



Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB)



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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Working Paper 9 Gender Approach

September 2016



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Gender Approach

September 2016

Blue Gold Program

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Issue and revision record

Revision	Date	Originator	Checker	Approver	Description
1.0	16/09/2016	Kitty Bentvelsen		Guy Jones	First draft

Working Papers are intended to explore the issues surrounding a particular aspect of the project (eg gender, BGP exit strategy, polder development planning, roles and functions of WMO organisations, water management, communications) in a form which allows discussion and comment within the project whilst remaining as a working draft - but with the eventual aim of issuing as a Technical or Thematic Report when the process of internal interrogation and refinement has resulted in a product which has wider application. A WP is not intended to be an action plan or progress report, but a discussion of issues and processes and the reasons behind what we are doing in the project.

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BGP	Blue Gold Program
BWDP	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CAWH	Community Animal health Worker
CDSP	Char Development and Settlement Project
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGIAR	Global Agricultural Research Partnership
CLW	Community Livestock Worker
CO	Community Organizer
CPW	Community Poultry Worker
CU	Concern Universal
DAC	Development assistance Committee (of OECD)
DAE	Department of agricultural Extension
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DoL	Department of Livestock
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	Executive Committee
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EWM	Equitable Water Management
FFS	Farmer Field School
FO	Farmer field School Organizer
FYP	Five Year Plan
GESAP	Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GLD	Gender and Leadership Development
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GoN	Government of the Netherlands
GPWM	Guidelines for Participatory Water Management
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance
GWAPB	Gender and Water Alliance Project, Bangladesh
HPR	Half Yearly Progress Report
IF	Innovation Fund
IFMC	Integrated Farm Management Component
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGA	Income generating activity
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
IPSWAM	Integrated Planning for Sustainable Water Management
KNKS	
LCS	Labour Contracting Society
MFS	Market oriented Farmer Field School
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development initiative
PF	Producer Group Facilitator
PWMR	Participatory Water Management Rules (of 2014)

SAFAL	Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Linkages
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SVC	Strengthened value Chains
SWAIWRPMP	South West Area Integrated Water Resources Planning and Management Project
TA	Technical Assistance
UIU	United International University
ULAB	University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UP	Union Parishad
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Value Chain
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WEF	World Economic Forum
WLE	Water, land and Ecosystems
WMA	Water Management Association
WMG	Water Management Group
WMIP	Water Management Improvement Project
WMO	Water Management Organization

Executive Summary

This working paper presents the background, status and further planning for gender equality and women's empowerment as an important cross-cutting issue within the Blue Gold Program. Chapter 1 and 2 present the background of the Blue Gold program and of its gender approach. Chapter 3 summarizes the gender approach as presented in Blue Gold's inception report. Chapter 4 presents gender related findings from Blue Gold's baseline survey and from several other sources relevant for Blue Gold's working area. Chapter 5 summarizes the gender related activities in the first 3 years of Blue Gold and Chapter 6 presents the main achievements. Chapter 7 revisits Blue Gold's gender approach, presenting how gender is included in Blue Gold's updated Theory of Change, which gender results are foreseen, as well as the gender related activities.

Background to Blue Gold's gender approach

Integrating gender perspectives into a water management and food security program as Blue Gold is well in line with policies of both the government of Bangladesh (GoB) and the government of the Netherlands (GoN). GoB has its National Women's Development Policy of 2011 (which was also quoted in Blue Gold's Program Document) which recognizes the (important) role of women in agriculture and food security, as well as in environmental conservation and disaster risk management. This policy requires that each line ministry in Bangladesh has its own gender policy. Also GoB's current Five Year Plan 2016-2020, prepared by the Planning Commission, lists empowerment of women and reducing gender inequality as one of the drivers for development. This 7th FYP explicitly recognizes women's crucial role in agriculture in order to achieve food and nutritional security in Bangladesh.

For the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs women's rights and gender equality are among the priority issues in its foreign policy (New Agenda for Aid, Trade and Investments "A World to Gain"). In addition, EU development policy aims that the large majority of projects and programs (85% by 2020) are gender sensitive, with gender equality as a significant objective or result. The Multi-annual Strategic Plan 2014-2017 of EKN Dhaka includes the commitment to integrate gender issues in all its programs.

The Blue Gold Program is in various respects based on the experiences of the IPSWAM project, which included quite a thorough gender approach. Chapter 2 also summarizes the characteristics, achievements, lessons learnt and challenges of IPSWAM's gender approach.

The global phenomenon of feminization of agriculture is also experienced in Bangladesh, which is another reason for explicit attention to gender issues within the Blue Gold program.

Gender approach in the Blue Gold program

In the inception period in 2013 a gender approach for the Blue Gold program had been developed in close consultation with project staff of the various components, which was in many respects based on IPSWAM experience. The purpose of the gender approach was seen as twofold: (1) to enable men and women to both benefit from Blue Gold interventions, including contributing to gender equality; and (2) to improve the program's performance and increase the likelihood of sustainability. The Inception Report of Blue Gold included specific gender measures / activities for each component, including for training, M&E and other cross-cutting issues. The inception report also included a comprehensive list of gender indicators (see Annex 2 of this Working Paper), most of which were at output level, though some were at outcome level. For most indicators quantified targets had been added, some of which were based on government policies (in particular the Participatory Water Management Guidelines, which require, for example, that at least 30% of the Executive Committee members of WMOs are women), whereas others were targets set within

Blue Gold (such as 40% women as WMG members). The targets for outcome level indicators were provisionally set, to be reviewed after the baseline study had identified the values for the baseline situation.

Most gender related activities concerned “gender mainstreaming”, i.e. the integration of gender perspectives in core Blue Gold activities by BGP staff of the various components, with support or input of BGP’s gender team if and when needed. For a limited number of gender activities the gender team was firstly responsible, such as gender training, though often jointly with others (e.g. the training team).

Gender data

A specific gender analysis was not planned at the start of the BGP for two reasons: much gender knowledge was considered still in place due to IPSWAM experience (the first national gender expert also worked in IPSWAM) and because the baseline survey would also collect gender related data. Though this was certainly true, looking back with hindsight suggests that a proper gender analysis focusing on in-depth information could have been useful.

Findings from the baseline study demonstrate that the proportion of female headed households is relatively low (4.25%), however, they are in many respects more disadvantaged than male headed households. A larger proportion of female headed households (as compared to male headed households) has unemployed household heads, eat less meat, more often experienced situations with less than 2 meals a day and were considerably less involved in WMGs.

In 50-80% of the male headed households decision-making was found to be jointly by husband and wife, depending on the topic (NB: as these questions were answered by male household heads, a certain level of socially desirable answering cannot be excluded). A relatively small percentage (21%) of women were reportedly involved in work that generates income, with about one third of them working as agricultural wage labourer.

Some other sources that provide relevant gender information were found, for example, the study of ULAB on Gender and Aquaculture, which was conducted in the same districts as where BGP is working. This study provides interesting information also relevant to Blue Gold. Examples are the much longer average working days of women (15-16 hours) than men (7 hours), the productive work of women (often the more routine tasks) being often unrecognized, the considerably lower wages that women get, the widely experienced verbal or physical harassment of women and girls, and the largely negative perception of men on women in public functions and in market linkages.

Implementation of gender activities

The majority of gender related activities in recent years were core BGP activities ensuring the (meaningful) involvement of both men and women, such as promoting that men and women joined WMG membership and participated in LCS groups, Farmer Field Schools and other training.

The role of the gender team consisted of liaising with BGP colleagues to ensure such “gender mainstreaming”, including emphasising the “meaningful and active” participation of men and women, i.e. not only as a tokenism. The gender team contributed to integrating gender perspectives in Blue Gold strategies and approaches (e.g. the CWM strategy and revised ToC) and commented on numerous documents, such as Innovation Fund concept notes.

Specific activities initiated by the gender team include the development of an anti-harassment policy for the BGP, the development of the Gender and Leadership Development training (together with the training team), the development of a ToR for updating BWDB’s Gender Action Plan, the development of a ToR for a study on the impact of LCS work on poverty and women’s empowerment and development of court yard sessions to motivate men and women on women’s WMG membership.

Gender achievements in Blue Gold

By the end of 2015 just over 40% of all WMG members were women and 34% of the Executive Committee members. Of LCS group members 38% were women (5176 in total). In FFS groups organized by Blue Gold TA a large majority (81%) of the participants were women (also due to the FFS topics); in DAE FFS 50% of the participants (achieved because DAE's approach works with husband and wife). In the market oriented FFS (MFS groups) 44.3% were women, with a majority of women in tilapia and poultry MFS and a majority of men in sesame and mung bean MFS. In most other training about one third of the participants were women.

Blue Gold has not yet (structurally) collected substantial qualitative information on gender equality and women's empowerment, also because impact surveys have not yet been conducted. But anecdotal information appears to demonstrate that women's participation in BGP activities, such as FFS, has some level of empowering effect, for example, in terms of increased self-confidence and/or status of women and increased mobility of women and interaction with others. Women's (and men's) participation in FFS and MFS also leads to increased availability of food and/or income for the household, but there is limited insight to which extent women have access or control over such income. Rather, some examples of husbands selling women's produce and keeping the money to themselves were reported.

The impact of women's membership of WMGs or Executive Committees of WMOs is neither structurally measured yet, but also here anecdotal evidence provides some interesting examples, e.g. of women's EC members becoming candidates (and being elected) in local elections (of Union Parishads).

In the first years of Blue Gold also constraints and challenges were identified, both for women to become (active) members of Executive Committees of WMOs and several internal challenges. The first include the male (and female) perception that public space is male as well as several practical constraints for women to become EC member (such as women lacking the money to buy the nomination papers and pay for the costs of the election campaign). Internal challenges include the room for improvement for internalizing pro-gender attitudes at all levels of Blue Gold staff and the frequent changes in the person of gender coordinator (4 in 3 years).

Gender in Blue Gold's new Theory of Change

In the first half of 2016 the ToC of the BGP was reviewed and gender equity was explicitly included as a goal in its own right, to be achieved through various pathways as well as contributing to improved livelihoods. The Working Paper on the new ToC (WP5) identified also the main causal relationships between Blue Gold results and Gender Equity and the underlying assumptions.

Updated Gender Approach

Apart from the new ToC, also other reasons for revisiting Blue Gold's gender approach had emerged. The need was felt to design gender related activities more on the basis of the results that BGP aims to achieve, rather than (only) on the opportunities for gender mainstreaming. Also the increased insight in the local gender situation and (other) lessons learnt from the first 3 years of Blue Gold (gender) interventions gave rise to revising of gender activities. Table 6 of this paper presents the gender related activities of Blue Gold for the next years per activity cluster of the new ToC, also taking the new TA structure more into account. In this first draft of the Gender Working Paper several gender activities are still preliminary, because not all details have been sufficiently discussed with all concerned colleagues.

Many gender activities are the same or similar to those already being implemented, but there are also differences: more (or more explicit) attention to changing gender norms and attitudes; the introduction of a gender indicator (or rather: an index) better measuring women's empowerment as related to men's empowerment; and more (explicit) attention to gender issues within Blue Gold's internal operations.

Also the fact that women (like men) do not form a homogeneous group is more explicitly realized, e.g. by intending to also target women of landholding households as potential WMG members (they are now

under-represented). The fact that feminization of agriculture might have quite an impact on agricultural production in Blue Gold's polders led to including this topic as potential research subject to assess its scale, potential consequences and potential measures to address these.

Responsibilities for implementing the gender approach

The three teams within the new Blue Gold TA structure (Livelihood Improvements, EWM and SVC) and BG management each will have responsibilities and ownership for gender activities related to function and activity clusters –in cooperation with Blue Gold's gender staff-, whereby:

- Livelihood Improvement team: responsible for the overall gender strategy and gender equity results to be achieved, including the sustainability of such results.
- EWM team: responsible for the more practical approaches and interventions to improve women's (and men's) active and meaningful participation in WMOs, including addressing barriers to women's active participation; follow-up on the recommendations of the LCS study (when available) in term of reviewing BGP's LCS approach;
- SVC team: review the approaches and interventions regarding targeting men and women farmers, e.g. exploring the need and options to involve women more in field crop and market linkage related activities (also in view of feminization of agriculture).
- Blue Gold management: responsible for the internal gender related measures.
- Responsibilities for zonal and polder teams are generally evident, but will be further detailed and made more explicit (in a next version of this paper).

It is recognized that BGP staff, apart from commitment, must have adequate understanding of what is expected from them with regard to integrating gender into their work. Until now this was partially addressed in the induction training for the field staff (which included gender sessions) and/or by setting quantitative targets. With the new structure and revisited gender approach, the gender team will put more emphasis on discussing gender related responsibilities with the various categories and levels of Blue Gold staff. The new TA structure at field level (with polder teams) also creates new opportunities, e.g. to have a gender focal point at polder level, which is being further explored.

Gender results and gender in MRL

Quantitative results, mostly in terms of participation of women (and men) in Blue Gold activities and as membership of WMGs, LCS groups and FFS/MFS, are currently already well monitored by the concerned teams. Such gender-disaggregated data is presented in Blue Gold's progress reports.

However, there is a need to more structurally measure qualitative gender results. When reviewing the Blue Gold logframe, this need was kept in mind when discussing the gender indicators. A main change is the addition of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), which measures the empowerment of women in 5 domains (see section 7.3) as compared to men's empowerment. WEAI hence will form the main indicator for the result area of "Gender Equity". Another new addition is a tool to measure women's active participation in dialogues and decision-making of WMO Executive Committees.

Apart from the regular monitoring and the measurement of the (gender) indicators in the revised logframe, also the option of separate studies has always been foreseen. The first such study will be on the impact of LCS work (especially by women) on poverty reduction and women's empowerment (the tender process for a service provider for this research is ongoing). BAU interns are currently conducting a small study on gender issues in Community Water Management. Also case studies on successful women (and men who create space for women) are foreseen; a few have already been collected in recent years for Blue Gold newsletters.

1. Objective and background of the Blue Gold Program

Objective of the Blue Gold Program¹

The Blue Gold Program is a US\$ 63.3 million joint initiative funded by the governments of Bangladesh and the Netherlands. The program began in March 2013 and is scheduled to last six years. The Program was designed to cover 160,000 ha (gross) of selected coastal polders with the objective of reducing poverty among an estimated 150,000 households by creating a healthy living environment and a sustainable socio-economic development". The specific objectives of Blue Gold were formulated as:

- a. To protect the communities and their land located in polders against floods from river and sea (climate change adaptation) and to optimize the use of water resources for their productive sectors;
- b. To organize the communities in water management organizations (WMOs) which will have to become the driving force for the natural resources based development (agriculture, fisheries and livestock), whereby environment, gender and good governance are effectively addressed;
- c. To increase the household income derived from the productive sectors; and
- d. To strengthen the institutional framework for sustained water resources development and related development services in the Southwest/Southcentral coastal zones.

Its operations concentrate on the polders of three districts in the Southwest of Bangladesh: Patuakhali, Khulna and Satkhira.

Background

The Government of the Netherlands (GoN) has supported water management projects in Bangladesh since 1975, usually as a partner of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB). The nature of the projects evolved from projects focusing on engineering and construction to more integrated water resources development projects. Participatory approaches were successfully introduced since 2003 in line with the water resources development strategies of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), many of which were co-funded by GoN. These projects include the Integrated Planning for Sustainable Water Management (IPSWAM) project, the South West Area Integrated Water Resources Planning and Management Project (SWAIWRPMP or South-west), the Char Development and Settlement Projects (CDSP) and the Water Management Improvement Project (WMIP). The IPSWAM project ended in June 2011, after which GoB and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) prepared a follow-up programme with the name "Blue Gold". Though water management remained the most important sector, food security was re-introduced and emphasis was also given to business development / value chain strengthening, in line with EKN's Multi-Annual Strategic Plan 2012-2015.

