in to “manage” applications for a fee. This creates uneven access, as citizens with fewer resources or connections are more likely to face delays or incomplete services.

4.3.3 Need for Clear Accountability and Coordination Mechanisms

Participants stressed the need for clearer accountability mechanisms, stronger coordination among departments at the district level, and greater delegation of routine decision-making authority to upazila and union offices. Simplifying procedures, clarifying roles, and strengthening feedback loops were seen as essential steps toward making digital services more responsive and citizen-centric.

4.4 Inclusion, Access, and Citizen Trust

4.4.1 Persistent Digital Divides and Unequal Access

The discussions highlighted that inclusion and trust are central to the success of digital public services. Participants observed that digital divides based on geography, disability, age, and socio-economic status continue to shape who can access services effectively. Poor connectivity in remote areas, affordability constraints, and limited awareness disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, reinforcing existing inequalities.

Citizens from char and remote rural areas often need to travel multiple times to upazila offices or UDCs due to connectivity issues or incomplete submissions. These repeated visits increase time and financial costs, discouraging continued use of digital services.

4.4.2 Data Security and Privacy as Trust Factors

Concerns around data security and privacy also emerged as significant trust issues, particularly for social and family services that handle sensitive personal information. Many citizens rely on shared devices or intermediaries, increasing the risk of data misuse. Participants noted that without visible safeguards and clear communication about data protection, citizens remain hesitant to engage directly with digital platforms.

When citizens rely on shared devices or third-party assistance, personal information such as national identity numbers and contact details is frequently exposed. Participants observed that this has led some citizens to avoid online platforms altogether, preferring manual processes they perceive as more secure.

4.4.3 Everyday Service Experience and Trust Formation

“When citizens are forced to make repeated trips for system failure or unclear instructions, trust quickly erodes. Instead of saving time, digital services begin to feel unreliable.”

Trust was repeatedly described as an outcome of everyday service experiences. Delays, unclear procedures, and lack of response to complaints discourage adoption, while transparent communication, predictable timelines, and respectful

treatment build confidence. Participants emphasized that citizen trust cannot be built through technology alone but must be reinforced through consistent and accountable service delivery.

4.5 Localization, Innovation, and Sustainability

4.5.1 Adapting Services to Local Contexts

Participants strongly emphasized that digital services must be adapted to local realities rather than applied uniformly across contexts. Infrastructure gaps, variations in institutional readiness, and differences in citizen capacity require flexible approaches that combine digital and manual processes

where necessary. One-size-fits-all solutions were widely viewed as ineffective in addressing local service delivery challenges.

4.5.2 Practical, Incremental Innovation

Innovation was discussed primarily in practical terms, focusing on small, achievable improvements rather than complex technological upgrades. Examples included simplifying service steps, improving information displays at service points, and organizing service camps to reach citizens who face mobility or connectivity barriers. Participants stressed that such incremental changes could have a meaningful impact on citizen experience if they are grounded in local feedback.

4.5.3 Local Ownership and Long-Term Sustainability

Sustainability was closely linked to local ownership and continuous learning. Participants emphasized that digital initiatives must be embedded within routine institutional practices rather than treated as temporary projects.

Several participants emphasized that initiatives introduced without ongoing local support often lose momentum once project activities end. In contrast, small improvements maintained by local offices were seen as more sustainable and easier to adapt over time.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations were directly proposed by the participants of the Citizen-Centric e-Service Delivery (CCeD) district consultation events. These insights represent the collective voices of local administrators, frontline service providers, Union Digital Centre (UDC) entrepreneurs, and community members who engaged in these sessions to identify systemic bottlenecks and suggest actionable improvements. The content below serves as a formal record of their observations and priorities, structured to reflect the specific needs and localized challenges identified within the district.

The recommendations emerging from the Kushtia group discussions emphasize **that improving citizen-centric digital service delivery requires coordinated action across multiple administrative levels**. While many challenges manifest at the frontline, participants consistently noted that their root causes lie in upstream system design, governance arrangements, and unclear institutional accountability.

5.1. Strengthening System Reliability and Interoperability

Participants repeatedly highlighted service disruption, portal downtime, and data mismatches as major constraints on effective service delivery that are largely beyond the control of local offices.

- **Improve backend stability:** Enhance the reliability of frequently used national portals, particularly those relied upon for civil registration, social protection, land services, and identity verification.
- **Strengthen interoperability between core databases:** Ensure that frontline offices are not required to manually reconcile information across systems.

- **Establish clearer ownership:** Define specific responsibility for system maintenance and escalation when services fail to reduce technical ambiguity at the district level.



Figure 2: The consultation discussed ways to make e-services inclusive and accessible for all.

