

NATURAL RESOURCES SYSTEMS PROGRAMME
PROJECT REPORT¹

DFID Project Number

R8365

Report Title

Process monitoring for PUI planning in the East Kolkata Wetlands.
Annex B3 of the Final Technical Report of project R8365.

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Date

2005

NRSP Production System

Peri-Urban Interface

¹ This document is an output from projects funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the benefit of developing countries. The views expressed are not necessarily those of DFID.

Contents

This report comprises 4 sections.

Section 1 outlines issues associated with documenting qualitative and institutional change in the context of participatory planning. The basic project strategy is presented with respect to recent developments in approaches to documenting change and in relation to strategies in several past and present NRSP planning projects.

Section 2 describes the development of a working strategy with the research team at IW MED. This includes the structure and rationale of the various reporting formats drafted over the course of the project. Changes to reporting formats are discussed in relation to changing planning strategy, more generally.

Section 3 discusses the significance of the team's process documentation in relation to project objective.

Section 4 summarises the experience with process monitoring within the project and makes suggestions for future process monitoring of PAP in the PUI context, generally.

Supporting material is provided in Appendices i-iv.

Section 1.

Process documentation within this and other NRSP projects (R8103, R8195 and R8306)¹ has performed a range of functions depending on project objective. In all cases, there was a need to track change attributable to the project. In particular, it was important to follow social and institutional developments often overlooked in conventional monitoring².

The various methodologies were loosely based on interesting approaches to project monitoring and evaluation which emphasise the process of the project and its interaction with participants rather than post-project impact in isolation. This change in focus allows the “type” of evaluation criteria to be flexible in relation to interesting or unexpected developments rather than to be pre-defined by set indicators. These new developments can then be tracked and their significance communicated with reference to narratives or “stories”.

In his paper “Improved representations of change processes: improved theories of change” (2002) Davies argues that the influence of projects and programmes is unlikely to be purely a linear one. Processes are more likely to operate within several overlapping spheres concurrently. In reality, projects tend not to adhere to classic hierarchical organogram-type structures but are better described as heterarchies where people and institutions form their own networks within larger structures. In this respect it is difficult to pre-empt the components of projects and their interaction with local people and institutions that are likely to be significant and interesting – or which may constitute what Davies terms “Most Significant Change” (MSC). In this case, PAP was given a preliminary structure (a sequence, punctuated by distinct event types, guidance on facilitation etc.) but it was hoped process documentation might capture the significance of less formal dialogue and interaction around the project’s margins (what additional stakeholders play a key role, can their influence be pro-poor and how might they be systematically accommodated in future?). Dependent on the project aim, however, it is possible to start the documentation process off by directing the research team to potentially key areas of interaction or the *types* of change to be aware of.

Process documentation has been used to detect change in relation to project activities (promotion of integrated floodplain management methods or the appraisal of social and institutional impacts of other projects) and the suitability of planning approaches (PUI PAP and char-modified PAPD – participatory action plan development). The following sub-section provides a brief overview.

- *Documenting change attributable to project institutions (structures & processes)*

Whilst recognising this complexity, the approach adopted for process documentation within Project R8195 targeted the local resource management institutions (RMIs) as

¹ R8103 - *Consensus for a Holistic Approach to improve Rural-livelihoods in Riverine-islands of Bangladesh (CHAR)*, R8195 - *Integrated floodplain management: institutional environments and participatory methods*, R8306 - *Better options for integrated floodplain management – uptake promotion*.

² Project R8195 suggests that the relationship between project facilitators, themselves, and potential beneficiaries may evolve in quite unexpected ways and will influence the type of outcomes that outlive projects. These relationships are a sub-set of the informal institutional environment and relate to process. For instance, in Project R8103 the char-modified PAPD required an extended period of familiarisation and confidence building between the facilitator and the community before large, more entrenched, issues could be addressed. This feature was recorded in the project team’s diaries which revealed increasing participation and confidence by local people over time (for instance, autonomous meetings or interaction with secondary stakeholders, community-modified activities etc.).