¹ This chapter may be aligned with new formulations, such as in Working Paper 3 (in a later version).

The Blue Gold Program (BGP) was originally designed with five components, i.e. (1) community mobilization and institutional strengthening; (2) water resources management; (3) food security and agricultural production; (4) business development and (5) cross cutting issues, consisting of (i) Good Governance; (ii) Gender; (iii) Environment; (iv) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and (v) Innovation. To achieve its intended results, BGP also involves Training; Institutional Strengthening; Communication and Knowledge Management; and Monitoring and Evaluation.

The original BGP design incorporated lessons from past experiences. Its approach to water management was based on the Participatory Water Management Guidelines (PWMG) and the six steps process for community mobilization and WMO formation developed under IPSWAM. To address food security, BGP largely followed the proven Farmer Field School approach, as developed by DAE, with support of Danida. The business development approach was developed during the first years of the Blue Gold program by identifying opportunities and constraints, including those related to market linkages. The Blue Gold approach evolved during its implementation, leading to a revised Theory of Change in early 2016, see section 7.1. of this working paper.

2. Background to Blue Gold's gender approach

This section discusses the gender policies of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and the Government of the Netherlands (GoN), the latter as related to international development, as well as the experience with integrating gender within the IPSWAM project.

2.1 Women's rights and gender equality in Bangladesh

Women's opportunities and public participation in Bangladesh have changed significantly in recent decades. GoB ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, though with some reservations. Various gains in the area of gender equality were made, especially on the legislative front (e.g. on equal pay). Though enforcement of such legislation is still a challenge, gender indicators of UNDP and the World Economic Forum (WEF) demonstrate improvements. For example, WEF's Gender Gap Index for Bangladesh increased from 0.627 in 2006 to 0.668 in 2012 and to 0.704 in 2015², scoring better than countries as Japan or India.

Major progress has especially been made in closing the gender gap in school enrolments at both primary and secondary levels: girls currently outnumber boys. The rapid growth of the garment industry has provided a large number of formal sector jobs for women, who comprise more than 90% of its labour force (but very under-represented in management functions). Women are now also found as members of the local government councils with responsibilities for rural and urban development³.

In 1997 GoB formulated its National Policy for Women's Advancement, which provided important commitments to equality of women and men. Such commitments were reflected in other national policies, for example, the poverty reduction strategy, which emphasized the importance of women's rights and opportunities for progress in the battle against poverty. Sectoral policies, such as those related to agriculture⁴, food, labour force and industry, increasingly refer to women's involvement and rights. The commitment to increased participation by women in public decision making is reflected in legislative provisions that ensure a minimum number of women in national and local governments, including in executive boards of government supported (local) organizations and committees.

Bangladesh benefits from an active women's movement with a large number of organizations that deliver services, conduct research on gender problems and policies, raise awareness on gender issues and women's rights among women and the broader public, and advocate for progress. The women's movement in Bangladesh has also made strategic use of CEDAW to advocate for changes in laws and policies. Moreover, most of Bangladesh' development organizations (NGOs) have always

² WEF's Gender Gap Index reflects economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. A score of 1 means the absence of any gender gap, i.e. full gender equality.

³ ADB Country Gender Assessment Bangladesh 2011

⁴ See Agricultural Sector Development Strategy: Background paper for the preparation of the 7th Five Year Plan, which concludes that: "Policies and programmes need to seriously address the issues of (women's) empowerment and wage differentials between men and women in agriculture".

been emphasizing women as their target group, e.g. by using micro-credit to benefit women and improving the access by women and girls to schooling and health services.

In 2011 the National Women's Development Policy was adopted, which aims to secure women's rights in a wide range of areas. The Blue Gold Program Document contained the following text about this policy:

The National Women Development Policy 2011 includes rights to and incorporation of the following Program related subjects:

- Recognition of women work in household and agricultural activities,
- Making of food, poverty reduction, etc. allowances for destitute women
- Improvement of working skill of poor women by organizing, training and creating alternative economic and social opportunities,
- Development of gender responsive budget and disaggregated data base, Incorporation of women friendly technology,
- Recognition of work, roles, contribution, participation and opportunities in food security,
- Recognition in agriculture labour, climate change mitigation needs and in agricultural materials/products, such as, seeds, fertilizer, loan, firm registration,
- Water and sanitation needs,
- Encouragement and equal participation/opportunities in environmental conservation, pollution control, livestock, fisheries, etc.,
- Disaster risks management and other activities, which are of direct interests to the population.

Source: Blue Gold Program Document August 2012

This women's development policy was formulated by GoB's Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs (MoWCA) in consultation with concerned ministries, organisations and NGOs and in the light of the fundamental rights of women recognized in the national constitution and international charters as CEDAW and Beijing Declaration and Plan of Work. The National Women's Policy requires that each line ministry in Bangladesh has its own gender policy.

GoB's current Five Year Plan FY2016-FY2020, prepared by the Planning Commission, lists "empowering women and reducing gender inequality" as one of the key drivers for development. The FYP's objective regarding gender (see below box) not only points to the need of women's empowerment, but also to removing structural and institution barriers and changing social norms.

The objective of 7th FYP regarding gender is to ensure women's advancement as self-reliant human beings and reduce discriminatory barriers by taking both developmental and institutional measures. Gender equality and women's empowerment agenda for the 7th FYP is based on pursuing strategies and actions that not only enhance women's capabilities and access to resources and opportunities but also address the barriers in structures and institutions and aim at changing social norms and protecting their rights are critical to integrate within the plan.

Source: 7th FYP FY2016-FY2020, of 18.02.2016

The 7th FYP recognizes women's crucial role in agriculture for achieving food and nutritional security in Bangladesh, stating that "*gender based inequalities all along the food production chain must be reduced and the active engagement of women at all levels of decision making is absolutely necessary*". To achieve this, women will require access to information, credit and other business development services. The 7th FYP also emphasizes the need for capacity building of women to ensure that they "*remain active and assure important positions in leadership and decision making in economic organizations*". The following areas for special policies and provision are indicated:

- Developing women friendly technology and business environment;
- More women participation in market transaction;
- Capacity development of women for small-scale entrepreneurs;

- Collective action and market linkages;
- Supporting homestead agricultural value addition strategies;
- Recruit more women agricultural workers and increase their participation in the technology innovation;
- Protection of women and children from health hazards during agricultural operation.

Elsewhere in the 7th FYP wage discrimination of women is mentioned as part of the “*unfinished agenda which need most attention concerning (women’s) economic empowerment*”.

2.2 Dutch Gender policies

For the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs women’s rights, women’s empowerment and gender equality are among the priority issues in its foreign policy, as demonstrated in the New Agenda for Aid, Trade and Investment “A World to Gain” of April 2013.

To track resource allocation for promoting gender equality the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) developed a marking systems with a scale of 0 to 2, called the Gender Equality Policy Marker or, in short, the Gender Marker. This marker is used to measure the degree to which program budgets contribute to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment, using scores as presented in the next box. A program such as Blue Gold is expected to achieve the G-1 marker.

Explanation of the scoring system for the Gender Equality Policy Marker:

G-0: Gender equality is not targeted (or not sufficiently operationalized in the project design);

G-1: Gender equality is a significant objective (with the promotion of gender equality clearly included in the project design and expected results);

G-2: Gender equality is the principal or main objective (a so-called gender stand-alone project).

As a member of the EU, the Dutch are committed to the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 of the Council of the European Union. This GAP includes the target that 85%⁵ of new (development) programmes are gender-sensitive, scoring G-1 or G-2. To be gender sensitive, a program should contribute to one of more of the criteria presented in the next box.

A programme can be considered gender-sensitive and contributing to gender equality if its expected results explicitly aim to either:

- Reduce social, economic and/or political power inequalities between men and women, girls and boys;
- Ensure that women benefit equally with men from the activity; and/or
- Compensate for past discrimination.

The Dutch commitment to women’s rights and gender equality is also reflected in EKN Dhaka’s Multi-annual Strategic Plan 2014-2017, section 1.2.4, see next box:

Women’s rights and gender equality

Women’s rights and gender equality has been a policy priority for Dutch development cooperation since long. The Netherlands are respected because of its work related to women’s empowerment by government and donor partners. The coming years the Embassy will continue this policy and integrate gender issues in all its programmes as well as support organisations working on the improvement of women’s empowerment and gender equality, in particular violence against women and child marriage.

⁵ This is the new and increased target since 2016; the previous EU Gender Action Plan (2010-2015) had as target that at least 75% of the new proposals score G-2 or G-1.

Source: Multi-annual Strategic Plan 2014-2017 of EKN Dhaka

2.3 Gender in the IPSWAM project

The IPSWAM project was implemented between 2004 and 2008, with some specific activities, mainly completion of infrastructural works, continuing until 2011. IPSWAM focused on the implementation of water policies of GoB, such as the National Water Policy of 1999 and the Guidelines for Participatory Water Management (GPWM) of 2000, through rehabilitating water management related infrastructure and establishing WMOs in nine polders in coastal Bangladesh, also aiming to better integrate these participatory approaches within BWDB. From the start of IPSWAM, attention to gender had been foreseen, even though an approach still had to be developed during the project. The IPSWAM gender approach aimed to contribute to women's empowerment and the implementation of GoB gender policies, including the operationalization of gender targets in water policies.

Technical Report no.15 of IPSWAM is on gender within the IPSWAM project. Initially the project's attempts to involve women in its activities met with much resentment. It was found that "most people simply could not understand what project staff wanted to discuss with or consult women about: *'they are ignorant; they don't know anything, especially about the outside world'*. Most women too had a similar outlook about themselves". Only after much persuasion, including door-to-door visits, women gradually started coming to meetings. The report mentions that after the first rounds of village-based meetings, "there was a surge of interest, as many women felt elated that for the first time there were some people interested in their hardships and impoverished situations, asking them about their needs, problems and struggles, and offering support to overcome some of these". The fact that women met other women in similar plights as themselves was an eye-opener to many. The fact that they too were invited for meetings, elections, training and were encouraged to stand for elections contributed to self-confidence.

From the start of the project, the Technical Assistance (TA) team aimed to integrate gender issues in the project, also in agreement with GoB policy and recognizing the important and critical role that BWDB had to play in this, in particular by an organizational commitment to achieve gender sensitivity and equality. The project's viewpoint was that the focus could not be on women alone, but that also the men had to be brought in to achieve meaningful and lasting changes. This resulted in a consistent, non-compromise approach of involving women and men right from the beginning, even though initially a lot of resistance was met. However, this approach was consistent with implementing GoB's own Guidelines and over time people began to realize the advantage of also women participating in all activities. Below the characteristics, achievements, lessons learnt and challenges of the IPSWAM gender approach have been summarized.

Main gender approaches / activities implemented by IPSWAM:

- Support to the development of BWDB's Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan (GESAP) 2006-2011;
- Canvassing support of local leaders to (organizing) women's participation
- Actively supporting the (active) participation of women in meetings by (initially) organizing special meetings for women and men only, and encouraging also women to attend and speak out in mixed meetings.
- Promoting mixed participants in all training;
- Provision of Gender and Leadership Development training for male and female WMG Executive Board members.

Main quantitative achievements by 2008:

- 40.6 % of the general membership of WMGs were female
- 34.2 % of the Executive Members of WMGs were female (Guideline: 33.3%)

- 40.6 % of all training participants had been women; and
- 36.4 % of the members of Labour Contracting Society (LCS) groups had been women.

Reported impact⁶ based on impact assessment meeting with 8 WMAs in August 2008:

- Though both men and women needed time to realize the value of women's participation, a new found respect for women was reported, also acknowledged by BWDB officials.
- The IPSWAM training reportedly had an immense impact on the people in the polders in many respects, varying from new attitudes towards each other to comprehending the functions of sluices and inlet pipes.
- Women especially reported to have benefitted from the Gender and Leadership Development Training, which helped them to better partake in decision making and executing their roles in WMO Executive Committees. Besides, they realised that they had to give equal chances to get good education, food and clothes to their daughters as to their sons.
- Women invested money to buy land, more cows, goats, poultry, and/or grow vegetables, also because of the improved drainage and availability of water in canals that previously were silted and clogged, earning money by selling surplus. This led to better food, clothes, medical treatment and extra savings for daughters marriages. Women generally were very contented about the economic benefits they gained.
- Relationships between men and women became easier over the years. At the start of IPSWAM men spoke very deprecatingly about women's ability to contribute; towards the end men accepted and even appreciated the valuable input of women. And women's self-confidence increased; they even expressed themselves in front of men and local leaders (including disagreeing), something that was earlier unimaginable.
- Women's mobility increased, including the attitude of men towards women going to meetings and training.
- Health improvements were reported, e.g. due to more or better food and the use of savings to construct sanitary latrines. Women with growing up daughters and elderly family members were most relieved by the latter.
- Evidence of women confident to speak up (especially Executive Committee members) and/or no longer accepting being bullied (LCS women).

Reported challenges and lessons learnt:

- Reluctance among well-off households' women and poorer households' women to go to each other's houses to meet, especially initially; proper selection of meeting venues (favourable for all women to attend) was essential.
- Initial meetings to explain the aims of the project and why also women were being consulted, including addressing sensitive questions, were important to create good rapport and feelings of involvement. Project staff firmly -but tactfully- expressed that there was no alternative to involving women.
- The varied strategies to encourage women's active participation paid off in several ways, including by giving a platform to women to express their needs, problems and opinions.
- Training was an indispensable tool to convey relevant messages, including close attention to the content, also addressing the needs of women. The presence of women trainers made a lot of impact to encourage women. The conclusion was drawn that also BWDB should have more female staff at field level.
- The consistent gender approach only gradually started to pay dividends when people begun to realize how much to their advantage it was to have also women participating in activities.

⁶ The steady progress of the IPSWAM project had come to an (at least temporary) standstill after the cyclone Sidr of November 23, 2007, which caused crop damages and losses of assets and properties, including of water management infrastructure. In mid-2008 the people were found to be picking-up the threads of their lives again.

- The report ends with notes on BWDB and its approach to gender, concluding that the commitment of BWDB to achieving the gender goals of the GPWM is crucial as well as the importance that BWDB increases its field level women employees.

The above reported findings of IPSWAM's Technical Paper No 15 are in line with other IPSWAM monitoring data and personal information from key persons. Interestingly, the research paper "The Imposition of participation? The case of participatory water management in coastal Bangladesh⁷" investigating the functioning of WMOs in polders in coastal Bangladesh, characterized women's participation in WMOs as "tokenism" with women only being nominal WMO members without being consulted or even invited for meetings. However, the authors found an exception in polders 30 and 22 (the two IPSWAM polders investigated by them), concluding that IPSWAM's gender awareness training of male and female WMO members had made the difference.

