29 Technical Assistance: Context, Scope, Contractual Arrangements and External Service Contracts

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Context and Scope[edit | edit source]

This section of the report sets out to provide the context within which the EKN-funded technical assistance (TA) team operated, and the reasons for its wide remit.

The TA team included international and national experts who were charged with supporting all aspects of the program and guiding and facilitating development within the polders. The Program Document (EKN 2012) recognised the crucial role that community facilitators, and Farmer Field School (FFS) trainers would contribute to the achievement of objectives, and the importance of providing training and guidance to the field level staff. The next chapter (Chapter 30) sets out how the TA team evolved away from a component-based organisational structure to give greater autonomy to polder-level staff who were responsible for community mobilisation and the coordination of project activities with WMGs.

The design of the Blue Gold Program broadened the thematic coverage of the most recent EKN-funded investment in the coastal zone, through the Integrated Planning for Sustainable Water Management IPSWAM (2003 to 2011) by introducing livelihoods training for water management groups (WMGs) through the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Department of Fisheries (DoF) and Department of Livestock Services (DLS), and focusing attention on choice of cropping patterns best suited to the local environment (the soils and water) which maximise profitability for the farmer.

Starting from 2015, DAE-led Community-led Agricultural Water Management (CAWM) schemes brought a package of measures including cropping patterns suited to local conditions, investments in small-scale water infrastructure to allow farmers greater control over water levels so, for example, water could be drained before harvest, and a focus on farming as a business, including record keeping and collective actions in input purchase and bulk sale of produce. CAWM farmers then introduced the lessons they had learnt from this integrated approach to cropping, water management and the business of farming by hosting visits from surrounding WMGs. And in due course, an initiative to expand investments in small-scale water management infrastructure (SSWMI) has broadened the awareness and practice of water control within polders.

Whilst the role of local government institutions (LGIs) was recognised in EKN's Program Document, the strengthened role of Union Parishads (UPs), in particular, has evolved over the latter years of Blue Gold. Union Parishads have provided the initial point of contact with proxy representatives of

communities before the establishment of WMGs, as well as assistance to WMGs in realising their collective objectives for economic development, and resolving community disputes, especially over shared water resources.

Over the course of Blue Gold, investments through the innovation fund (refer Section H) have resulted in a range of positive and practical outcomes for farming communities.

Contractual Arrangements[edit | edit source]

An advertisement inviting proposals for Technical Assistance (TA) services to the Blue Gold Program was published on 31st August 2012. Technical and financial proposals were submitted to the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on 15th October 2012, six weeks from the date of advertisement. After evaluations of the submitted proposals, contract negotiations commenced with Euroconsult Mott MacDonald BV on 17th February 2013, and a contract agreement was signed between EKN/MoFA and Euroconsult Mott MacDonald BV on 20th February 2013. The TA team was considered to have mobilised with the arrival of the Team Leader in Dhaka on 15th March 2013.

Four addenda to the contract between EKN/MoFA and Euroconsult Mott MacDonald BV were issued, as follows:

18 Nov 2013	Addendum 1: changes to invoicing period (6m) and amount of advance.
10 Dec 2014	Addendum 2: changes to invoicing period (3m), amount of advance and schedule for reporting
20 Jun 2017	Addendum 3: changes to contract ceiling and inclusion of inflation adjustment after Year 3
24 Nov 2017	Addendum 4: project completion extended from 15th March 2019 to 31st December 2020, contract ceiling changed, and delivery date for final narrative and financial report fixed at 30th June 2021.
5 Aug 2020	Addendum 5: project completion extended from 31st December 2020 to 31st December 2021, contract ceiling changed, and set delivery dates for 2020/21 Annual Plan and narrative, financial, audit and final financial and final narrative reports.

TA Service Contracts[edit | edit source]

Arrangements for service contracts were made through sub-consultancy agreements. This section provides an overview of the types of work that was undertaken. It does not include the 50+ agreements for the Innovation Fund projects which are covered in Section H of this report.

Environmental Impact Assessments[edit | edit source]

Because of the proximity of the environmentally sensitive area of the Sundarbans, environmental clearance certificates from the Department of environment (DoE) are required before the commencement of any construction work. The process of obtaining this clearance involves the preparation and submission of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for each polder.

	Firm	Title	Contract Date
1	CEGIS	Environmental Studies	5-Mar-14
2	CEGIS	Environmental Studies	4-Dec-14
3	SCL	Environmental Impact Assessments Phase 1	16-Apr-19

4	SCL	Environmental Impact Assessments Phase 2	9-Jan-20

Digital Elevation Models (DEMs)[edit | edit source]

DEMs provide the base polder maps showing land levels, khals, roads, villages, embankments and regulator locations and drainage catchments.

