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Blue Gold

Working Paper 2A Sustainability from The Start Exit Strategy (draft final)

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Working Paper 2A

Sustainability from The Start

Exit Strategy (draft final)

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Blue Gold Program

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List of Abbreviations

ADP	Annual Development Plan
AEO	Agricultural Extension Officer
BWDB	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDMP	Comprehensive Disaster Management Program
CDSP IV	Char Development and Settlement Project Phase IV
CEGIS	Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services
CEIP	Coastal Embankment Improvement Project
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre
CO	Community Organizer
CSISA	Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia
CUB	<i>Concern</i> Universal Bangladesh
CWM	<i>Chief Water Management (BWDB)</i>
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
DLS	Department of Livestock Services
DoC	Department of Cooperatives
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DP III	Directorate of Planning III
DPP	Development Project Proforma
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTL	Deputy Team Leader
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
FFS	Farmers Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FO	FFS Organiser
FY	Financial Year
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GESAP	Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan (of BWDB)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GoN	Government of the Netherlands
GPWM	Guidelines for Participatory Water Management
HH	Household
IFMC	Integrated Farm Management Component
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IPSWAM	Integrated Planning for Sustainable Water Management
IPSWARM	Guidelines for Integrated Planning for Sustainable Water Resources Management
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
IWM	Institute of Water Modelling
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LCG	Local Consultative Group
LCS	Labour Contracting Societies

LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	Local Government Institutions
MMC	Mass-line Media Centre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PCD	Program Coordinating Director
PCM	Public Consultation Meeting
PD	Project Director
PDP	Polder Development Plan
PMC	Project Management Committee
PSC	Program Steering Committee
SAFAL	Sustainable Agriculture, Food security and Linkages
SDE	Sub-Divisional Engineer
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSSWRDSP	Second Small-Scale Water Resources Development Sector Project
SSWRDSP	Small Scale Water Resources Development Sector Project
SWAIWRPMP	Southwest Area Integrated Water Resources Planning and Management Project
TA	Technical Assistance
TL	Team Leader
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TOT	Training of Trainers
UAO	Upazila Agricultural Officer
UDMC	Union Disaster Management Committee
UP	Union Parishad
VAP	Village Action Plan
VC	Value Chain
VCA	Value Chain Analysis
VCD	Value Chain Development
VCS	Value Chain Selection
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene education
WMA	Water Management Association
WMG	Water Management Group
WMIP	Water Management Improvement Project (World Bank)
WMO	Water Management Organisation
WUR	Wageningen University and Research Centre
XEN	Executive Engineer (BWDB)
ZSE	Zonal Socio economist

Executive Summary

The Blue Gold Program (BGP) is a major water resources management programme aiming to reduce poverty for 150,000 households living on 160,000 ha in 26 coastal polders in Khulna, Patuakhali and Satkhira Districts in Bangladesh. It helps local communities create a safe and healthy living environment and to pursue their sustainable socio-economic development through an approach referred to in brief as 'water management for development'. The Programme is implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board and the Department of Agriculture Extension and supported by the Netherlands Government.

With the experience gained in three years of implementation the pathways by which the Programme impacts on poverty and food security are well-articulated. BGP's 'Theory of Change' assumes that water management for development is facilitated by the following outcomes: (i) water management infrastructure; by (ii) an institutional framework for water management; by (iii) new practises and innovations to enhance the value of water resources; and by (iv) services optimising agricultural production and marketing.

The Blue Gold Program is a temporal activity: by 2019 all technical assistance, coordination structures for programme management and external financial assistance will be withdrawn and it will fall upon permanent organisations and structures to sustain Programme outcomes. To optimally build this sustainability a strategy is needed to enhance the long-term efficacy of 'water management for development'. This **exit strategy** is more than a hand-over in the final months of the Programme. It constitutes a deliberate approach to involve – and if need be shape – a permanent institutional basis for delivering and improving water management for development beyond the Programme period and area.

The central concept in the exit strategy is the involvement from the start of WMGs and local partner agencies in planning, design and implementation of joint activities within the scope of water management for development. The partnership composition is flexible and dependent upon the type of activity being pursued by the WMGs.

The strategies elaborated in this chapter enhance the involvement of partners and partnerships in co-creating water management for development. This requires a renewed focus on joint actions undertaken by different combinations of actors; e.g. private sector seed suppliers, DAE and producer groups to pursue crop diversification; WMG, DAE, Union and BWDB to work on catchment water management; BWDB, LGI and water user representatives to make priority plans for main infrastructure; etc. The combined outcome of the strategies is a stronger degree of sustainability of the benefit streams that are created through BGP; and an adjustment of BGP work routines from this perspective.

The activation of the above philosophy of 'sustainability from the start' is proposed to be achieved by nine strategies, which all pursue a change in the way BGP works:

1. **Set a timeframe for completion** – This changes the present rather open-ended plan per polder into a time bound activity plan. This creates urgency for the activities carried-out in the individual polders; and brings forward the transfer of responsibilities to permanent entities in the area;
2. **Develop partnerships** – This widens the perspective from establishing WMOs to establishment of constructive working relationships between WMOs, LGIs, decentralised department (such as DAE, DLS and DoF) and BWDB. It creates a shared responsibility towards water management for development;

3. **Streamline the work process** – This changes parallel implementation of components to an integrated drive to engage newly initiated WMOs in joint ‘water management for development’ actions with concerned partners, with the ultimate aim to reduce poverty and increase food security. The strategy enhances coherence between programme activities;
4. **Develop agricultural production and marketing services** – This changes the emphasis from delivering benefits by BGP to establishing and enabling multiple structures to continue to provide services in the field of agricultural production (including livestock and fisheries) and marketing. The strategy invests in potential services for production and marketing;
5. **Enhance the benefit of main water management infrastructure** – This builds on the present planning, design and construction of major infrastructure by helping develop approaches for operation and maintenance of main infrastructure and for disaster management;
6. **Optimise internal water management** – This aspires to optimise the benefit of water management for the local economy by supporting internal and catchment water management initiatives;
7. **Enable targeting of joint activities** – This strategy augments the gains that rural poor, women and youth enjoy from joint activities from predominantly spin-offs to well-targeted benefits. This is done by helping the partnership undertaking joint activities to consider and explicitly target these priority categories;
8. **Contribute to a national drive for PWM** – This changes experiences gained within BGP to lessons learned for the sector as a whole. It enables the continued development of a national policy and regulatory framework for participatory water management and helps align donor agencies to those policies and regulations;
9. **Introduce new work routines** – This strategy sets out to make a transition from the present Programme work routines to new routines developed by the above strategies. It aspires to swiftly align staff and resources to the new approaches.

The focus of the exit strategy is on those parts of the Programme that will, by programme’s close, be withdrawn: the technical assistance team; the coordination structures for programme management and the EKN-funded external assistance. As a consequence, the strategy prescribes **actions** to be undertaken by the BGP team. The success of these activities is, however, contingent upon concurrence, support and parallel actions by the partner agencies. Critical partner agency support and actions are identified as **dependencies**.

Many of the dependencies relate to changes in staff composition and structure, funding mechanisms and mandate of the implementing organisations, and the exit strategy acknowledges that changes in some of these dependencies take place on a longer time-scale than that of the BGP duration. The upshot is that changes to the governance setting of water management continue to be required beyond BGP completion, in order to further bolster the sustainability of the deliverables and partnerships established by BGP. This in turn points to the need for a national process to further develop the institutional and policy context for water management for development.

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1. Background, outline and status

Blue Gold in brief

The Blue Gold Program (BGP) is a major water resources management programme aiming to reduce poverty for 150,000 households living on 160,000 ha in 26 coastal polders in Khulna, Patuakhali and Satkhira Districts in Bangladesh¹. It helps local communities create a safe and healthy living environment and to pursue their sustainable socio-economic development. The project is implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board and the Department of Agriculture Extension and supported by the Netherlands Government. Day-to-day implementation is partially outsourced to a consortium of national and international consultants.

