

Project Progress Report

SDG Policy Challenge 2023
Global Gatekeepers
31/01/2024



Project info

SDG Policy Challenge 2023 was organised by Global Gatekeepers of Independent University, Bangladesh with the Youth Innovation Fund - University Clubs. It is a competition aimed to build collaboration among students, researchers, policymakers, and industry experts to devise innovative policy solutions aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The theme of the SDG Policy Challenge 2023 was SDG 7 of affordable and clean energy. The project's goal was to organise a national-level policy competition focused on renewable energy in Bangladesh. The competition was open to university students from all educational institutions across Bangladesh. There were three rounds - Preliminary, Semi-Finals and Grand Finale along with two workshops - SDG Policy Workshop and SDG Policy Bootcamp.

Objectives of the Project

- *To encourage students to develop a comprehensive understanding of renewable energy technologies, policies, and their potential applications.*
- *To foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and policy development skills among students.*
- *To empower students to actively contribute to the policymaking process and advocate for renewable energy solutions.*
- *To create a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration among students, policymakers, and industry experts.*
- *To generate innovative ideas and proposals that address the energy-related challenges faced by Bangladesh.*

The CAP-RES project has three objectives as follows:

Objective 1: Create enabling environment and foster individuals to enhance their knowledge of climate change issues and develop their problem-solving skills

Objective 2: Generate factual evidence from local practices to scale up at the global level.

Objective 3: Improve institutional efficiency and effectiveness in decision-making and putting into practice in climate intervention

Based on these above objectives, which one is more relevant to your project? How did your project activities achieve this objective? (Maximum 200 words)

Objective 1 is most relevant to SDG Policy Challenge 2023. Through the project, we brought together students, researchers, policymakers, and industry experts. The university students came up with ideas for increasing renewable energy access and policymaking in Bangladesh. Industry experts from climate change and renewable energy fields in Bangladesh were invited as judges and guest speakers. Through this, the participating teams received mentorship. We were able to create a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and mentorship. The event enabled participants to gain insights from diverse perspectives, enhancing their understanding of current energy challenges and potential solutions. Also, we had organised two learning workshops. The SDG Policy Workshop and Bootcamp equipped participants with essential knowledge on SDG 7, policy development frameworks, and innovative solutions for sustainable energy transition. This enhanced their critical thinking skills and empowered them to develop effective policy proposals. As it was a three-round competition, starting with preliminary applications, progressing to semi-final presentations, and concluding in the Grand Finale, it provided participants with an opportunity to refine their ideas, receive feedback, and build their problem-solving skills in a real-world context. The teams also had an opportunity to publish their policy briefs which allowed for dissemination of wider gained knowledge.

Team Composition

- 1) *Armanul Karim Kabir, President, Global Gatekeepers*
- 2) *Allin Mohana Biswas, Vice President, Global Gatekeepers*
- 3) *Nova Khan, Vice President, Global Gatekeepers*
- 4) *Reshma Sultana Muskan, Events Director, Global Gatekeepers*
- 5) *Hosen Ankur Andalib, General Secretary, Global Gatekeepers*

Location

The event was based in Dhaka, Bangladesh and reached students from all over Bangladesh.

Reached people (Direct and indirect)

Direct Reached people: 2270

Indirect Reached people: 100,000

Summary findings

The SDG Policy Challenge 2023 had 910 team registrations and had 2270 individual participants from all the teams. The project had reached over 40+ institutions from all over Bangladesh. We had organised five events throughout the project. We had 14 judges and 3 workshop facilitators in total. There were 10 special guests and experts from the renewable energy field. The event had 10 partner organisations and companies. We appointed 36 Campus Ambassadors for the event.