⁷ Dewan, C; Buisson, M.-C. and Mukherji, A. 2014. The Imposition of participation? The case of participatory water management in coastal Bangladesh. Water Initiatives 7 (2): 342-366

3. Gender approach in the Blue Gold Program

The Blue Gold Program's goal of reducing poverty and improving food security in the polder areas can only be effectively achieved through the meaningful participation of both men and women in Blue Gold interventions, even more because women are overrepresented among the poor. The purpose of the gender approach of the Blue Gold Program was therefore formulated as enhancing the participation of women and men:

- (i) to enable men and women benefiting more equally from the interventions by the program in terms of increased food security and livelihoods, increasing their socio-economic status and participation in decision-making, thus also contributing to increased gender equality; and
- (ii) to improve the program's performance and increase the likelihood of sustainability.

The Blue Gold gender approach also aimed to contribute to a more effective gender approach in the targeted sectors, promoting sharing and enabling replication.

3.1 Gender in the Blue Gold Inception Report

During the inception phase (March – June 2013) of the Blue Gold Program a first gender approach for Blue Gold was developed by the gender team⁸ in close consultation with project staff of all components. The approach built on experiences in previous and on-going projects in Bangladesh, such as IPSWAM and CDSP IV, and took into account existing GoB guidelines (e.g. of BWDB's Guidelines for Participatory Water Management) and other relevant practices (e.g. ADB Gender Action Plans and DANIDA experience with Farmer Field Schools), also to promote harmonization.

In the Inception Report the basic principle underlying the Blue Gold gender approach was formulated as the valuation of men's and women's experience and knowledge and the recognition of their roles, responsibilities, needs and potential. Because women are often in more disadvantaged positions than men, special attention to women's participation would be paid to reduce such gaps; this would also apply to other marginalized groups such as the poor and landless. The Inception Report recognized that also special efforts might be needed to reach out to men, for example to create awareness on the importance of participation of men and women in WMOs, to address any "disempowerment" faced by men (or categories of men), and to ensure that men are also reached by messages traditionally targeted on women (e.g. on nutrition).

The Inception Report of Blue Gold presented the specific gender measures for each component as integrated in its component specific sections. The next box summarizes this gender approach.

Summary of the Blue Gold gender approach as integrated in the Inception Report for the various components:

- **Component 1 Community Organization:** male and female field staff will collect gender-disaggregated data, inform men and women and encourage them to become registered WMG members, also taking into account GoB targets of minimum women's participation in e.g. Executive Committees. Meaningful participation of women (and men) in decision-making will be emphasized,

⁸ The Blue Gold TA includes one full time national gender coordinator and one short-term international gender specialist

e.g. by gender and leadership training.

- After data collection and the formation of WMOs, a polder development plan will be developed for each polder, involving men and women; the polder development plan will include a Gender Action Plan tailored to the situation of each polder.
- **Component 2 Water Resources Management:** men and women will be involved in planning and monitoring; their needs and options will be taken into account. Labour Contracting Societies (LCS) contracted for earthwork will include women's groups. Contractors will be oriented to provide basic facilities at the construction site and pay equal wages for work of equal value.
- LCS women will be provided with skill training for other income generation options (in cooperation with component 3 and/or 4).
- **Component 3 Agricultural Production:** Men and women will be consulted and their needs and (potential) roles in agricultural production identified, which will be reflected in the Farmer Field School (FFS) modules offered. FFS will be formed within or linked to the WMGs. Men and women FFS participants are targeted in equal numbers, with all FFS sessions open to both women and men, even though certain modules may attract more women and others more men.
- Linkages to markets will be improved for men and women; in the development of services, men and women are considered as potential service providers (in cooperation with component 4).
- **Component 4 Business development:** Male and female key informants will be consulted in preparatory studies to map value chains (VCs); selection of VCs for further analysis ensures inclusion of VCs that have segments in which women play significant roles. Special attention to applying a gender lens during VC analyses e.g. to identify "invisible" women. When improving VCs women and men (especially landless and poor) who are structurally involved in low value segments will be supported to increase the value within their segment or participate in other segments with higher value, also increasing women's decision-making in value chain governance.
- **Institutional strengthening:** the BWDB Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2011 will be reviewed and updated (the Action Plan) in cooperation with BWDB stakeholders. Support will be given to its implementation at head office level and at Satkhira and Khulna district, upazila and field levels.
- **Networking and sharing lessons learnt:** networking and exchange of information and experiences on gender mainstreaming with similar projects will be promoted, including dissemination of the lessons learnt and best practices of the Blue Gold gender approach, also to enable replication.
- **Cooperation and Coordination:** When cooperating and coordinating with the SAFAL program of Solidaridad and CARE on promoting agricultural production and market chain development a common gender approach will be pursued as much as possible.
- Max Foundation implements WASH, SRHR and stunting related activities to prevent child mortality, parallel to the Blue Gold Programme in several Blue Gold polders. Coordination and cooperation with Max Foundation is foreseen, for instance regarding access to safe drinking water –and sanitation-, which is highly in demand by women.

Source: Blue Gold Inception Report, November 2013

Training and capacity building of the beneficiaries and involved implementing agencies have been seen as essential for the successful implementation of the Blue Gold components and the sustainability of the intended results. Because gender is mainstreamed in all components, the inception report also envisaged that gender perspectives would be integrated in training and capacity building activities, whenever relevant. The next box presents the main gender principles for Blue Gold Training and capacity building, as identified in the Inception Report.

Gender considerations for training:

- Training needs assessments will assess the training needs of male and female stakeholders.
- Staff, beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders will be targeted by basic and/or refresher gender training. Gender perspectives will be integrated in all other training, whenever relevant.
- Training will be needs based, addressing practical and strategic gender issues; stereotyping in modules will be avoided.
- Each training course aims at a mixed group of trainees (males and females). However, training only for women (or men) will be possible, for example, if this is strategically relevant (such as possibly leadership training for women only). Male and female trainers will be employed.
- Exposure visits and experience sharing workshops will be arranged for men and women. Especially for young and less experienced women, mentoring by more experienced women will be piloted.
- Location, timing and duration of training events will be suitable for women.

Source: Blue Gold Inception Report, November 2013

The Inception Report also envisaged that gender perspectives would be integrated into Blue Gold's progress monitoring and in measuring results and impact, such as the monitoring of the actual participation of men and women and assessing gender related improvements attributable to the Blue Gold program, such as increased empowerment of women and decision-making by women in WMOs.

The gender indicators identified in the inception phase were mostly at output level, but several at outcome level (see Annex 2 for the gender indicators identified during the Inception Phase). It was foreseen that data would be gender-disaggregated at collection, during analyses and in reporting. Examples of gender indicators are the proportion of registered women members of WMGs (40% by the end of Blue Gold); the number of women earning income from Labour Contracting Societies (target: 7500⁹); and the proportion of women in Executive Committees of WMOs (at least 30%). Some of these targets follow from Government Guidelines; others were set by the BGP.

The Inception Report recognized that only achieving quantitative targets was not the ultimate goal; rather, Blue Gold wanted to contribute to **active and meaningful** participation of women and men in Blue Gold interventions, and in particular within WMOs, with male members taking women's opinion serious and women members participating in decision-making. It was therefore foreseen that qualitative studies would take place to assess improvements in women's empowerment and gender equity, to complement the quantitative data collection by regular monitoring,

3.2 Approach to the implementation of the gender strategy

Blue Gold's gender approach would be operationalized by the national gender coordinator (fulltime) and the international gender expert (short term) in coordination with relevant Blue Gold component staff. This was mostly done in the form of gender activity planning, both as work plans for the national gender expert and as part of Blue Gold's overall planning (in progress reports and annual planning). In practice this meant the following:

- Gender mainstreaming as a responsibility of all project staff; gender training for especially field staff was foreseen. In practice, gender mainstreaming was mostly (and often successfully) done in the form of striving towards certain proportions of women participants. For example, the Community Organizers (COs) actively motivated also women to become WMG member to achieve the target of 40%);
- The development of Polder level Gender Action Plans for 26 polders was foreseen as part of the Polder Development Plans (for 26 polders).
- Regular meetings by the gender coordinator and/or expert with (individual) colleagues on gender issues in their work, as well as regular (joint) field visits.
- Gender training of Blue Gold staff, including of partners, was foreseen.
- The national gender coordinator was foreseen to both provide support to gender mainstreaming of colleagues and initiate and/or implement specific gender activities, such as gender training.
- The international gender specialist was foreseen to backstop the national gender coordinator and contribute to overall planning and development of approaches for gender related activities.
- Engagement with (gender experts of) other similar projects to exchange information and share learnings and to coordinate activities where needed and appropriate.
- When employing field staff, the recruitment of about 50% male and 50% female candidates was aimed at, also to better enable that female field staff serve as role model for female beneficiaries.

⁹ The logframe of the Program Document for Blue Gold has the target of 40,000 women earning from LCS. Considering that only in 5 of the 26 polders full rehabilitation works will be conducted (25,000 ha), the amount of earthwork for fine tuning is uncertain and during IPSWAM 7,500 women earned from LCS work in 9 polders and 45,000 ha (representing 36% of the total), using a similar target of 7500 women seems more realistic than 40,000.

- As in the inception phase men were over-represented among the technical Blue Gold staff, it was foreseen that when new technical staff needed to be recruited, female candidates would explicitly be considered.

There was never a specific budget within Blue Gold for gender activities; rather, all gender related activities were expected to be financed from the respective component budgets.

4. Gender related findings from the BG baseline survey and from other sources

At the start of the Blue Gold Program a specific gender analysis was not planned¹⁰ because (i) it was felt that still much gender knowledge was in place from the IPSWAM project (the national gender coordinator at that time also worked as gender coordinator in the IPSWAM project) and (ii) various gender related questions were to be integrated in the baseline survey, which indeed was done. The baseline survey was conducted between March and June 2014. In recent years also other sources with relevant gender data were collected. This chapter presents gender related findings from Blue Gold's baseline survey¹¹ as well as from a few other sources.

4.1 Gender related findings from the Blue Gold baseline survey of 2014

Due to the large amount of data collected by the baseline survey, the baseline report only presented selected data which was relevant for the indicators of the Blue Gold logical framework. The baseline situation for three gender-related outcome indicators was as follows:

Table 1: Selected Logical Framework Indicators representing women's empowerment

No.	Indicator	Project	Khulna	Patuakhali
1.11.1	Women move outside of the village on their own (target: 25%)	83 %	89 %	78 %
1.12.1	Women earning own cash income by the end of the project through FFS and IGA (target: 20%)	21 %	30 %	14 %
3.6.2	Employment attributable to women (target: 30% of the increase in employment)	19 %	26.46 %	14.25 %

The above table demonstrates that the benchmark values for indicator 1.11.1 and 1.12.1 already exceeded their target, in particular for Khulna. Though revising targets after the baseline findings became available was intended, this also demonstrated that trends, observed during the IPSWAM projects (e.g. on increased women's mobility), accelerated more than expected. This can also be illustrated by the fact that the first mixed meetings of the IPSWAM project in Patuakhali were only possible because curtains were hanged in the meeting venues separating men and women. Currently the need for such measures is hardly conceivable, which confirms the rapid changes that are going on.

Below additional findings from the baseline data are presented, mostly obtained by additional analyses of collected data (i.e. not copied from the baseline report).

About the respondents and their households

¹⁰ Looking back with hindsight, a gender analysis might have been useful. See section x.x

¹¹ To be discussed: can or should all information stay in this chapter, or should some information / tables be put in an annex?

The baseline survey covered 1401 households, 601 of which in Khulna and 800 in Patuakhali. Of the 1401 first respondents, 61 were women. In 210 households (15%) a second respondent was present, 162 of whom were female, nearly always wives of the first respondent.

The average household size is 4.52 for Khulna and 5.09 for Patuakhali. The baseline survey did not ask a direct question about whether the household consisted of a nuclear family (only parents and children) or a joint or extended family (three generations and/or with married brothers). From the following table on household composition, it can be deduced that at least a good proportion of the households must be nuclear, though it cannot be assessed to which extent, as it is unclear which proportion of the above 18 adults are married or still unmarried. In the Blue Gold polders there are more women in the 18-59 age group than men (1989 women vs 1793 men) or 110 women per 100 men¹². It is highly likely that this difference can be (partially) explained by outmigration of men in this age group.

District	Khulna Average		Patuakhali Average		Total	
	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median
Total Household Memebers	4.52	4	5.09	5	4.85	5
Total Women: 18-59	1.38	1	1.46	1	1.42	1
Total Men: 18-59	1.34	1	1.23	1	1.28	1
Total Children 6-18	0.95	1	1.41	1	1.21	1
Total Children below 6	0.35	0	0.48	0	0.42	0
Total HH members above 59	0.50	0	0.51	0	0.51	0

Female headed households

The baseline survey covered 1401 households, with 61 female and 1340 male household heads, hence the proportion of female headed household is 4,25%. Nearly half of these female household heads are widow, but 24 of 61 of them (nearly 40%) reportedly were still married¹³, but with husbands apparently not living with them. It is not known how many of these female headed households receive income from remittances and/or how many solely depend on the income of the woman household head.

Though the sample of female headed households is relatively small, the analysis of several questions separately for male and for female headed households, demonstrates that female headed households are on average worse off than male headed households.

Table 2: Comparison between female and male headed households for selected characteristics.

Characteristic	Female headed households	Male headed households
Main primary occupation of household head	Self-employed in agricultural business (41%)	Self-employed in agricultural business (51%)
Household head self-employed in non-agricultural business	2 of 61 (=3.3%)	154 of 1340 (=11.5%)
Household head unemployed	24.6%	1.6%
Did not eat meat last month	25 %	12.5 %
Household had 1 or more months with less than 2 meals a day	41%	24%
No (access to) loan*	52 %	31.6 %
Involvement in WMGs	18 %	63 %

¹² The baseline survey of the IOB of July 30, 2015, found very different values, i.e. 70 women per 100 men, see section 4.2.

¹³ The definition of female headed household as used in the baseline was: STILL TO BE CHECKED

Main challenge faced over the last 3 years	Serious disease of a household member	Serious disease of a household member
Second main challenge faced over the last 3 years	Loss / death / theft of livestock or poultry	Loss of crop due to flood or drought
Women harassment** (as first or second challenge)	3 of 61 (= 4.9%)	3 of 1340 (= 0.2%)

*It cannot be deducted what the reason is that households do not have a loan, i.e. whether they do not have access to loans or whether there is no need for a loan.

**As only the main and second challenge are reported, this cannot be seen as an indication of the incidence of women's harassment or violence against women in the Blue Gold polders. It rather means that other "challenges" were seen as more threatening to the household. In addition, there is the tendency that male respondent under-report on violence against women.

Women moving around without chaperon

The baseline question consisted of various sub-questions; the following table presents the answers per sub-question, with the figures and percentages indicating the households of which at least one woman can visit the place on her own, i.e. without a chaperon.

Place	Khulna		Patuakhali		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Local markets	263	43.8	288	36.0	551	39.3
Health Centres	376	62.6	574	71.8	950	67.8
Hospital	321	53.4	499	62.4	820	58.5
NGO office / CBO office	268	44.6	186	23.3	454	32.4
National festivals	85	14.1	37	4.6	122	8.7
Union Parishad	39	6.5	65	8.1	104	7.4
Upazila Offices	44	7.3	21	2.6	65	4.6
Other	79	13.1	14	1.8	93	6.6
Females are not allowed to move alone	68	11.3	173	21.6	241	17.2
Total cases	601		800		1401	

As mentioned, the percentage of households in which females are not allowed to move on their own at all (17.2%)¹⁴ turned out to be much lower than was expected (above 70%). In particular the proportion of households in which a female member is allowed to visit a local market on her own, traditionally seen as a "male space", is considerable higher than expected.

