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Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB)
Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)



Working Paper 1
Theory of Change

November 2015



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Blue Gold Program

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Issue and revision record

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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

BDP 2100	Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100
BGP	Blue Gold Program
BWDB	Bangladesh Water Development Board
DAE	Department of Agriculture Extension
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Inter-Ministerial Policy Review (Government of Netherlands)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
SW/SC	South West /South Central
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
UP	Union Parishad
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WM	Water Management
WMO	Water Management Organization

Executive Summary

1. An effort has been made to take the first step towards developing a theory of change methodology in the specific context of the Blue Gold Program (BGP). This goes beyond updating existing logical frameworks. It seeks to introduce a more adaptive methodology, providing information on progress of activities and outcomes, and in addition analysing how and why envisaged changes did or are expected to take place. The report gives a basic framework that requires further elaboration.
2. Based on the basic framework, the idea of exploring the feasibility of the introduction of an explicit theory of change in Blue Gold Program was generally accepted. The next step should be identification of output/outcome, and cause-effect indicators and research questions (see section 3.3.2.).
3. The identification should best be done through a workshop with staff from BWDB, DAE and the BGP technical assistance team. Such a workshop could have a duration of three days, not necessarily in one stretch (six mornings/afternoons) with three parts concentrating on indicators for WMOs, water management and productive aspects (agriculture, business development), and three parts on the overall system and the linkages/cause-effect relations.
4. If, after the identification of indicators and research questions, the decision is taken to continue down this path, serious consideration should be given to involving third parties in the M&E process. This would have a number of advantages: the technical assistance team and especially the M&E staff would be relieved from an additional workload, the objectivity would be increased if parts of the theory of change related work is kept at arm's length from BGP, certainly from the perspective from outsiders; it would be an example of a partnerships between the program and knowledge based institutes..
5. Since the (possible) introduction of the theory of change exercise will, most probably, bring additional indicators and questions, the existing M&E system has to be reviewed. This review should also be used to assess whether the present range of data being collected is still in line with the evolving needs of the program.
6. With the same perspective (theory of change, evolving needs), the Terms of Reference for the next series of baseline reports should be reviewed. More regular publications on outcome and impact of the program, in particular on its economic aspects, would well serve the requirements or a number of stakeholders.
7. Steps should be undertaken to reformulate the overall objective and the purposes of the program to include aspects that were not included at the time in the base documents and to reconcile the differences between the Program Document and the Inception Report.

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

The aim of this short assignment (from 12 to 23 November 2015) was to assist the Blue Gold Program with the follow up of recommendations of the Mid Term Review (MTR) mission, in particular recommendations 28, 29, and the review of the Theory of Change.

1.1.1 MTR Recommendations

The MTR Aide Memoire states:

Recommendation 28

To live up to its potential as a model program, the analytical and reflective capacity within BGP (TA) needs to be considerably strengthened to work out the evidence on the inclusive growth impacts of the different integrated activities undertaken, the efficacy of community mobilisation, the value of in-polder water management in terms of land productivity and others.

Recommendation 29

The as yet dormant but budgeted partnerships with knowledge institutes, including in Bangladesh, may be activated. There is also a need to synchronize the different data efforts – including the baseline of IOB (that concentrates on food security and less on water security) and for transparency and learning publish these as open sources.

At the very end of its Aide Memoire (after the last recommendation, no. 32) the MTR adds “In the meantime the Theory of Change as in the original project document will be updated (see Annex 11).” During the mission this was combined with recommendation 28, since the evidence on inclusive growth impact can be a part of the Theory of Change, as will be shown below.

1.2 Activities

Activities during the mission basically consisted of reading documents, discussions with management and staff of the Technical Assistance (TA) team, including bilateral interviews with 14 of them, and writing drafts that were then subject of discussions again with the Team Leader and staff members. Andrew Jenkins and Niels van den Berge participated in two brainstorming sessions. Meetings with Chief Planning Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Project Director Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), and the Dutch Embassy took place towards the end of the mission. A summary of the one-on-one discussions with the staff is given in Annex 1

1.3 Output

The output of the mission is presented in the following three sections:

- Section 2: Vision, objectives and purposes of the Blue Gold Program
- Section 3: Evidence of inclusive growth and theory of change

- Section 4: Subjects of recommendation 29: partner ships, data bases and publications.