The Blue Gold Program seeks to strengthen and activate the institutional framework for participatory water management, as outlined by policies and regulations of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB)². These policies and regulations describe a/o the roles and responsibilities of (i) Government line agencies, including the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB); of (ii) beneficiaries of water management infrastructure, including their Water Management Groups and Associations; and of (iii) Local Government Institutions, including Union and Upazila Parishads. By strengthening the institutional framework; by investing in water resources infrastructure and by supporting agricultural services, Blue Gold aspires to reduce poverty and enhance food security. Reduction of the vulnerability of polder inhabitants – and especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups – to weather extremes (which are likely to become more frequent due to climate change processes) is an important condition supporting poverty reduction and food security. For brevity, the approach applied BGP is referred to as **water management for development**.

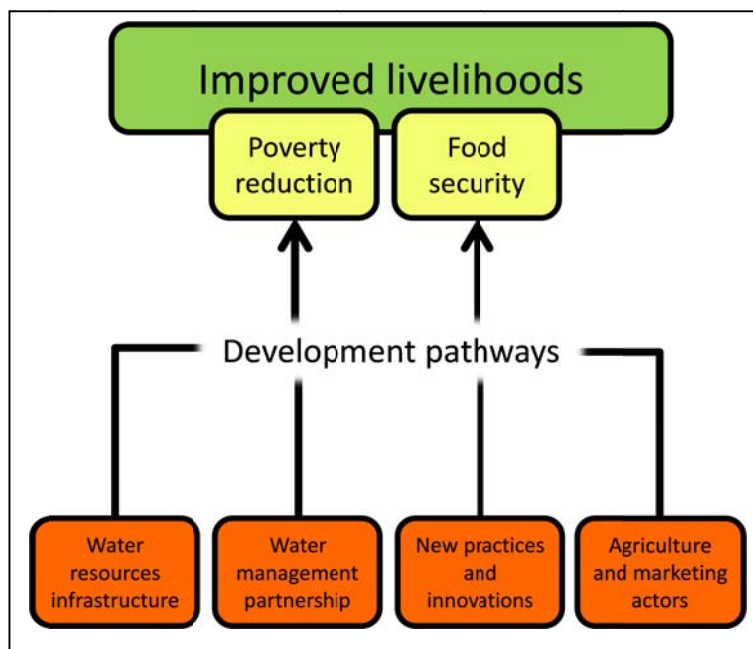


Figure 1: Schematic BGP Theory of Change

Reduction of the vulnerability of polder inhabitants – and especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups – to weather extremes (which are likely to become more frequent due to climate change processes) is an important condition supporting poverty reduction and food security. For brevity, the approach applied BGP is referred to as **water management for development**.

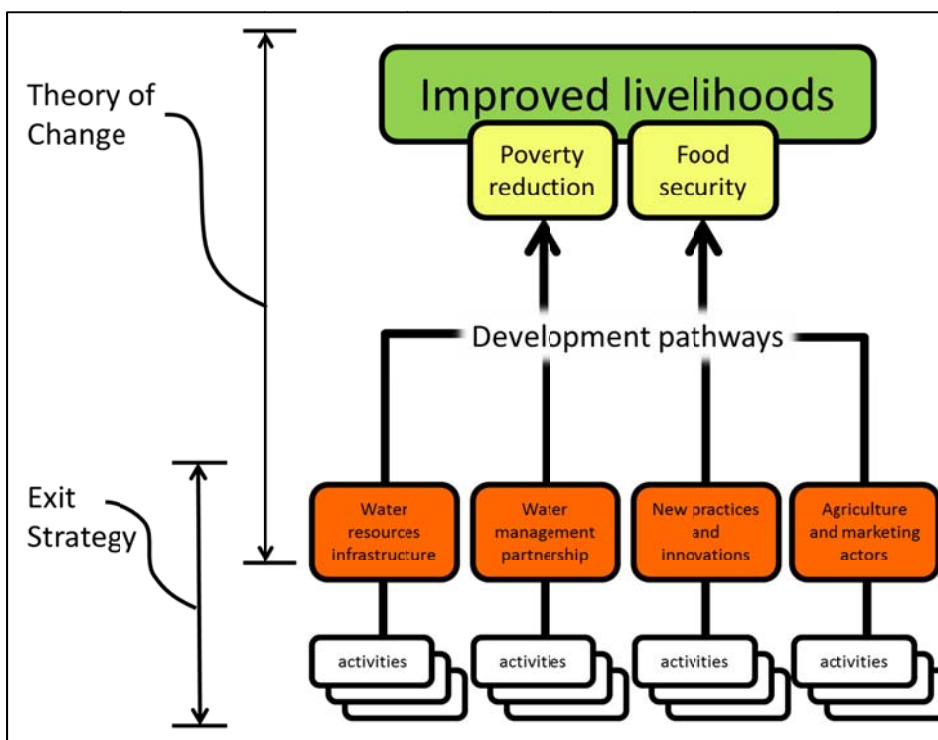
¹ These figures will be reviewed in the forthcoming revision of the BGP Development Project Proforma's (DPP).

² Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Water Resources, **Guidelines for Participatory Water Management**, Dhaka, 2000; and: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, **Participatory Water Management Rules, 2014**, Circular 20 Magh 1420 Bangla Year/2 February 2014 AD, published in Bangladesh Gazette, Additional Issue, February 11, 2014 (translation: Blue Gold). These regulations are reinforced by provisions for local governance: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, **Local Government (Union Parishad) Act**, 2009, Additional Gazette, Dhaka, October 15, 2009 / 30 Asshin, 1416 (Translation World Bank)

Refining the programme

With the experience gained in three years of implementation, a hypothesis is articulated on how Programme outcomes impact on poverty and food security. This ‘Theory of Change’³ assumes that water management for development is facilitated by (i) water management infrastructure; by (ii) an institutional framework for water management; by (iii) new practises and innovations to enhance the productive use of water resources; and by (iv) service providers supporting agricultural production and marketing. There are several different development pathways that link outcomes to goals, as schematically shown in Figure 1, above.

The Blue Gold Program is – notwithstanding the word ‘programme’ in its name – a temporal activity: by 2019 all technical assistance, coordination structures for programme management and external financial assistance will be withdrawn and it will fall upon permanent organisations and structures to sustain Programme outcomes. To optimally build this sustainability a strategy is needed to enhance the long-term efficacy of ‘water management for development’. This **exit strategy** is more than a hand-over in the final months of the Programme. It constitutes a deliberate approach to involve – and if need be shape – a permanent institutional basis for delivering and improving water management for development beyond the Programme period and area. It pursues sustainability from the start.



Theory of Change and Exit Strategy both are different forms of plans related to the BGP implementation. It is important to establish how the two relate and whether there is any area of overlap. Figure 2 shows how the exit strategy links to BGP’s Theory of Change.

The sustainability of the four deliverables in Figure 2 (infrastructure, partnership, new practices and innovations, and agriculture and marketing service providers) needs to be ensured so that the Programme will result in

Figure 2: Relation of Exit Strategy to Theory of Change

continued reduction of poverty and ditto improvement of food security. The exit strategy aims at enhancing the sustainability of Programme deliverables during and beyond the programme implementation period and area. The focus of the exit strategy is therefore on sustainability of the deliverables and on the actions leading to this sustainability.

Status of this document

This document present a final draft exit strategy, which has been developed over a 5-month period, with inputs from implementation partners (notably BWDB, DAE and LGIs), the EKN, the BGP team and

³ The Theory of Change is elaborated in a separate document (BGP, forthcoming, 2016)

programme beneficiaries. Key issues and outcomes have been reflected upon by an advisory panel of senior government staff and by a working group within the BGP team.

The exit strategy does not replace the implementation plan of the Programme, but seeks to direct the planning, preparation and implementation of activities towards enhanced sustainability of the programme outcomes (a.k.a. deliverables, see chapter 2). Necessary concurrence to and approval of Programme activities will continue to be sought through the regular process of periodic and annual planning; and will be monitored through regular M&E systems. The Exit Strategy brings together in one place the current thinking on programme sustainability.

