

Country Name People's Republic of Bangladesh	Participatory Rural Development Project (Phase II)
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I. Project Outline

Background	In the rural area of Bangladesh, where 80% of the poor live, vertically divided administrative services were not responding to the needs of the community people due to the lack of horizontal coordination among the related government agencies at the Upazila level and the lack of resources. To cope with these problems, activities to link the needs of people and the public services concerning rural development at the Union level were introduced in Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP Phase I) ¹ . These activities were functioned as expected in the pilot Unions and named as "Link Model". Then, the Phase II of the project was implemented to test the Link Model in more Unions in order to confirm the applicability of the Link Model to the whole country.
Objectives of the Project	<p>1. Overall Goal: Link Model* is extended in Bangladesh in accordance with the regional characteristics.</p> <p>2. Project Purpose: Link Model functions in the project area and the extending system of the Link Model is established.</p> <p>[* A framework to incorporate the needs of rural population in the process of rural development by linking villages and local government institutions concerning rural development.]</p>
Activities of the project	<p>1. Project site: 11 Unions of Kalihati Upazila in Tangail District, 2 Unions of Titash Upaliza in Comilla District, 2 Unions of Meherpur Sadar Upazila in Meherpur District</p> <p>2. Main activities: (i) Training of Union Development Officers (UDOs) and Organizers, (ii) Establishment of the Union Coordination Committee (UCC) and training of stakeholders related to UCC, (iii) Organizing and training of Gram Committees (GCs) through planning and implementation of small-scale infrastructure projects, and (iv) Training of Link Model Cell (LMC) and stakeholders related to the Link Model.</p> <p>3. Inputs (to carry out above activities) Japanese Side 1) Experts: 16 persons 2) Trainees received: 112 persons 3) Equipment: Office equipment and others 4) Operational cost: 442 million yen</p> <p>Bangladeshi Side 1) Staff allocated: 26 persons 2) Land and facilities: Office space for the project headquarter, field office and training center 3) Local cost: 51 million yen</p>
Ex-Ante Evaluation	2004 Project Period June 2005 to May 2010 Project Cost 522 million yen
Implementing Agency	Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB)
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Center for Southeast Asian Studies of Kyoto University, Institute of Developing Economies of Japan External Trade Organization, Shapla Neer.

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance
This project has been highly relevant to Bangladesh's development policy of "rural development through linking villages and government institutions" at the time of both the ex-ante evaluation and project completion, as set in policy documents including the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2003-2006) and the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction II (2009-2011). Also, it has been consistent with development needs for making administrative services reach to the villages by linking the district-administrative bodies and communities and conveying the villages' needs to the Union level. The project was relevant also to Japan's ODA policy at the time of ex-ante evaluation: Country Assistance Program (2000), in which "agricultural and rural development and improvement of agricultural productivity" is described as one of the four strategic priority areas. Therefore, relevance of this project is high.
2 Effectiveness/Impact
The project aimed to promote the function of the Link Model in the project area and strengthen the extending system of this model, through (i) capacity development of the stakeholders related to participatory rural development (GCs, Upazila Rural

¹ Administratively, Bangladesh has 7 Divisions, 64 districts, 489 Upazilas and 4,545 Unions. Local government institutions at the Upazila level are responsible for provision of public services to villages (grams) under Unions, but had the problems to deliver the services to villagers. In such circumstance, PRDP Phase I demonstrated that service coordination at the Union level enabled efficient service provisions for responding to the needs of villagers.

Development Officers (URDOs), Assistant Rural Development Officers (ARDOs), UCCs, chairperson of the Union Parishad (UP)², officers of the nation-building departments³ (NBDs), and LMC, (ii) strengthening of the network of these stakeholders, and (iii) capacity development of LMC. As part of the capacity development, GCs planned and implemented community development projects (GC schemes) mainly with UCCs' coordination and UDOs' facilitation. The Overall Goal was set as extending the Link Model in the country by BRDB.

The Project Purpose was achieved by the time of project completion. More administrative bodies participated in UCC meetings than targeted, and villagers implemented a total of 687 GC schemes, such as construction of roads, boundary walls around the school, arsenic free tube wells, etc., under facilitation of UDOs⁴. And, the action plan for extension of the Link Model in the succeeding phase (2010-2014) was officially approved and conducted by the Bangladesh government right after the project completion (July 2010), which tried to extend the Link Model in 200 Unions nationwide.

Even since the project completion, UCC meetings have been conducted under UDO's facilitation, with frequent participation of UP chairpersons, NBD officers, GC members and NGOs, according to the field survey in all of the target 15 Unions of the three surveyed Upazillas. Also, GC meetings have been regularly held by 60-65% of GCs. As a result, more GC schemes have been implemented than the project period in the three Upazillas (90 GC schemes in 2010, 118 in 2011, 151 in 2012 and 106 in 2013). Implemented GC schemes include construction of village roads, boundary walls around the school, sanitation facilities, village libraries, etc. Interviewed concerned officials responded that "villagers are feeling more secured than before in areas like health, education, environment, income generation and livelihood improvement."