2. Vision, Objective and Purposes

2.1 Introduction

A review of the overall objectives and purposes of BGP was in a sense an obvious start for discussions on evidence and the theory of change. Identification of variables that are supposed to change because of the program must be derived from what it tries to achieve. A second reason was that it was felt that some aspects of the program, in particular innovation and the efforts in BGP to systematically evaluate its impact (as might be done using the theory of change methodology), should be reflected in the purposes. Thirdly, there are differences between the objective and purposes, and consequently the Logical Frameworks, of the Program Document and the Inception Report, reference documents for respectively the government agencies and the consultant's team. Review could bring these two together.

The MTR has suggested as well that changes are made in the objective and purposes. This might provide an opening for a formal reformulation. The results of the discussions during the mission can be of assistance to the team during the process of review.

2.2 Mission Statement

Although in existing documents no real "vision statement" was made, BGP could adopt a vision statement, or maybe rather mission statement, in line with the recently developed (and still draft) Delta Vision of BDP 2100. The Delta Vision is: "Ensure long term water and food security, economic growth and environmental sustainability while effectively coping with natural disasters, climate change and other delta issues through robust, adaptive and integrated strategies, and equitable water governance."

In tune with this, BGP's mission statement might therefore be:

"Contribute to the realization of the Delta vision in a number of selected polders at sub-regional level in the coastal zone of Bangladesh, with special attention for the linkages between water management and inclusive economic growth and with a focus on poverty reduction".

2.3 Overall Objective

The Inception Report (November 2013), the leading report for the consultant, states as overall objective of BGP: *"To reduce poverty by creating a healthy living environment and a sustainable socio-economic development for 150.000 households living on 160.000 ha of the coastal areas."*

However, the Program Document (August 2012), presumably the reference document for the government agencies, describes the overall objective in a different (and probably more appropriate) manner: *"To reduce poverty in the coastal area by enhancing the livelihood of the rural population, through more efficient water resources management and increased productivity of mainly crops, fishery and livestock in the polders by empowering the communities to be the driving force".*

The Mid Term Review mission (October 2015) finds reasons to redefine the overall objective and proposes the following: *“Reduce poverty by creating a healthy living environment and a sustainable socio-economic development for 190,000 households living in approximately 115,000 ha polder area.”*

With a view on the earlier mentioned mission statement, these two statements and on what is actually happening in the field, the overall objective might be rephrased as follows:

“The overall objective is to reduce poverty and to improve livelihoods of the population in a number of selected polders in Satkhira, Khulna and Patuakhali, through more efficient and equitable management of water resources, leading to higher productivity in crop agriculture, fisheries and livestock and subsequently to more household income, further stimulated by the sale of surplus agricultural products and the creation of employment through business development.”

2.4 Specific Program Purposes

Both the Inception Report and Program Document provide four specific program purposes, but again quite different”. The MTR mission also offered a reformulation.

2.4.1 Inception Report

“1. Protect the communities and their land located in the polders against floods from river and sea (climate change adaption) and to optimize the use of water resources for their productive sectors;
2. Organize the communities in cooperatives which will have to become the driving force for the natural resource based development (agriculture, fisheries and livestock), whereby environment, gender and good governance are effectively addressed;
3. Increase the household income derived from the productive sectors;
4. Strengthen the institutional framework for sustained water resources development and related development services in the SW/SC coastal areas.”

2.4.2 Program Document

“1. Increased sustainability of the development of the polders through effective community participation. The community organizations (primary societies and their associations) will become the driving force for the natural resources based development (agriculture, fisheries and livestock), whereby environment, gender and good governance are effectively addressed in their operations;
2. Effective use of the water resources and protection against flooding. Embankments will be rehabilitated and effective water distribution system established with close participation of the users;
3. Increased farmers’ income and strengthened livelihoods through improved farm productivity: production system, harvesting, processing, storage and marketing. Improved production and access to markets will be the two entry points and for each polder a Business Plan will be developed with the value chain for matchmaking as important stepping stones;
4. The living environment will be improved and nearly 100% coverage of drinking water and sanitation will be realized and sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR), balanced nutrition, and good governance issues are well understood and applied. This will be implemented by a separate project (Max-value for WASH).”