The focus of the exit strategy is on those parts of the Programme that will, by programme's close, be withdrawn: Blue Gold team; coordination structures for programme management and EKN-funded external assistance. As a consequence, the strategy prescribes **actions** to be undertaken by the BGP team. The success of these activities is, however, contingent upon concurrence, support and parallel actions by the partner agencies. To some extent, these form the business-as-usual of these organisations, but critical partner agency support and actions are identified as **dependencies**.

Document outline

As shown in Figure 2 above, the exit strategy's top end overlaps with the Theory of Change's starting point. The overlap comprises the BGP deliverables. A good understanding of the deliverables is needed to ensure the integrity of Programme activities and goals. Chapter 2 discusses the Programme deliverables in the light of sustainability of programme results and explains the importance of joint activities and partnerships for achieving this sustainability.

Chapter 3 presents nine strategies for sustainability one by one, including requisite actions and dependencies.

Chapter 4 concludes the document, by taking stock of the main dilemma facing the programme's sustainability. While being optimistic, the conclusion does not hide concerns regarding the sustainability of water management for development, and it emphasises the need for national resolve for further developing the enabling environment for participatory water management; as well as the requirement for continued donor alignment to the policies underpinning the emergence of such an enabling environment.

2. Understanding Blue Gold Deliverables

2.1 Projects and Sustainability

A problematic relation

Traditional project-thinking defines the outcomes of a project as tangible results, such as e.g. ‘risk of flood reduced to once in 20 years’, or ‘new knowledge and skills for *aman* and *boro* crop cultivation’. These are one-off results that the targeted population subsequently uses to achieve project effects (e.g. intensification and diversification of crops), which – in turn – will contribute to long-term development goals (better livelihoods).

Whereas projects are set-up to deliver results efficiently, there are concerns regarding effectiveness. The basic flaw in the project-approach is that the one-off results are not sustained over time. After project completion, shortcomings are observed with respect to e.g. operation and maintenance of infrastructure or renewal of agricultural knowledge. The tangible results do on the short run resort in a positive effect, but the effect cannot be sustained, because over time the results themselves disappear or become obsolete.

To overcome this flaw, development projects started to establish both the concrete results as well as the organisations that are to sustain these results on the longer run. Thus, in case of the Blue Gold Programme, much emphasis is given to **establishing organisations** for participatory water management alongside investments in polder infrastructure; and to involving DAE alongside building production capacities.

The step from ‘tangibles’ to ‘tangibles and organisations’ is a significant improvement in designing development projects for sustainability, but this new thinking is also marred. Full assumption of responsibility by the new and / or improved organisations is often deferred until completion and hand-over of the tangibles. Thus the new (or improved) organisations take over infrastructure or capacity development programmes that they feel at best only partially committed to.

To overcome this flaw, development project designs nowadays emphasise **co-creation** of the tangible outcomes by the project protagonist and the concerned organisation. Thus, in the design of the Blue Gold Program attention is given to participatory planning processes, whereby the new water management organisations can engage in decisions about polder infrastructure.

A second shortcoming in development projects that combine tangible results with organisation building is that the tangible results fall only partially in the domain of the new organisation. Existing organisations and agencies have roles and responsibilities towards the tangible results; or can play a constructive role in sustaining these results. Local governments, for instance, generally help provide law and order with respect to the use of local resources; and where it comes to agricultural capacities, private sector representatives play a role as well.

To address this flaw, co-creation is to engage all concerned stakeholders and to help develop a constructive **partnership** amongst them; so that their joint actions will combine to sustain the tangible results and the effect thereof. Thus, within the Blue Gold Programme, there is a renewed confirmation of the long-term role of national stakeholders, such as BWDB and DAE, in water management for development; as well as an emerging recognition of the positive value of involving private sector agencies and local government institutions, and the services that are provided through these.

Focus on BGP

BGP aspires to harness the potential of water management in 26 coastal polders in Khulna, Patuakhali and Satkhira Districts for the development of 150,000 households living on 160,000 ha. The BGP results required to achieve this (presented in detail in the various project design documents) can be grouped into two domains, as follows:

- Capacity to provide, operate and maintain essential water resources infrastructure
- Capacity to use water-related opportunities for local economic development

To sustain these capacities beyond the Programme period, the Programme will have to engage in co-creation of tangible results and will have to support the partnerships that assume responsibility for the tangibles during and after the Programme period. This leads to four deliverables (see Table 1):

Table 1: BGP results framework

Results domain	Tangible results	Institutional results
Water resources infrastructure	1. Water resources infrastructure	2. Water management institutional framework
Water-based local economic development	3. New practices and innovations in agricultural water management, production and marketing	4. Agriculture and marketing service providers

2.2 Deliverable 1 – Water Resources Infrastructure

The Programme intends to restore functionality of polder infrastructure and to thereby provide safety from flooding and opportunities for enhanced agricultural and fisheries production.

This result focuses on the major infrastructure that comprises a polder: the embankment, the regulators placed therein and the major *khas* providing drainage to the area within the polder. This description coincides with the responsibility of the BWDB for water management systems over 1,000 ha. Within the selected and to-be-selected polders, such infrastructure has already been in place since as early as the 1960s. BGP provides resources to ‘fine-tune’ the polders; but funds are inadequate to either fully rehabilitate the infrastructure to the degree required by present design criteria, or to fully climate-proof all infrastructure.

It should be understood that the main function of the infrastructure described here is to prevent and / or reduce the effect of extreme weather events, be it a storm surge or excessive rainfall. The fine-tuning of the infrastructure intends to restore the integrity of the polder by addressing present and imminent embankment breaches; and by ensuring the overall drainage function; but does not necessarily require restoration of infrastructure in keeping with existing or new ‘climate-proof’ design criteria.

Polders can contain minor infrastructure and such infrastructure is – as will be argued – essential for harnessing water for economic development. The development and management of minor infrastructure is included under deliverable 3 (see section 2.4)

2.3 Deliverable 2 – Water management partnership

Water management constitutes several activities that each require the involvement of – at least – local beneficiaries (in or outside to-be-established or revived Water Management Organisations); the Local Government (and the technical departments decentralised within them); and the Bangladesh Water Development Board. Water management activities inter alia include:

- Planning, design and construction of infrastructure – BWDB is the lead agency, and engages with local beneficiaries with respect to priorities, alignments and design parameters; and with Union Parishads on land acquisition and resettlement.

- Routine maintenance, periodic maintenance and emergency repair – again BWDB is the lead agency, and it engages with water management organisations on their role routine maintenance, while coordinating its own role in periodic maintenance and emergency repair with them. Moreover, local governments interact with the BWDB on eminent damage and emergency response.
- Disaster risk management is led by the local government (with backing from the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation), and requires involvement of the water management organisations to identify and address physical risks, as well as to organise the community response to disasters.

This listing of joint actions is not exclusive and could be elaborated with conflict resolution, mobilisation of labour and funds for maintenance, etc. Point is that the partners mentioned above need to work in varying constellations at various tasks. This requires constructive relations and flexibility to find the right way of cooperation.

2.4 Deliverable 3 – New practices and innovations

This deliverable includes those activities supported and to-be-supported by the Blue Gold Innovation Fund but goes beyond those as well. New practices and innovations supported by Blue Gold have in common that they enhance the economic value of water resources; be it by making clever use of the opportunities created by the water resources or by creating additional opportunities to derive income from water resources. Innovations pursued by the Blue gold Programme are:

- Good agricultural practices that optimise the production of crops, livestock and fisheries. The emphasis of BGP support is on products that benefit from the improved water management in the polders, but the programme does support production systems that are not strongly dependent on the polder infrastructure, such as integrated homestead food production (vegetables, poultry and fish). The support to the establishment of good agricultural practices is a core role of DAE, DLS and DoF;
- Forward and backward market linkages to improve the margin to be had from production of fish and field crops, including interventions to introduce selected value chains and / or improve their performance;
- Catchment water management is led by WMOs, but is closely coordinate with local government institutions. BWDB can provide technical advisory services on planning and design, while DAE plays an important role in helping the identification of the agricultural potential that can be supported by revised catchment water management. DoF supports the realisation of the water management potential for fisheries. Interventions in catchment water management aim to enhance the potential for crop and / or fish production. CWM has been tested within BGP and this pilot and other experiences point to important potential for adding value to water resources by better local management;
- Innovations suggested by the private sector in response to an innovation challenge launched by the programme.