Describing findings of the project

Describe the progress/findings of your project

The SDG Policy Challenge 2023, held in Bangladesh, stands as a remarkable initiative that engaged 910 student teams, encompassing 2270 individuals from over 40 institutions. This project fostered nationwide participation in tackling SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, empowering young minds to develop innovative solutions for a sustainable future. The SDG Policy Challenge 2023 employed a multifaceted approach, fostering learning, collaboration, and innovation. Workshops were facilitated by experts equipped participants with comprehensive knowledge about SDG 7, its challenges, and opportunities in Bangladesh. The teams embarked on a journey of ideation, research, and refinement, culminating in the development of impactful proposals addressing various aspects of renewable energy implementation. The top 5 teams of the Grand Finale were from Independent University, Bangladesh, Islamic University of Technology and University of Dhaka. The finalists presented their innovative solutions to a distinguished panel of judges and esteemed guests, receiving valuable feedback and recognition.

Some of the key achievements were that there was widespread engagement across Bangladesh which reflects a surge in youth interest in contributing to a sustainable energy future. The participants presented proposals which showcased a remarkable range of innovative approaches, addressing varied aspects of renewable energy implementation. Renowned international and national figures enriched the event, providing valuable insights and guidance to participants. The project empowering youth as it equipped young minds with knowledge, skills, and confidence to champion renewable energy. Through the project, it showcased solutions which hold immense potential for real-world implementation, contributing to Bangladesh's progress towards SDG 7. Through the project we were about to build partnerships and collaboration across government and private sectors which promotes long-term commitment to renewable energy development. The project raised awareness and highlighted the importance of SDG 7 generates wider public engagement and support for sustainable energy initiatives.

Measuring Progress

How many project activities have you done? (These might be workshops, focus groups, or performances, etc). Please list all of these

- Registration : October 10 - October 20 (Online)
- SDG Policy Workshop : October 20 (Online)
- Preliminary Round : October 21 - October 25 (Case Study)
- SDG Policy Bootcamp : November 13 (Online)
- Semi-Finals : November 18 (Online)
- Grand Finale : November 29 (IUB Auditorium)

Identifying new skills and where to learn more

What are the most useful skills or practices that you learned? Which do you use most often?

By hosting the events, we were able to improve our event management and facilitation skills. Proper communication skills were also required when reaching out to high-official guests and judges. Along with that, communicating with the participants for queries through mobile and email was also done. We also needed budget management skills for handling the grant and executing the event. For promoting our event on social media, we needed online marketing skills for reaching a wide audience. For data managements, we also needed data visualisation skills along with good Excel skills.

What knowledge or skills do you think would have improved your project?

