

## MEDIA RELEASE



### AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION DHAKA

#### **Australia launches two Private Sector Partnerships in Bangladesh**

Two projects under the Australian Government's Business Partnerships Platform were officially launched yesterday at the Australian High Commission in Dhaka. Australian Deputy Head of Mission, Ms Sally-Anne Vincent said: "The Australian Government is a strong supporter of private sector engagement in development and is pleased to be working with private sector and not for profit organisations to further development in Bangladesh".

The Bangladesh projects won funding out of a field of almost 100 applications in the Indo-Pacific region. The initiatives focus on improving dairy sector productivity and providing affordable vision correction services to people in rural areas.

Australia's contribution will be matched by the partner organisations in the two projects- Bangladesh SME Corporation Limited (BSCL), Oxfam in Bangladesh, Essilor, MART and Grameen Kalyan.

Through the dairy sector initiative, farmers will obtain access to low-cost financing from banks through BSCL's i-SME platform while also benefiting from Oxfam's dairy enterprises and off-grid energy solutions involving over 4,000 dairy farmers, 80 per cent of whom are women. The affordable vision correction services initiative managed by Essilor, MART and Grameen Kalyan will create provisions for affordable vision care services for low income customers in specific rural and peri-urban areas in Bangladesh by training 400 youths as Eye Mitra Opticians. These shared value partnerships will contribute to more income generation for dairy farmers, revenue for the respective private sector actors, create more work opportunities for the youth and provide eye care solutions for the rural population.

The private sector is an essential partner and steer towards achieving sustainable socio-economic outcomes. The Australian Government's expertise in development contributes to building stronger, more inclusive private sector growth to deliver social impact and commercial returns in the Asia-Pacific region.

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