Decision making in male headed households

The findings of the baseline survey demonstrate that in a majority of the male headed households decision-making is jointly done by husband and wife, see below table. It should be noted that because the men were the respondents (and women's opinion was apparently not asked), there is a risk that some respondents gave "socially desirable answers". Anecdotal evidence from field visits points to other pictures, i.e. that men tend to decide about the income earned by their wives. This needs to be studied further.

Table 3: Intra-household decision-making in male headed households¹⁵

Kind of decision	By husband and wife equally	Only / mainly by husband	Only / mainly by wife	Not applicable

¹⁴ Considering the relatively high percentage of women who move around on their own, this indicator has not been included anymore in the logical framework that was revised in 2016 (after the new Theory of Change was developed).

¹⁵ NB: Still discuss with M&E the likeliness that (male) respondents gave socially desirable answers here.

Selection of crops to be cultivated	49.0%	39.4%	0.4%	10.8%
Treatment of diseases	80.0%	19.1%	0.8%	0.1%
Education of children	62.6%	30.9%	1.5%	4.3%
Marriage of children	62.6%	33.7%	1.5%	2.0%
Adoption of family planning	81.8%	1.5%	2.4%	14.3%
Visit to relatives house	78.4%	21.0%	0.5%	0.1%
Visiting upazila / zila towns	72.8%	26.6%	0.4%	0.2%
Attending social / cultural events	76.4%	23.0%	0.5%	0.2%
Joining an NGO or other organization	71.6%	18.5%	1.8%	8.1%
Purchase or sale of cattle, chicken, ducks	78.4%	15.2%	7.6%	1.4%
Micro credit / use of micro credit	68.1%	21.6%	0.9%	9.3%
Purchase/mortgage (in/out) of agricultural land	65.4%	31.9%	0.3%	2.4%
Purchase/selling of ornaments	82.4%	14.0	1.6%	2.1%
Household expenses	57.4%	40.9%	1.3%	0
Selling of cash crops	54.9%	33.7%	0.5%	11.0%
Selling of fruits and vegetables	61.9%	26.6%	1.9%	9.6%
Construction / repair house	75.4%	24.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Deciding on how to spend money	60.3%	38.3%	1.2%	0

The above information demonstrates that –depending on the subject- in 50 to 80% of the households decision-making is joint, at least as perceived by the (male) respondent. In between 20 and 40% of the households –again depending of the subject- it is the husband who is the main or sole decision-making. Women hardly take decisions on their own, with the highest percentage (in 7.6% of the households) such decisions relate to the purchase or sale of cattle, chicken or ducks.

Women involved in income earning work

A relative small percentage (21%) of the women are reportedly involved in work that generates income¹⁶, but with a significant difference between Patuakhali and Khulna, with 14 and 30%, respectively. The below table demonstrates that of those women who do work to generate income, slightly over one third work as wage labourer, which is the most common source for women's income, with income from livestock and/or poultry as the second most important source.

Type of activity that generates income (IGA)	Khulna		Patuakhali		Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Agriculture	16	8%	6	5%	22	7%
Livestock / poultry	20	10%	26	24%	46	15%
Fisheries	2	1%	1	1%	3	1%
Handicraft	10	5%	6	5%	16	5%
Trade	3	2%	9	8%	12	4%
Services	19	10%	5	5%	24	8%
Other non-agricultural business	7	4%	4	4%	11	4%
Agricultural labourer	71	36%	37	34%	108	35%
Migrant labourer	9	5%	3	3%	12	4%
Public servant	8	4%	10	9%	18	6%
Other wage labour or employee work	31	16%	3	3%	34	11%

¹⁶ To be checked how this was exactly defined in the baseline and/or whether this meant that women had control over the income. Is unpaid family labour included? Any (other) data available in the baseline on women providing family labour?

Total number of women involved in IGA	196	100 %	110	100%	306	100 %
Women who are not involved in work that directly generates income	448		697		1145	

4.2 Relevant gender related information from other sources

The baseline survey of the IOB

In July 2015 a household survey baseline report was published, commissioned by the IOB, the evaluation department of Dutch foreign policy. This survey covered the baseline situation of beneficiary and control groups of two Dutch funded projects in coastal Bangladesh: Blue Gold and SaFaL. The IOB report contains limited gender related or gender-disaggregated data; much information is provided per household and not (also) for individual persons. Apart from the fact that presenting data per household can hide intra-household differences, some questions would have been more appropriate for individuals than households, e.g. land ownership or WMG membership, as these are personal titles, i.e. on the name of an individual person, and not jointly or household-based.

Interesting findings:

- The IOB baseline survey found significantly different values than the BGP baseline on the proportion of men and women in the Blue Gold beneficiary group, i.e. 70 women per 100 men as compared to 110 women per 100 men in the BG baseline. This difference seems inexplicable even though the IOB survey included all household members to determine this value and the BG baseline only the 18-59 age group.
- It is curious that the IOB survey found that in 0% of the households domestic violence is a social problem. Initially this seems to suggest that there is no domestic violence, but it may also mean that domestic violence is seen as acceptable (see below findings of ULAB's Gender and Aquaculture study).
- 13% of the Blue Gold beneficiary group households have income from remittances, apparently from foreign countries¹⁷, suggesting that they have a (male) adult member involved in migrant labour. Though the survey does not provide information on which member of a household is involved in such migrant labour (e.g. adult sons or husbands), this is an indication that feminization of agriculture is a phenomenon in the Blue Gold area.
- The IOB survey collected information on women's health (not on men's health). It is quite striking that nearly one third (31.5%) of the interviewed women (20-50 age) had any illness in the four weeks before the survey, mostly body, head or back pain, followed by prolonged fever and diarrhoea. The study does not elaborate whether there is a link to the high incidence of body, back and head ache and women's work burden.
- Also the Body Mass Index of the women was measured, with 15.5% of the women being underweight; nearly 60% healthy; 20.7% slightly overweight; and 4.4% obese.
- The IOB survey also collected data on weight and height of boys and girls to enable the assessment of stunting (low height for age) and wasting (low weight for height)¹⁸. For the Blue Gold area, 43.4% of the boys and 42.0% of the girls were stunted and 7.8% of the boys and 16.7% of the girls wasted. The report comments, however, that because of the small number of gender specific observations the total values are more reliable, i.e. 42.9% stunting and 11.2% wasting.

Gender in Aquaculture

¹⁷ The text of the IOB study includes the sentence "Remittances from foreign countries are more important in the BG areas than in those of SAFAL".

¹⁸ Stunting is caused by long-term insufficient nutrient intake and frequent infections; wasting is usually the result of acute significant food shortage and/or disease.

In the context of its cooperation with the SaFaL project, the EKN funded Gender van Water Alliance Project Bangladesh (GWAPB) commissioned a study on gender issues in aquaculture, which was conducted by ULAB (University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh). This study was conducted in Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat, which are the same or very similar areas as the Blue Gold project area. Though focusing on households having a gher (fish pond), many findings seem also relevant for the Blue Gold beneficiary communities. Main findings from this report:

- The study found that men enjoy considerably more leisure time than women, with men working on average 7 hours per day and women 15 to 16 hours.
- Though the division of labour was found to be largely traditional (men responsible for work outside the household, women for household work), recent changes in the attitude of people towards the role of women were noticed, e.g. in household decision making and involvement in income generating activities. Women were found to manage most routine operations in gher management (fertilizing and feeding) and had a leading role in gher operation when their husbands were away from home for other work.
- Though women independently performed the majority of tasks (21 out of 29), their work in aquaculture was found to be unrecognized.
- Still, male respondents do believe that women's engagement in aquaculture is very important for the efficient management of ghers. They think that government and NGOs need to support women empowerment projects recognizing women as major contributors to aquaculture.
- Women face more or other challenges than men, such as lack of resources, inputs, technology, skills, finance, representation and decision-making opportunities. They also lack control over earnings and profits, have restricted mobility, lack access and/or ownership over land and ghers and get no or less support from external projects of government and NGOs.
- Women get significantly lower wages than men for the same work (men often get 50% more), even if the women perform equally or even better. However, both men and women think that it is normal for men to get higher wages, and the interviewed women accepted this.
- Gher owners prefer to employ women workers over male workers, because women can be paid less and because usually they do not challenge such exploitation.
- Women, men and children all work throughout the shrimp value chain, but women and children are located in segments of the chain where employment is more flexible and insecure, with women constituting the bulk of the casual and contingent labour supplied throughout the chain.
- Women and girls encountered physical or verbal harassment when conducting certain tasks, such as shrimp fry collection from the river and being harassed by male guards, managers and male youth when working inside the gher. Most men expressed that women should cover their body (purda) to protect them, to avoid being harassed. However, women opposed this, suggesting that even women wearing veils, including young school girls, become victims of eve teasing or other forms of sexual harassment. And in case of harassment, the men who harassed women are left free, whilst the women (the victims) are blamed.
- The study did not find any incidence of women collectively protesting against either (sexual) harassment or low wages. These issues were not being addressed by any projects or NGOs working in the study area.
- Men's perceptions were found to point towards men's superiority over women, with men having the right to dominate and control family decisions. Even the use and repayment of NGO microcredit to women was found to depend on the decisions of men. A common "myth" is that "the man who takes suggestions from his wife is a *Habla* (low intelligent)". It seemed that most men consider wife battering as a way to exercise their power, with husband having the right to beat their wives for any wrong doing.
- Participation of women in public functions (e.g. UP membership) is not only considered as inappropriate for women, but also linked to security risks for women. The majority of men and women also thinks that a politician needs to take authoritative decisions which women cannot make.

- During menstruation, women do not work at the gher, usually for two reasons: lack of toilet facilities near the gher and the common believe that the gher is a holy place which women would pollute during menstruation.
- It is commonly believed that women should not go to the market place, also because it would be easy to cheat them in weighing products “due to their low intelligence and intellectual capacity”.

5. Gender within Blue Gold activities between 2013 and 2015

This section presents the main gender related activities implemented by the Blue Gold Program. Section 5.1 describes the main gender related activities or aspects per component of the BGP; section 5.2 focuses on activities in which the national and international gender experts had a lead role.

5.1 Gender within the interventions of Blue Gold per component

In the first years of the Blue Gold Program, most interventions were planned and implemented by component. The integration of gender (“gender mainstreaming”) in Blue Gold interventions was therefore also largely planned and implemented component wise.

Component 1 – Community Mobilization

From the start of the BGP serious attempts were made to recruit a gender-balanced team of Community Organizers (target 50:50), who are the key Blue Gold staff in mobilizing communities to form active Water Management Groups. Apart from thus creating employment opportunities for both male and female candidates, the female COs also serve as role models in the Blue Gold target area. As part of their induction and refresher training, a session on gender issues was conducted.

In all contacts with the communities the importance of WMG membership by men and women is being emphasized. The BGP target of 40% women for the WMG membership encourages the COs to motivate also women to become WMG member. And the fact that GoB’s Guidelines for Participatory Water Management, recently replaced by the Participatory Water Management Rules 2014, both stipulate that 30% of the Executive Members of each WMG should be women is used as a hard requirement to ensure that all new Executive Committees have at least 4 female members of the 12 members in total.

To a varying degree the field staff also motivates women to speak out in WMG meetings and to benefit from WMG activities, such as credits given to WMG members from the WMG savings¹⁹ and to join LCS and/or FFS groups. COs also collect gender-disaggregated data on WMG membership, including about the extent that women hold key positions within the Executive Committees (chairperson, treasurer and secretary).

In order to better sensitize the community for active participation of also women in WMGs, court yard sessions started in 2015²⁰, both for groups of men and groups of women. These sessions aim to achieve that men and women consider women’s WMG membership and women’s leadership in WMOs as acceptable and important.

In the original planning for the development of Polder Development Plans (PDPs), gender action plans were included as foreseen in Blue Gold’s Program Document and Inception Report. However, in the

¹⁹ At the start of the BGP WMGs were registered as cooperatives and savings were compulsory. A number of WMGs used such savings for issuing small loans to its members. Since 2014 WMGs are no longer registered as cooperatives and savings are no longer required.

²⁰ In spring 2016 these sessions were temporarily discontinued because of revising the approach.

course of the years, the thinking about the PDPs evolved and also the relevance of developing 26 separate polder gender action plans became questionable, but without questioning the importance of integrating gender in the work of BGP and the WMOs. (still add some text on the current status). As part of the Gender and leadership Development Training, WMGs develop an own Gender Action Plan, with feasible actions that WMGs and their members can work on.

Component 2 – Water Management

Men and women attend the validation meetings to decide on the infrastructure that will be rehabilitated with Blue Gold support, in particular, those who are members of Water Management Associations (WMAs). Under the current PWM rules, at least 25% of the WMA members are female. Though women do also attend such meetings, the general tendency is that men (in particular male elite) dominate the discussions.

It is also ensured that the Monitoring Committees (monitoring the progress and quality of infrastructural works) include at least one woman as member. Both men and women are also involved in the maintenance work of water management infrastructure (correct?), the women mainly involved in cleaning canals, such as removing water hyacinth.

In particular much “gender related” work is being done in the formation of both male and female LCS groups, targeting an involvement of 40-50% LCS groups of female workers. LCS groups formed by the BGP consist either of only male members or only female members. All groups receive a brief training. After BWDB’s working order they start their work, which is often rather late in the construction season. Apart from monitoring, Blue Gold staff also intervenes in case of any problems. A challenge is the fact that women usually cannot work long days, and have more difficulties achieving the targets in time, which then affects the payments. At occasions, Blue Gold staff arranged with the concerned XEN of BWDB that a partial payment is done to a specific women’s group²¹.

The IGA training for LCS women, as foreseen in the program document and inception report, has not taken off yet, apart from exploring various options and modalities, and possibly some LCS women participating in FFS cycles. The fact that this IGA training is not directly related to Blue Gold’s core interventions of water management and agricultural production seems a reason contributing to its slow progress, but the limited IGA options other than (homestead) agricultural production, is another reason. Providing basic entrepreneurial training is one of the options being discussed.

In 2015 the cooperation between Blue Gold and the WLE program of CGIAR²² started Blue Gold’s important work on community water management, i.e. water management at sub-polder levels. Already in the proposal submitted by IRRI (as lead CGIAR organisation) attention to women was paid. The Community Water Management (CWM) strategy, developed based on the experiences with the first pilot in a sub-area in polder 30, included explicit intention to also involving women and recognizing their (potential) roles. (check with latest version of CWM strategy)

Component 3 – Agricultural Production

The core activity of component 3 has been the organization of Farmer Field Schools (FFS). These are implemented by FFS organizers (FOs) and supported by subject matter specialists. As for the COs, the BGP also aimed for a gender balanced team of FOs, which is well achieved. Also the induction and refresher training for FOs include gender sessions. The FOs were so enthused by this, that they requested the Blue Gold’s gender coordinator to develop some gender tips or tools for them to better integrate gender issues in the FFS (still to be done).

²¹ Check whether from Blue Gold side anything is done on promoting / ensuring that contractors provide basic facilities?

²² WLE stands for the Water, Land and Ecosystem programme of the Global Agricultural Research Partnership CGIAR.

The FFS organized by the TA of the BGP do not specifically target only women or men, rather, those community members who are interested and meet the selection criteria, can participate. This led to an over-representation of women in the FFS groups, largely because main topics of the TA FFS attract many women (i.e. homestead gardening and poultry).

