

Summary of Terminal Evaluation

1. Outline of the Project	
Country: People's Republic of Bangladesh	Project title: Participatory Rural Development Project (Phase 2)
Issue/Sector: Rural Development and Governance	Cooperation scheme: Technical Cooperation
Division in charge: JICA Bangladesh Office	Total costs: 550 million yen (as of Terminal Evaluation)
Period of Cooperation	(R/D): June 1, 2005-May 31, 2010
	Partner Country's Implementing Organization : Supporting Organization in Japan: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, and Shaplaneer
Related Cooperation: Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs)	
<p>1. Background of the Project</p> <p>In Bangladesh, where over 70% of the population resides in rural areas, vertically structured administration and insufficient administrative resources have been preventing rural population from receiving necessary services.</p> <p>In response to this issue, "Link Model", which is a framework to link village and local government institutions concerning rural development for incorporating needs of villagers in the development process, as a strategy to connect local administration and rural villages was proposed based on the experiences of the Joint Study on Agriculture and Rural Development (JSARD) in 1986-90 and the Joint Study on Rural Development Experiment (JSRDE) in 1992-95. The Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP) was implemented from 2000 to 2004 with technical cooperation of JICA to establish the Link Model in four Unions of Kalihati Upazila, Tangail District. The Link Model consists of the Village Committee (VC)* for each village; the Union Coordination Committee composed of Union Parishad (UP) chairman and members, VC representatives, extension workers of Nation Building Departments (NBDs) and NGOs; and the Union Development Officers (UDOs). The Link Model promotes coordination among administrative services, and link administrative services to villagers. Villagers' initiative is most valued in establishing these horizontal and vertical links.</p> <p>Based on these experiences, JICA and BRDB have started Participatory Rural Development Project Phase 2 (PRDP2) in 2005 aiming to achieve the project purpose 'Link Model functions in the project area and the extending system of the Link Model is established'</p> <p>* Village Committee (VC) was renamed as Gram Committee (GC) in the course of the Project.</p>	
<p>2. Project Overview</p> <p>(1) Overall Goal</p> <p>Link Model* is extended in Bangladesh in accordance with the regional characteristics.</p>	

* A framework to incorporate the needs of rural population in the process of development by linking villages and local government institutions concerning rural development.

(2) Project Purpose

Link Model functions in the project area and the extending system of the Link Model is established.

(3) Outputs

Output 1: Union Development Officers (UDOs) and Organizers responsible for overall coordination at Union Coordination Committee (UCC), are institutionalized in BRDB

Output 2: UCC functions as a platform to facilitate overall coordination among Upazila, Union, and Village

Output 3: Gram Committee (GC) functions as an organization to ensure villagers' participation in rural development process in order to contribute to the improvement of the villagers' quality of life

Output 4: The operational system of the Link Model is established in BRDB

Output 5: The system of human resource development for stakeholders of Link Model is established and enhanced.

(4) Inputs

Japanese side :

Long-term Expert: 11

Equipment: Machinery and Equipment

Short-term Expert: 5

Local cost (Up to November 2009): 75,852,053 TK

Trainees received: 13 for Training in Japan and 99 for Training in India and Thailand

Bangladeshi Side :

Counterpart: 26

Land and Facilities: A project office at Headquarters and three field offices and a training center

Local Cost: 38,814,000 TK local currency

2. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team	Bangladesh Side:	
	Ms. Zahida Khanam	Team Leader, Deputy Secretary, RDCD
	Ms Nasreen Akhtar Chowdhury	Deputy Secretary, ERD
	Mr. Ranjit Kumar Sarkar	Senior Assistant Chief, Planning Commission
	Mr. Mohammed Ariful Haque	Assistant Director, IMED
	Mr. Mustafa Kamal	Joint Director, BRDB
	Japan Side:	
	Mr. Eiichiro Cho	Team Leader, Senior Representative, JICA
	Bangladesh	
	Mr. Masanobu Kiyoka	Rural Development
Mr. Tetsuro Tsutsui	Participatory Development	
Ms. Mitsuru Kayama	Governance/Evaluation Planning	
Ms. Shimako Narahara	Evaluation Analysis	
Period of Evaluation	14 January - 4 February, 2010	Type of Evaluation: Terminal Evaluation

3. Results of Evaluation

1. Project Performance

-Project Purpose

The first portion of the Project Purpose, “Link Model functions in the project area”, has been achieved. The latter half, “the extending system the Link Model is established” is most likely to be achieved by the end of the project period, as the Succeeding Phase by BRDB, which will apply the Link Model in 200 unions nationwide, is expected to be approved by the government of Bangladesh soon.