	Firm	Title	Contract Date
1	IWM	Preparation of DEM for Polders 2, 26 and 31-part	29-Apr-15
2	CEGIS	Development of Digital Elevation Model 55/2A,55/2C	16-Sep-15
3	CEGIS	Development of Digital Elevation Model 7 Polders	21-Mar-16
4	CEGIS	Development of Digital Elevation Model 2 Polders	1-Aug-16
5	CEGIS	Development of Digital Elevation Model 8 Polders	2-Oct-16
6	CEGIS	Development of Digital Elevation Model 34/2	22-Jan-18

Arrangements for Communications, Extension and Horizontal Learning[edit | edit source]

A key responsibility of the TA team has been to provide open communications with all stakeholders, for monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. Formal reporting arrangements are covered in Chapter 28. The most important communications, however, were directed at the coastal communities who were to be the driving force of development - and the mechanisms we used for communicating with them are covered in Chapters 32 and 33. In the latter years of the project - from 2019 onwards – the lessons learnt by Blue Gold were presented to a wider and more sophisticated audience using a combination of videos, high quality brochures and case studies, and a wiki report.

	Firm	Title	Contract Date
1	Mass Line Media Centre	Piloting dissemination through Lokbetar	1-Jul-14
2	Aditi	Popular Theatre for Mela (fair)	18-Dec-14
3	Ashek - E - Elahi	Supervisor of Mela (fair)	18-Dec-14
4	Tareq Mahamud	Consultancy Support for BARTA Newsletter	5-May-15
5	Prekkha Greehoo	2D Animation to promote WMO/LGIS collaboration	3-Mar-16
6	Tareq Mahamud	Consultancy Support for BARTA Newsletter	5-Jun-16
7	Agro-Insight	Evaluation of Extension Methods for Blue Gold	29-Jan-18
8	AVCOM	CAWM video documentary	24-May-18
9	R & B creatives studio	Blue Gold LOGO creation in Motion Graphics	27-Sep-18
10	Big Blue Communications	Design of Communication Materials	22-May-19
11	Big Blue Communications	Design and Management of wiki LLR Database	14-Feb-20
12	Aowlad Hossain	Call for Action translation	9-Mar-21

Capacity Building[edit | edit source]

In the first years of the Blue Gold Program, a number of WMG capacity building programs were out-sourced to external training organisations, for example for Gender and Leadership Development (GLD), Accounts Keeping and Audit System (AKAS), and Organisational Management (OM). Over time, the limitations of this form of training were recognised (refer for more details to Chapter 31), capacity building was refocused to learning-by-doing to encourage WMGs to take control of their own activities. During 2017/18, therefore, courses run by training organisations were closed, and a

refocused approach to WMG capacity building using polder teams was adopted.

	Firm	Title	Contract Date
1	Khairuzzaman Khokon	Organizing management (OM) Phase-1	10-Sep-14
2	Shushilan	Community DRR Volunteer	18-Dec-14
3	Gopi Nath Saha	Management of Agricultural Machineries (MAM)	12-Jan-15
4	MATRIX	Savings and credit	16-Apr-15
5	SUS	Organizing management (OM) Phase-2	11-Nov-15
6	KNKS	Gender and Leadership Development	6-Mar-16
7	AIRN	Agricultural Input Retailer Training Services	29-Aug-17

Monitoring, Reflection and Learning[edit | edit source]

Data collection for baseline, endline and WMG surveys has been sub-contracted to specialist organisations to ensure there is no conflict of interest. In developing databases and MIS systems, specialist assistance has been obtained. A report on agricultural changes from 2013 to 2021 by reconfiguring DAE Block-level data to represent polder-level figures is being carried out by an independent consultant. An analysis of satellite mapping was carried out by specialist firms in 2018 and 2021. An evaluation of CAWM demonstrations was terminated when the contracted organisation was unresponsive for an extended period.

	Firm	Title	Contract Date
1	Abdullah Al Shakib	Socio Economic Baseline Survey Phase I	12-Apr-16
2	BRAC RED	Impact Evaluation of CAWM	16-Nov-16
3	Mpower	WMG Tracker: Database and MIS development	2-Mar-17
4	Mpower	MIS Development: Service Level Agreement	19-Mar-17
5	LSTSCL Consortium	Socio Economic Baseline Survey Phase II	11-Apr-17
6	Socioconsult Ltd.	2018 WMG data collection	16-Aug-18
7	Satelligence	Earth Observation Mapping	6-Feb-18
8	Socioconsult Ltd.	2019 WMG data collection	13-Jun-19
9	Mpower	WMG/WMA Self-Monitoring	9-Jan-20
10	LSTSCL Consortium	2020 Endline Impact Assessment data collection	25-Feb-20
11	LSTSCL Consortium	2021 WMG Survey data collection	12-May-21
12	Md Ashraful Islam	Updating TR22 on agricultural changes	17-May-21
13	Terrasphere Imaging	Satellite Mapping	19-Apr-21

Miscellaneous[edit | edit source]

A mix of international and national individual consultants were contracted as members of the review missions, reporting directly to EKN. A number of high-level specialists were recruited to prepare a of papers on participatory water management (PWM) for presentation at a national conference.