Enabling and enhancing the productive use of water resources is an important ambition for the above new practices and innovations, but a second concern is to bring the benefits from new practices and innovations to the special target categories of the programme: rural poor, women and youth.

2.5 Deliverable 4 – Agriculture and marketing actors

The institutional framework for innovations in agricultural production and marketing of products benefitting from improved water management is more complex and less formally structured than the partnership for water management (see 2.3). The institutional framework comprises a wide array of service providers that serve individual producers:

- Farmer Field Schools which enable producers to jointly acquire new knowledge and skills in a manner that is more effective than every producer fending for her- or himself;
- Market-oriented Farmer Field School (MFS), which allow individual producers to jointly investigate their opportunities with respect to backward and forward market linkages;
- DAE, which provides routine support to FFSs and may, with time, to MFSs;
- DoF and DLS which provide services in their respective fields, but are less closely associated with local opportunities than DAE;
- Self-sustained service providers, be it those established with backing of departments (i.e. the community animal health worker) or those who set up business by themselves (i.e. fertiliser dealers)
- Producer groups, which take a joint action to better market their produce and / or to purchase requisite inputs;
- Local governments, especially in their role as governing body for market places.

These entities are in one way or another linked to commodity value chains and a large are of innovation (see above) is to make the value chain more effective in creating added value for the primary producers and processors.

2.6 Water Management Organisations

While sustaining water management for development requires the engagement of a long-term water management partnership; it is useful to pay special attention to the new – and quite possibly binding – element in the partnership; i.e. the water management organisations.

Their formal structure and role is described in the government guidelines and regulations for participatory water management (see footnote 1 on page 1), but with the hindsight provided by 3-years of implementation, a function-oriented perspective of the WMOs (within the context of a donor-funded development project) can be given.

Heterogeneity

Water Management Organisations are inherently heterogeneous. They are different from cooperatives (members with a shared business ambition), producer groups (members with a common interest in a commodity) and savings & credit groups (members of similar socio-economic background); in the sense that Water Management Groups and Associations enlist members with diverse aspirations, interests or backgrounds. This heterogeneity follows logically from the nature of water, as this resource is essential to very different forms of usage and to all forms of life; but it also follows from the legal framework, which proposes that members “(...) will be the farmers, fishermen, small traders, artisans of handicrafts, boatmen, aqua-culturists, the landless, the destitute, and project affected families which are directly or indirectly affected, positively or negatively, or those which are likely to be affected by the project”⁴. Figure 3 provides a schematic representation of the different interests represented in a typical WMO.

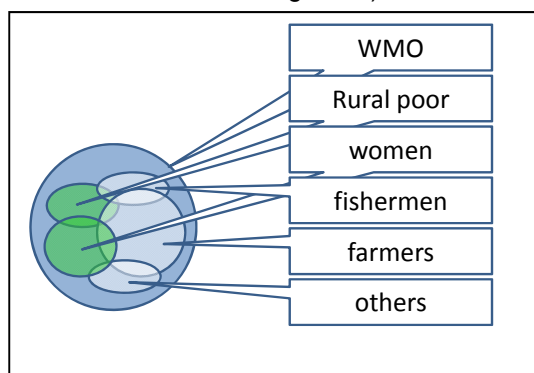


Figure 3: Diverse membership in a WMO

The upshot of this heterogeneity is that the benefits of an activity undertaken by the WMO as a whole rarely benefit the members in an equal – or even a proportionate – manner. While all members may be said to benefit from the safety provided by well-maintained embankments; fishermen may lose out as their

⁴ Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, **Participatory Water Management Rules, 2014**, Circular 20 Magh 1420 Bangla Year/2 February 2014 AD, published in Bangladesh Gazette, Additional Issue, February 11, 2014 (translation: Blue Gold).

inland fishing grounds are less well-connected to the riverine system. Improved conditions for agricultural production only benefit those with land, and often only those whose lands are neither very low, nor high and dry.

Joint activities

Within the context of the Blue Gold Programme, WMOs are rolled-out throughout the programme area. Through the programme – and in keeping with its Theory of Change – the WMOs are supported to perform activities in three areas: poverty reduction, food security and flood management.

- Essentially aimed to benefit rural poor and women, present Blue Gold *poverty reduction* activities include contracting of earthwork for embankment construction and khal re-excavation to landless contracting societies (LCSs); support to integrated homestead food production (especially aimed at women); and support to group savings and credit;
- Improved agricultural production will have indirect and direct impacts on poverty reduction but is also aimed at enhancing *food security*. Blue Gold activities include Farmer Field Schools for field crops and for integrated homestead food production; Market-oriented Farmer Field Schools; the development of service provision; but it also pursues harnessing local water resources for better agricultural production;
- The above two targets are very vulnerable to weather extreme, and especially those extremes resulting in flooding and water logging. *Flood management* is another area of activity in which the WMGs are involved.

Partnership

The activities in the above three fields do in all cases require interplay between the WMG and agencies and entities that already exist and which have a role in the specific field. While the WMOs pursue activities within the three activity domains above – and will be supported by BGP in doing so; sustainability requires an early and full involvement of development partners with the WMOs:

- Local governments have a key concern about *poverty reduction*, in keeping with their role of provider of a social safety net. Local NGOs and the technical departments decentralised within local government also play an important role in this field;
- DAE is a lead agency in the field of *food security*, together with DOF and DLS but is accompanied in this by private sector service providers that provide inputs and / or purchase produce; by various producer groups, which seek to improve their position vis-à-vis the market; and by the Local Government, in line with its responsibility for market places and local connectivity;
- BWDB is a lead partner when it comes to *flood management*, especially through main polder infrastructure, together with local governments, as partners in planning of interventions. For internal infrastructure the lead agency is less well-defined, but partners for the WMO include DAE (identifying potential crops) and LGIs (resolving local resource conflicts and possibly funding minor infrastructure).

The exit strategy intends to promote from the start the active **partnership** of the agencies and organisations mentioned with the WMO to identify and **co-create** joint activities for poverty reduction food security and flood management in the context of water management for development.

3. Strategies for Sustainability

The strategies elaborated in this chapter enhance the involvement of partners and partnerships in co-creating water management for development. This requires a renewed focus on joint activities undertaken by different combinations of actors; e.g. private sector seed suppliers, DAE and producer groups to pursue crop diversification; WMG, DAE, Union and BWDB to work on catchment water management; BWDB, LGI and water user representatives to make priority plans for main infrastructure; etc. The combined outcome of the strategies is a stronger degree of sustainability of the benefit streams that are created through BGP; and an adjustment of BGP work routines from this perspective.