-Implementation Process

Some of the issues in regards to the implementation process are noted below:

- (1) Japanese experts and counterpart personnel, as well as project staff including UDO/Os, have communicated and collaborated smoothly;
- (2) Since the end of 2008, the project has intensively communicated within BRDB and with other donor projects/programs resulting in the awareness of and interest in the Link Model and its components being increased in Bangladesh’s development circle;
- (3) Some of the activities in Titas and Meherpur Sadar, including the implementation of the GC schemes, were not conducted in a timely manner due to the delayed disbursement of the budget by the Bangladeshi side. As delays in budget disbursement frequently occur in Bangladesh, it is advisable for BRDB to design a flexible annual working plan in the Succeeding Phase so that activities can accommodate the change of schedule corresponding to changes in budget availability;
- (4) JCC has contributed to redefining the direction of project activities. As PDM had assumed that project activity would not have effects beyond the project area, JCC, considering the project achievements, and surrounding political and social environment, had advised the following for the project:
 - (a) to expand the project area from the original 15 unions to the current 20 unions with the activities in the new 5 unions being conducted solely by BRDB;
 - (b) to design a Succeeding Phase implemented by BRDB after the completion of the project;
 - (c) to clarify on how best to promote national institutionalization of the UCCM system, such as including it in a national legal document;
- (5) JOCVs dispatched to some of the unions where the project operates have developed constructive relationships with the local people and the UDO/Os who are in charge of the unions. They have encouraged villagers to actively participate in project activities such as GC formulation, GCM, and field proposal type training provided by the project and thus contributed to the smooth implementation of the project. Some JOCVs intensively support the work of UDO/Os and other project personnel at the field level. Although JOCVs’ input is not defined in PDM, their contributions to the successful implementation of the project and to the achievement of outputs should be noted.

2. Summary of Evaluation Results

2-1. Relevance - highly relevant

(1) Consistency with Bangladeshi policy and appropriateness of the project approach

The National Rural Development Policy (NRDP; 2001) identifies union and upazila level coordination to be an issue to be addressed through rural development. The National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction II, which was in the process of being finalized at the time of the study, incorporates NRDP contents in rural development. The strategy also highlights the strengthening of local government, such as through introducing local planning, budgeting, and monitoring, and ensuring access to information on

government services. Aligned with these policy and strategy, the project has pursued rural development through the strengthening of local governance with an approach to link local government (union and upazila) with the local people, through which governmental service delivery is able to become more accessible, and union level governance is strengthened with people's participation in the planning and monitoring of local development activities.

(2) Consistency with Japan's aid policy

JICA's Country Assistance Strategy (2009) and Country Assistance Program (2006) for Bangladesh identify both local governance and rural development as priority sectors for assistance. As such, the project is consistent with Japan's aid policy.

2-2. Effectiveness – Relatively High

UCCM system (Output 2) has proved to be especially effective in improving people's access to government services and in increasing people's participation in local governance procedures, such as the planning and implementation of local development work. UDO/Os (Output 1) and GC (Output 3) have also contributed to the achievement of the project purpose.

It should be noted that the latter half of the project purpose, "the extending the Link Model is established", has not been fully achieved as of the time of this study. BRDB, the counterpart agency, developed the Succeeding Phase plan in 2009, which is expected to be approved in a few months.

2-3. Efficiency – Middle

The Japanese side inputs have been effectively utilized though it could be argued that some of it, specifically the allocation of Japanese experts and Bangladeshi project-employed staff, was comparatively larger in scale than similar projects in Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi side inputs were sufficient although the delay in budget disbursement has caused problems in the implementation of some activities.

2-4. Impact – Highly Positive

(1) Impacts at the overall goal level:

The Link Model and its core aspects (specifically UCCM) have been appreciated and adopted by other donor projects as well as governmental projects and are likely to influence union level governance in many parts of the country. Incorporation of the UCCM system into the country's legal system can be said to be reasonably probable.

(2) Impact on other projects outside of JICA cooperation:

The design of the project, as described in PDM, had assumed that the impacts would not reach beyond the project area and/or BRDB. However, due to intensive communication at the central level governmental and the donor personnel, and promotion of the Link Model, by the project team, especially after the mid-term evaluation, the awareness of and the interest in the Model has greatly increased to the current semi-national level.

(3) Impact at the field level:

Villagers have started to notice the lack of transparency in union budget utilization by UP members. Through implementation of GC schemes, villagers have shown that a local development activity. The villagers wonder why UP conducted work is less cost-effective and want to have reasonable explanation. No negative impacts have been observed by the evaluation team.