See more[edit | edit source]

Previous chapter:
Chapter 28: Project Management Arrangements

Blue Gold Lessons Learnt Wiki
Section G: Project Management

Next chapter:
Chapter 30: Evolution of TA Organisational Arrangements

Section G: Project Management

Chapter 28: Project Management Arrangements	Chapter 29: Technical Assistance: Context, Scope, Contractual Arrangements and External Service Contracts	Chapter 30: Evolution of TA Organisational Arrangements organisation
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Executive summary: A Call for Action		
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Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the contractual representative of the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands and signatory to the agreement for the Blue Gold Program with the External Resources Division of the Ministry of Finance as the signatory for the Government of Bangladesh

Technical Assistance

Farmer Field School - A group-based learning process through which farmers carry out experiential learning activities that help them to understand the ecology of their fields, based on simple experiments, regular field observations and group analysis. The knowledge gained from these activities enables participants to make their own locally specific decisions about crop management practices. This approach represents a radical departure from earlier agricultural extension programmes, in which farmers were expected to adopt generalized recommendations that are formulated by specialists from outside the community.

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An area of low-lying land surrounded by an earthen embankment to prevent flooding by river or seawater, with associated structures which are provided to either drain excess rainwater within the polder or to admit freshwater to be stored in a khal for subsequent use for irrigation.

Water Management Group - The basic organizational unit in Blue Gold representing local stakeholders from a hydrological or social unit (para/village). Through Blue Gold, 511 WMGs have been formed and registered. The average WMG covers an area of around 230 ha has 365 households or a population of just over 1,500.

Integrated Planning for Sustainable Water Management

A livelihood is a way of making a living. It comprises capabilities, skills, assets (including material and social resources), and activities that households put together to produce food, meet basic needs, earn income, or establish a means of living in any other way.

Department of Agricultural Extension, a department of the Ministry of Agriculture responsible for disseminating scientific research and new knowledge on agricultural practices through communication and learning activities for farmers in agriculture, agricultural marketing, nutrition and business studies.

Department of Fisheries, a government department under the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock responsible for regulating the fisheries industry in Bangladesh

Department of Livestock Services, a government department under the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock responsible for the livestock industry in Bangladesh

Community-led Agricultural Water Management - with DAE, Blue Gold established a network of schemes for demonstration purposes where locally-applicable annual cropping patterns are introduced along with water level control facilitated by small-scale water infrastructure, and the development of value chain skills in farmers

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Collective action - by a producer group is one way to partially overcome constraints such as in weak markets, where inputs and services essential to production innovations, are generally scarce, costly to access and/or to obtain. Collective action is working in group instead of individually in order to gain economic or social benefit. Through collective action, farmers can address constraints in their market linkages, organise their activities jointly and use their collective bargaining power to reduce input costs through bulk purchase, or to obtain services from buyers such as farm-level collection of produce

Small-scale water management structure: an initiative to improve in-polder drainage and irrigation conditions in Blue Gold polders which was started in 2018. The improvement of secondary and tertiary infrastructure across the coastal zone will involve a large number of small-scale structures and huge volumes of earthwork. The planning, design, contracting, supervising and monitoring of this small-scale infrastructure would be highly resource-intensive if provided with the same level of involvement as is provided by government engineering departments in large-scale infrastructure. Building on the success of the CAWM schemes, a pilot fund was made available so that WMOs could plan and implement small-scale water management infrastructure (SSWMI) with a relatively low-level of supervision from government or TA staff.

Local Government Institutions - Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad etc

Department of Environment

Environmental Impact Assessment

Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services

the principal function of a regulator or drainage sluice is to allow the drainage of water from the polder into a peripheral river when there is a differential head across the regulator (ie when the polder or country-side water level exceeds the level in the tidal river). The regulator is provided with a lift gate on the country-side (to allow freshwater to be held in the khal for irrigation during the dry season) and a flap gate on the river-side (to prevent water entry from the river channel into the polder during high tide conditions). A frame is provided on the river-side so that the flap gate can be

lifted when there is freshwater in the river (during the monsoon flood season), thus allowing freshwater to be stored in the khal within the polder and used for irrigation during the dry season. The size of the culvert is determined from the drainage area served by the structure.

Institute of Water Modelling

Learning from peers; and in the context of Blue Gold, farmer-to-farmer learning in which a host WMG invites representatives from visiting WMGs to witness an event - such as the harvesting of a new variety of rice - to pass on the knowledge and lessons gained from their experience

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

Water Management Group - The basic organizational unit in Blue Gold representing local stakeholders from a hydrological or social unit (para/village). Through Blue Gold, 511 WMGs have been formed and registered. The average WMG covers an area of around 230 ha has 365 households or a population of just over 1,500.

Gender and Leadership Development (training)

Disaster Risk Reduction - The Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) has been given the mandate to lead disaster preparedness, mitigation, emergency response and post disaster rehabilitation, by informing local people, empowering them to take practical measures to reduce risk at household and community levels and to disseminate success stories of reducing disaster risks widely among local people.

Management Information System

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (an NGO)

Water Management Association - In Blue Gold, the polder-level representative of WMGs, and signatory to an O&M Agreement with BWDB

A process by which the local stakeholders are directly and actively involved in identification, planning, design, implementation, operation & maintenance and evaluation of a water management project.

A process by which the local stakeholders are directly and actively involved in identification, planning, design, implementation, operation & maintenance and evaluation of a water management project.

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Variants

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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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