This chapter proposes nine strategies, which all pursue a change in the way the programme works:

1. **Set a timeframe for completion** – This changes the present rather open-ended plan per polder into a time bound activity plan. This creates urgency for the activities carried-out in the individual polders; and brings forward the transfer of responsibilities to permanent entities in the area;
2. **Develop partnerships** – This widens the perspective from establishing WMOs to establishment of constructive working relationships between WMOs, LGIs, decentralised department (such as DAE, DLS and DoF) and BWDB. It creates a shared responsibility towards water management for development;
3. **Streamline the work process** – This changes parallel implementation of components to an integrated drive to engage WMOs in joint ‘water management for development’ activities with concerned partners, with the ultimate aim to reduce poverty and increase food security. The strategy enhances coherence between programme activities;
4. **Develop agricultural production and marketing services** – This changes the emphasis from delivering benefits by BGP to establishing and enabling multiple structures to continue to provide services in the field of agricultural production (including livestock and fisheries) and marketing. The strategy invests in potential services providers for production and marketing;
5. **Enhance the benefit of main water management infrastructure** – This builds on the present planning, design and construction of major infrastructure by helping develop approaches for operation and maintenance of main infrastructure and for disaster management;
6. **Optimise internal water management** – This aspires to optimise the benefit of water management for the local economy by supporting internal and catchment water management initiatives;
7. **Enable targeting of joint activities** – This strategy augments the gains that rural poor, women and youth enjoy from joint activities from predominantly spin-offs to well-targeted benefits. This is done by helping the partnership undertaking joint activities to consider and explicitly target these priority categories;
8. **Contribute to a national drive for PWM** – This changes experiences gained within BGP to lessons learned by the sector as a whole. It enables the continued development of a national policy and regulatory framework for participatory water management and helps align donor agencies to those policies and regulations;
9. **Introduce new work routines** – This strategy sets out to make a transition from the present Programme work routines to new routines developed by the above strategies. It aspires to swiftly align staff and resources to the new approaches.

The following nine sections describe each of these strategies in more detail. Each section starts by a succinct description of the *aspired change*. Subsequently, the *outcome* of the strategy is elaborated and where need be illustrated. The next two sections list *actions* and *dependencies* respectively. The actions describe what the BGP team is to do in order to optimise the sustainability of the deliverables before being decommissioned; whereas the dependencies point out to supportive actions and decisions by BGP implementing partners: BWDB and DAE, with additional references to local governments, DoF and DLS; during and after programme implementation. The dependencies are addressed by strategy 8 (contribute to a national drive for PWM), with the caveat that the timeframe for establishing the dependencies is longer than the BGP implementation period.

3.1 Strategy 1: Set a timeframe for completion

Aspired change

This strategy aspires to provide a specific time horizon on all activities, implying a sense of urgency for sustaining and handing-over activities to the concerned partners.

Outcome

The strategy is to result in a timeframe for programme involvement per polder, which is set-up in such a manner that the roll-out of the Blue gold Programme in each polder gets roughly the same attention (allowing for greater efficiency in latter batches, due to build-up of staff experience).

The original work plan for the Programme had an indicative planning per polder, but this need to be updated in accordance to progress achieved; as well as elaborated to reflect the planning of different on-going activities. A continued presence of the Programme in each new batch of polders taken-up until the overall completion date is not realistic, as this would either require the number of staff to keep pace with the number of polders; or imply that the polders taken-up in later years are given structurally less support.

To show the sense of urgency that is required in defining the timeframe for completion, a first stab has been made at the overall timeframe (see Figure 4).

#	Batch	Polder	duration	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	1	22	48								
2		30	48								
3		43/2D	48								
4		43/2F	48								
5	2	2	48								
6		26	48								
7		29	48								
8		31/part	48								
9		43/2A	48								
10		43/2B	48								
11	43/2E	48									
12	3	55/2A	48								
13		55/2C	48								
14	4	25	48								
15		27/1	48								
16		27/2	48								
17		28/1	48								
18		28/2	48								
19		47/3	48								
20		47/4	48								
21	TNB	48									
22	5	...	-								
23		...	-								
24		...	-								
25		...	-								
26		...	-								

Figure 4: Provisional timeframe for polder development

Actions

The strategy requires the following actions to be undertaken:

- Propose a revised timeframe for polder development to implementing agencies before DPP approval;
- Inform polder teams and local partners and agencies of the deadlines to be observed;
- Obtain revised work plans from polder teams and compile into an overall work plan
- Identify key risks for time overruns and propose an appropriate course of action. Examples:
 - The likely time overrun of the MFS-activity in the first batch of polders;
 - The need to swiftly plan, design, commission and complete priority works for major infrastructure.
- Prioritise support to WMGs with a good response and potential; and enable WMAs and BWDB to continue to roll-out WMG coverage after BGP withdrawal, with appropriate support from Local Government Institutions;
- Gradually withdraw staff from the polders in order to wean-off dependency of new structures on temporary staff.

Dependencies

The strategy's success hinges on the following conditions to be met:

- BWDB to plan, design, commission and complete priority infrastructure for fine-tuning within the given timeframe;
- Hand-over of project-led FFSs for DAE follow-up within the suggested timeframe;
- Adequate capacity in BWDB to assist WMAs in establishing WMG coverage;
- Availability of follow-up programmes for catchment water management through BWDB and / or others;
- Continued development of the framework for main infrastructure maintenance and operation after withdrawal of the BGP team.

3.2 Strategy 2: Develop partnerships

Aspired change

The focus on establishing WMOs will be amplified to pursue establishment of constructive working relationships between WMOs, LGIs, decentralised department (such as DAE, DLS and DoF) and BWDB.

Outcome

The outcome of this strategy is that WMOs together with concerned organisations undertake joint activities that lead to water management for development.

The existing regulatory framework for participatory water management provides a description of the organisations involved or to be newly involved; as well as of their interactions. The emphasis is quite logically on formal organisational structure; and this provides a skeleton for a dynamic institutional framework

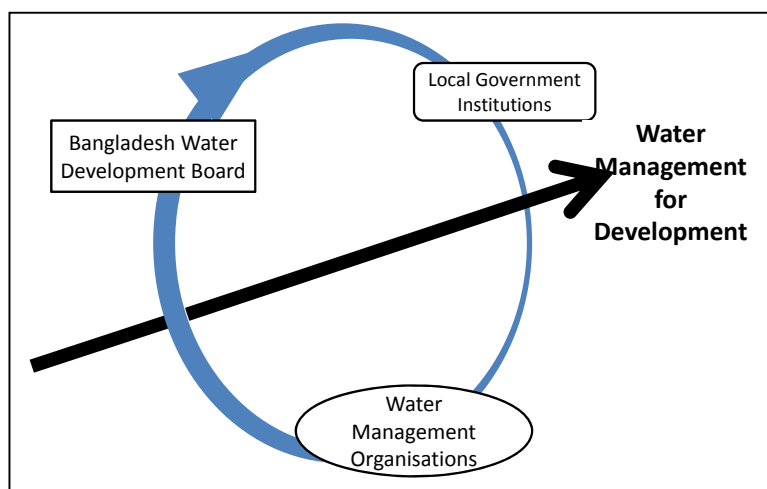


Figure 5: Water management partnership (schematic)

jointly pursuing water management for development. This strategy intends to put flesh on the bare bones provided by guides and rules for participatory water management; and gives attention to less tangible but essential aspects of the institutional framework, such as relationships, functions and internal culture. The strategy constitutes a shift in emphasis from establishing WMOs to building water management partnerships, as schematised in Figure 5.

Actions

- Identify and approach partners in water management for development immediately upon identification / selection of the prospective polders;
- Involve active support of existing organisations (BWDB, LGI, DAE, etc.) in establishing new entities (WMG, WMA, etc.) from the start. This goes further than informing (e.g. through induction training and courtesy visits) existing entities on WMO establishment; and seeks to obtain constructive involvement as early as possible in the establishment process;
- Orient field staff on promotion of water management partnership between WMOs, LGIs and technical departments (BWDB, DAE, etc.)
- Gradually withdraw TA from coordination mechanisms at polder and district levels; in line with the timeframe to be set by strategy 1. New coordination mechanisms have been proposed recently, and this action adds a gradual TA withdrawal from those mechanisms;
- Define the support that BGP is committed to render with respect to poverty reduction, food security and flood management; including the related targets (duly disaggregated for wealth class, gender and age bracket). This action sets a well-defined menu of water management and income generating activities supported by the Programme and allows focused attention to hand-over of only these activities. As an example: support to savings and credit operations may be outsourced or withdrawn, reducing the need for finding appropriate long-term support institutions;
- Pursue co-funding of joint actions by water management partners;
- Promote a network between local people that show above average capacity and initiative in water management for development; and provide training aimed at strengthening this network and developing individual capacities in entrepreneurship and community leadership. This so-called community resource group would comprise high potential training participants, resource farmer and contact farmers, self-employed service providers and disaster management volunteers, etc. This activity should link, where possible to existing initiatives to build networks of local service providers;
- Propose representation of MoLGRDC, DLS and DOF in programme coordination mechanisms at all levels.

