Building A Greener Bangladesh Through Finance

Tareq Refat Ullah Khan

Our story has always been about purpose. BRAC Bank is not just a financial institution; it is part of a much larger ecosystem of change. Nearly half of our shares, about 46 percent, are owned by BRAC, the largest non-governmental organization in the world. BRAC works directly with people across Bangladesh to fight poverty, promote education, and support social empowerment.

As Bangladesh prepares for COP30, the global focus is turning toward how countries can balance development with environmental responsibility. For a nation as climate vulnerable as ours, the challenge is clear: we must grow while protecting the planet. This balance can only be achieved when sustainability becomes part of every sector's DNA. At BRAC Bank, we believe that finance has a transformative role in this journey. Responsible financing can help industries adapt, inspire innovation, and build a greener, more resilient Bangladesh.

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This philosophy has guided our actions and earned recognition at home and abroad. For five consecutive years, Bangladesh Bank has named BRAC Bank one of the top sustainable banks in the country. Our leadership in responsible banking has also been acknowledged internationally, as Bloomberg recently ranked BRAC Bank as the top organization in Bangladesh in its ESG rating. These recognitions reaffirm our belief that ethical banking and financial success can go hand in hand.

We have consistently tried to lead by example. BRAC Bank was the first financial institution in Bangladesh to issue a Social Subordinated Bond in accordance with the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) Principles. This pioneering initiative created a new pathway for impact-driven and socially responsible financing. Today, sustainable finance makes up 82 percent of our total portfolio, while green finance accounts for 20 percent of our term loans. These numbers are not just statistics; they reflect our long-term commitment to integrate sustainability into every aspect of our business.

Among all our green initiatives, renewable energy stands out as a priority. We see solar power as more than a technology; it is a symbol

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of hope and progress for Bangladesh. To date, BRAC Bank has supported financing of 70 megawatts of solar energy projects across Bangladesh, with around 470 megawatts currently in the pipeline. One of our proudest contributions is our financing of a 68-megawatt solar power project in Sirajganj. BRAC Bank provided 15 million US dollars in long-term funding for this project, which reduces about 70,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions every year. This achievement shows how targeted financing can translate directly into environmental benefits and national development.

Our commitment to sustainability also extends to transparency and accountability. Earlier this year, BRAC Bank published its Sustainability and Impact Report 2024, prepared in full alignment with ISSB, PCAF, and GRI standards. In this report, we disclosed 100 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions across all scopes, calculated according to the PCAF standard. This level of transparency reflects our commitment to accountability and provides stakeholders with a clear picture of our environmental impact. We also became the first bank in Bangladesh to release an independent IFRS S1 and S2 report, reflecting our dedication to meeting global standards in sustainability reporting.

At BRAC Bank, sustainability is not a side project or a compliance requirement; it is at the heart of who we are. We see it as a long-term responsibility to the country and to future generations. Renewable energy, especially solar power, can create jobs, strengthen rural economies, and secure cleaner air for all. These are goals that go far beyond banking, and they define our identity as an institution that works for the welfare of the people.

As Bangladesh moves closer to COP30, BRAC Bank stands ready to play its part in shaping a low-carbon future. Guided by the vision of our parent organization, BRAC, we remain committed to promoting green finance, supporting renewable energy, and advancing national progress. By financing change and empowering people, we hope to help build a Bangladesh that grows responsibly, inclusively, and sustainably. EP

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