2.4.3 Mid-Term Review Mission

The MTR mission suggested the following formulation:

- “1. To reduce the risk of communities and their located in polders against floods from river and sea and to optimize the use and management of water resources for their productive sectors;
2. To organize the communities in water management organizations which will have to become the driving force for the natural resource based development (agriculture, fisheries and livestock), whereby environment, gender and good governance are effectively addressed;
3. To increase the household income derived from the productive sectors for the entire range of rural population but particularly creating income opportunities for the poor and the landless;
4. To strengthen the institutional framework for sustained water resource development and related development services.”

2.5 Proposed Reformulation of BGP Purposes

The proposed reformulation of the BGP purposes is in line with the cluster of activities of the program and gives attention to innovation and the theory of change. The aspects of water management and related infrastructure are elaborated upon below:

1. Increased sustainability of the development of the polders through effective community participation by creation of functional and self-organizing Water Management Organisations. The WMOs and their associations will become the driving force in improving the management of water resources, and subsequently for further natural resources based development (agriculture, fisheries and livestock), whereby environment, gender and good governance are effectively addressed in their operations.
2. Greater resilience to flooding will be enhanced, through the repair of perimeter embankments and associated structures, and the adoption of low-cost erosion protection measures along vulnerable sections of embankment, together with strengthened institutional linkages between BWDB, UPs and WMOs to identify and prioritize medium-term infrastructure investments and O&M priorities to mitigate the occurrence of breaches, and to better prepare the communities for breaches through coordinated emergency responses and disaster preparedness involving BWDB, UPs and WMOs. A number of community water management pilot schemes will be developed to promote and demonstrate the benefits of improved water management within (and possibly between) polder catchments. These will then be used for horizontal learning.
3. Building on the improved water management in the polders, the purpose is to increase the income of rural households and reduce poverty through improved farm productivity. Aspects as production systems, harvesting, processing and storage methods will all be subject of support. Access to markets, improved facilities for the sale of surplus products and development of businesses will be entry points to generate income as well as employment.
4. The assumed mutually reinforcing relation between the abovementioned three purposes, supported by innovative initiatives, is to be scrutinized and thoroughly tested by developing and implementing a system of primary data collection, monitoring and evaluation, that will ultimately result in answers on the question of changes in livelihoods have indeed taken place and on the question whether project interventions indeed had a substantial role in the transformation process. More insight into the linkages between the three components, community organization, water management infrastructure and higher productivity (forming the heart of what is known as “the theory of change”) contributes to accountability, has a strong learning element, has a much wider significance and can prove valuable for other development programs in the water sector.

5. The purposes of increased agricultural productivity and of generating income and employment by enhancement of business opportunities, will be facilitated by investments in innovative approaches and technologies. Such innovative interventions will contribute to the further development of the economy in the polder and will open up linkages with the wider regional and national economy.

3. Theory of change and evidence of inclusive growth

3.1 Theory of Change

The concept of theory of change (ToC) was developed in the mid-1990s and is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why desired changes are expected to happen in a particular context. It is a hypothesis that, after being tested in reality, can be proven right or wrong, and all shades in between. The Dutch government started in 2014 with efforts to develop a theory of change for all priority fields of its development policy, of which food security and water are closest to the BGP domain. An Evaluation of Dutch Food Security Programme was initiated, following principles of the theory of change methodology. BGP was selected as one of the pilot programs for the Bangladesh part of that overall evaluation. In 2015, three missions were fielded by IOB (Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie). The reports of these missions all contain valuable data and information for the BGP M&E system and for the development of a BGP tailored theory of change, and comprise the following:

- Brief report for identification of key issues on theory of change, indicators and research *questions*, *March/April 2014*
- Bangladesh Case Study, Sub-theme: *Water Management*, *Kessler/Heun, April 2015*
- Baseline, aid environment/*BRAC university/Ape, April 2015*
- Household survey baseline report, *de Jong/Gielen, van der Haar, Saha, July 2015*.

3.2 Updating the ToC

The MTR recommends that the theory of change as in the original documents will be updated. These documents (Inception Report and Program Document) have however only implicitly presented a theory of change, in a condensed manner present in their logical frameworks. Since they do not apply the methodology that can be seen in the work of IOB (which of course was not known yet at the time of drafting the original project documents), an effort has been made during the mission to develop a theory of change methodology in the specific context of BGP. This is more than updating existing logical frameworks, but is not contrary to them. It tries to make more explicit the main elements in BGP interventions and the assumed cause-effect relations between these elements and the objective and purposes of the program. Based on this BGP theory of change, the existing logical frameworks could indeed be revised and reconciled. An advantage is that the theory as such is more adaptive and dynamic than the static logical framework approach.