Dependencies

- Formal recognition by BWDB of the roles that LGIs and technical departments play in water management for development, based on their respective formal mandates;
- Formal recognition that WMOs can and should interact with agencies other than BWDB, such as DAE, DoF and DLS, and such as LGIs. WMGs should be understood to be a functional community-based organisation and should as such be able to take part in Union development coordination mechanisms;
- Policy backing for joint actions (co-creation and co-funding to be stimulated);
- Formal liaison of BWDB tiers to the tiers of local government and to the departments decentralised at those levels (e.g. DAE);
- Adequate local capacity for PWM in BWDB through the O&M divisions, the Water Management wing or otherwise.

3.3 Strategy 3: Streamline the work process

Aspired change

This changes parallel implementation of components to a coherent sequence of activities directed at to-be-established WMOs and aiming to enable these to pursue ‘water management for development’ activities jointly with institutions in their area.

Outcome

The outcome of this strategy is the initiation of joint activities between WMGs or sections of their memberships and agencies, services and private sector companies present and active in ‘water management for development’ or sub-sets thereof.

This strategy has two basic premises:

- Any meaningful activity by the WMG or a sub-set of its members touches on the mandate or services of existing water management partners. To pursue sustainability from the start, activities are initiated, designed and implemented jointly by the WMO (or sub-set) and the existing entities – whereby the role of each partner is of course in line with its mandate and potential;
- Joint activities by the WMO, with due involvement of existing agencies strengthens the WMOs cohesion and builds their legitimacy in the eyes of local entities. Organisation building is no longer a separate activity, but is driven by the activities jointly undertaken. The relationship between joint activities and organisation strengthening is illustrated in Figure 6.

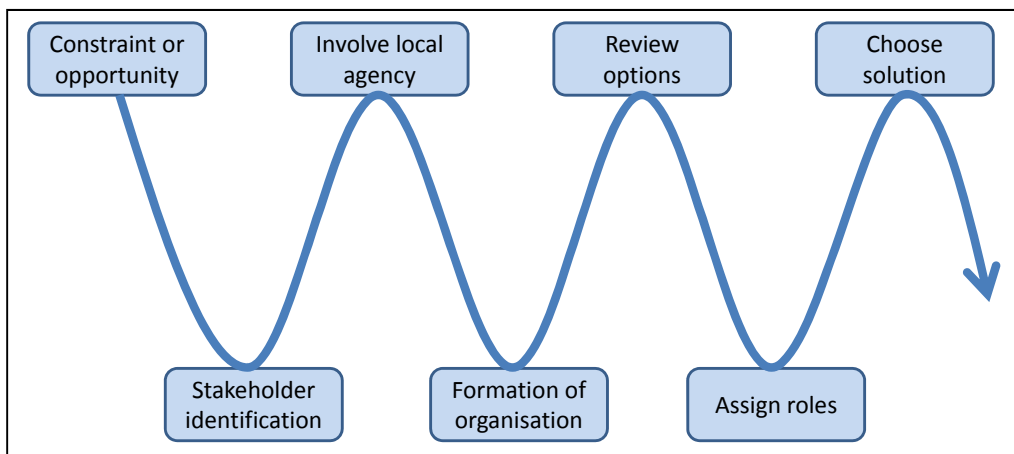


Figure 6: Relation between joint activities and organisation building (schematic)

In other words: this strategy uses the engagement in and development of joint activities as a driver for strengthening WMOs. The strategy may push the registration of the WMGs to a later stage than presently the case, but the ensuing organisation will comprise a much more committed membership, and will benefit from positive exposure to other entities in their vicinity.

Actions

- Further refine, document and disseminate an activity-led establishment process for WMOs, comprising standard step such as identification of partners, needs assessment, polder development planning, water management initiatives at catchment or other level, other joint activities and O&M planning within the timeframe set by strategy 1;
- Consider the activity-mix being supported by BGP. Support for savings and credit and for farm mechanisation may have to be outsourced or withdrawn as being too removed from the BGP core business – it is of course up to the WMOs to decide whether and how they will continue these activities;

- Visualise the same in an easy-to-understand flowchart of main activities per WMG and / or WMA;
- Develop maps (existing cropping patterns, land elevation classes, potential cropping patterns) and use these in interactive sessions to support WMO identification of actions;
- Prioritise BGP assistance to joint activities developed in the above manner, to encourage an action-oriented attitude in the WMOs and their local partners;
- Focus BGP support on those WMGs and WMAs that have the perspective and the initiative to engage in water management for development-activities;
- Develop additional communication materials (e.g. motivation posters, issue charts, role-plays, etc.) to support interactions in the different stages of the core process, striving for maximum coherence between the different media;
- Document the process in formats appropriate for partner agencies and field staff

Dependencies

- Flexibility in BWDB, LGIs and others to allocate resources to joint activities that address local needs and priorities.

3.4 Strategy 4: Deliver agricultural production and marketing services

Aspired change

Rather than predominantly engage in the delivery of services in the field of agriculture (including animal husbandry and fisheries) and marketing; BGP will use its capacity to pursue better service delivery by existing and new entities in the polders.

Outcome

This strategy intends to strengthen local availability and provision of relevant services through existing agencies and through novel mechanisms, which harness private initiative.

The activities of the BGP team in the fields of agricultural production and marketing have increasingly become interlinked and show a growing orientation towards engagement of and transfer to local services. Within the field of production and marketing, potential service providers include:

- The decentralised levels of DAE (Union) and DoF and DLS (Upazila); which have mainstream programmes for extension on crop husbandry through Farmer Field Schools, and for promotion of self-employed community service providers for animal health and fisheries;
- The Unions, which manage and set-up public market places through market committees, and which invest in connectivity of market places;
- A myriad of private sector actors ranging from input supply to produce purchasers; from local buyers to wholesale buyers; and from informal businessmen to established companies;
- Farmer clubs and producer groups; in which farmers (or fishermen) pursue better terms in forward and backward market linkages, through joint action;
- WMGs and WMAs which strive to improve water management conditions for crop production and fisheries at the local level through joint action;
- NGOs and development agencies that provide support to inter alia integrated homestead food production.

Much of the Blue Gold support is used for service provision: funding for intensified FFS coverage by DAE; TA-supported FFSs for integrated household food production (strongly gender and poverty-focussed, but hardly related to water management) and TA-supported Market-oriented Farmer Field Schools (which have the potential to develop into producer groups). The present strategy will add emphasis to linking producers to the service providers that help them undertake farming (fishing) as a business.

Actions

- Share approaches, lessons and materials for non-field crop FFSs and MFSs with DAE, inter alia by knowledge exchange sessions at field and central levels;
- Pursue recognition of WMOs as an entry point for DAE, DLS and DoF;
- Include basic 'farming as a business' in all FSS curricula (e.g. basic gross margin calculations, producer group formation, establishment of self-employed local service providers, etc.);
- Support networking by FFS and MFS lead farmers and provide additional training to further develop their leadership potential and their value as a community resource for future development initiatives (see also strategies 2 and 9);
- Help establish self-employed local service providers, such as Community Animal Health Workers and similar fisheries-service providers by inter alia training; by pursuing their formal recognition by the concerned departments and the Unions in their area of work (e.g. combined Union/department identity cards valid for a certain period); and by introducing them to the communities supported by the programme;
- Maintain and enhance focus on the establishment of mutually beneficial linkages between growers and services. This focus discourages entry into new fields such as ICT applications for agricultural extension and weather forecasts;
- Coordinate market development with Unions and market committees, where needed.

Dependencies

- Willingness in DAE, DoF and DLS to adapt lessons from the MFS approach in their mainstream programmes;
- Willingness in DAE, DoF and DLS to engage with WMGs and WMAs to support the development of water management at community and catchment level through technical advice and e.g. land use and land potential mapping.

