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**A Unified Approach to Developing Water Management Organizations:  
Lessons from Polder 47/4<sup>1</sup>**  
Shorab Hossain<sup>2</sup> and Nazrul Islam<sup>3</sup>

**1. Introduction**

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has been working in the operation and management (O&M) of coastal polders to allow access to water to a wide range of users and stakeholders. BWDB has faced diverse and multi-sectoral water problem and learned lot of experiences. Now it is concerned with the sustainable development of water management system for the completed polder system where large section of people's community is living. The Blue Gold Program operates in the southern and southwest coastal polders with the aim of introducing sustainable socio-economic development through participatory water management and diversified farming practices, market participation and supporting local initiative; for helping build relations with partner organisations, line agencies, local resource persons, private sectors; and for optimising the mix of disciplinary support to the situation at hand.

One of the main activities of the program has been to form stakeholders in water management organizations to be the main drivers for development activities. Polder Teams (BWDB-OCWM and BWDB-O&M Divisions, DAE and TA field staff) have established sub-catchment-based Water Management Groups and a Water Management Association at polder level.

The process used in Polder 47/4 in 2018 for mobilizing and organizing water management organizations has been documented in this paper based on the combined experience of the Technical Assistance (TA) zonal team and the community development facilitators (CDFs) who live and work in the polders. P47/4 has a gross area of about 6,600 ha and cultivable land about 5,600 ha. It includes four Unions (Ballatali, Khaprabhanga, Dhulashar and Mithaganj Union) and twelve mouzas (Char Nazib, Chotto Ballatali, Lemu Para, Sona Para, Bara Ballatali, Char Ballatali, Dulashar, Baultali, Dalbugonj, Manashatali, Harandrapur Khaprabhanga and Madukhali) in Kalapara Upazila of Patuakhali District. P47/4 was empoldered by BWDB between 1961 and 1964 under the Coastal Embankment Project through the construction of an embankment of a length of 61 km and 26 sluices.

**2. Planned and Set-up Methodologies Adopted**

During the formation of WMG the following process was used in P47/4 by BWDB and TA team members:

**2.1 Meet partner agency key staff:** TA Zonal and polder coordinators meet key staff of the partners in water management for development of the concerned polder – preferably as a group – to discuss the Blue Gold initiative, its initial activities (familiarisation and information gathering, program dissemination and polder planning) and its overall programme. To help build commitment, leaflets have distributed and different type of video are shown:

- BWDB: XEN and key staff; DCEO, and AEO;
- District and Upazila officials of DAE, DLS and DoF;
- UP and Upazila Chairmen and members.

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**3. Setup polder teams**  
Polder Coordinators, Extension Officer (EO), BWDB and Sub-Assistant Agricultural Officer (SAAO), DAE along with TA staff implement the polder team.

**3.1 Conduct orientation workshop for polder teams** to ensure common understanding of the building blocks of water management for development.

- Polder team's goal and targets, as well as specific activities for planning the TA staff from all agencies and planning in their own area.
- Building blocks for developing Functional Water Management Organization (FWMO).
- Collaborative Action (CA): horizontal learning and self-reflection, participatory and self-learning.
- Collaborative Action (CA): horizontal learning and self-reflection, participatory and self-learning, and income-generating activities (IGA).
- Horizontal learning and participatory monitoring as a tool for promoting self-reflection and identifying a self-learning development process.
- Creating participatory and a support network to face to an incident when addressing problems and non-compliance water resource management and operational development.

**3.2 Activation days**  
Support, enhance and expand related activities. Culture evening collection activity and activation days to get involved in identifying and implementing new ideas in FWMO system, group activities, introducing construction related issues and conflicts, using learning process of water management water management/operation and maintenance. During the process, the Polder Team will support from Zonal and District level provide technical support to FWMO and other concerned groups in understanding activities. Polder teams have received an experience in FWMO implementation. It is important of this paper to discuss with the activation under focus the importance of horizontal learning strategies and attempts to foster cooperation of collective action and inter-agency teams.

**3.3. Village and household visit**  
A joint FWMO visit was used for the understanding the actual situation of the polder and water resource situation of the people. Through the process most of the institutions, main, trials, farms, and other facilities. During the visiting group people, farmers and produce representatives have shown as well compare the current situation of the area. The process also opens an opportunity to visit the members of the FWMO in the polder area. Before the visiting process and the implementation, create clear picture about the physical situation of the polder system. A joint polder visit (during orientation workshop, visiting visits and information) arranged the FWMO coordinators for use during the week-long Polder team to assess participation of stakeholders (collective action, houses and less influence from the polder community, including FWMO, if applicable), SAOs and TA members during the visit through.

- The whole process has provided a basis of the physical and biological environment of the polder system.

**3.4. Experience formation**  
The BWDB team was the first to form and implement a joint group of people at each BWDB area who are responsible for being the facilitator for a self-learning WMO. The core group has consisted of individuals from the local village and the nearby collection areas and the area implementer including existing farmer representatives members. The BWDB polder team is a collaboration with the community members and with the concerned UP ward members, identify their own group.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper documents the experiences of the Technical Assistance (TA) team's community development facilitators (CDFs) in implementing the unified approach published in the PAM Field Manual (in [English](#) and [Bangla](#)) in February 2017

<sup>2</sup> Community Organisation Expert and BGP Zonal Coordinator for the TA team in Patuakhali

<sup>3</sup> TA Socio-Economist in Patuakhali

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**Summary**[\[edit | edit source\]](#)

A Unified Approach to Developing Water Management Organizations: Lessons from Polder 47/4 by Shorab Hossain and Nazrul Islam

Water Management Organizations - The common name of organizations of the local stakeholders of a water resource project/sub-project/scheme. The concept WMO typically refers to WMGs and WMAs (and/or WMFs) together

## File history

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current <a href="#">05:44, 9 March 2021</a>		1,240 × 1,754, 5 pages (658 KB)	<a href="#">Bigblue</a> ( <a href="#">talk</a>   <a href="#">contribs</a> )	A Unified Approach to Developing Water Management Organizations: Lessons from Polder 47/4 by Shorab Hossain and Nazrul Islam

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## Blue Gold Program Wiki

The wiki version of the Lessons Learnt Report of the Blue Gold program, documents the experiences of a technical assistance (TA) team working in a development project implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) over an eight+ year period from March 2013 to December 2021. The wiki lessons learnt report (LLR) is intended to complement the BWDB and DAE project completion reports (PCRs), with the aim of recording lessons learnt for use in the design and implementation of future interventions in the coastal zone.

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