

## Our GREEN Presence for a GREENER and better future.....

The Stone Age didn't end because we ran out of stones. It ended because there were better ideas about how to meet society's needs. Similarly, the end of our current "oil age" won't end because we run out of oil. It will end because we have better ways to meet our energy needs. Those better ways are proven, cost-effective and have multiple benefits to individuals and society. Bangladesh has one of the lowest levels of per capita consumption of commercial energy in South Asia, where it has a large unsatisfied demand for energy, which is growing by 10 percent annually, the concern is our country's power generation system is almost entirely dependent on fossil-fuel. This at one side is causing fast depletion of gas reserves at the same time deteriorating the mother nature. We know the burning of fossil fuels produces carbon dioxide, but the concern is it is estimated that natural processes can only absorb about half of that amount. So what happens to the remaining?! Under such circumstances the only savior that can protect us from the detriments of environmental degradation is afforestation.

We all know that trees are the longest living organisms on the planet and one of the earth's greatest natural resources. They keep our air supply clean, reduce noise pollution, improve water quality, help prevent erosion, provide food and building materials, create shade, and help make our landscapes look beautiful. Interestingly enough many of us might not be aware that a mature tree removes more pollution than a newly planted tree. Precisely, two mature trees can supply enough oxygen annually to support a family of four! The undisputed significance of trees is ubiquitous. Not only trees create buffers to reduce noise, its roots stabilize soil and prevent erosion. Moreover, trees lower air temperature by evaporating water in their leaves. Being a banking financial organization all we can do by functioning within the periphery of our operation, we can put sincere effort for a sustainable banking. Having started its journey last year with representatives from different divisions, our Green Banking Unit (GBU) has allotted more than BDT 900 million under **green budget for the year 2013**, whereby the achievement rate is appreciable. It comprises of green financing, climate risk fund, Marketing, Training and Capacity Building. We strive to go for extensive green financing where in the year 2013 the amount was around BDT 3364 million. We have gone for Direct Green Financing as well as provided Working Capital Financing to projects having ETP/Solar Panels/double hull oil tanker. Also worth mentioning, the number of Projects applicable for Environmental Due Diligence (EDD) and Projects being rated (i.e. **Environmental Risk Rating**) has been increasing appreciably over time. Environmental risk rating is an integral part of our credit appraisal process.

Moreover, the consumption of water, paper and energy has been optimum where we always strive to utilize these resources more efficiently. Whereby, as far as our in-house green management is concerned, we cautiously adhere to the guideline prescribed in our Green Office Guide. We have extensively gone for indirect green financing especially Projects financed having Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP). Also part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, there are three significant events in which we contributed to the Green Banking and they are as follows: 1. Bishwa Shahitya Kendra – Greeneries at the premises 2. Bangladesh Bonsai Association – Event Support 3. We supported a Daily newspaper to send a reporter to Poland to cover World Climate Conference 2013. This is the 19th yearly session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 19) organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The conference works to reach a global agreement on climate change. The conference is critical for a country like Bangladesh which risks of losing a large part of land due to rise in sea level as an effect of climate change. At Warsaw Conference, member states agreed to work towards curbing emissions as soon as possible, with an idea date targeted at the first quarter of 2015. Being a fully online bank we emphasize i-banking and mobile banking subscription exhaustively. We are also persistently pursuing e-commerce facilities. Having introduced business via e-Commerce in 2010 BRAC Bank is rapidly gaining success in this field. The online payment gateway has served as a crucial component in BRAC Bank's Green Banking initiative by reducing the use of paper and increasing paperless transactions. Currently around 250 merchants are using our online platform through which our debit/credit card holders can avail our e-

commerce facilities. These services have not only made the lives of our valued customers easy, but have also helped reduce air and noise polluting, reduce energy consumptions. Some of BRAC banks the most significant e-Commerce merchants are:

1. **Online BRTA Fees payments**: Long queue and traffic jam are the common problems faced by customers while paying BRTA fees. To make customers' life more convenient we have successfully integrated our e-Commerce payment gateway with the BRTA website. Now customers can make payments from the comfort of their home or office.

2. **Online Railway**: Bus and Airlines ticket sale: At present with the convenience of online payment gateway people are purchasing Bangladesh railway, bus and airlines tickets of various route online. This facility helps eliminates the customer's need to go to the ticket counter physically. Now they can easily purchase ticket from any where with the help of internet and online payment gateway.

In Bangladesh, online payment gateway is gradually becoming a popular way of making payment through internet for almost everything. If utilized to its fullest it also has the potential to significantly reduce the necessity of people to physically go to stores (merchant locations), thereby reducing traffic & fuel consumption. In turn this will reduce physical commuting and contribute to lesser emission of air and noise pollution.

In support of the Green Banking initiative, we have introduced a receipt printing option at all our ATMs. Now customers have the option of NOT printing the ATM paper receipt instead of always receiving it by default. It is an eco-friendly initiative to save a bulk amount of receipt paper.

For continuous capacity building of our human resource, exclusive training sessions on "Green Banking" were arranged to garner best practices and enhance knowledge. Moreover, via e-learning module employee knowledge base is vastly enhanced. All newly recruited employees have been taken under the purview of Green Banking in their Orientation Programs. Till date, approximately 5200 employees have been enlightened with Training Programs/Seminars exclusively conducted for Green Banking. It is also to be borne in mind that as the development of sector specific environmental risk policies is already underway, our credit appraisal process inherently considers the environmental aspect of the borrowers. Moreover, with the constant support and guidance from our regulators we always strive to incorporate better practices and norms in the business operation. We operate with a green soul and it is for this reason on our 12th anniversary of financial inclusion we distributed saplings to our valued stakeholders. We are a sustainable bank and we vouch to remain so as long as the glorious sun continues to endow its dazzling beam on us.