All FFS cycles, which consist of 25 sessions, include various sessions about nutrition, targeting both the female and the male participants, to make sure that also the men (often as fathers) become aware on the importance of adequate nutrition for all, especially for children (boys and girls), adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women.

Apart from FFS organized by the TA, DAE organizes FFS. DAE applies an approach in which parallel groups of 25 men and 25 women (husbands and wives) are being formed. The male FFS groups focus on field crops, whereas the women's FFS groups focus on homestead gardening and poultry.

Another activity of Blue Gold's Component 3 is the training of and support to Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs). End 2014 / early 2015 the training of 20 Community Poultry Workers (CPWs, all female) and 20 Community Livestock Workers (CLWs, 2 female, 18 male) took place. The training of the CPWs and CLWs was conducted jointly by the Department of Livestock and Blue Gold (10 days for the CLWs and 5 days for the CPWs), with also a session on gender facilitated by Blue Gold's national gender coordinator and one on business development by Component 4. All CAHWs received a toolkit with basic materials, an apron, vaccination cards and (only for the CLWs) a bicycle. The expected impact of the work of CPWs and CLWs is twofold: providing income for the workers and improving the productivity of poultry and livestock. First results demonstrate a good performance of the women CPWs, including the ability to earn a decent income as compared to the number of working days²³.

Component 4 – Business / Value chain development

In selecting the value chains to be addressed by the BGP, also a gender criterion was included, i.e. the participation of (also) women in the particular value chain. Of the 4 value chains selected during the first Blue Gold years to be supported, two involved relatively more men as VC actors (sesame and mung bean production) whereas women were more involved in the two other VCs (poultry and tilapia).

Market-oriented Farmer Field Schools (MFS) were developed, which are different from the regular FFS because of their specific attention to market linkages. It was expected that the sesame and mung bean MFS groups would be largely male. Though indeed a majority of the participants are male, more women than expected showed up as participants, which is –at least partially- explained by the fact that their husbands have other employment (a sign of “feminization of agriculture”). In the MFS on tilapia and poultry the majority of the participants are women, largely the wives of the male participants of the sesame / mung bean groups.

The Producer group Facilitators (PFs) are male -except for two females- because it was difficult to identify enough suitable female candidates with the required “business” background. In 2015 all PFs received a ToT training on gender within market oriented production, focusing on joint decision-making in market oriented production. In particular, the PFs conducted a specific sesame or mung bean session in all MFS groups for the wives of the male participants. The purpose was to inform them on the improved cultivation practices, the impact on (family) labour requirements and to create awareness on the “new” decisions that market oriented production requires as well as the importance that husband and wife take joint decisions. This session is now standard in the MFS curriculum²⁴.

²³ check whether more CAHWs were trained thereafter and/or more info on the impact / earnings has been collected recently.

²⁴ Check the information of this paragraph with the concerned Blue Gold TA.

5.2 Main activities implemented by the gender experts:

The Blue Gold TA team includes a full time national gender coordinator, a short term international gender specialist and a gender and IGA expert in Patuakhali (the latter also working for component 4). In addition, several of the zonal socio-economists also have a certain level of gender expertise. The gender team supports the Blue Gold colleagues in implementing gender sensitive interventions, take gender-related initiatives and implements specific gender related activities. The main activities of this gender team can be summarized²⁵ as follows:

- Liaised with Blue Gold staff (TA and partners) at all levels to discuss the need for integrating gender perspectives in Blue Gold interventions and provide support in implementing these.
- Presented the Blue Gold gender approach in various meetings, such as orientation meetings with Union Parishad representatives;
- Conducted or facilitated gender awareness training, especially for field staff, as part of their induction or refresher training; a 2-day more comprehensive gender training for zonal and field staff is foreseen to take place in September 2016.
- Contributed to including gender perspectives in Blue Gold strategies and approaches, such as in the Inception Report of 2013, the CWM strategy and the revised Theory of Change of 2016, including the identification of gender indicators.
- Developed the Blue Gold anti-harassment policy and organized orientations about this approach on all levels;
- Participated in numerous field visits with Blue Gold colleagues to observe and discuss gender issues at WMG / community level;
- Developed Focus Group Discussions / Court Yard Sessions separately for male and female (potential) WMG members to sensitize them on WMG membership and gender issues (currently being revised);
- Cooperated very closely with the Training Team to develop and organize the Gender and Leadership Development training²⁶ to be conducted for the Executive Board members of all WMGs by a service provider (KNKS, an NGO based in Bagerhat). The pilots were held in May 2016; actual training will start later in 2016.
- Suggested several research topics for the Innovation Fund and became involved in the follow-up (e.g. the eco-pond research on women managed small ponds by WorldFish and the research on pig rearing by (mainly) Kawra women by the Nice Foundation);
- Commented on numerous documents, both from a gender and more general point of view, varying from the UCEP proposal for vocational training to Concept Notes, ToRs and Exit Strategy Action Plans developed by BGP colleagues.
- Represented Blue Gold and exchanged (gender) related information in contacts with others, e.g. organized gender network meetings, participated in gender events (of GWAPB, HKI etc), in meetings with gender experts of other projects, such as IFMC (Danida), Max Foundation, GWAPB and WorldFish; and liaised with other organizations such as the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU).
- Collected monitoring data and case studies on successful women (such as female WMG presidents) for the Blue Gold newsletter;
- Support to BWDB in updating their Gender Action Plan (part of their Gender Equity Strategy). However, up till now only the ToR for this support has been developed.
- Developed a ToR for a comprehensive study on the impact of LCS work on poverty reduction and women's empowerment (currently the tender process for outsourcing is ongoing).

²⁵ Check with the gender coordinator whether all main activities are covered by this list.

²⁶ Based on a similar curriculum developed during the IPSWAM project, but with major changes.

6. Achievements and other findings

6.1 Quantitative achievements

The Blue Gold Program collects monitoring data in a gender-disaggregated way. Such data is especially helpful in getting insight in the participation of men and women in Blue Gold related activities, including in WMG membership. Though for several of such quantitative output data targets have been set in the Blue Gold logframe, achieving these targets are seen as intermediate steps towards achieving women's empowerment and gender equity rather than (only) a final goal in themselves. The progress reports of the Blue Gold program present the main monitoring data. The following information is derived from the progress report for the second semester of 2015 (HPR2-2015).

WMO membership

Per end December 2015 in total 339 WMGs had been formed with 48,866 members in total, of whom 29,151 were male (59.3%) and 19,715 female (40.3%). Of the 339 WMGs, 240 were formed under the IPSWAM project (but were often re-activated under Blue Gold) and 99 under the Blue Gold Program, i.e. in the new Blue Gold polders. In these 99 new WMGs, the proportion of female members is somewhat higher than average, namely 43.9%.

Of the 325 WMGs for which such information is provided, 189 have at least 40% women's membership, which is a target for Blue Gold. Polder specific data are provided in the next table, demonstrating that more than half of the WMGs achieved the target.

Polder	Total no of WMGs established	No of WMGs with at least 40% women's membership	% of WMGs that have \geq 40% women's membership
43/2A	22	8	36 %
43/2B	28	19	68%
43/2D	29	14	48%
43/2E	12	5	42%
43/2F	27	20	74%
43/1A	14	5	36%
55/2A	0		
55/2C	0		
22	12	9	75%
30	40	21	53%
29	56	32	57%
31 part	12	9	75%
26	15	8	53%
2	58	39	67%
Total	325	189	58%

Both the previous Guidelines for PWM (2000) and the new PWM rules (2014) require that at least 30% of the members of the Executive Committees (ECs) of WMOs be female, i.e. 4 of the 12 members. This is achieved for all WMGs. Of the 4056 EC members of 338 WMGs, 2675 are male (66%) and 1381 female (34%), suggesting that 29 WMGs have a fifth female EC member, i.e. one extra female member than required. In WMAs the female membership is 33%²⁷.

LCS groups

Until December 2015, 51% of the earthwork under Blue Gold was implemented by Labour Contracting Society (LCS) groups (target: 50%). Until that time 38% of the LCS workers were women, 5176 in total (target in project document: 40,000; in inception report: 7500²⁸).

FFS and MFS groups

DAE implemented 170 FFS. Because DAE works with parallel groups of 25 men and 25 women (husbands and wives), equal numbers of men and women were reached: 4250 men and 4250 women. The FFS activities for the men focus on field crops; those for the women on homestead gardening, poultry and nutrition. (check: what in case husbands have other jobs: do women participate also in the field crop FFS is they want?)

269 FFS were implemented by the Blue Gold TA with 8950 participants in total, or on average 33.3 participants per FFS. Of the 8950 participants, 1608 were male (18%) and 7342 were female (82%). Also 269 field days were held, in which in total 40,405 adults participated, 37.8% of whom were male and 62.2% female.

Earlier data (of the quarterly report Q2 2015, presenting the data as per end of June 2015) demonstrate how the participation of men and women are in the different FFS:

Kind of FFS	No of FFS organized	No of male farmers	No of women farmers	Total	% women
Homestead, Vegetable & fruits, poultry	172	448	3860	4308	90%
Fish and beef fattening	44	595	505	1100	46%
Fish/tilapia, poultry	48	204	996	1200	83%
Total	264	1247	5361	6608	81%

Per end 2015 110 Producer Groups or Market Oriented FFS (MFS) were formed with a total membership of 2750, of whom 1533 were male (55.7%) and 1217 female (44.3%). In the MFS groups working on mung bean and sesame, male farmers form a majority; in the groups on tilapia and poultry, female farmers do.

Training

In much of the training that is conducted for WMG members and/or other participants from the Blue Gold polders, about one third is female, see the below table:

Name of training	No. of batches	No. of male participants	No. of female participants	Total no. of participants	% of female

²⁷ Check whether this is 33% of all membership or of EC members.

²⁸ The logframe of the Program Document for Blue Gold has the target of 40,000 women earning from LCS. Considering that only in 5 of the 26 polders full rehabilitation works will be conducted (25,000 ha), the amount of earthwork for fine tuning is uncertain, and during IPSWAM 7,500 women earned from LCS work in 9 polders and 45,000 ha (representing 36% of the total number of LCS workers), using a similar target of 7500 women seems more realistic than 40,000.

					participants
Training on LCS work	225	6098	3940	10038	39.3%
Training on Construction Work, Monitoring and Quality Control	29	279	108	387	27.9%
Blue Gold Orientation for UP members	25	392	225	617	36.5%
Training on Organizational Management for WMG EC members, potential members and selected UP members	36	1498	694	2192	31.7%
Training on Management of Agricultural Machinery for WMGs (part 1, 2 and follow-up) ²⁹	227	4373	2284	6621	34.5%
Training on credit and saving for 4 WMGs		91	29	120	24.2%
Training on DRR and environment for volunteers and UDMC members		44	25	69	36.2%

From the start of the Blue Gold Program, it has always been attempted to have a gender-balanced TA team, in particular among the field staff (Community Organizers and FFS Organizers). It proved more difficult to find suitable PFs and technical staff at zonal level, as demonstrated by the below table, based on data of October 2015:

Level	Total staff*	Male	Female	% female
Dhaka Technical staff	23	15	8	35%
Khulna Technical staff	17	14	3	18%
Patuakhali Technical staff	18	15	3	17%
Satkhira Technical staff	4	4	0	0
Total technical staff	62	48	14	23%
COs	57	31	26	46%
FOs	22	11	11	50%
PFs	10	10	0	0%

*As per end October 2015 (Still to be updated in the next version of this Working Paper, for example, at this moment there are 2 female PFs and one female engineer in Satkhira)

6.2 Qualitative achievements

Information on outcome level results, e.g. in terms of women's empowerment, has not yet structurally been collected. Neither an impact study (repeating the baseline survey) has taken place. However, there is –mainly anecdotal- information from field visits, colleagues and/or derived from some technical reports.

Effect of women's participation in WMGs

²⁹ In total 108 WMGs were trained, but for each group more than one training sessions were provided. The total number of participants is therefore also a "double counting" as in fact 3075 persons were trained at least twice, of whom 1947 were male (63.3%) and 1128 female (36.7%)

Interviews with women WMG members show that women become WMG member for the following reasons (Roksana: have you more data on this?):

- To have opportunities to interact and link with other people
- To have a good reason to move out of the house (increased mobility)
- To get access to information and learning
- To have opportunities for collective action, improved livelihoods and/or income earning (e.g. LCS work)
- To understand the role and function of WMGs
- (to be further investigated, in particular it is not clear to what extent the women become member because of interest in water issues)

The above reasons indicate that women's membership of WMGs create opportunities for them to broaden their horizon, which is apparently felt as a need. They are –at least to a certain extent– curious to understand what the WMG is about and hope for opportunities to improve their lives.

Especially the women who are selected as Executive Board member have opportunities to develop leadership capacities. Observations learnt that some women merely attend meetings without contributing; others, however, are keen to speak out. When a female EC member was asked whether the other (especially male) EC members would listen to what she had to say, she answered that sometime they do, sometimes not.

It is not uncommon that women (and men) who have developed leadership capacities in WMGs later stand for Union Parishad (UP) elections (local government). The next table presents the number of male and female WMG members who were elected in the recent UP elections.

District	Male WMG members elected	Female WMG members elected	function
Khulna	19	9	UP members
Patuakhali	3	-	UP chairman
	66	11	UP members
Satkhira	1	-	UP chairman
	5	-	UP members

Source: gender coordinator, collected during field visits in July 2016

Effect of women's participation in LCS groups

A ToR has been developed for a study to investigate the impact of LCS work on poverty reduction and women's empowerment; the study is expected to start in the last quarter of 2016. First evidence, however, seems to demonstrate that participation in LCS work is at most a temporary income source rather than a means to more structurally alleviate poverty.

BGP's evaluation report³⁰ on the performance of LCS groups and contractors involved in earthworks found that (women) workers were often not satisfied for reasons as the temporary and seasonal nature of this work (and short duration) and the payments schedules. Women were quoted saying to prefer daily wages rather than the installments as paid to LCS groups. Women's groups also had problems completing the works in time, because of the difficulties for them to make long working days (due to domestic tasks). On the other hand, BWDB engineers reportedly said that LCS groups did better quality work than contractors, with especially the women's groups being more sincere in following-up specifications than male groups.

³⁰ Evaluation report on Performance of LCS and Contractor on Earthworks. M&E report No. 6 of Blue Gold. June 2015.

Effect of women's participation in FFS

There is evidence that the participation of women in FFS groups empowers them by increasing both their self-confidence and their productivity. Increase in self-confidence is reported by FOs and other Blue Gold colleagues who observed a change within many women participants during the FFS cycle: from shy to more self-confident. The fact that FFS participants are requested to share their new knowledge with at least two neighbours (correct?) also increases their status in their own neighbourhood.

The participation in homestead and poultry FFS groups (with about 90% women as participants) leads to increased productivity, including increased home consumption and increased sales. As an example selected data from the technical report on the fourth FFS cycle in Khulna is presented in the below box. The data show that participation in an FFS group leads to improved nutrition and increased income from surplus sales, even though the nominal amounts may not be large. The study did not measure whether the FFS participants (especially if they were female) sold the surplus themselves and/or could decide about the use of the additional income.

