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Final Draft Aide Memoire
 Blue Gold Programme Annual Review Mission 2016
 24 October 2016

1. Introduction

This report records the findings and recommendations of the Annual Review Mission¹ to the Blue Gold Program that took place from 2-14 October 2016. It responds to the questions raised in the agreed Terms-of-Reference that is attached as Annex 1. The Mission want to thanks the organization involved in BG implementation for the excellent preparation, including the day long briefing session at the beginning of the Mission, the active supervision by the EKN, the submission of the Issues Paper by the ARM, the well-organized field trip and discussion sessions with project field-level staff and the general open and constructive mood of discussion.

After the 2015 Mid Term Review Mission it was agreed to extend the project period of the Blue Gold Program up to December 2020 (administrative closure). In line with the agreement during the MTR the area to be covered under the program was reduced from 160,000 hectares to 115,000 hectares. Blue Gold will now work in 22 polders, i.e. the 12 polders in which activities started since 2013/4 (nine so-called fine tuning polders earlier covered under IPSWAM and three new rehabilitation polders) and 10 new polders (see Annex 2). The total population in these 22 polders is 171,415 households. Based on detailed survey in selected polders an estimated 56% are landless, whereas 22% are marginal farmers and the balance (13%) are small farmers (see also Annex 2).

Annex 3 is a summary of the status of the recommendation of the Mid Term Review Mission 2015. Following the Mid Term Review Mission an Inter Ministerial Committee visited the Blue Gold Program field activities in February 2016, assessing the realistic investment requirements in water infrastructure, given that the original per hectare amounts were considered an underestimate. The Inter Ministerial Committee report outlines three investment trajectories. Based on the report, released in May 2016, it was provisionally agreed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (76%) and the Government of Bangladesh (24%) to increase the investment in water infrastructure with Euro 15.22 M. An assessment of the specific scope of works has been undertaken in the meantime for the new polders as well. This additional budget allocation raises the infrastructure budget to Euro 38,469,000 and the overall project budget to Euro 72,920,000.

¹ The Annual Review Mission consisted of Dr. Frank van Steenberg (mission leader), Dr. Chandrasekera M. Wijayarathna, Dr. Waïs Kabir and Professor Abul Fazal M. Saleh.

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The above changes plus an expanded range of feasible activities¹ is being collected in the final IPR that at the time of the mission was being prepared by the EKN and is hopefully approved not too late ahead of the coming construction season. It has been a considerable time since the MTR and it is expected that the EKN and project partners explore ways to meet early or immediate spending against the IPR approval.

The IPR of the IAD would in principle need to be extended too, but the policy of the Ministry of Agriculture is not to do so unless there are solid reasons to do otherwise. An extension of the MTR to cover an enlarged program under IAD (see section 3.2) would be a possibility, but it is far less desirable option. The Mission request all parties to get for an extension of the IPR of IAD too, including outcome of recommendation 3.8.

2. Short assessment of impact

Whereas the area covered under the Blue Gold has been reduced, the population in the final activities of polders (171,415 households) exceeds the number mentioned in the original project documents (130,000 households).

ICP has contributed to the security of people by rehabilitation of embankments (at least 100km) and helping the introduction of beneficial opportunities through better water management for productive use (including fisheries), particularly allowing a second and third crop and promoting the intensification of production including poultry and livestock. The specific poverty targeting in Blue Gold covers the deployment of Labour Contracting Services and the organization of Farmer Field Schools targeted at landless (households, poultry and livestock) - reaching 11,200 households so far.

¹ In particular, emergency repair work, embankment maintenance, embankment reinforcement, embankment protection, dike and drainage system works (including household water and external works), improved electricity connection (for drainage pumping) pump house extension and land acquisition (for fish ponds) and extension of road projects and provision of adequate support for fish operations.

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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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This page was last edited on 22 July 2020, at 10:54.

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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