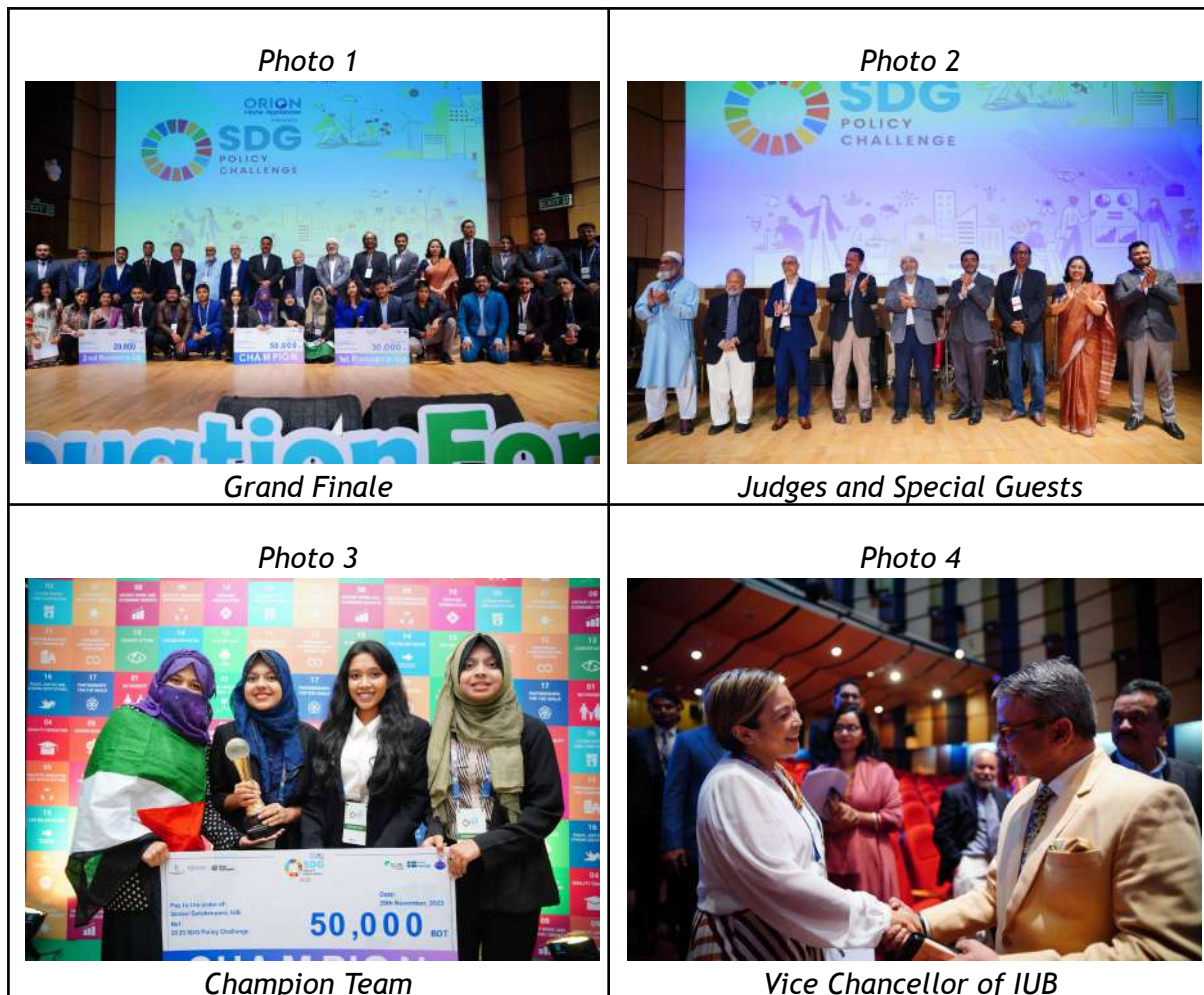
More knowledge on project management would have improved our project.

What are the challenges/Risks you faced during the project activities? How do you overcome/minimise those challenges?

Some challenges were there in getting access to industry experts and government organisations. We were able to leverage the professional network of the faculty members in Independent University, Bangladesh for reaching out to experts. There was also a risk of not getting enough quality submissions or expected number of submissions from the participants. We were able to mitigate this by increasing our reach of the number of universities and also provided workshops for increasing the participants knowledge on renewable energy and policy making.

Write down the “lesson-learn” of your project

We learnt that it is important in empowering youth through knowledge or exposure to SDG/policy related events. Also, we learnt that collaboration is crucial for achieving success. We should also put more focus on the implementation of renewable energy solutions.



Write feedback on this innovation fund. (Write a paragraph within 400 words)

Our journey with the SDG Policy Challenge began on the ICCCAD Facebook page, where we stumbled upon the incredible opportunity offered by the Youth Innovation Fund. We instantly saw a perfect alignment between the fund's objectives and our club's mission, both striving to empower young minds to tackle sustainability issues.

The financial support extended by the fund allowed us to directly connect the event with our organisational mission, hosting an event that not only met our pre-established goals but surpassed them! We successfully engaged a substantial audience, primarily university students, and amplified awareness surrounding Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7) - ensuring access to clean and affordable energy.

We encountered two significant challenges. Firstly, we had problems with project guidance. Certain aspects of the initiative felt like solitary endeavours, particularly when grappling with complex project intricacies. We were challenged in finding additional avenues for guidance and support. Secondly, securing access to relevant experts in the field of renewable energy proved frustratingly difficult, obstructing the project's full potential.