Water Smart Communities

Opportunities

The water and land of the coastal zone of Bangladesh are rich, valuable and under-utilized resources. They could be used to improve food security and contribute to poverty reduction through agricultural growth. As described in these briefings, opportunities do exist to increase the agricultural and aquacultural productivity of the coastal zone. Implementation of these recommendations can support current and future coastal zone investments, national plans of the Government of Bangladesh and the orientation of policies.

Realizing the opportunities

Achieving Water Smart Communities in the polders requires integration of policy implementation, which requires greater coordination between institutions responsible for water management and food production and dissemination systems. This approach would support:

- Investment in infrastructure improvement inside the polders to enable drainage and to create hydrologically-defined Water Management Units (WMUs);
- Investment in the creation of communities that cooperate around water management and production systems within and across WMUs;
- A transparent and accountable water governance framework that formalizes and enhances the role of local government institution representatives;
- A viable strategy for maintenance of infrastructure;
- An integrated approach to supporting these communities in terms of governance, access to technical expertise, access to input and output markets and microfinance

Overall, what is required is an integrated approach by government, the private sector, donors, NGOs, and government ministries, departments and local government institutions. By working together, these groups can support the trans-disciplinary approach necessary for achieving Water Smart Communities. In turn, Water Smart Communities can contribute to Bangladesh’s food security, raise the living standards of those living in rural regions of the coastal zone and ensure that polder ecosystem services are available for future generations.

For more information, please visit: www.waterandfood.org and www.wle.cgiar.org