5.2. Clarifying Roles, Authority, and Escalation Pathways

A consistent finding across groups was uncertainty about who is authorized to resolve digital service failures, leaving officials accountable to citizens without having decision-making power over systems.

- **Define and formally communicate escalation protocols:** Create clear pathways for different categories of digital service issues, including technical failures, data errors, and procedural exceptions.
- **Clarify discretionary authority of district and upazila officials:** Ensure that services do not stall entirely due to rigid digital workflows when systems fail.
- **Designate focal points within relevant directorates:** Assign specific individuals at the central level to respond to issues raised from districts.

5.3. Building Frontline Capacity Beyond Basic Digital Literacy

While most frontline staff can operate basic digital tools, participants emphasized significant gaps in troubleshooting skills and applied system understanding.

- **Shift training toward practical, scenario-driven support:** Move away from one-off, tool-based sessions and focus on solving real service delivery problems.
- **Provide refresher training and peer-learning opportunities:** Focus on supporting staff who are regularly engaged with high-demand services.
- **Reflect actual system constraints in training content:** Ensure that training materials acknowledge the technical challenges experienced in district and upazila offices.

5.4. Improving Support for Union-Level and Last-Mile Service Providers

Union Digital Centre (UDC) entrepreneurs and union-level staff play a critical intermediary role but often operate with limited guidance and support.

- **Provide clearer operational guidance for UDCs:** Focus on practical instructions for handling incomplete applications, system errors, and citizen complaints.
- **Strengthen communication channels between unions and upazila offices:** Establish better links so that technical and procedural issues can be resolved collaboratively.
- **Recognize UDCs as part of the service delivery ecosystem:** Shift the perception of UDCs from mere access points to integrated components of the delivery system.

5.5. Reducing the Burden on Citizens Through Process Simplification

Participants stressed that citizens continue to face repeated visits, document re-submission, and informal workarounds even when services are digitized.

- **Review service workflows:** Identify and remove steps that unnecessarily shift the administrative burden onto citizens.
- **Reduce dependency on manual verification:** Minimize the need for physical paperwork in cases where digital records already exist but are not being fully utilized.
- **Align citizen-facing interfaces with backend processes:** Ensure that digital portals reflect actual system capabilities to avoid mismatches between expectations and outcomes.

5.6. Institutionalizing Feedback Loops

District-level insights are currently captured informally and inconsistently, limiting their influence on the continuous improvement of national systems.

- **Create structured mechanisms for district reporting:** Establish formal channels for districts to regularly report service delivery challenges and citizen pain points.
- **Inform system updates with frontline feedback:** Ensure that insights from consultations and help desks directly lead to system updates and policy revisions.
- **Close the feedback loop:** Establish a protocol for communicating back to districts how their reported issues have been addressed by the centre.

6. Highlights from Speeches and Reflections



Figure 3: The Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate of Kushtia, Md. Iqbal Hossain addressing the participants.

6.1 Compassion as the Core of Public Service

Md. Iqbal Hossain, Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, Kushtia

In his inaugural address, Md. Iqbal Hossain framed the consultation around two core principles: citizen-centeredness and responsiveness. He emphasized that effective public service delivery requires moving beyond top-down policy implementation toward a bottom-up approach that values citizen feedback and frontline experience. Policies, he noted, are most effective when they are grounded in the realities faced by people at the grassroots rather than developed in isolation.

He explained that responsiveness goes beyond procedural compliance and requires empathy, timely action, and genuine concern for citizen needs. Using practical examples, he illustrated how public servants should approach service delivery with the same care and urgency they would extend to their own family members. He cautioned against reactive administration, noting that delayed or mechanical responses weaken public trust and confidence in institutions.

“Responsive public service goes beyond procedural compliance. It requires empathy, timely action, and genuine concern for citizen needs.”

Mr. Hossain concluded by urging participants to share candid experiences during the consultation. He described participant feedback as critical for

shaping realistic and actionable policy insights, reaffirming the district administration’s commitment to improving digital public services through reflection, accountability, and continuous learning.

6.2 Grounding Digital Reform in Citizen Experience and Project Overview

Arsen Stepp, Team Leader, E-effective Governance

Introducing the event, Mr. Stepp clarified that the CCeD initiative does not seek to introduce new platforms, but to improve how existing systems work for people, particularly those affected by digital literacy gaps, connectivity constraints, or accessibility barriers. He defined digital public services as any government service that people can apply for, pay for (if not free), or receive using a computer, mobile phone, or online system — instead of having to do everything on paper or by visiting offices.

He noted that while Bangladesh has expanded the number of digital public services, many citizens continue to face barriers related to usability, access, and confidence, with up to 46% of the population using button phones. He stressed that district-level consultations such as the Kushtia dialogue are essential for surfacing frontline realities that are often missed in national planning. He encouraged participants to share practical experiences openly, noting that these insights would directly inform future project interventions and support more inclusive, accountable digital service delivery.