the fulcrum between potential beneficiaries, non-targets and secondary stakeholders such as project personnel and local government institutions. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, considerable time, effort and faith has been invested in RMIs as community based organisations, resource management institutions, user groups etc. with the assumption that local participation in the choice of rules will increase compliance and longevity of new and pro-poor management. In R8195 it was important to understand the working of these units and why they tend to disintegrate or introduce conflicts and differential access to pre-existing or new resources. Secondly, the choice of the RMI as the first or central “port of call” allowed the research team to evaluate its role and status with respect to other stakeholders and sets of stakeholders or “other players in the game”. The RMI formed a basis of semi-structured interview or discussion, around which additional and related issues and narratives could also be aired. Thirdly, the organogram of almost all project structures assumes a clear and delineated formal and hierarchical structure. As long as the means of recording and eliciting feedback is not too structured, this step-wise visit to key players and groups is an effective means to uncover the *de facto* relationships and interests of numerous stakeholders. Discussion of the RMI helps anchor discussion (creates a basis for developing narratives around what Davies would call “realms of change”) and local reality can be discussed by triangulating numerous perspectives of the same structure – the RMI as the interface between the project and the people!³

- *Documenting change attributable to the planning process*

In R8103 the approach was slightly different. Because the greater purpose of the project was to investigate the impact of PAPD through consensus and local activities, rather than group or committee building, the meetings themselves were seen as key units within the process. The manner in which issues were negotiated, people were included or excluded in activities, were all relevant to commentating on the impact of PAPD and the project in the two villages. In addition, the team acknowledged that discussions continued locally between group meetings and that some issues were less likely to be aired willingly in public or to project staff. To capture this additional change, the monitoring system adopted a diary format for staff to outline “off-stage” and “on-stage” concerns or issues as they evolved over the course of the project. Both meeting and diary reporting were intended to work towards a narrative for key changes within each of the two villages. These were intended to take the form of detailed case studies of how problems or topics were identified and the process by which they were then negotiated, resolved or enacted. The process by which different interest groups were included and secondary stakeholders consulted within the macro-PAPD plan for a community-managed jalmohal provided the key story of change in the project reports (see Coupe, 2005).

In this project, the draft planning strategy evolved and changed direction after the MTR. From an open-ended process dependent on the facilitator’s initiative and drawing on some of the PAPD principles (discussion within distinct interest groups before convergence in public meetings with political commitment, for instance) the strategy became better defined and constrained by a system of pre-planned meetings and local planning workshops. Rather than open-ended activity reports completed on a weekly basis (i.e. *Researcher’s Discussion Diary* – Appendix i), these new events became the focus of process documentation with their own reporting format (i.e. *Events Report* and *STEPS Report Sheet* – Appendix ii).

³ The approach was intended to be similarly anchored and directed in Project R8306 where project implementation groups formed the focus of the discussion and analysis.

Table 1 below demonstrates that the MSC approach is novel in that it does not attempt to compare outcomes and experience with predefined models of reality or indicators of preferred outcomes. What Davies (Ibid) refers to as the planning-based approach is normally intended to generate arguments based on the quantification of the attainment (or otherwise) of these indicators. In contrast, the MSC approach does not presume the potential direction of change nor what the key changes may be.

The approaches adopted within the above projects attempted to resemble MSC in that they explicitly emphasised the importance of “unusual outcomes” to the reporting teams. In R8195 outcomes are discussed in relation to “transparency”, “equity”, “pro-poor” etc. and in R8103 outcomes are framed in relation to “decision-making”, “conflict or consensus”, “participation”. In both cases, these indicators may be better described as “indicative domains of change”, however, because they are designed to elicit discussion by both local stakeholders and field staff themselves of unusual events and outcome relating to these types of change. Micro and macro-PAPD activities are not scored in relation to these indicative types but narratives are discussed in relation to these characters.

The rather more directed approach to uncovering change adopted in R8103 (through group-identified indicator types) was appropriate given the aims of the project – to uncover the potential of existing integrated floodplain knowledge. In other words, indicator types, and the stories they let us develop, need to be focussed on issues related to community negotiation (meetings, outcomes, conflicts, decisions, actions etc.).

In R8103, the early discussions with the field team put the emphasis on trying to uncover change attributable to the project and PAPD, whether this is deemed as positive or negative. In order to do this, the team jointly-identified themes that might be expected to change as a result of project activities. These were not so much set indicators, rather guidance and the intention here was to structure the field reporting formats to help staff realign their perception of the greater project purpose (social/community, political and institutional linkage and cooperation). Crucially, however, reporting staff were encouraged to develop and follow what they saw as key outcomes and changes and to describe how these stories evolved overtime. The domains of change were initially presented with potential examples but they were ultimately “fuzzy” in that reporting could use these examples to develop stories in any number of directions.