Selected effects of FFS training, based on comparing benchmark and end data

Number of participants: 1000, of whom 885 were women

Effects of training (but with some bias as some seeds were provided to the participants):

- Average increase in the variety of vegetables grown: from 3.2 to 8.1 different varieties
- Farmers selling surplus vegetables: from 28% to 96%
- Average number of fruit trees: from 26 to 40
- Average number of poultry (chicken, chicks, ducks and ducklings): from 16.9 to 46
- The average number of eggs per hen and duck doubled
- The household consumption of eggs and poultry also doubled
- Sales of eggs and poultry increased: more participants sold surplus (from 72 to 92%) and the volume sales of eggs and birds increased four to fivefold.
- Vegetable consumption doubled.

Source: Blue Gold Program. Technical Note 07, FFS Cycle 04, Khulna March-September 2015, Comparing Benchmark and End data. December 2015

Additional information in next version of this Paper³¹.

6.3 Constraints and challenges

Constraints for women to become WMG EC member

Field experience has learned that there are many barriers for women to become an (active) WMG and/or EC member. The main constraints encountered by BGP field staff and gender coordinator are presented in the below box.

Constraints for women to become member of WMG Executive Committees (mainly based on observations of the national gender expert in 2015):

- Women do not consider leadership as an option for women (neither men do);
- Women tend to lack confidence and exposure;
- Women lack support of their family and may even meet active resistance;
- Women are shy to talk to other people, in particular to men and officials;
- Many women do not have time for voluntary work as active EC member because they are already overburdened;
- Women lack the money to buy the nomination papers and to pay for the costs of

³¹ Add any other findings, e.g. of MFS. And: Is the fact of mixed (WMG ECs, FFS / MFS) groups contributing to more cooperation and understanding between men and women and hence more gender equality? (to be discussed with e.g. gender coordinator)

campaigning;

- The patriarchal society considers public space as “male” and women feel inclined to withdraw if a male candidate competes for the same position;
- Some women candidates have been threatened;
- Women tend to have less access to information, because they have less opportunities to meet other people than men (men socialize outside, whereas women stay at home) and husbands often do not share information with their wives;
- Many adult women still have less education than men, with still a considerable proportion of them not having completed primary education (but most girls do now complete primary education);
- Compared to men, women are more often dependent on means of transport to attend WMO meetings, such as rickshaws (whereas men can walk). The cost of such transport (Tk 100 one way) can be prohibiting for women to participate regularly in meetings.

Some positive trends can also be observed, for example, the mobility of women (as measured in the baseline study) turned out to be greater than expected (and as during the IPSWAM project), whereas measures needed during IPSWAM to conduct mixed meetings (curtains to divide a venue into a male and a female section) and the intensive persuasion to achieve that women come out for meetings is nowadays also less than in IPSWAM's time. Despite such trends, addressing the observed constraints, where possible, is important.

Constraints and challenges in implementing Blue Gold's gender approach

Also in implementing Blue Gold's gender approach, constraints and challenges were met. The main ones³² are presented here:

- Though initially assumed as not necessary (e.g. because of IPSWAM experience), a good gender analysis at the start was felt missing at occasions. Gender related information and insights have now been gradually collected, both from own experience and from other sources. Still some questions remain for more in-depth investigation, e.g. what motivates women to become and remain active WMG members.
- The approach of gender mainstreaming has its advantages, but also its weaknesses: all staff are considered responsible for gender but in practice there is a risk that the attention for gender is too much diluted.
- The fact that hard targets were set for women's participation (such as 40% female WMG membership) undoubtedly helped to achieve such targets. However, experience should learn how sustainable such achievements will be. For example, will women WMG member (continue) to attend meetings.
- Though most Blue Gold TA staff have (some) gender knowledge and/or basic gender training is provided as part of their induction, there is a need for better internalizing a pro-gender attitude.
- Women nor men are homogeneous groups, which is a factor not always sufficiently recognized in all Blue Gold activities. For example, when motivating women to become WMG member, the women of the better-off and landholding families (for whom proper water management might be more important than for landless women) are often not sufficiently targeted or reached.
- Despite BWDB's Gender Equity Strategy, practice is different, and there is a need to increase gender sensitivity among BWDW staff (however, in practice XENs were found open to support women LCS groups).
- The high turnover of national gender coordinators (4 in 3 years) caused that much time was used to again familiarize a new gender coordinator with the Blue Gold program in general, and with the gender activities in particular.

³² To be further discussed and updated in the next draft of this Paper.

- The fact that no allocation was made in the project budget for payments to female staff in case of maternity leave, negatively influenced the search for female (field) staff.
- The fact that gender is a cross-cutting issue, made that apart from the national gender coordinator, the capacity to follow-up on new initiatives was sometimes less than hoped for. Issues put “on the rails” by the international gender specialist, were sometimes still in the same stage during a next mission.

7. Revisiting Blue Gold's Gender Approach

7.1 Gender in Blue Gold's new Theory of Change and (draft) revised Logical Framework

The Mid Term Review Mission of September 2015 recommended the review of Blue Gold's Theory of Change (ToC) to better show the evidence on inclusive growth impacts of the different activities undertaken. In the first half of 2016 a thorough process took place to review and revise the ToC, involving the key partners as well as TA staff at the various levels of the program. The two main outputs³³ were:

1. A joint and integrated Result Chain for Blue Gold, showing the connections between results defined in earlier program documentation; and
2. Logical Pathways to Change explaining the causal relationships between the different results.

Gender in Blue Gold's Result Chain

Figure 1 on the next page presents the detailed results chain for Blue Gold. The bottom blue level in the figure summarizes the activities that Blue Gold is implementing; the orange level represents the systematic changes resulting from the activities in the way water management or value chains are organised; and the green level represents the impact of the program on polder and household level, as "caused" by the orange level results.

In this result chain, Gender Equity has been identified as a goal in its own right, also as contributing to the overall objective of improved livelihoods. During the review process, discussions were held about how to "label" the gender goal: as women's empowerment, gender equality or gender equity. Though Blue Gold aims to contribute to women's empowerment, striving for women's empowerment only, without aiming for changes in men's attitudes, was not considered sufficient. "Gender Equity" was selected as best option, also because this is in line with gender policies of the Government of Bangladesh that refer to Gender Equity. For examples, the gender strategy of BWDB is also labelled as Gender Equity Strategy.

Gender equity vs Gender Equality

'Gender equality' stands for equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies and equal access to resources and services within families, communities and society at large.

'Gender equity' refers to a fair sharing of resources, opportunities, responsibilities and benefits between women and men. It recognizes that development policies and programs should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the inequalities between women and men.

Equity can be understood as the means while equality is the end, that is, equity leads to equality.

³³ See Working Paper 5, Theory of Change, Version 2, May, 2016

Source: PhD thesis Shahnaz Parveen

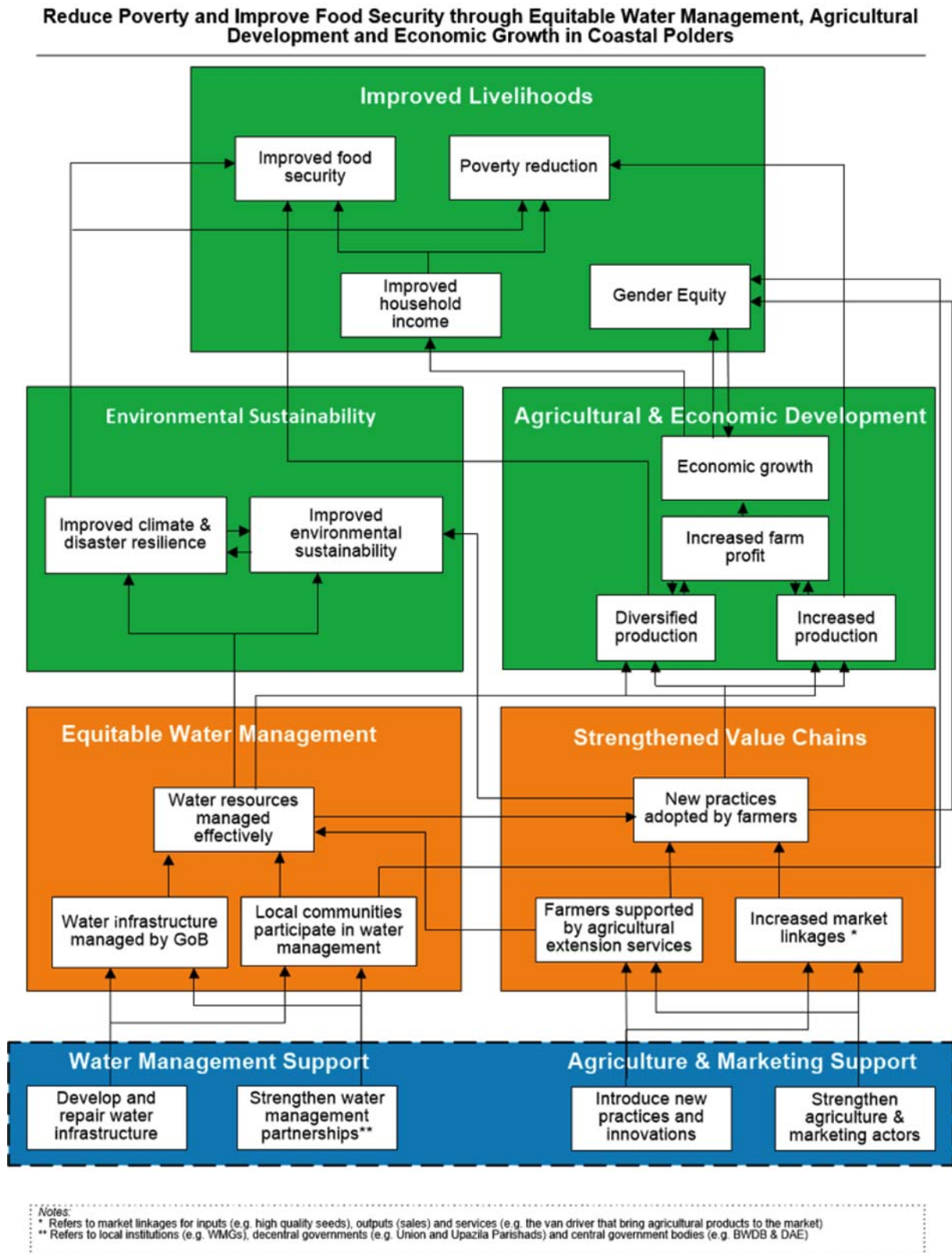


Figure 1. Detailed Results Chain for Blue Gold, with 3 levels (from bottom to top): activities, results and impact.

Logical Pathways explaining causal relationships related to gender equity

Figure 1 demonstrates that Gender Equity is an explicit goal for the Blue Gold Program. Gender is meant to be addressed throughout the different pathways. The causal relationships between Blue Gold results and Gender Equity presented in Figure 1 are the main ones, but are not exhaustive because also other result areas are likely to have links with gender equity. The following table presents the assumptions for the gender equity related arrows of Figure 1.

Table 4: Assumptions related to Gender Equity³⁴

Arrow	Causal relationship	Assumption	Remarks
5	If local communities participate in water management, then women empowerment will increase	5.1 Women need to be represented in WMOs	Clear requirement during formation
		5.2 Women need to be in decision making positions in WMOs	Clear requirements during formation. Women's empowerment shall be part of all relevant training curricula
		5.3 Meaningful participation of women in water management processes (add: and accepted by men)	Gender & Leadership training is being organised. The impact will be evaluated. Women's empowerment shall be part of all relevant training curricula
21	If new practices are adopted by farmers, then women empowerment will increase	21.1 New practices need to provide women with more decision making power over income	Can be addressed in selection of technology. Women's empowerment shall be part of all relevant training curricula
		21.2 Women need to be able to hold-on and spend income	Depends on men in the household allowing this
35	If economic growth happens, then women empowerment will increase	35.1 Women should earn income	Focus on value added services provided by women
		35.2 Women should have decision making power	Change in relationship between men and women is required. Awareness on attitudes and role patterns shall be included in the relevant training curricula.
36	If gender equity increases, then economic growth will happen	36.1 Women will invest in additional IGA	Opportunities need to be made available. This shall be included in the relevant training curricula

Gender in the (draft) revised Logical Framework

The revision of Blue Gold's Theory of Change also required the review of the earlier logical framework to align it with the newly formulated result areas, while still reflecting the main indicators in the DPPs

³⁴ Should we include a footnote explaining that in WP5 the assumptions refer to women's empowerment instead of gender equity?

and Program Document. The proposed indicators include several that are relevant for measuring increased gender equity and women's empowerment:

Table 5: Gender related indicators in Blue Gold's draft logical framework (of 14 June 2016)

ToC area	Result	Proposed indicator	Remarks	Target
Improved Livelihoods	4. Gender Equity	4.1 Attitudes of men and women about gender roles	Qualitative indicator	
		4.2 Women's Empowerment in Agriculture index (WEAI)	Standard WEAI measurement will be reviewed and adjusted if required	
Equitable Water Management	13. Local communities participate in water management	13.3 Female leadership in (WMO) decision making	IRC scale in an adjusted form	
Water Management Support	17. Develop and repair water infrastructure	17.4 Women earning from LCS		7500 / 40,000
	18. Strengthen water management partnerships	18.2 Female executive members (in WMO Boards)		At least 30%
Agricultural & Marketing Support	19. Introduce new practices and innovation	19.2 Women trained in IGA		40,000

7.2 Updated Gender Approach and Gender in Blue Gold's Exit Strategies

Need for revision

As mentioned before, the gender approach in the first years of the Blue Gold program focused on achieving quantitative gender targets within all components of Blue Gold, though with the clear intention to achieve qualitative improvements, such as active and meaningful participation of women in WMGs and increasing the productivity and/or incomes of women. But the monitoring of gender issues mostly concerned the collection of quantitative data on the participation of women and men in WMGs and in Blue Gold activities such as LCS, FFS and MFS, with limited data collection on qualitative or outcome level results, although anecdotal evidence of successes were reported. Several achievements on outcome level were also meant to be measured in the impact survey, measuring changes as compared with the baseline survey. And for some specific topics, e.g. the impact of women's involvement in LCS work, specific studies were meant to be conducted.

There are various reasons for the revision of Blue Gold's gender approach:

- The gender approach as in the inception report was based on the four original components of Blue Gold; the revised approach needs to be more aligned with the new ToC.
- The gender approach also needs to be more aligned with the new (TA) structure, in particular the shifted focus towards zonal and polder levels.
- The need is felt to design gender related activities more on the basis of the results we intend to achieve, rather than (only) on opportunities for gender mainstreaming.
- Use lessons learnt from the first three years of Blue Gold interventions
- Expand the focus on measuring qualitative results, but also continuing the collection of quantitative gender (or gender-disaggregated) output data.

Basic principles and strategies

Blue Gold's gender approach remains two-pronged: aiming for women's empowerment and contributing to changes in gender norms, attitudes and roles of men and women, which overlap and reinforce each other.

Regarding women's empowerment: though BGP aims to empower all Blue Gold beneficiaries (men and women) through its interventions, a special focus on the empowerment of women is needed to reduce gender gaps by addressing specific constraints encountered by women. Blue Gold aims to empower women in particular economically (e.g. increasing their productivity and/or incomes) and socially (increasing their self-confidence and improving their social relationships, including their active participation in decision making).

The need for changing attitudes, norms and roles of both men and women is underlined by information presented in other parts of this report, e.g. in Chapter 4. For example, many men and women consider public space as male, with women speaking out in public as inappropriate, whereas men, who take women's suggestions seriously, tend to be considered as weak. Without also addressing these norms and attitudes, attempts of improving women's participation and leadership within WMOs will be less effective.