6.3 Digital Services as a Continuous Journey

Ahamed Mahbub-Ul-Islam, Deputy Director, Local Government (DDLG), Kushtia

In his remarks as a special guest, Ahamed Mahbub-Ul-Islam highlighted that digital public services can significantly improve efficiency and accountability if they are designed with usability and security in mind. He welcomed Kushtia’s role as a pilot district, describing it as an opportunity to test and refine approaches before wider replication.

He stressed that launching digital services is not sufficient without regular evaluation of their accessibility and real-world impact. He also raised concerns about third-party interference and cybersecurity, emphasizing the need to assess readiness of both service providers and citizens. He concluded by encouraging honest feedback, noting that realistic improvement depends on continuous self-assessment and reflection.

6.4 Reducing Time, Cost, and Visits

Mahmudul Haque Majumder, Additional Superintendent of Police, Kushtia

Mahmudul Haque Majumder, as a special guest emphasized that the true measure of public service success is whether services reach citizens efficiently and with minimal hassle. He noted that reducing time, cost, and the number of visits required to access services is central to building public trust.

Drawing on examples from the police sector, he referenced initiatives such as online police clearance, online General Diary services, and digital access to criminal records, which aim to simplify procedures and improve responsiveness. He underscored the importance of coordination across agencies and reaffirmed the police administration’s commitment to improving citizen convenience through digital solutions.

6.5 Citizen Feedback as the Basis for Better Policy

Mizanur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT), Kushtia

Md. Mizanur Rahman, as the chair of the event delivered the closing address. He emphasized the need to move away from traditional top-down planning toward a citizen-informed approach to service design.

“Top-down planning alone cannot deliver citizen-centric services. Policies become effective only when frontline realities and citizen feedback are built into design.”

He observed that while long-term planning frameworks have guided national development, meaningful improvements depend on understanding how services function in practice.

He stressed that citizens must remain at the centre of all government services and that policies shaped through stakeholder feedback are more practical, inclusive, and responsive. Highlighting the persistent digital divide, he noted that disparities in access, skills, and connectivity continue to affect who benefits from digital services. Mr. Rahman concluded by thanking participants for their active engagement and reaffirmed that the insights generated during the consultation would inform ongoing efforts to strengthen digital public services in Kushtia, underscoring the importance of inclusion, responsiveness, and continuous learning.

7. Conclusion

The Kushtia District Consultation on Citizen-Centric e-Service Design (CCeD) highlighted that the success of digital public services depends not only on their availability, but on how they operate in practice. Discussions across sectors pointed to shared challenges, including fragmented systems, uneven infrastructure, limited digital literacy, and unclear accountability, all of which directly affect citizen experience and trust. At the same time, participants identified practical opportunities to improve service delivery through better coordination, incremental design changes, and stronger engagement with frontline service providers and citizens.

The consultation demonstrated the value of district-level dialogue in capturing operational insights that are often missing from national discussions. By bringing together administrators, service providers,

UDC entrepreneurs, civil society representatives, and citizens, the event surfaced grounded perspectives on how digital services function at the local level.

Insights from Kushtia will be consolidated with findings from other two pilot districts (Nilphamari and Bagerhat) and carried forward to a national-level consultation under the CCeD initiative. This next phase will focus on identifying cross-district patterns and translating local experience into coherent national policy and service design recommendations.



Figure 4 : Group photo of participants at the Kushtia CCeD Consultation Workshop.