3.5 Strategy 5: Enhance the benefit of main water management infrastructure

Aspired change

To add to the present deliverable of main infrastructure attention to the development of approaches for operation and maintenance, including disaster risk management.

Outcome

Better arrangements for operation and maintenance of main infrastructure, including arrangements for emergency response and disaster management.

Interaction with local governments and intended beneficiaries during planning, design and construction of main polder infrastructure (embankments, regulators and primary khals) offers an opportunity to jointly define arrangements for the infrastructure management. This strategy intends to make better use of that opportunity.

- A well-defined activity related to the integrity of the main infrastructure is the Disaster Risk Management, in which local governments have a formal lead role, defined in guidelines issued by the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation. The role of WMOs as community-based organisations that can help to disseminate information and mobilise people for emergency response should be integrated with this approach for disaster risk management;
- BWDB has a responsibility towards emergency repairs, but stands to gain from early warnings through WMOs and LGIS; and from mobilisation of a local emergency response by the Unions;
- While retaining the primary responsibility for regulators with the BWDB, tripartite agreements between BWDB, Unions and WMGs can ensure sound operation, provision of routine maintenance and early warning on major damage.

- Embankments offer safety but are also used – often illegally – for various purposes. Agreements between BWDB, users and Unions can establish a framework in which embankment use for cultivation and habitation is permitted on the proviso that the beneficiary maintains the concerned section of the embankment in keeping with agreed standards.

More such arrangements may be possible, and will be identified through interaction between the concerned partners.

Actions

- Propose which infrastructure needs can be addressed by BGP, emphasising that the budget only allows refinement and would be stretched if used for rehabilitation. A possible choice would be to repair embankment breaches, while not restoring crest-levels and slopes everywhere around the polder;
- Engage partnership in main infrastructure planning, design, construction and O&M from the start;
- Develop instruments promoting good care of infrastructure, such as inspection forms, regulator user manuals and sign-boarded restrictions;
- Propose a system of routine inspections, with clear roles for WMOs, LGIs and BWDB to support regular O&M and swift emergency responses;
- Involve partnership in disaster risk reduction activities (undertaken by Unions under the purview of the Ministry of Relief & Rehabilitation), inter alia pursuing that WMOs are recognised as a potential partner in disaster risk management;
- Propose and help test approaches for embankment and regulator O&M, inter alia making use of approaches pioneered in other project areas (O&M for use-swaps; beneficiary financing; in-kind contributions, etc.)

Dependencies

- Recognition of WMOs role in disaster risk management at the Union level;
- Commitment of recurrent ready-to-use funding in the BWDB O&M divisions for maintenance and emergency works on main infrastructure;
- Development and acceptance of pragmatic arrangements for operation and maintenance between BWDB, LGIs and WMOs;
- Policy-backing for testing and reviewing diverse mechanisms to generate a maintenance fund and / or to collect cash and kind contributions by WMGs. Some options are discussed in the first version of this working paper.

3.6 Strategy 6: Optimise internal water management

Aspired change

This strategy enhances the benefit from polder infrastructure from prevention of crop damage from flooding and waterlogging to better conditions for optimal crop growth and / or fisheries.

Outcome

Systematic development of internal water management, whereby measures in hydrological units or sub-units inside the polder help create better conditions for crop production and / or fisheries.

The second aspect is visualised in Figure 7. It shows that main infrastructure helps secure higher average yields, and that agricultural research and extension helps realise higher yields under present conditions. The third area is less well established in Bangladesh and uses catchment water management to optimise conditions for the crops of choice.

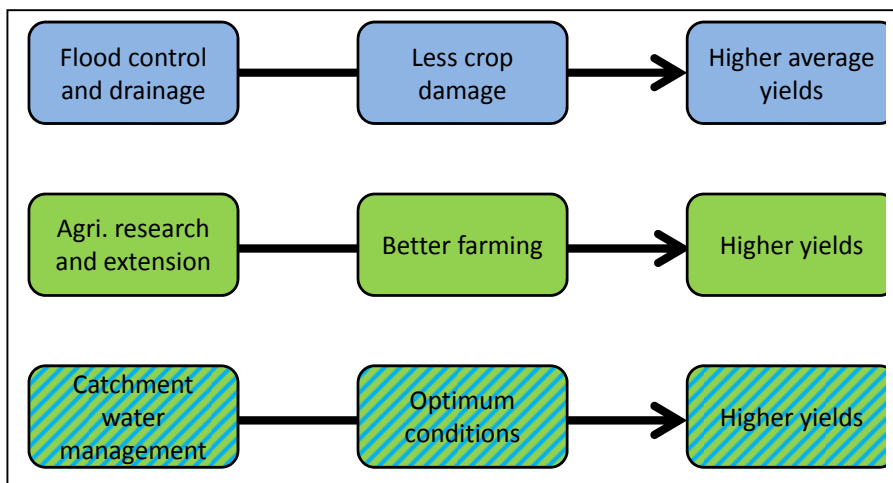


Figure 7: Agricultural water management – a new frontier

Recent research by inter alia IRRI underscores the potential for innovation at the interface between hydrology and agronomy. The recent pilot conducted by BGP in polder 30 confirms the viability of this approach.

Actions

- Propose allocating a larger share of the fine-tuning budget to internal drainage and catchment water management;
- Propose the type of infrastructure to be supported by BGP for internal water management BGP (drainage, retention, irrigation?);
- Help define the exact role of BWDB and others vis-à-vis internal water management;
- Engage partnership in internal water management infrastructure planning, design, construction and O&M from the start and base decisions on the potential for crop intensification and diversification;
- Explore and pursue co-funding internal water management infrastructure by BGP, LGIs and WMOs;
- Replicate Catchment Water Management demonstrations (combining water management, input supply and extension), with due involvement of DAE and LGIs, and consider commissioning novel approaches to catchment water management through the innovation fund;
- Document and share approaches for and outcomes of catchment water management

Dependencies

- BWDB DPP (and possibly that of others) to reflect adequate provisions for investment support to internal water management infrastructure;
- BWDB to focus its role on main infrastructure and on extending the primary and secondary khals; while promoting improvement of the tertiary and smaller drainage network by WMOs with support from LGIs, DAE, DoF and others
- Partners to agree on co-funding for more effective roll-out;

- Other programmes help ensure adequate capacity of the rivers in the Southwest Delta; addressing the sedimentation in the main rivers and providing a viable drainage base for the polders.

3.7 Strategy 7: Enable targeting of joint activities

Aspired change

This strategy seeks a more effective way of directing programme benefits to special target categories (rural poor, women and youth) through enabling the partners that undertake joint activities to take well-informed choices about targeting.

Outcome

The WMOs and their partners take decisions with respect to how benefits of joint activities are distributed; and how this distribution affects the position of vulnerable groups.

The outcomes of water management for development tend to be unevenly distributed:

- Investment in water resources benefits the local economy but social and environmental impacts may affect some households (Project Affected People – PAP) disproportionately. BGP is, however, unable to directly compensate loss of land or homesteads in realignment/widening of khals and embankments;
- Direct household benefits from water management are in general proportionate to the land holding and therefore are biased towards the larger landholders, while the burden of maintenance and operation could fall disproportionately on the poorer households that are over-represented in the WMOs.
- Improved water management does leads to higher on-average yields and thereby to a growing local economy that creates spin-off opportunities for men and women engaged as agricultural labourer; provided they do not migrate out of the area;
- BWDB-owned water-bodies and land – and other *khas* resources – could benefit vulnerable groups provided these resources are made available to them, and provided this access is adequately secured by agencies responsible for law and order.

The fifth strategy intends to make concerns for and opportunities in social inclusiveness of water management for development part of the social responsibility of the organisations that jointly pursue improvements in water management and agriculture. The strategy sensitises the water management partnership between WMOs, line agencies, LGIs and others of opportunities to address social inclusiveness in and beyond social safety net activities. Furthermore, it helps the WMOs and their partners to find ways in which to give shape to their social responsibility.