The Blue Gold program aims to contribute to gender equity and women's empowerment by mainstreaming gender in its regular activities as well as by implementing selected gender specific (or gender stand-alone) activities.

Gender mainstreaming means that gender perspectives are integrated in core Blue Gold activities, i.e. in the blue boxes of Blue Gold's result chain (Figure 1). The operationalization of gender mainstreaming in individual activities can have several forms, such as promoting the participation of women (next to men) in activities (such as training workshops, FFS cycles and LCS groups); promoting women's leadership as part of WMO strengthening activities; promoting women's participation in decision-making (own and/or joint) when working on value chain improvements; and creating access for men and women to resources, finance and markets. Mainstreaming gender equity also means integrating gender content in activities and training curricula, also conveying the message of equal opportunities for and equal treatment of men and women (i.e. non-discrimination), while paying special attention to specific constraints met by women.

Gender specific or gender stand-alone activities concern those activities that are designed and implemented with as main purpose to contribute to women's empowerment and gender equity. Examples are gender training and gender court yard sessions focusing on changing gender norms.

Next to gender related activities as part of Blue Gold's program, also gender activities are distinguished that address 'internal' gender equity and sensitivity, i.e. within the Blue Gold team, including to improve the working conditions for women staff.

No homogeneous groups

Within Blue Gold, it is realised that women (like men) do not form one homogeneous group. Thus different categories of women are distinguished that have different roles and needs. Within the context of agricultural value chains, for example, the following main categories of women can be distinguished: (1) women as farmers (taking decisions on agricultural production and/or involved in day-to-day management of the farm); (2) women as family labour (unremunerated and not involved in decision-making); (3) women wage labourers; and (4) women as service providers / entrepreneurs.

Gender Activities within Blue Gold

The gender activities in Blue Gold are presented per activity cluster (i.e. the blue boxes of Figure 1), for the services training and MRL, as well as for Blue Gold's internal operations. There are three main differences as compared to the gender approach of the Inception Report: more (or more explicit) attention to changing gender norms and attitudes, introduction of a gender indicator (index) better measuring women's empowerment as related to men's empowerment; and more attention to gender issues within Blue Gold's internal operations.

Most activities presented in Table 6 concern "gender mainstreaming" into activities initiated by program advisors / subject matter staff mostly implemented by relevant field staff. Where needed, support of the gender team is provided to better integrate gender issues. The table also includes several gender specific activities, which were primarily developed to address gender constraints, usually initiated by the gender team together with relevant colleagues. Some specific gender activities are implemented by the gender staff (e.g. gender sessions in field staff induction training) whereas other activities are implemented by either Blue Gold field staff (the gender court yard sessions) or are (or will be) outsourced to a service provider (the gender and leadership development training and the LCS study).

Table 6: Gender related activities within Blue Gold per activity cluster

Activity Cluster	Main gender related activities	Main responsibility³⁵	Remarks / Status (as per August 2016)
1. Develop and repair water infrastructure	1.1 Ensure that at least 50% of the LCS group members are women	Polder teams	This may be revised after the findings of the LCS study become available
	1.2 Monitor the implementation of the LCS study on the impact of LCS work on women.	Gender teams and MRL team	Status: tender process for service provider ongoing
	1.3 Follow-up on findings of the LCS study	Gender team / depending on issues	Will depend on the findings / recommendations of the LCS impact study.
	1.4 Men and women consulted in planning of infrastructure to be repaired	Technical staff / polder teams	Through validation meetings - ongoing
2. Strengthen water management partnerships	2.1 Motivate men and women for WMG membership (target of women membership = 40%) by two approaches: (a) integrated into general community mobilization activities and (b) Court Yard Sessions focused on changing attitudes towards women's participation in WMOs	COs / polder teams, with support by zonal staff (esp. socio-economists) and gender coordinator	(a) Ongoing (b) CYS approach was revised in the first half of 2016, currently each CO conducts 2 sessions per month (correct?)
	2.2 Promote that also women (and men) of landholding households join WMGs, as such households are under-represented in WMG membership, whereas they are important actors with regard to water management	Polder teams with support of gender team and relevant program advisors	Still to start? Gender steam to support in identifying best approach for this

³⁵ In this draft version of the Gender Working Paper, the responsibilities are only tentatively indicated. During the next visit of the international gender expert to BGP this will be discussed in more detail, taking the new Blue Gold TA structure better into account.

	<p>2.3 Investigate the motivations and/or constraints of women (and men) to become WMG member and to attend WMG meetings (including to not become member and/or not attend WMG meetings). Identify measures to overcome constraints (see also section 6.3).</p> <p>As part of this, investigate whether addressing drinking water issues within WMG meetings would better involve women into WMG discussions (also: is this appropriate as a WMG issue?)</p>	To be determined , but probably with Livelihood team and MLR team	Still to be further discussed
	2.4 Motivate that women form at least 30% of the Executive Board members of WMGs, occupying at least 1 – 2 of the 5 key positions	COs / polder teams	Ongoing
	2.5 Gender and Leadership Development training of all Executive Board members (M+F) of all WMGs to address gender attitudes and contribute to leadership development of women and men	Service provider with support of training and gender team	Ongoing. Monitoring and impact assessment by gender, training and MRL teams / staff;
	2.6 Support / monitor the implementation of the Gender Action Plans of the WMGs (elaborated during the GLD training), including the active participation of women (and all men) in dialogues and decision making within WMOs	Field staff / polder teams and gender team	To be discussed in the polder teams and addressed in the gender training for zonal and field staff
	2.7 Support BWDB in updating their Gender Equity Strategy as part of the Gender Equity Strategy of BWDB	External consultant	Status: ToR developed; in process of identifying suitable consultant
	2.8 Workshops / orientations with Union Parishads: (1) Orientations for Union Parishads, which include a gender presentation; (2) workshops for UPs ensure the use of the gender budget for women's empowerment; and (3) workshops for UP members, elite persons and other relevant stakeholders (including women Executive Board members) to increase gender sensitiveness including discussing the importance of men and women participation in WMOs and addressing gender norms and attitudes.	Gender team , Institutional staff, and other relevant BL staff	Status: (1) already being done; (2) being planned, first workshops to be implemented in the last quarter of 2016; (3) being planned (is part of Exit strategy 2).
	2.9 Integration of gender issues in Training on Environmental Safeguards and Disaster Management, by including also women as trainees and	Environmental Expert, with support of gender team	Status: ?

	“environmental champions” and integrating DRR related gender content in the curriculum.		
3. Introduce new practices and innovations	3.1 Aim for 50% women’s participation in FFS groups (NB. proportion of women depends on FFS topics)	FFS organizers	Well achieved with over 80% women in FFS by TA and 50% women in FFS by DAE (50% women and 50% men is standard approach).
	3.2 Introduce gender issues in FFS curriculum and/or in the form of gender tips	Gender team in coordination with zonal staff	As requested by Khulna staff
	3.3 Follow-up and/or support Innovation Fund projects, especially those with a clear gender aspects (such as Nice Foundation, GIZ, WorldFish, UIU)	Gender team in coordination with IF manager	This is currently already a good practice for relevant IF research projects
	3.4 Decide whether the topic of feminization of agriculture could be further elaborated within Blue Gold, preferably either both as research (to assess scale of this phenomenon and consequences) and as IF project (e.g. to pilot agricultural technologies more suitable for women)	IF manager, gender team and relevant program advisors	Topic included in research agenda; discussion planned for October 2016
4. Strengthen agriculture & marketing actors	4.1 Follow-up on gender issues in MFS groups, including promoting women’s (active) participation in MFS groups where appropriate, also promoting market linkages for women involved in farming.	Gender team, including the gender and IGA coordinator (Jhorna) supporting the concerned zonal / polder team staff	Gender issues have already been integrated to some extent in the MFS approach
	4.2 Follow-up on IGA and/or entrepreneurial training for (LCS) women, e.g. by involving Concern Universal to set up Women’s Business Centres (WMCs).	Gender team/ Institutional expert/ relevant program advisors of SVC team	Target: 40,000 (project Document) or 7500/6000 women (inception report). This is also part of Exit Strategy 2. Status: Meeting held with CU; 2 WBCs visited.
	4.3 Investigate / discuss whether (apart from activity 4.1 and 4.2) extra attention should be given to promoting access of women to markets, (input) resources (including credit) and entrepreneurship, and if so, how.	Gender team and SVC team members	Should this also be a separate activity ? to be discussed in October 2016.
	4.4 The Vocational Training for adolescents will include boys and girls (target: 50:50); investigate whether and	VET Coordinator, gender team	Gender issues were already included in the needs assessment.

	how gender issues are and should be included in the VET curricula.		
5. Gender in “Services”	5.1 re Training: (1) promote that male and female beneficiaries can participate as trainees (target: \geq 33%, whenever relevant); (2) promote mixed training teams (male and female trainers); and (3) integrate gender issues in training curricula, when and where relevant.	Training and gender team	Is currently already being endeavoured / done, but should stay on our agenda.
	5.2 MRL: (1) collect gender-disaggregated (monitoring) data; (2) ensure proper collection of data on the gender indicators from the Logframe; (3) ensure that in specific (baseline and impact) studies gender issues are explicitly addressed; (4) conduct (or support) specific gender studies when and where necessary (such as LCS study) and (5) collect relevant case studies, e.g. of successful women leaders, but also of men who create space for women.	MLR team with gender team	Partially being done. a special focus will be on the use of the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)
6. Internal	6.1 Increase proportion of female (technical) TA staff, especially at Zonal level	Management and program advisors who recruit new staff	Female staff also act as role models influencing attitudes
	6.2 Explore option to add responsibility for gender within job description of all staff members	Management / gender team	Has been discussed with TL
	6.3 Ensure that (1) Blue Gold’s gender approach and anti-harassment policy is included in induction package for new staff; also to be discussed during induction meetings and (2) promote that all Blue Gold colleagues behave in the spirit of this policy, i.e. ensuring mutual respect among all layers of (M/F) staff.	Gender team and program manager	Partially done, but check to which extent
	6.4 Gender training for staff: (1) gender sessions within induction training for all (new) field staff and in refresher training	Gender coordinator	Is largely being done
	6.5 Gender training for staff: (2) gender training for zonal and field staff (including BWDB, DAE, DoL and DoF), also linked to follow-up of GLD training to WMGs	Service provider (KNKS), organised by training and gender teams	Was planned to take place in September 2016
	6.6 Gender cum team building workshop for Dhaka staff	External facilitator, organized by gender and training staff	Has been discussed and is tentatively planned for autumn 2016
	6.7 Select gender focal persons at	Management	Being planned

	central, zonal and polder level and prepare their ToR	and gender coordinator	
	6.8 Continue follow-up of Blue Gold's anti-harassment policy by measures as skype meetings with female staff, creating a confidential online page, and/or by <i>confidential information boxes</i> at zonal level	Management and gender coordinator	Being planned
	6.7 Conduct a gender budget analysis of Blue Gold's budget (or parts of it) using the tool as distributed by EKN	Administrative officer with support of gender team	Status: was agreed upon in May 2016
7. Other	7.1 Liaise with partners (such as BWDB and DAE) and other projects, programmes and/or organisations (e.g. Max Foundation, WLE, SaFaL), also sharing information / lessons learnt.	Gender team	When and where opportunities arise, but also taking own initiatives.
	7.2 Follow-up on gender issues in the exit strategies, in particular 2, 4, 6 and 7 and provide support as per concerned action plans	Gender team	As far as not yet explicitly mentioned above.

Other options for gender related activities

From Blue Gold field experiences and from other sources (such as non-Blue Gold documents such as referred to in 4.2), several other gender topics emerged that are relevant for reducing gender gaps, improving gender norms and attitudes, and/or for contributing to improved food security and livelihoods. These topics relate to a varying degree to Blue Gold's key result areas of equitable water management and strengthened value chains. To what extent these topics should or can be more explicitly addressed within the Blue Gold program needs further discussions. Examples of such topics are:

- a. Gender gap in agricultural wages;
- b. The incidence of eve teasing, harassment and other forms of verbal or physical violence against beneficiary women, which negatively affects women's participation in activities in the public space, including in WMOs and in market linkages. More respectful attitudes towards women are essential, both to achieve increased productivity of women in the various value chains and to achieve women's empowerment and gender equity. NB: This is indirectly and to some extent addressed in the Gender and Leadership Development Training when discussing a respectful attitude towards women.
- c. The responsibility of women for almost all unpaid care work, which not only causes a huge difference in workload between men and women, but also restricts the time available for women to devote to productive, income earning activities. This thus restricts their contribution to improved livelihoods and their participation in public meetings and/or leadership functions.
- d. Early marriage (with 29% of girls under the age of 15 likely to be married in Bangladesh) has also clear linkages to food security.
- e. Expanding nutrition related activities, currently already integrated in the FFS modules, and –in the form of a brief session- in the Gender and Leadership Development training, to ensure reaching a larger proportion of (male and female) Blue Gold beneficiaries, based on the grounds that nutrition is an important pillar of food security.

When deciding if and to what extent such topics will be taken up or expanded, also already existing activities by other organizations in the project area will be considered.

Implementing the gender activities

The table with gender activities on the previous pages tentatively presents the responsibilities for implementation, which will be further discussed and refined. In a next version of this Working Paper the gender related tasks for the various categories of BGP staff will be more clearly presented.

The three teams (Livelihood Improvements, EWM and SVC) and BG management each have responsibilities and ownership for gender activities related to their activity clusters –in cooperation with Blue Gold’s gender staff-, whereby:

- Livelihood Improvement team: responsible for the overall gender strategy and gender equity results to be achieved, including the sustainability of such results; at this level also options for replication and/or institutionalization of Blue Gold’s gender approach needs to be addressed, e.g. among partners and/or –at field level- through horizontal learning.
- EWM team: responsible for the more practical approaches and interventions to improve women’s (and men’s) active and meaningful participation in WMOs, including addressing barriers to women’s active participation; follow-up on the recommendations of the LCS study (when available) in term of reviewing BGP’s LCS approach;
- SVC team: review the approaches and interventions regarding targeting men and women farmers, e.g. exploring the need and options to involve women more in field crop and market linkage related activities (also in view of feminization of agriculture).
- Blue Gold management: responsible for the internal gender related measures.

Preconditions for a successful implementation of the BGP gender approach

Because of the nature of gender as a cross-cutting issue, the success of the implementation of Blue Gold’s gender approach will depend largely on the ownership felt by all Blue Gold staff and their capacities and commitment to successfully implement the gender related activities related to their daily work. This requires the following:

- Blue Gold staff have the capacities to implement gender related activities (→ extra gender training for zonal and field staff will soon be conducted);
- Staff should have adequate understanding on what is expected from them (this is currently especially clear for the quantitative targets). Responsibilities for several categories of staff, including polder teams, will be better elaborated and shared, based on the proposed gender activities in this paper and the further dialogues on their implementation.
- The attitude of Blue Gold staff counts as we are role models for our beneficiaries and partners. The following box contains several practical tips.

Practical tips for contributing to gender equity in Blue Gold’s daily activities:

- Remember that gender concerns men and women.
- Make it a practice that when referring to farmers or entrepreneurs, these include male and female persons.
- Women (nor men) form homogeneous groups: it can be important to clearly distinguish the category we mean (e.g. women as family labour or as wage labourer).
- When having meetings with project beneficiaries: purposely create opportunities for men and women to speak out (also for more marginalized men).
- When working with women to increase their productivity / production, also promote that women become more involved in decision-making on production and spending the income derived from any (increased) production.
- Gender equity means that extra support to women (or disadvantaged men) is needed to make sure they have equal opportunities or access as compared with men.
- When planning activities, keep in mind that the constraints for women to participate in BGP / WMG activities may be different than for men (e.g. location) → consider these!
- In reporting (field visit reports, progress reports, etc) use gender-disaggregated data where relevant and distinguish impact on men and women.
- Be a role model by engaging in a respectful and equitable way with male and female colleagues and beneficiaries.