Regarding the Overall Goal, LMC is still active in appointing UDOs, supporting UCCs' management, monitoring GC schemes through URDOs. And, the Link Model Training Center (LMTC) has been conducting various training courses for upgrading skills of UDOs, BRDB/LMC staffs, NBD officers, GC representatives, etc. These efforts have resulted in the expansion and continuity of the Link Model in more than 200 Unions by 2014 (in the succeeding phase), considering the regional characteristics or the development level of each region.

So as to other positive impacts, the following has been reported. First, the function and effectiveness of UCC, which was a component of the Link Model, were recognized by the government and was institutionalized as Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) under an initiative of the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives (MOLGRD&C)⁵. UDCC meetings have been actively introduced into and utilized in the projects of other development partners such as the World Bank and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Second, the project contributed to reinforcing transparency and accountability of public services as they are delivered efficiently and can be more need-based through the UCC meetings where the villagers, public representatives and public officials are sitting together.

There was no land acquisition and resettlement. No negative impact has been observed.

Therefore, effectiveness/ impact of the project is high.

Achievement of the Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results																														
(Project Purpose) Link Model functions in the project area and the extending system of the Link Model is established.	1) Positive participation in Link Model activities by all parties (local government and people) concerned	<p>(Project completion) Achieved. - The "Link Model in the project area" was functioning. The linkage among the Union, NBDs, and GCs (villagers) was strengthened.</p> <p>Average UCCM Attendance Rate (%)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Target</th> <th>2005 - January 2010</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UP</td> <td>60</td> <td>62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NBDs</td> <td>60</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GC</td> <td>60</td> <td>71</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NGO</td> <td>60</td> <td>61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>60</td> <td>n.a.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(Ex-post Evaluation) Continued. - In Upazilas of Kalihati, Titash, and Meherpur Sadar, UP, NBDs, GSs and NGOs are participating in UCCM almost regularly.</p>		Target	2005 - January 2010	UP	60	62	NBDs	60	55	GC	60	71	NGO	60	61	Total	60	n.a.												
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	2) Quality and number of the activities for village development implemented.	<p>(Project Completion) Achieved in terms of quantity. The quality aspect was not verified. - In Upazilas of Kalihati, Titash and Meherpur Sadar, a total of 687 GC schemes were completed by 2010.</p> <p>(Ex-post evaluation) Effects continued.</p> <p>Number of GC schemes implemented (including those implemented in the non-target Unions)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Upazila</th> <th>2005-Dec. 2009</th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Kalihati</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>63</td> <td>85</td> <td>94</td> <td>59</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Titash</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>13</td> <td>26</td> <td>36</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meherpur Sadar</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>14</td> <td>7</td> <td>21</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>462</td> <td>90</td> <td>118</td> <td>151</td> <td>106</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Upazila	2005-Dec. 2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Kalihati	n.a.	63	85	94	59	Titash	n.a.	13	26	36	36	Meherpur Sadar	n.a.	14	7	21	11	Total	462	90	118	151	106
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	3) Action plan for	(Project completion) Achieved.																														

² UP is a council at the Union level.

³ NBDs are ministries which directly provide villagers with services such as agricultural extension, health, etc.

⁴ The post of organizers was extinguished when the project was completed in 2010, so as to save the cost for the succeeding phase. The function has been performed by UDOs.

⁵ At UDCC, UDOs have been co-opted as UDCC members to facilitate the Link Model implementation.

	extension is formulated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The action plan for the succeeding phase (2010 -2014) involving expansion of the Link Model to 200 Unions nationwide was prepared by BRBD and approved officially by the Bangladesh government in July 2010. (Ex-post evaluation) Effects continued. - Based on the action plan, the Link Model has been applied in 200 Unions including the project target 15 Unions. 																																													
(Overall goal) Link Model is extended in Bangladesh in accordance with the regional characteristics.	1) Link Model Cell continues activities to promote Link Model. 2) The training center is actively utilized.	<p>(Ex-post evaluation) Achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LMC appointed 84 UDOs in the succeeding phase (2010 -2014). LMC organized training, seminars and workshops involving UP chairman, UP and GC members to improve the management efficiency of UCCs. <p>(Ex-post evaluation) Achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LMTC has provided various stakeholders with training courses and workshops. <p>Number of participants in the training courses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Participants</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2014</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UDOs</td> <td>106</td> <td>197</td> <td>71</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BRDB staff (except LMC staff)</td> <td>105</td> <td>70</td> <td>0</td> <td>432</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LMC staff</td> <td>9</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UP chairpersons</td> <td>94</td> <td>94</td> <td>82</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UP secretary</td> <td>12</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GC representatives</td> <td>235</td> <td>234</td> <td>358</td> <td>390</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NBD officers</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Others</td> <td>47</td> <td>20</td> <td>31</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Participants	2011	2012	2013	2014	UDOs	106	197	71	26	BRDB staff (except LMC staff)	105	70	0	432	LMC staff	9	0	0	0	UP chairpersons	94	94	82	20	UP secretary	12	0	0	0	GC representatives	235	234	358	390	NBD officers	0	0	0	0	Others	47	20	31	0
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Source: Terminal Evaluation Report and Questionnaire survey with LMTC.