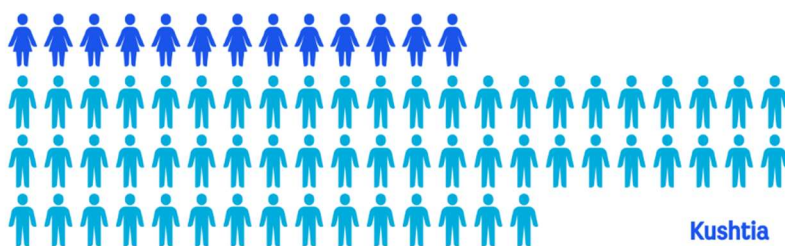
Annex A: Event Agenda

Monday December 8, 2025 Desha TARC Auditorium, Kushtia	
Time	Session & Description
09:30 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:30	Opening (30 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hosted by Md. Zahid Hasan, Assistant Commissioner and Executive Magistrate, Kushtia ▪ Inaugural speech by Chief Guest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Md. Iqbal Hossain, Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, Kushtia ▪ Opening remarks by Special Guests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohammed Jhasim Uddin, PPM (BAR), Superintendent of Police, Kushtia ○ Ahamed Mahbub-Ul-Islam DDLG (Deputy Secretary), Kushtia ○ Dr. Shaikh Md Kamal Hossain, Civil Surgeon, Kushtia ▪ Welcome address and project overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arsen Stepp, Team Leader, E-effective Governance ▪ Opening address from Workshop Chairperson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Md. Mizanur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education & ICT), Kushtia
10:30 – 11:00	Presentations (30 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Digital Public Services in Kushtia: An Overview (15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Md Abuzor Rahman, District ICT Officer (Programmer) ▪ Keynote Presentation: Citizen-Centric e-Services in Bangladesh, Making Digital Services Work for People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professor Shahab Enam Khan, PhD, Jahangirnagar University
11:00 - 11:15	Transition to group discussions (15 mins)
11:15 - 12:00	Thematic Group Discussions (45 mins)
12:00 – 12:15	Tea Break
12:15 – 13:15	Group Presentations (60 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentations based on thematic group discussions
13:15 – 13:45	Closing Session (30 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summary and next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arsen Stepp, Team Leader, E-effective Governance ▪ Vote of thanks from Chairperson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Md. Mizanur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education & ICT), Kushtia
13:45 – 14:00	Group Photos & Informal Networking
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch

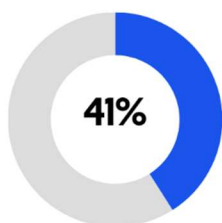
Annex B: Participant Composition and Thematic Focus

Participant Composition

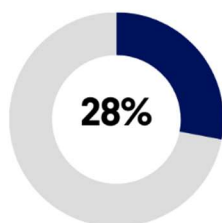
18% Women 72 total participants (59 men + 13 women)



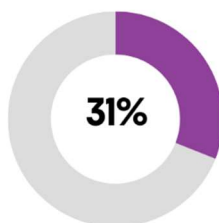
Kushtia



Government Administration



Government Technical & Sectoral



Citizens & Civil Society

The Kushtia CCeD consultation brought together a total of 72 participants, including 13 women (18%). Excluding facilitators, 61 participants were organized into thematic groups reflecting a strategic balance of strong institutional engagement and meaningful citizen representation.

Despite this composition, gender representation remained uneven. Although women officials, UDC entrepreneurs, and CSO members contributed important perspectives on equity and access, their voices were comparatively limited in the broader discussion.

Structurally, roughly two-thirds of participants were local stakeholders, with the remaining one-third representing national or central institutions. This deliberate balance ensured a dialogue that effectively bridged grassroots realities with broader policy frameworks.

The core thematic discussions engaged participants across three key cohorts:

- **Government Administrative Officials (41%):** Assistant Commissioners (Land) and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) formed a substantial cohort. Their participation underscored the central role of local land and service administration in advancing digital governance reform.
- **Government Technical Staff and Sectoral Officials (27.9%):** District and Upazila ICT Officers and Programmers provided the essential technical backbone, focusing on interoperability, server reliability, and system design. Alongside them, representatives from diverse sectors—ranging from Health, Education, and Social Welfare to regulatory bodies like the BRTA and the Anti-Corruption Commission—contributed service-specific insights, linking digitalization efforts to frontline realities.
- **Civil Society & District Policy Forum (DPF) Members (31.1%):** CSO leaders, UDC entrepreneurs, and DPF members anchored the consultation in citizen perspectives. They voiced critical on-the-ground challenges regarding awareness, digital literacy, and access, while advocating strongly for transparency and inclusion.

Together, this diverse composition enabled the consultation to capture both systemic challenges and lived realities, laying the groundwork for actionable, inclusive reform in Bangladesh's digital governance journey.

Thematic Focus and Institutional Perspectives

Discussions reflected the distinct mandates and operational realities of participating institutions:

- **District and Upazila Administrators** emphasized digital services as tools to streamline workflows, reduce administrative burden, and strengthen accountability, with a focus on coordination and grievance management.
- **ICT and Technical Personnel** highlighted system interoperability, infrastructure readiness, data integration, and technical ownership as prerequisites for reliable service delivery.
- **Sectoral Service Providers** contributed service-specific insights on digital workflows, eligibility verification, data accuracy, continuity, and the need to balance efficiency with equity.
- **Union-Level Actors and UDC Entrepreneurs** focused on last-mile challenges, including low digital literacy, documentation gaps, and the continued need for human mediation in digital services.
- **Civil Society and District Policy Forum Representatives** anchored discussions in citizen experience, emphasizing inclusion, transparency, trust, and accountability in digital public services.
- **Facilitators** supported participatory dialogue and synthesis, ensuring local insights were captured and translated into actionable guidance for the CCeD process.



**E-effective Governance:
Accelerating e-government and digital public
services in Bangladesh**

<https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/E-governance>

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the E-effective Governance project and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.