In summary, with respect to procedure and the way monitoring is implemented on the ground, process documentation in these projects has adopted several of the characteristics of the MSC approach. Change is not recorded with respect to the attainment or otherwise of pre-formed indicators. Rather, discussion surrounding the *indicative realms of change* is encouraged. As with MSC, great care was taken in “phrasing the question”. Diary and meeting report formats required project staff to think analytically about outcomes, first by describing what had or had not changed (Davies’ *descriptive* component of the story) and then attempting an explanation for this (Davies’ *explanatory* component of the story). In this regard, process documentation functions to develop the understanding of the research teams and to help them realign their understanding of what is significant within the parameters of project objective.

Planning based approach	Process documentation (R8103, R8195, R8306 & current project))	Evolutionary or Most Significant Changes approach*
Set indicators (yes/no)	Indicators provide “window” for discussion	Stories (significant changes) are uncovered
Predominantly quantitative	Predominantly qualitative	Predominantly qualitative
Seeks common themes & tendencies	Seeks themes & unexpected outcomes	Focuses on outliers (the unusual)
Predictable scope of outputs	Predictable output types but scope driven by staff & participants	Reported issues open-ended
<i>Deductive</i> – performance rated in relation to desired & pre-defined outcomes	“Desirable” outcomes form basis of reporting real events and processes	<i>Inductive</i> – relevant criteria (stories) drawn from recent and ongoing experiences
Indicators & frames of reference identified by senior staff	Indicators & frames of reference identified in conjunction with field staff (thought on explanations encouraged)	Indicators & frames of reference
Information is analysed centrally	Field staff are encouraged to respond to their own observations (hopes/fears)	Information is distributed within entire project hierarchy
Data tabulated and removed from context	Contextual information forms basis of stories	Contextual information forms basis of stories
Approach is fixed and repeated	Approach is well defined but adaptable (re-directed towards key events etc.)	Approach is totally adaptive

Deductive ←————→ *Inductive*

Table 1. The spectrum of monitoring approaches. Process documentation within this project is a more directed, research-oriented, version of a Most Significant Change approach. *Also known as the “Narrative Approach” or “Story Approach”.

Section 2

Development of the monitoring strategy

The initial strategy

Process documentation was initially intended to: 1) record any significant events, decisions, obstacles or breakthroughs that shape the outcome/relevance of the planning process; 2) help guide the research team (especially the junior team) with respect to the type of issues that might be expected to influence the “quality” and outcome of planning (participation by the poor and women, political support, public awareness etc.); and 3) to help the entire research team re-direct planning to additional key areas/stakeholders or to suggest revisions in plans and planning approach as the project progressed. In this respect, process documentation was to provide support in facilitation as much as tool to represent the planning process in retrospect.

The first project team meetings comprised discussion of some of the key NRM issues of the EKW and how they related to poverty and the objectives of Ramsar, DFID and the Government of India. This formed the basis to introduce some of the consensual planning principles and their application in other settings, in particular, PAPD experience in Bangladesh. A proposed planning strategy was drafted to elicit and manage the input from the range of stakeholders and to seek potential actions that benefit the widest range of poor stakeholders. The importance of looking beyond entrenched positions (in this case, fish production and sewage content versus agriculture interests and water supply) helped the team consider the importance of filtering and clumping issues and solutions i.e. the proactive role of the facilitator. In this respect, water management issues were seen as unifying feature that affected all vulnerable stakeholders in the EKW system both in terms of quality and quantity of supply.

At this stage of the project, the approach was to be flexible, with IWMED as the facilitator with poor stakeholders and potential supporters of the process as and when required. The direction of the planning process, the type of issues discussed and the type of actions proposed was to be relatively open. Three distinct levels of EKW stakeholder were defined and diary and major meeting reports were drafted for weekly use and to document specific meetings, respectively (appendix 1).

The function of process documentation at this stage was: 1) to record interaction with the various stakeholders, the outcomes of this interaction and its significance for the pilot planning; 2) to highlight the key role of the team themselves as facilitators and the need to react strategically to the outcomes of discussion and meetings. In this last regard, it was felt important the team were able to navigate the political landscape of EKW and were aware of potential problems before they occurred. The reporting formats were intended to prompt the team to consider opportunities and potential problems as the process evolved.

