



Concept Note & Proposal

A National Roadmap for Economic Democracy and Social Justice in a Fractured Polity

**A Rapid National and Grassroot Consultation Exercise &
Formation of a Professionals-Entrepreneurs Advocacy Platform**

January-December 2026

1 Context and Rationale

Bangladesh enters its next political cycle in a moment of deep democratic strain. Formal processes exist, yet public trust is depleted. Institutions function, yet citizens feel unheard. Policy is active, yet equity— distributive, procedural, and transformative — remains elusive. An election is on the horizon. But the voice and demands of the grassroots, professionals, SMEs and entrepreneurs struggle for entry and space in the political and action plans.

PPRC's *2025 National Real Economy Survey (8,067 households)* captures this rupture with empirical clarity. Poverty has reversed sharply; urban inequality has surged; chronic illness and debt weigh on household mobility; *Hoirani* (harassment/hassle) corrodes everyday dignity; and optimism—a national hallmark—is now a class privilege.

In this fractured polity, the **National Roadmap** initiative is not merely a policy exercise. It is a strategic democratic intervention aimed at re-establishing voice, trust, and justice as the foundation of national agenda-setting. It operationalizes PPRC's longstanding commitment to grounded research and civic empowerment, offering a structured platform through which citizens articulate the priorities that the political process has struggled to absorb.

2 A Polity Adrift from its Citizens

Bangladesh is living through a prolonged period of political and economic dislocation:

Longer-term

- 2010-2024: Democracy's retreat with sham elections
- 2016-2024: Consolidation of a corrupt 'growth without equity' model

Near-term

- 2020–22: Covid disruptions
- 2023: Inflationary shock
- July 2024: Political upheaval
- 2025: Macroeconomic uncertainty

PPRC's data reveal a citizenry facing *Distributive Injustice* (rising costs, reversed poverty), *Procedural Injustice* (*Hoirani* across services, corruption, lack of voice), and *Transformative Stagnation* (structural inequities and policy ineptness that block social mobility and economic democracy, fail to bring new employment-friendly growth drivers into focus and provides no credible way out for youth and quality crisis in education).

PPRC findings on the lived realities – 10% rise in poverty between 2022 and 2025, urban inequality soaring to 0.532 gini, 36% of households still using non-sanitary toilets, 51% of households burdened with one or more member with chronic illnesses, wasteful debt cycles entrenched across the bottom 40%. The political system has been unable to integrate these lived realities into policy agendas. Citizens fear price volatility, health costs, governance failures, and deteriorating law and order. Yet, these themes are almost entirely absent from elite political discourse.

3 Why a National Roadmap Now?

Because the crisis is no longer only economic; it is representational. The distance between lived reality and political narrative is widening. Without an energized public discourse intervention, the 2026 election risks recentering elite competition while sidelining the country's real economy.

The **National Roadmap** offers a platform through which PPRC can help rebuild:

Distributive Equity: Ensuring fairer allocation of benefits, burdens, and opportunities.

Procedural Equity: Ensuring policy processes include and respect citizens.

Transformative Equity: Tackling the structural barriers that hold families and enterprises in low-mobility traps.

4 Objectives of the Initiative

- **Rebuild democratic legitimacy** by placing citizens at the center of agenda-setting.
- **Translate PPRC's Real Economy evidence** into actionable policies.
- **Establish a non-partisan policy blueprint** anchored in equity, accountability, and climate resilience.
- **Consolidate a Coalition of the Willing Platform** of professionals and entrepreneurs at national level.
- **Deploy a permanent Digital E-Governance Platform** to validate findings, creating a lasting PPRC asset for continuous public consultation and civic feedback.

5 Scope of the National Roadmap

The Road Map will be organized around four central pillars:

1. *Economy and Business:* Identifying and promoting new growth drivers, SME hurdles, credit access, policy barriers, targeted reform actions, promoting women's economic

- participation.
2. **Youth:** Addressing aspirations, education quality, skills gaps, and digital futures.
 3. **Education and Human Capital:** Quality challenges across the educational spectrum, disparities in access and resources, soft skills, capacity gaps, leveraging technology, STEM for women.
 4. **Community:** Focusing on safety, gender equity, strengthened local governance, dispute resolution, social cohesion, and resilience.

6 Detailed Implementation Plan & Event Calendar

Timeline: 12 Weeks | **Strategy:** Grounded Dialogue to National Consensus

Phase 1: Diagnostics & Mobilization (Weeks 1–2)

Goal: Establishing the quantitative baseline and mobilizing regional networks.

