

Toggle menu
Blue Gold Program Wiki

Navigation

- [Main page](#)
- [Recent changes](#)
- [Random page](#)
- [Help about MediaWiki](#)

Tools

- [What links here](#)
- [Related changes](#)
- [Special pages](#)
- [Permanent link](#)
- [Page information](#)

Personal tools

- [Log in](#)

personal-extra

Toggle search

Search

Random page

Views

- [View](#)
- [View source](#)
- [History](#)
- [PDF Export](#)

Actions

File:ARM Aide Memoire 9-20Nov 2018 11jan 19.pdf

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- [File](#)
- [File history](#)

- [File usage](#)

**Aide Memoire
Blue Gold Program Annual Review Mission 2018
January 2019**

1. Introduction

This is the Aide Memoire of the Annual Review Mission (ARM) to the Blue Gold Program (BGP) that took place from 9 November to 20 November 2018¹. The terms of reference of the ARM are included as annex 1. The aim of the mission was to guide the implementation of the project against its objectives and see if it can be completed within the time and resources available.

The Mission is grateful for the congenial atmosphere and the constructive discussion it could have with many persons involved in the implementation of the project and the opportunities to witness the challenges and successes of the BGP in the field. Adequate documentation, including a comprehensive Position Paper, was made available prior to the ARM.

The main text summarizes the main findings of the reviews and the recommendations. Section 2 brings the highlight on the impact and progress of BGP. Section 3 discusses the main operational areas of the project and the main recommendation in each of these domains. Section 4 summarized the implications.

This mission report also addresses the specific questions asked in the Terms of Reference as well as in the Position Paper prepared for the ARM in annex 2 and 3, whereas an update on the ARM 2017 is presented in Annex 4.

The message from the ARM-2018 can be summarized as follows:

- There is spectacular agricultural growth in the BGP area: the coastal zone is a region of potential.
- Polder water management and agricultural development go together in harnessing this potential.
- Agriculture is increasingly seen as a business
- Agriculture not only increased agricultural production, it also improves family well-being
- Given the socio-economic situation, there is still a need for poverty alleviation – directly and indirectly
- In BGP the work in the polders needs to be completed properly and uses all resources required, one needs to closely monitor whether this is being done on time
- There is a need for integrated development related to water resource use in the polder areas, in line with current thinking
- For sustainability, the strengthening of WMA in particular is essential. They need to move towards professionalism. This requires attention and time.
- For growth, we need to work towards cooperation between WMAs.

¹The Annual Review Mission consisted of Frank van Steenberghe (mission leader), Jetze Heun, Wais Kabir, Nowsher Sarder, Professor Abul Fazal M. Saleh and Abul Kalam Azad.

Go to page

3. Short assessment of impact and progress

Impact
The very positive level of transformation that was observed in last years has continued. Several operational activities have become sustainable, that put numbers to the agricultural changes. The Water Management Groups that reported to be free of acute water problems (after water logging, water shortage or flooding) increased from 6 to 20%. The impact was the impetus to increase further if the water control infrastructure component will get closer to completion. Based on the data from the Department of Agricultural Extension the crop intensity has increased with 10%. A special evaluation study was done by one of the mission members, confirming this figure. The impact study corroborates based on a large number of focus group discussion with Water Management Groups that the increase in crop intensity was higher, of 20%. Besides the increased crop intensity crop yields have increased as well.

This significant increase in crop intensity is driven by better water management and the introduction of high value crops (HVC) like water melon, mangoes, avocados, lemons, citrus, etc. However, farmers gradually remember after the season crop harvest. Translated to its own benefits, farmers the potential gained for the investments in better drainage, water storage and WMA capacity building is less than these years. This is remarkable for any water resource and agriculture development investment.

The increase in agricultural production (including aquaculture and small livestock) has also created small animal change. Additional evidence suggested that the increased yields changed the quality of life. The additional income earned was invested in improved housing, children's education, agricultural inputs and better food. These expenditures further boost the local economy. Income contribution goes rise to more local employment and the purchase of agricultural inputs (fertilizer, seedling and) produce agricultural development via. The increased availability of land to cultivate because of multiple cropping and the removal of drainage competition has changed income sources. Through in some polders more than in others it has given more opportunity to landless people to become tenant. In the first group of tenant, carbon sequestration (CS) the carbon sequestration has been tested in 10%. It showed that very important effect has also been the changed family activities with more family stability and respect for women. The BGP has also made much strides in improving gender equity with women now often take better the changed family activities with more family stability and respect for women. The BGP has also made much strides in improving gender equity with women now often take better the changed family activities with more family stability and respect for women. The BGP has also made much strides in improving gender equity with women now often take better the changed family activities with more family stability and respect for women.

Progress
The BGP program has been made in the last year. Almost all WMA's originally envisaged are now formed and registered. The different operational activities have reached almost 20% of their families in the area directly with a water group needed through formation.

¹Particularly where women received income they often in the family increased significantly leading to less domestic violence. This is a small issue mentioned by the Bangladesh Bureau of Economic Research (BBE) in its report on the impact of the program.

[next page →](#)

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ARM Aide Memoire 9-20Nov 2018 11jan_19.pdf

Annual Review Mission, the broad objective of which was to secure and where possible further enhance the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the project. ARM members were individuals who were appointed by, and reported directly to, EKN and BWDB/DAE

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- [File](#)
- [Discussion](#)

Variants

[Categories](#):

- [Review mission](#)
- [Aide memoire](#)
- [File used in Section G: Project Management](#)

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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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