3.3 BGP Theory of Change

The application of the theory of change can take different forms. In this section, a rather straightforward version is taken. The chain of causes and events that are supposed to lead to the realization of the desired changes (as captured in objective and purposes) is in a linear way described as a cycle, starting with Water Management Organisations (WMOs) and ending with better equipped and more active organizations, triggering a new cycle of causes and effects.

Summarizing the chain: formation and support to WMOs, lead to more functional WMOs, while infrastructure interventions result in improved water management infrastructure. This infrastructure combined with the better functioning WMOs will result in improved water management (including water governance), in turn leading to an overall increase of agricultural production (crop agriculture, aquaculture, livestock) in the respective polders. As a consequence, disadvantaged households are benefitted through less food insecurity and poverty, with polder wide higher incomes and better livelihoods. Thus better conditions are created for increased and more sustained contributions for O&M work of infrastructure and to an increased inclination of household members to participate more actively in the WMOs. This end of the cycle is the start of a new one.

3.3.1 Key Elements in the Primary Process of BGP

The theory of change for BGP, aims to clarify how changes in livelihoods are assumed to take place in BGP, can be seen as a cyclical chain of causes and effects between key elements. In the program it is, explicitly or implicitly, assumed that:

- **(cause)** formation of and support to WMOs (component 1) will result in
- **(effect)** improved functioning of Water Management Organisations
- while **(cause)** infrastructural interventions, such as repairs and rehabilitation of canals, khals sluices and embankments (component 2) will result in
- **(effect)** more climate resilient and more effective water management infrastructure.

Both effects combined will in turn become a **cause**, leading to

- **(effect)** improved water management and water governance

causing

- **(effect)** increased and diversified agricultural production (crops, aquaculture, livestock)- C3
- **(effect)** and possibilities for agro-based business development – C4

These two effects will individually and in combination **lead** to

- **(effect)** in general higher incomes of households in the polders,
- **(effect)** less households in poverty
- and **(effect)** food security during a longer period of the year and better nutrition

which will in combination subsequently **cause**

- **(effect)** higher and more sustained contributions to O&M of water management (and other infrastructure)
- **(effect)** and to a greater inclination of household members to work actively in Water Management Organisations.

The cycle is then complete and starts again. Ideally speaking, the whole process is an upward pointing spiral, leading indeed to sustainable WMOs.

3.3.2 BGP Indicators

For each of the elements in this chain (as formation and support to WMOs, improved water management, higher agricultural production etc.) indicators have to be identified. These indicators will in character be both output and outcome indicators, and are for a large part already available in the current M&E system,

the baseline reports and the IOB reports. These indicators, shown below as “Part A” indicators, would provide an impression about the impact of BGP.

But the output and outcome indicators in Part A indicators as such do not test the theory of change and would not result in better insight about the reasons for relative success or failure. For that purpose a second group of indicators has to be identified, for the time being called “cause-effect indicators” or “linkage indicators” (shown below as “Part B” indicators), while at the same time research questions have to be formulated for issues that cannot be reflected in a single indicator. This would be a relatively new angle which will need substantive and intense discussions. This part would be, if you will, the innovative aspect of applying the theory of change. That part needs to highlight the linkages; the how and why of the cause-effect relation. To gain this sort of insights, indicators have to be supplemented with issues for research.

Many of the indicators (both Part A and Part B) will provide evidence of inclusive growth, and underlying dynamics, that the MTR is hinting at in recommendation 28.

An initial inventory is provided below for both Part A and Part B indicators. Most of these are referenced in four existing reports on impact evaluation for the Dutch food security programme in Bangladesh, repeated here for ease of reference:

- IOB 1: Brief report for identification of key issues on theory of change, indicators and research questions, *March/April 2014*
- IOB 2: Bangladesh Case Study, Sub-theme: Water Management, *Kessler/Heun, April 2015*
- IOB 3: Baseline, aid environment/BRAC university/Ape, *April 2015*
- IOB 4: Household survey baseline report, de Jong/Gielen, van der Haar, Saha, *July 2015*

Part A: Output/outcome indicators

The primary process (see Section 3.3.1) can be made more visible by a series of essentially output and outcome indicators that will provide over time information on progress of activities and results (changes in living conditions). The key elements of this process are repeated below, with between brackets reports that already provide indicators. This can facilitate the discussions during the proposed workshops.