2.5 Sustainability – Hopefully High

The sustainability of the project's effect is considered hopefully high as it is difficult to judge the effects

at the moment due to the current circumstances surrounding the project being highly dynamic over the remaining 4 months. The evaluation team has deemed the following points to be worth noting:

- (1) Throughout the project period for the BRDB Succeeding Phase (up to July 2014), a complete set of Link Model will continue to be implemented and will be expanded to 200 unions nationwide.
- (2) Should BRDB Succeeding Phase retain the capacity of the project staff through daily activities, and utilize their experience and field based knowledge, the quality of operations should be stable and high.
- (3) GCs' sustainability largely depends on whether they have active relationships with the people outside the village, such as UDO or NBD extension workers. It would be important for the Succeeding Phase to encourage both existing and newly formed GCs to continue to attend the UCCM so that they would keep in contact with the society outside the village.
- (4) Outside the BRDB Succeeding Phase, the core aspects of the Link Model (specifically UCCM) are expected to be expanded through other projects including the HL program (World Bank) and the One House One Farm project (RDCD/BRDB). In the unions that adopt UCCM through these channels, the role of UDO would be primarily played by the UP secretary. It would be desirable for these UP secretaries and other stakeholders to learn from UDOs with project experience.
- (5) As for the incorporation of the UCCM system into the national legal framework, when realized, this should be a great encouragement to unions that are interested in adopting the Link Model.

3. Factors promoting sustainability and impact

(1) Factors concerning to Planning

- A consensus on focusing on the Link Model expansion in the latter half of the project:

It was agreed by BRDB, the project, and JICA that the project activities for the latter half of the project would focus on the promotion of the Link Model and preparation for its expansion given that the Link Model which had been established in the 15 unions in the then project area. The decision effectively shifted the direction of the project, which contributed to the semi-national impact the project has created.

(2) Factors concerning to the Implementation Process

- Effective involvement of management level officials of the Bangladeshi government.

Since 2008, the project has effectively promoted the Link Model to management level officials of the key governmental agencies, such as RDCD (supervisory authority of BRDB), ERD, Planning Commission, and LGD, by having intensive communication, and inviting them to project sites as well as Third Country Training in Thailand. This effort has contributed to the officials' support for the realization of BRDB Succeeding Phase.

- Bengali-fluent Experts

Most Experts dispatched for the project have been able to communicate in the Bengali language, which has made collaboration with counterparts, project staff, and project beneficiaries smooth and more in depth.

- JOCVs as field catalysts:

JOVCs have worked as de-facto counterparts to UDO/Os in the field, and encouraged the stakeholders, including beneficiaries, to actively participate in the activities.

4. Factors inhibiting sustainability and impact

(1) Factors concerning to Planning

- Government procedures required for approving the Succeeding Phase.

The lengthy procedures and uncertain prospects for the Succeeding Phase to be funded from the Japan Debt Cancellation Fund (JDCF) have caused: (a) difficulty in concrete preparations for the Succeeding Phase; and (b) anxiety over future prospects especially among the field level project staff including UDO/Os.

(2) Factors concerning to the Implementation Process

(No particular factors found.)

5. Conclusions

The Evaluation Team concluded that the Project has attained its project purpose. The Link Model operational system and human resource development systems for future extension have become functional. The Project has contributed to build a basis for improving public service delivery to villagers while reinforcing public transparency and accountability. The Link Model is expected to be extended to 200 unions by BRDB soon. In addition, UCCM, one of the components of the Link Model, has already been introduced to and incorporated into other unions through other government/donor/NGOs projects. Further, if the institutionalization of UCCM, which is likely to be achieved, is realized, more unions as well as other projects would be encouraged to adopt the UCCM system, thus extending the Link Model concept throughout the country.

6. Recommendations

6-1. Recommendations – Overall

- Reinforcing linkage among Villages, Union, and Upazila
- Coordination between Rural Development and Local Governance
- Continuous efforts to incorporate the basic concepts of the Link Model into the legal system
- Exploring alternative ways to fulfill UDO function
- Monitoring focused on the quality of the operations

6-2. Recommendations for the on-going project (up to end of May 2010)

- Early approval and implementation of the Succeeding Phase
- Strengthening a functional operations system for the Succeeding Phase
 - (a) Reinforcing staffing of Link Model Cell
 - (b) Taking project activities ahead of the Succeeding Phase
 - (c) Maintaining coordination channels with other initiatives, as well as learning from, other projects/organizations
 - (d) Remaining tasks of the on-going project such as the project compile a glossary, both in Bengali and in English, of the Link Model terms and finalization of the preparation of various manuals and guidelines in regards to the Link Model operations.
- BRDB contributions to training targeted UPs

6-3. Recommendations for after the completion of the project

- Baseline survey for the Succeeding Phase
- Transfer of the existing project staff to BRDB as permanent staff

- UDOs experience sharing
- Coordination between the headquarters of the Succeeding Phase and LMTC
- NBD extension workers' involvement in the Succeeding Phase
- Experience sharing by the various stakeholders
- Application of PRDP2 know-how in other BRDB projects
- Continuous promotion of the Link Model through existing networks
- Establishing a support system for the unions and upazilas out of the project area
- Progress of the Succeeding Phase to be shared by the Japanese side