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Blue Gold Program

Lessons learnt from the coastal zone: a call for action

Summary

Program duration
2013 to 2021

Program area in Bangladesh
Districts of Patuakhali, Khulna, Satkhira and Borguna

Objective

To reduce poverty and to increase household income through appropriately targeted interventions for 185,000 households in the coastal districts of Patuakhali, Khulna, Satkhira, and Borguna; by helping local communities to mitigate impacts of climate change and to develop their local economy through diversified farming practices based on information on input costs and market prices, and supported by participatory management of local water resources.

Partners

Implementation

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB)
Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)
in association with
Department of Livestock Services (DLS)
Department of Fisheries (DoF)

Donor

Government of the Netherlands (GoN)
Government of Bangladesh (GoB)

Consultants

Euroconsult Mott MacDonald
in association with
FEMconsult, Socioconsult and BETS Consulting

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Lessons learnt from the coastal zone: a call for action

Being the country's main economic belt – a productive agricultural area, where more than 50% of the population are provided to the country's agricultural rural areas. The next phase of development in these areas must therefore focus on the protection of the environment and infrastructure from flood damage, secure communities from the consequences of climate change and also create the conditions for a better economy, which can produce qualities to allow high value production of both fisheries and crops.

In particular in the south and south-west were Bangladesh, the Padma Bridge Project has a great and increased road and rail infrastructure – will provide new opportunities that:

- Increase the demand for agricultural products in local markets as towns and cities expand, due to the increase of employment opportunities
- Reduce transport costs for agricultural products to existing markets, increase the speed of delivery of goods to market, and reduce losses caused by damage to vulnerable food products during transport
- Open up new markets for agricultural products in India and internationally

The new opportunities for the south and south-west are for marketing and could stimulate important changes in agriculture.

Bangladesh has adopted the Delta Plan 2100 which provides a clear vision for the future of the country for the development of water infrastructure. While it is a long-term plan, it is clear that the focus is on increasing water security infrastructure to ensure continued and inclusive economic growth which crucially needs attention.

The Lessons Learned Report (LLR) identifies individual lessons learned from the Blue Gold Program, which can be used to inform policy and practice in the context of water management and infrastructure management. The LLR also highlights the importance of the Blue Gold Program's practical experience and presents suggestions for the use by water sector planners in deriving policies which could aid better governance of water resources.

Blue Gold Program – a unique cooperation
The relation between water management and agriculture is very strong. This report is the first investment project that is a government-priority for the coastal zone. The Blue Gold Program is a joint venture between the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment and Improvement of the coastal zone, agricultural research institutions, NGOs, and private sector organizations.

The case of irrigation
The promotion of a dense network of water infrastructure is a key element of the Government's strategy for ensuring water security. Irrigation is a critical component of agriculture, water management plays a significant role in ensuring water security. Management could contribute to improving water governance.

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A Call for Action

This is the executive summary of the Lessons Learnt Report of the Blue Gold Program (BGP), which is written with the aim of assisting its intended readership of policy makers, planners and practitioners to use practical lessons gained from Blue Gold in modifying policies, plans, procedures, and the design of programs, and projects that support water management in the coastal zone. This executive summary is intended to present summary recommendations from Blue Gold's eight year practical experience with 800,000 farmers in 22 polders as a "call for action" by investment platforms like the government's Delta Plan.

What is the importance of lessons from the Blue Gold Program?

Bangladesh's impressive economic development has brought the country's imminent identification as a middle-income country as a realistic goal. One precondition for development is that adequate water security sustains lives and livelihoods. This means that adequate protection from the destructive force of water must be in place and that the productive potential of water for the greater good of society is harnessed at the same time. The better a society functions, the higher the level of water security must be. One can see this relation between economic development and water security already: Dhaka City –

V1.6 February 2021

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Summary

PDF version of the English version of 'Executive summary: Call for Action' from Blue Gold Program's Lessons Learnt Report.

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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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