1. Formation/support WMOs (BGP Output monitoring reports)
2. Improved functioning of WMOs (BGP Outcome monitoring reports; IOB 1, IOB 2, IOB 4)
3. Infrastructure interventions (BGP Output monitoring reports)
4. Improved WM infrastructure (IOB 1, IOB 2)
5. Improved water management (IOB 1, IOB 2, IOB 4)
6. Increased agricultural production (BGP baseline report; any other M&E reports?; IOB 1, IOB 4)
7. Possibilities for agro-based business development (BGP baseline report; any other M&E reports?; IOB 1, IOB 4)
8. Higher household incomes in general (IOB 4)
9. Less households in poverty (BGP baseline report; IOB 4) NB Huge difference between the sources
10. Food security during a longer period in time (check with IOB) (BGP baseline report; IOB 4)

11. Higher and more sustained contributions to maintenance of infrastructure (no indicators/data available in existing BGP baseline or M&E reports)
12. Greater inclination of household members to work actively in WMOs (no indicators/data available in existing BGP baseline or M&E reports)

Part B: “Cause-Effect” or “Linkage Indicators”, Research Questions

The current M&E system of BGP and its baseline reports do not give much on cause-effect indicators. The IOB reports go further in this respect. BGP commissioned a short study on costs of maintenance, related to increased production (see 9 below). A number of indicators (additional to those four mentioned above) were suggested during interviews; they have been mentioned, followed by a question mark:

1. **Support to WMOs > Improved functioning of WMOs**
 - (IOB 1)
2. **Infrastructure intervention > More effective WM infrastructure**
 - Peripheral infrastructure: less flooding, less saline water in polder?
 - Khals: greater capacity to hold water, greater drainage capacity?
3. **Improved functioning WMOs)
More effective WM infrastructure) > improved water management**
 - (IOB 2)
4. **Improved water management > increased agricultural production**
 - Water at suitable levels available at right time at farm level?
 - More water available for irrigation?
 - More cultivable land due to less water logging?
 - (IOB 2)
5. **Increased agricultural production > agro-based business development**
 - Surplus available for marketing?
 - (IOB 1)
6. **Increased agric.production)
Agro-based business development) > higher households income in general**
 - (IOB 4)
7. **Increased agric.production)
Agro-based business development) > less households in poverty**
 - (IOB 4)
8. **Increased agric.production)
Agro-based business development) > greater food security**
 - (IOB 4)
9. **Higher income in general > higher and more sustained contributions O&M**
 - (Economic impact and maintenance cost analysis of water management infrastructure, Blue Gold, Sept. 2015)
10. **Higher income in general)
Less poverty)
Greater food security) > increased inclination to participate actively in WMOs**
 - (IOB 4)

3.3.3 Proposed next steps

It seems worthwhile to see if following the path of development of a theory of change for BGP does make sense and is not too complicated and labour intensive, by taking the next step and start the process of identification of both groups of indicators. It is proposed that this is done in a workshop with technical assistance staff and government agency staff as participants. This could be a workshop with a duration of three days, not necessarily in one stretch (six mornings/afternoons) with three parts concentrating on indicators for WMOs, water management and productive aspects (agriculture, business development), and three parts on the overall system and the linkages/cause-effect relations.

If the decision is taken to continue down this path, it has to be seriously considered to entertain a third party by way of outsourcing. This would have a number of advantages: the technical assistance team and especially the M&E staff would be relieved from an additional workload, to keep parts of the theory of change related work at arm's length from BGP would increase the objectivity (certainly from the perspective from outsiders), while it would be an example of the envisaged partnerships with third parties.

4. Partnerships, Databases and Dissemination

4.1 Partnership

Outsourcing of a part of the theory of change exercise could turn into a long term relation between BGP and knowledge based institutes in Bangladesh and The Netherlands. This would activate the dormant but budgeted partnerships, as the MTR mission put it in recommendation 29. Other examples for partnering did not come up in the discussions.

4.2 Databases and M&E

The present M&E system is geared towards institutional aspects of three “boundary partners”: WMOs, BWDB, and DAE. It does not give attention to, for instance, water management, agricultural productivity, and business development. Data on the latter subjects can be found in the Base line reports. These baseline reports will only be followed up by end line reports, presumably in 2019. In the technical assistance team there is a general consensus that on a more regular basis data on for instance agricultural production should be collected and published. During the next mission of the short term M&E consultant this should be discussed. Much information is available in the components, which could easily be entered into the overall M&E system.