Modifying the strategy

The draft reporting formats were developed around several key areas of planning performance more commonly applied to the monitoring of consensus building (e.g. “understanding”, “co-operation” and “decision-making”). These criteria were intended to order the diary-type reporting and keep feedback consistent across the team.

However, as highlighted by the MTR, there are limitations of this approach in relation to the primary research objective – the generation of new knowledge useful to PAP in the PUI context. Process documentation within other NRSP projects (Table 1) had attempted to uncover informal institutional developments that relate to new relationships between the various stakeholders and with the facilitators, themselves, and the early approach here had focussed on the management of “good” planning, likely to result in achievable actions.

The key requirement was to maintain a method to re-cap what had occurred, what decisions had been made and what events or stakeholders appeared key in the planning process while keeping the strategy simple and framing the reporting criteria more tightly. The objective changed from one of strong facilitation to help ensure implementation of actions, to the recording of key moments in the process and an attempt to explain their significance.

In parallel, the planning process itself was undergoing change. From a preliminary phase of open discussion to publicise Ramsar and the potential for planning, the

project entered a phase of directed problem census and STEPS analysis. In an attempt to report back and verify the findings of these exercises, several large scale workshops were to be held with the entire range of stakeholders (equivalent to the PAPD plenary sessions). This more focussed phase of the planning was punctuated by discrete events and activities repeated in each of the 11 regions or in large workshops in the wetlands or the city.

The reporting formats were modified for the three basic levels of planning activity:

1. at the local level in discussions held directly with a mixture of stakeholders in each of the 11 regions,
2. in meetings where secondary stakeholders (taken here to mean representative bodies and committees for local stakeholders such as the Save the Wetlands Committee and the Labour Union) meet together or independently, and
3. at a tertiary level, where discussions between IWMED and other government agencies or donors take place.

A new approach to recording dialogue and decisions was piloted and used as the basis for documenting large meetings and workshops. The meeting reports were intended to record simple details of attendance/participation, agenda, commitments and decisions and researcher opinion (see Box 1 for *Events Report* example).

Events Report (discussions, meetings & workshops)

Date & location: 3/11/04 Mr Ghosh's house

Agenda & purpose: Introduce planning concept / seek commitment from SWC

Stakeholders present and attendance: SWC & FFPA

Key representatives: Mr Ghosh (SWC & FFPA) & Dr Kandu

Discussion

e.g. main points discussed, who said what, suggested activities or plans etc.

The project was introduced in greater detail (the strategy & regions, planning).

Mr Ghosh (SWC & FFPA) believes all problems ultimately relate to water management, particularly sewage supplies ("*increasing sewage would solve 50% of the people's problems*").

Mr Ghosh expressed interest and support for the project but stated that - "*lack of coordination among government agencies is a bottle-neck*"

Ghosh said there are 4 key stakeholders (Labour Union, SWC, FPA, the cooperatives)

A major problem has been sluice gate management and the distribution of sewage to downstream users (sluice gate committee failed under KMC). This problem has recently been debated by a cooperative in Region 2.

Other participants (EcoDev) expressed their own expertise, stating that evaluation and alternative management should be considered.

Decisions

e.g. any agreements on suggestions made, summing-up etc.

Agreement was reached to organise 2 workshops on 22nd and 23rd November (Labour Union followed by, FFPA)

Ghosh said that data on sewage would be available to the project and to IW MED.

Breakthroughs or obstacles

e.g. what +ve or -ve developments have occurred today or since last time?

The objectives of the project were well communicated and provisional support and enthusiasm was received (Ghosh suggested the meetings & will help organise).

Ghosh recognised solutions could benefit all stakeholders (agriculture & pisciculture).

Ghosh recognised the problem of government communication between departments and with local stakeholders, however.

Additional notes

e.g. what needs to be done now to ensure success?

The meeting did not represent a full range of SWC members as hoped but was useful in initiating major meetings with secondary stakeholders in November.

It also secured the support of a very influential individual (Ghosh).

The presence of EcoDev provided little, they are not a stakeholder, but did publicised the project a little further.

The need now is to plan for these November meetings/workshops and to ensure that stakeholders are well informed and in attendance on the day.