3 Efficiency

Both the project cost and the project period were within the plan (ratio against the plan: 92% and 100%, respectively). Therefore, efficiency of the project is high.

4 Sustainability

In the policy aspect, the project is still given importance in the current development policy. The 6th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015) identified UP as the focal point of rural development, and focuses on community participation with involvement of the local government institutions and other stakeholders. After the project completion, BRDB implemented the Link Model in 200 Unions until July 2014. BRDB, in its board meeting in January 2012, decided to administer the Link Model as its regular program, which waits for the approval of MOLGRD&C. LMC submitted a proposal for the next phase (phase III) to cover the whole country (489 Upazilas under 64 districts), which, however, is still under consideration of MOLGRD&C at the time of the ex-post evaluation.

Institutionally, the organizational structure of BRDB, LMC/LMTC and field offices (at the Upazila and district levels) still remains the same as that of during the project period to sustain the project effects. BRDB is still mandated for accelerating rural development⁶. At Upazila levels, URDOs and ARDOs are monitoring the Link Model activities. However, LMC needs more personnel for monitoring activities to respond to the extended needs of the next phase.

Regarding the technical aspect, the existing staff has sufficient skills to manage and expand the Link Model, although the project counterpart personnel did not remain in LMC or LMTC anymore. As mentioned earlier, LMTC has given training courses related to the Link Model to UDOs, ARDOs, UPs, URODs, and GCs. They have been trained enough to be able to perform as trainers for the Link Model expansion. LMC uses its own training manuals which incorporated key elements of the Link Model, and LMTC uses the training guide developed by the project.

In the financial aspect, the budget has not been sufficient for sustaining the project effects in the 200 Unions. The budget and expenditure for 2014 is 1,300 million BDT, which much increased from 813 million BDT (expenditure) in 2010. For the phase III, a budget of 295,864 million BDT has been proposed, but its approval is not assured. With regard to the training, LMTC has increased its budget and expenditure (16 million BDT in 2011, 29 million in 2014), which has been sufficient.

From these findings, it is considered that the project has some problems in the policy, institutional and financial aspects of the implementing agency; therefore, sustainability of the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project has achieved the Project Purpose and Overall Goal. As the Project Purpose, various government administrative bodies participated in UCC meetings, and villagers implemented a total of 687 GC schemes. And, the action plan for extending the Link Model was formulated by BRDB and implemented in 200 Unions. For the Overall Goal, LMC has performed its function for participatory rural development, by supporting UCCs' management and monitoring GC schemes through URDOs. Also, LMTC has been conducting various courses for upgrading skills of UDOs, BRDB/LMC staffs, NBD officers, GC representatives, etc. As for the project sustainability, there are some problems; the proposal for further extending the Link Model (phase III) is awaiting approval and needs a secured budget and personnel for monitoring..

In light of above, the project is evaluated to be highly satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing agency:

For BRDB:

- To apply the Link Model nationwide, it is recommended to allocate necessary human resources with own financial resources,

⁶ As well as BRDB, the Rural Development Cooperatives Division (RDCD) are mandated for accelerating rural development through cooperatives and various development projects. BRDB is an autonomous board under RDCD, MOLGRD&C. BRDB proposes activities and RDCD make a final decision on them.

especially UDOs. And, BRDB needs to collaborate with Upazila Parishad (a council at the Ulazila level) to make Link Model an institutionalized regular activity of Upazila Parishad.

Lessons learned for JICA:

- The linkage among the government administrative bodies, local government institutions and villagers can ensure efficient public service delivery by effectively utilizing existing resources in a transparent and accountable manner. In this project, the platform of UCC meetings has brought the public representatives, community and public officials together and enables efficient and effective coordination among them in order to improve delivery and quality of public services in rural areas, which contributed to the achievement of the project objectives. Other projects of a similar kind should carefully consider at the preparation stage that what kind of institutional arrangement would be the most effective to achieve rural development in accordance with the regional characteristics.



(Water irrigation constructed with GC scheme
at Jiarkandi Union, Titash Upazila)



(NBD officer distributing an “agri-card” to villagers
at Jiarkandi Union, Titash Upazila)