In case the theory of change methodology is indeed introduced in BGP, new indicators will have to be incorporated in the M&E system as well, unless the decision is taken to design a new data base altogether, serving the needs of the theory of change exercise. This is obviously another subject to be raised with the M&E consultant.

There is some unease with the baseline reports as they have been developed. It is advised that for baseline reports for the newly selected polders the existing Terms of Reference are scrutinized and reformulated, with involvement of the subject matter experts in the technical assistance team.

4.3 Dissemination

The dissemination efforts of BGP consist of three parts. Hard copies of Technical Reports, Progress Reports, Annual Work Plan and Polder development Plans are distributed among the immediate stakeholders (BWDB, DAE, EKN, consultants). In addition BGP has two open sources. Its own website provides currently case studies with best practices, Technical Reports, quarterly newsletter (“Barta”) aimed at WMGs, and information related to particular events. Through Facebook photo material is disseminated, and the newsletters.

To further the dissemination of information on Blue Gold’s activities and thus contribute to more transparency, already existing intentions and discussions during the mission led to the following

suggestions: - make more reports available on the BGP website and Facebook page; - publish working papers, intended to summarise the issues surrounding a particular aspect of the project in a form which allows discussion and comment within the project (eg by TA, EKN, BWDB, DAE etc) whilst remaining as a working draft, 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 can have wider application; - publish a monthly English summary of key events and issues aimed at senior government staff, policy makers, and water sector officials; - publish annual progress reports on the impact of BGP (this could be annual reports on the progress of the Theory of Change exercise); - give more attention to dissemination at field level (for instance establish an information centre for WMOs at polder level).

Annex 1. Interviews with BGP Staff

1. Without exception, people think that recommendations 28 and 29 are justified.
2. It needed explanation that the “theory of change” as depicted as a cyclical chain of causes and effects, was only a hypothesis underlying the central concept of the project and not a reflection of reality. Some found it too simplified (reality was much more complex), effects are nearly always only partly due to one particular cause (issue of attribution).
3. There was much scepticism that the assumed process of causes and effects can be proven. However, there is in general consensus that with the hypothesis as basis and with suitable, “smart” indicators, a proper judgment can be given at the end of the program.
4. Much of the scepticism focused on the formation (a.o. too much following the old rules) and functioning of WMOs (too weak, not formulating demands, not really involved with water management) and on the effectiveness of in polder water management (a.o. too much attention for improving the infrastructure, to little on the use of it).
5. Not all staff are comfortable with the M&E system and the baseline reports (for instance the way data were collected, the questionnaires used for the baseline). The additional indicators recommended by IOB were not yet taken up in the M&E system. All support the idea to include new indicators in the system, related to the process of change (see 2).
6. Much support to publish more regularly on the impact of the program, how little that might seem in this phase of the program. Annual impact reports were welcomed. For instance, increase of homestead (including poultry) and rice production based on pre- and post-training FFS data could be included in such an annual report. Data on field crops on a wider scale can be taken up as well, after making arrangements with DAE.
7. Someone suggested to entertain a third party (Bangladeshi and/or Dutch institute/university) for the quality control and analysis, especially for the indicators/data related to the evidence for the assumed process of change. The idea was fully supported by a second staff member (actually the only I discussed it with). Also case studies were mentioned as addition to M&E data.
8. Many felt that interactions between the components can be improved and that recurrent discussions about the chain of causes and effects would stimulate this interaction. This would also contribute to more integration of the delivery of services in the field.
9. To continue on the topic of integration, there many times it was mentioned that adequate interaction and consultation between all components should start from the beginning of entering a new polder.
10. Many people felt that potentially the program could indeed become a model where current and future projects can learn from. A wide range of elements of such a model were mentioned. Among them: community mobilization in a planned way; the way of registration of WMOs; addressing core needs of people; conflict management; links with local government; comprehensive package offered by the four components; linkage between water management and economic growth; on-farm water management; market oriented FFS; business development for poor people innovation fund.
11. Much support for the idea to rephrase the overall objective and the purposes (main reasons: should be the same for government agencies and consultants team; give different accents; include new elements, as for instance innovation). Some opposition to have the issue of a “model” to incorporate as

a secondary objective; it could be taken up at purpose level. Luke warm reactions on the idea to start with a vision/ or mission statement.