- **Citizen Mood Survey:** A rapid-response national survey to validate current sentiment on specific "hot-button" issues (inflation, safety, corruption, democratic transition) to frame the regional dialogues.
- **Digital Platform Beta:** Soft launch of "**Citizen Mood**" platform for initial data intake.

Phase 2: The Regional Dialogues (Weeks 3–7)

Goal: Deep-dive consultations across 4 strategic regions. Each regional engagement consists of 2 full-day dialogue sessions and a "Real Economy Walkabout."

Structure of Regional Dialogues: Each dialogue is segmented into four concurrent working sessions aligned with the Scope:

1. Economy and Business
2. Youth
3. Education & Human capital
4. Community

The "Walkabout": PPRC leadership and key experts physically visit local markets, transport hubs, or slum settlements to witness the "Real Economy" conditions firsthand (e.g., verifying commodity prices, observing transport extortion).

Event Calendar & Stakeholder Mapping

Week	Region	Stakeholder	Focus area
Week 3	North Dialogue (Rangpur/Rajshahi)	Youth: Public Univ. students, unemployed grads. Eco/Biz: Agro-processors, cross-	<i>Focus:</i> Agricultural pricing, seasonal poverty (Monga), rural connectivity.

		border traders. Women: Rural farm workers, weavers. Community: CSOs, NGOs	
Week 4	South Dialogue (Chattogram/Barishal)	Govt: Port Authority, Export Promotion Bureau. Youth: Freelancers, vocational students. Eco/Biz: Port traders, shipbreaking supply chain. Women: RMG workers, coastal entrepreneurs.	<i>Focus:</i> Climate adaptation, trade logistics, industrial safety.
Week 5	East Dialogue (Sylhet/Cumilla)	Govt: Expatriate Welfare Officials, DC. Youth: Potential migrants, returnee migrants. Eco/Biz: Tourism operators, remittance investors. Women: Tea garden workers, household heads.	<i>Focus:</i> Safe migration, remittance investment, environmental protection.
Week 6	West Dialogue (Khulna/Jashore)	Govt: Water Board Officials, Local Admin. Youth: University students, tech startups. Eco/Biz: Shrimp exporters, transport owners. Women: Gher (shrimp) workers, water collectors.	<i>Focus:</i> Salinity, water security, transport corridors.
Week 7	Synthesis Week	PPRC Technical Secretariat & Thematic Leads.	<i>Activity:</i> Collating 16 session reports (4 regions x 4 groups) + Walkabout notes into the Draft Roadmap.

Phase 3: National Consensus & Launch (Weeks 8–12)

Goal: Validating findings and facilitating political, governmental and social adoption.

- **Week 8: The National Consultation:** A high-level convening in Dhaka bringing together the ‘coalition of the willing’ platform of entrepreneurs, professionals, civic voices, policymakers and selected representatives from the 4 regional dialogues to present their demands directly to national policymakers.
- **Week 9-11: Drafting & Final Calibration:** Integrating **Citizen Mood Survey** results with Regional Dialogue outcomes.
- **Week 12: Launch of the National Roadmap:** Press event releasing the "Citizen’s Version" and the full technical report.

Phase 4: Yearlong advocacy (Month 4-12)

- Reports and Briefs, Digital platform
- Briefings with major political parties, elected government, trade bodies, professional associations, development partners, media houses.
- Consolidation of the ‘coalition of the willing’ national platform to drive the National Roadmap.
- Thematic in-depth advocacy convenings on new growth drivers, priority reforms targeted to economic democracy and social justice.

7 Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Politicization	Strict non-partisan framing; branding as "Demand of the People," not a critique of any specific party.
Digital Exclusion	"Citizen Mood" platform complemented by physical Regional Dialogues to ensure non-digital poor are heard.
Media Distortion	Pre-briefings with editors; a "Fact Check" unit to rapidly counter misinformation.
Safety/Security	Consultations in neutral venues; digital data anonymized to protect contributors.

8 Expected Impact

- **Repositions Justice:** Moves conversation from GDP to Economic Democracy and New Growth Drivers and Social Justice.
- **Electoral Influence:** Forces parties to respond to evidence-based demands, not rhetoric.
- **Institutional Legacy:** "Citizen Mood" platform remains as a permanent PPRC asset for real-time sensing.

9 Expected Resources Required and Potential Sources

Estimated total budget: BDT 2 Crores

Probable sponsors: Banks, Leading conglomerates, Hospitality and Media partners etc.