Actions

- Assess whether and how the LCS approach can continue to contribute to poverty reduction (considering that wages in agriculture are increasing; that mechanised equipment is increasingly available (cranes and dredgers) and reviewing the effectiveness of the present way of organising and paying LCSs), A study into structural poverty alleviation and empowerment of women engaged in LCSs is a first step;
- Engage LGIs (notably the Unions) from the start in addressing concerns related to loss of homesteads and land (as opposed to the present practice of calling in their help only when works are delayed);
- Use Unions to identify and / or confirm vulnerable groups (as they routinely do for their social safety net activities);
- Promote WMOs to liaise with local development agents (government agencies, NGOs or other) to undertake activities specifically aimed at poverty reduction and / or social inclusiveness;

- Signal concerns with respect to the distribution of benefits from joint actions to different genders, wealth classes and age brackets, and consider withdrawal of support where benefits are actively directed away from target categories;
- Support discussion on inclusive development with WMOs and partners by communication aids and socio-economic information;
- Use horizontal learning and communication campaigns to signal and share good practices with respect to targeting;
- Develop and propose mechanisms to enhance inclusiveness, such as LCSs, pragmatic maintenance for use-deals on embankments, etc.)

Dependencies

- Recognition of the potential of UPs in mitigating and resolving land issues, and in identifying vulnerable groups
- BWDB follow-up to make available their khas resources to vulnerable groups;
- BWDB commitment to pragmatic maintenance for use-deals on embankments;
- BWDB capacity to make timely payments to LCSs.

3.8 Strategy 8: Contribute to a national drive for PWM

Aspired change

Isolated stand-alone project experiences can feed into national dialogue on an evolving policy and regulatory framework for participatory water management.

Outcome

Local experiences will contribute to and transform into lessons learned at national level.

The present Guidelines for Participatory Water Management were the culmination of intensive dialogue between the policy makers of national water management-related agencies; strongly inspired by outcomes of the Flood Action Plan and of project experiences gained by BWDB and LGED. The structures proposed by the GPWM have been put to the test extensively, both under leadership of LGED and of BWDB; be it always in the context of donor-funded infrastructure development projects.

The experience presently accumulated has already led to departmental (unilateral) refinements of the approach; while many loose ends not yet well developed in policy have come to surface: e.g. fund mobilisation by WMOs; regular maintenance and emergency repair funding; inter-departmental relations; status of WMOs vis-à-vis others than the mother-department, etc.

Blue Gold has, like many other projects, important contributions to make to national policy dialogue, but is in no position to either initiate that dialogue; or to align donor agencies to the ensuing policies.

A national context to the water management for development initiated by BGP is, however, essential. Many of the dependencies identified in the above strategies are not easily established and, in fact, require national policy development to be realised. A continued refinement of the policy context for water management – through adaptive learning – is an essential ingredient of sustainability of water management for development.

This strategy recognises that a continued evolution of national PWM policies, guidelines and decisions is needed to sustain the outcomes of projects like BGP. It also recognises that development of a sustained national resolve for PWM takes place over a longer period than that of the implementation of BGP; and that consequently not all dependencies listed above will be resolved during the BGP period. The strategy intends, however, to help make the national resolve for water management stronger and more responsive to hand-on experience.

Actions

- Identify opportunities and constraints in BGP implementation requiring backing from national policies and decisions, beyond the issues that can be settled in the steering committee. The dependencies listed above for a starting point
- Initiate informal policy dialogue based on BGP hands-on experience (advisory group, workshops, orientation courses etc.). The advisory group formed to support development of this exit strategy has already been given a wider role in dialogue around strategic issues facing the BGP
- Support policy development through studies, consultancies, consultations, etc.; as well as by highlighting emerging good practices at national forums;
- Support internalisation of new work routines through in-house training programmes in BWDB and DAE;
- Support policy development through interactions with policy makers, including the Delta Plan protagonists;
- Initiate coordination for policy support between PWM-related donor-funded projects
- Address opportunities to include local lessons to the formulation of national guidance, such as for instance by engaging in the present development of Byelaws for the Water Act 2013.

Dependencies

- A national resolve for binging forward participatory water management, consistently supported by development partners
- Alignment of donor agencies to evolving framework and policies for PWM

3.9 Strategy 9: Introduce new work routines

Aspired change

The above strategies pursue changes in the activities routinely undertaken by the BGP team, and of activities enabled by the BGP funding, with the aim to enhance the sustainability of water management for development.

Outcome

This strategy aims for a swift introduction of new work routines. The central formulation of an exit strategy – basically aimed at embedding the four BGP deliverables during implementation in institutions bearing long-term responsibility for those deliverables – risks that the introduction of requisite changes is bogged down by review and approval processes. Quite some actions are however already well underway, and formalisation of the exit strategy should not stand in the way of the continued implementation of those actions.

This strategy intends to maintain and augment the present momentum for making the BGP future-proof. It does so by keeping necessary formalisation at a pragmatic minimum. Approval will be sought for crucial milestones, if and when these appear. Actions already started can continue to unfold until management and steering committee approval for a next step is required. This strategy sets out to maintain the pace of processes already on-going, while giving management and steering committee a comprehensive overview.

Actions

- Apply horizontal learning techniques (workshops, exchange visits, documentation) to disseminate good practices among partner and programme field staff, and among WMOs
- Transfer responsibilities from the centre to zonal and polder teams (decentralisation), basically building on the new structures for coordination proposed by the BGP zonal offices;
- Adjust staff designations to titles befitting with the new management routines;

- Develop and build personal capacities of a network (community resource group) among emerging community leaders and volunteers, such as the resource and contact farmers, self-employed service providers, disaster management workers and high potential participants identified in BGP training sessions; to enable them to share experiences and to support each other in future development-oriented activities;
- Assign responsibilities for each of the above strategies to a task team comprising a coordinator, with a small panel of key contributors, supported by senior backstopping; all within the BGP team; and seek reflection on programme adjustments from WMOs and agency field staff; as well as – on headlines – from the BGP Advisory Group;
- Ensure synergy between the on-going exercise for monitoring and reflection - by making sure that each strategy task team not only makes necessary adjustments to activities, but also identifies the right monitoring indicators for those adjusted activities;
- Review progress on a weekly basis in the central office;
- Present proposed changes that require confirmation by senior levels of the implementing partners and donor agency through the steering committee;

Dependencies

- Confirmation of proposed changes as and when required by the steering committee and the senior levels in BWDB, DAE and EKN

4. Sustainability

The strategies described in chapter 3 will result in adjustment to the BGP activities with the aim to enhance the sustainability of programme outcomes by involving development partners in co-creating the joint activities in the field of water management for development.

The strategies in essence focus on adjusting the activities performed and supported by the temporary programme. Sustainability does however also depend on changes in the work routines of the implementing agencies of the programme. These dependencies have been identified with each strategy and one strategy (number, section 3.8) is specifically aimed at addressing those dependencies. It must be understood however, that major change in BWDB and / or DAE procedures is a national concern, rather than a matter to be decided on the basis of one programme. As a consequence, requisite changes in BWDB and / or DAE procedures take a longer time to be brought about than changes within the activities of the Programme. The timeframe for changes in the organisational context for water management for development is larger than the BGP implementation period. Continued change at national level is required for securing and augmenting the sustainability of the programme outcomes during and after the completion date.

An important first step in adjusting the BWDB and DAE procedures to the new emphasis on sustainability in BGP is formed by the revision of the Development Project Proforma. Swift revision ensures that budget allocations in 2016 / 2017 financial year reflect new insights. The insights from the Theory of change exercise and the outcomes of the sustainability strategies combine to inform the formulation of a single unified Logical Framework to inform the new DPPs of DAE and BWDB.

More fundamental changes than those that can be incorporated in the DPP do however, as said above, take place on a longer timeline. Perseverance is required to change the present mind-sets in the water sector, to a new one that fully embraces the need for joint activities between WMOs and their partners in the water sector.

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