7.3 Gender Results and Gender in MRL

Results of the gender related activities can be distinguished at two levels: quantitative results, mostly in terms of participation of women (and men) in Blue Gold related activities, such as membership of WMGs, participation in LCS groups, FFS and MFS, and in training. Targets for these are included in the table on gender activities and the progress is monitored by the concerned teams. Blue Gold progress reports presents already a considerable part of these data, as also presented in chapter 6 of this paper. Measurement of these –mostly output level- results will continue.

Gender Related indicators in Blue Golds revised logframe

Blue Gold also aims to achieve more qualitative gender related results both in terms of women's empowerment and more gender equity / equality. The revised logframe of Blue Gold –as discussed in 7.1- includes indicators for measuring such qualitative results. Some earlier indicators (as in the Inception Report) have been replaced because they appeared less relevant or already achieved. These especially concern:

- The focus on also female headed households when reducing poverty. The main reason for replacing female headed households indicators is the relatively low percentage of such households as found in the baseline survey (just over 4%). Still, female headed households are certainly meant to be also targeted by Blue Gold interventions, depending on their status (e.g. as farmers if they have access to land, as potential LCS group members and/or as beneficiaries for the IGA or entrepreneurial activities). Comparing baseline and impact surveys will still allow to measure to what extent female headed households benefited from Blue Gold interventions.
- Increased mobility of women has been dropped as a main indicator for women's empowerment, because the baseline study demonstrated that women's mobility was already higher than expected.

The main qualitative results to be aimed at (and measured) are discussed below, including the methods to measure them:

a. **Indicator 4.1 “Attitudes of men and women about gender roles”** – The precise tool to measure this indicator is still under discussion.

b. Indicator 4.2 “Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index” (WEAI).

The WEAI is a composite tool that measures women's control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community and economy. It has been developed collaboratively by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in the context of the Feed the Future program, i.e. the US's government's global hunger and food security initiative, which is also implemented in Bangladesh, where also pilot surveys were conducted in the development phase of the WEAI.

The WEAI is composed of two sub-indexes: one measuring five domains of empowerment for women; and the other measuring gender parity in empowerment within the household, i.e. comparing the empowerment of men and women.

The five domains of empowerment in the WEAI are the following:

1. **Production:** Sole or joint decision making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock and fisheries as well as autonomy in agricultural production;
2. **Resources:** Ownership, access to, and decision making power over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables and credit;
3. **Income: Sole or joint control over income and expenditures;**
4. **Leadership:** Membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public;

5. **Time:** Allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities.

The domains comprise 10 indicators, see below table.

Domain	Indicators	Weight
Production	Input in productive decisions	1/10
	Autonomy in production	1/10
Resources	Ownership of assets	1/15
	Purchase, sale or transfer of assets	1/15
	Access to and decisions on credit	1/15
Income	Control over use of income	1/5
Leadership	Group member	1/10
	Speaking in public	1/10
Time	Workload	1/10
	Leisure	1/10

In addition to tracking the nature of empowerment in the five domains, The WEAI measures also the empowerment of women relative to men in the same household, the latter is critical to understanding the gender empowerment gap.

Sample questionnaires are available, but these will be reviewed and adapted to the Blue Gold area situation (to be done by the MRL team, with input from the gender team where needed). (NB. Add a sentence on the status of this after consulting MRL members).

c. Indicator 13.3: Female leadership in (WMO) decision making.

This means that it is not only important that women are WMG members, attend WMG meetings and/or are members of the Executive committees of the WMGs, but also that women speak out in meetings and that their opinions influence decision making. The following scale will be used, possibly with minor adaptations:

Observation	score
No participation of women in the meeting	0
Females participating in the meeting, but do not speak	25
Females attend, speak, but are not listened to	50
Females attend, speak, are listened to, but do not influence decisions	75
Females attend, speak, get heard, and influence or take part in the final decisions	100

Source of the table: Performance Monitoring report prepared by SNV / IRC for WASH project.

d. Indicator 17.4 Women earning from LCS work

This is currently already been measured. The LCS impact study (the tender process for which is currently (Sept 2016) ongoing) will investigate to what extent incomes from LCS work contribute to (structural) poverty reduction and empowerment of the LCS workers.

e. Female executive members in WMO boards (target 30 – 40%³⁶)

This is an indicator that is already measured, and which complements indicator 13.3 on women's active involvement in meetings, including in actual decision making.

³⁶ Check with concerned colleagues

f. Women trained in IGA

This indicator refers to the expectation that LCS women can be lifted out of poverty by providing IGA training in combination of using excess LCS income for investment in productive resources. First evidence showed that most LCS women dearly need their LCS income for daily expenses and/or repaying debts. The LCS study will look into this aspect as well.

Regarding the IGA training: apart from 5361 women participating in FFS and 1217 women in MFS groups (as per end 2015), no other IGA training has been provided for (LCS) women. Options, including outsourcing of such training and also paying attention to entrepreneurial development, are being investigated.

The indicator foremost measures quantitatively the number of women who will have received such training; a more qualitative impact survey will be designed once such training will start off.

Gender issues in other MRL activities

As mentioned also in the overview of gender related activities, gender perspectives will also be integrated in other monitoring and/or MRL activities, apart from measuring the above listed gender indicators of the BGP.

This specifically involves the following (which is already done to a good extent):

- All data that relate to persons (such as workshop participants or trainees) will be gender-disaggregated.
- Ensure that in specific studies (including baseline and impact studies) relevant gender issues are addressed, such as distinguishing findings for men and for women. When collecting household level data, the need for further intra-household details is always kept in mind.
- Specific studies on gender and women's empowerment are or will be conducted, such as the LCS study and the collection of data for the WEAI. Moreover, the effect of various specific gender related activities will be measured, such as the impact of the Gender and Leadership Development Training which is now in its starting phase.
- Case studies will be collected of successful women leaders or entrepreneurs due to Blue Gold interventions. Also case studies are foreseen on men who actively support women's empowerment, create space for women, and/or changed their attitude towards women's participation e.g. in WMG leadership. Case studies will be coordinated by MRL and the gender coordinator, but all Blue Gold staff will be encouraged to contribute.

Annex 1 References

(This annex still needs to be completed)

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- CWM strategy
- GESAP
- WEAI Tool 11 pager
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- Planning Commission Bangladesh, Seventh Five Year Plan FY2016-FY2020 (see: http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf)
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- Mission reports ST gender specialist
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- WFP final report (received from EKN for comments – if a reference is made to this).
- <http://www.globallslaveryindex.org/country/bangladesh/> (includes data on early marriage)
- 10 in 4 – EKN paper

Annex 2 Gender Indicators applied in Blue Gold (as per Inception Report of November 2013)

Note: Means of verification is indicative and will be further elaborated when developing the monitoring system. Some targets may be reviewed after baseline results are available. Most gender indicators at output level concern gender-disaggregated information which will be collected by regular monitoring.

Goal and purpose	Indicator and Targets (March 2019)	Means of verification
<u>Blue Gold Goal:</u> reduced poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Also among (<i>de facto</i>) female headed households the number of households with 5 months or more of food shortage is reduced to less than 10% Also (<i>de facto</i>) female headed households realize a 30% increase in household assets Also (<i>de facto</i>) female headed households increase expenditure on housing and education by 20% 	1, 2 and 3: Baseline and impact surveys
<u>Blue Gold purpose:</u> protection against floods; organization in WMGs; Increase of hh incomes; strengthened institutional framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Average household incomes increased by Tk 15,000 also for female headed households 30% of the LCS women (2250) are engaged in new and regular income earning other than LCS work Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan of BWDB updated and approved and evidence of its implementation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline and impact surveys WMG functionality assessments / FGD New GESAP approved; (Anecdotal) evidence of GESAP implementation
<u>Objective of the gender cross-cutting issue:</u> Improved socio-economic position and status for women in the polder areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of women in decision making increased (target: $\geq 40\%$ of female WMG / WMA members actively participate in discussions and decision-making within WMG) Women leadership increased (40% of EC members in important positions are women) Mobility of women increased (target: $\geq 25\%$ of women moving outside their own village on their own) $\geq 30\%$ of the able and adult women derive own cash income from the sales of surplus production, other IGA and/or employment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – 2: Functionality assessments of WMO/WMA 3 – 4: By Baseline and impact surveys (targets may be refined after baseline data have been analysed)
Components	Indicator and Targets (by end of project)	Means of verification
Component 1 – Community Mobilization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On average at least 30% women participants in all consultation and data collection meetings at community level At least 30% of the community organizers will be female (but aiming for 50% male and 50% female wherever possible) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring data Staff records of Blue Gold Monitoring data

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. At least one separate meeting for women and one for men held in the formation process for each WMG 4. Meetings for formation of WMGs with at least 30% female participants 5. By the end of Blue Gold at least 40% of the WMG members are women 6. WMA membership will consist of 50% males and 50% females (one male and one female representative from each WMG) 7. At least 30% of the Executive Committee members of WMA and WMG will be women, as per GPWM 8. Two one of the five key positions (40%) in each EC (WMG & WMA) is held by women 9. At least 30% of the participants in training for EC members will be women 10. In particular: in training on Accounts and Bookkeeping 2 female (EC) members per WMG / WMA participate. 11. Two male and two female EC members of each WMG participate in gender training (hence: 50% male and 50% female participation in gender training for WMGs) 12. 26 Gender Action Plans (GAPs) will be prepared as part of the Polder Development Plans, one for each polder 13. Evidence that a number of important issues of the GAPs have been implemented. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Monitoring data 5. Monitoring/Functionality Assessments 6. Monitoring/Functionality Assessments 7. Monitoring/Functionality Assessments 8. Monitoring/Functionality Assessments 9. Monitoring (training data) 10. Monitoring (training data) 11. Monitoring (training data) 12. Monitoring 13. Functionality Assessment / Case studies / FGD
<p>Component 2: Water management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 30% women’s participation in all validation meetings 2. At least 50% of all earth work will be carried out by LCSs 3. At least 40% of the all LCS members are female (either by mixed or only women LCS) 4. 7500 women earn from LCS work 5. At least 60% of all female LCS members participate in skill/FFS training (≥4500 women), in cooperation with other components. 6. At least 30% of the committees for construction supervision and/or O&M of water management infrastructure (at WMG, Block and/or WMA level) are female. 7. At construction sites (for major works) basic facilities for (female) labourers are in place 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring 2. Monitoring 3. Monitoring data 4. Monitoring data 5. Monitoring / training data 6. Monitoring / Functionality Assessment 7. Inspection Reports TA staff
<p>Component 3 Food Security and Agricultural Production</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 30% women’s participation in consultations on problems and potential activities (in coordination with Component 1) 2. At least 30% of FFS facilitators female 3. Women and men are participating in FFS in equal numbers (50% men and 50% women) 4. Also female headed households / women farmers will report increased agricultural production in line with targets of component 3 as per Blue Gold Logical Framework 5. Number of men (FFS participants) reached by nutrition, food safety and/or hygiene messages (EKN FS Ind8 of Result Area 2; target cannot be set as approach not yet fully developed) 6. Number of women (FFS participants) reached by nutrition, food safety and/or hygiene messages (EKN FS Ind 9 of Result Area 2; target cannot be set as approach not yet fully developed) 7. Productivity increase by female FFS participants is approx equal to increase by male farmers (for same products) 8. 80% of male and female farmers adopt at least 3 FFS-promoted farm practices 9. At least 50% of the innovative technology introduced and applied is (also) suitable for female famers and actually applied by female farmers 10. 50% of the 52 persons trained as Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) are women. 11. Of the participants in exposure visits / motivational tours at least 30% are women 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring 2. Monitoring 3. Monitoring 4. Gender disaggregated data collected by component 3 5 and 6. FFS data on imparting nutrition modules 7. Baseline and impact survey (by gender) 8 and 9. Technical report 10. Monitoring / training data 11. Monitoring / training data

Component 4: Business Development / Value Chain Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 30% of the persons consulted for business development data collection and value chain selection are women (in coordination with component 1) 2. At least 50% of the selected VCs have one or more segments in which women play a significant role 3. 25% of the participants of the FFS Module on Farm Business are female 4. Evidence (at least anecdotic) that women in value chain substantially increase value in their segment and/or become involved in higher value segments 5. Of the new employment created by value chain development, at least 30% are female employees 6. Men and women benefit from WMG economic and productive activities <p>Note: gender indicators for component 4 may be expanded or refined after the concrete activities of this component have been more elaborated.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data on participants in relevant meetings 2. List of selected VCs 3. Monitoring / training data 4. Case studies 5. Impact and/or other surveys 6. WMG Functionality assessments / inventory on WMGs' economic and productive activities
Component 5 Cross Cutting Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Good governance</u>: male and female BWDB participants in AWIS workshop 2. <u>Environment</u>: at least 30% women participate in SEMP preparation 3. Proposed environmental improvements address the needs of women 4. <u>DRR / CCA</u>: at least 40% women participants in community risk assessments (CRA) 5. Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDR) strategies take also women's constraints and needs into account 6. <u>Innovations</u>: Anecdotal evidence that innovations introduced by Blue Gold also benefit women 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List of participants 2. Monitoring data 3. Review of (selected) SEMPs 4. Monitoring data 5. Review of (selected) CBDR strategies 6. Review of innovations introduced
Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75% of relevant professional BWDB staff at Zonal level (relevant to Blue Gold polders) have received gender training 2. Gender knowledge increased of training participants as measured by end-of-training evaluations 3. Of all training imparted (other than FFS), at least 30% of the trainees are female 4. Overseas study tours have male and female participants (target: $\geq 25\%$ female staff) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring / training records 2. Training evaluation forms 3. Training statistics 4. List of participants
Institutional Strengthening of BWDB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated BWDB Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan (GESAP) approved within BWDB by mid 2015. 2. 10% of BWDB staff across all levels is female by the end of the Blue Gold Programme in line with GoB minimum quotas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approved updated GESAP in place 2. Staff records of BWDB
Other gender indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least one network meeting per year held with gender staff of other similar projects 2. Evidence in place on the benefits of the gender approach 3. Two workshops held within BWDB on lessons learnt of Blue Gold's gender approach (mid-term and end) 4. Anecdotal evidence that in liaison with other projects in same polders (such as Max WASH and SAFAL) also coordination / cooperation on gender approaches is addressed. 5. Document on lessons learnt (success and failures), best practices and other evidence documented on gender approach (draft at mid-term; final by the end of the project) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minutes of the meetings 2. Blue Gold staffing records 3. Baseline and impact surveys; case studies; FGDs etc. 4. Minutes / report on workshop 5. Anecdotal evidence / minutes etc
Blue Gold Staffing (apart from component specific targets already mentioned above)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In every district one male and one female socio-economist will be base (full time positions) 2. Junior Gender Expert appointed 3. Increase in proportion of female (technical) national staff in Blue Gold (Dhaka and field offices, excluding COs). Baseline July 2013: 2 female staff of 23 total technical staff (8.7%). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2 and 3: Blue Gold staffing records