After these group meetings, the local-level planning discussions with primary stakeholders could be undertaken.

Box 1. Example of completed Events Report.

As the project entered a period of consultation with the poor at local level, a mechanism was required to help the team facilitate and order meetings and to document their contributions. It was crucial that key local livelihoods issues were recorded so that the concerns of the poor could be communicated to other levels and to enabling institutions. In this respect, the prioritisation by stakeholders of local problems and solutions proved particularly successful in presenting the issues and options for the 11 regions in a concise and systematic way for the EKWMC and others. The team devised a way to clump and filter this feedback by tallying the number of responses to each issue type and was then able to represent this diagrammatically (see Appendix iii and Figure 1 respectively).

Consultations with local stakeholders

Region 6

Locally-prioritised problems & solutions

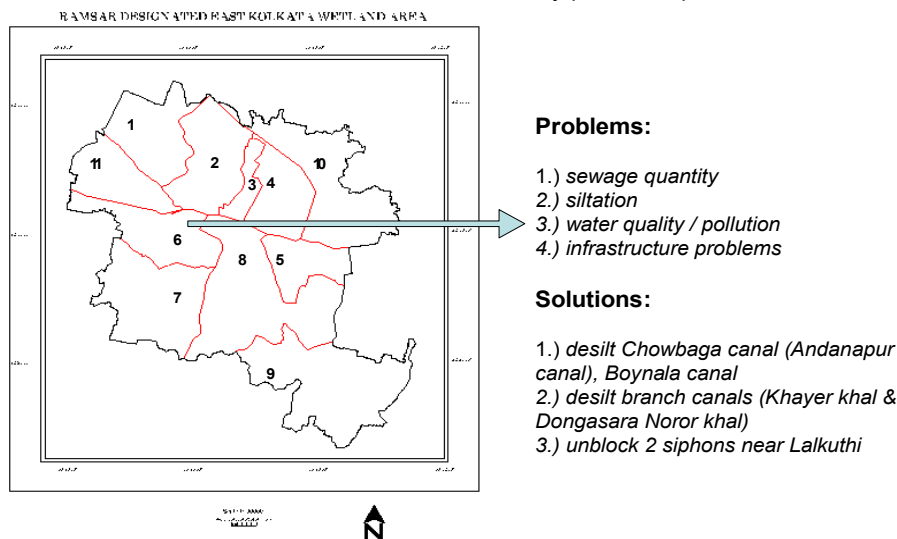


Figure 1. Summarised problem and solutions analysis for a government (EKWMC) audience. This format helped the facilitating team order the feedback of the poor and promote it vertically.

Finally, towards the end of the planning phase, post-problem census and STEPS but prior to publication of the PAP report, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a limited number of representative stakeholders to gauge their level of understanding and support of PAP. Two to three representatives of the three stakeholder groups (defined by the project as primary, secondary and tertiary) were interviewed with the intention to discuss PAP issues with both participants and potential participants (see Appendix iv). The feedback suggested that awareness of the planning activities was relatively good but that understanding of the purpose and mechanism of the piloted PAP was less developed (see Section 3).

Section 3

The process documentation strategy was well-applied by the team and several common features, constraints and opportunities were revealed by the reporting. The approach was largely intended to help keep planning on track and realign the PAP strategy as and when needed but some general observations on the quality of process are outlined below.

The Regional planning workshops

The Regional planning workshops provided the opportunity to consolidate local awareness of the PAP process. Reporting feedback suggests that the local participants were well aware of the technical and physical constraints to their livelihoods and, crucially, the potential solutions to them. The research team had agreed to focus on the water issues (quality and volume) that would appear unifying and acceptable by the full range of EKW users. The Events Reports of these meetings suggest that little facilitation and guidance was needed in this regard. Although the team had some reservations regarding representation of all interests (see below), the discussions were generally very detailed and thoughtful. Virtually all discussion focussed on the management of waste water, with desiltation the key proposed intervention. Detailed technical solutions were being suggested that incorporated the role of local and neighbouring stakeholders as well as the potential impact on other regions and the role of facilitating government institutions. These were later consolidated in more detail with STEPS workshops.

Political stakes were expected to provide a hurdle to inter-departmental collaboration and discussion at the tertiary level but Events Reports for each of the planning meetings at the 11 regions revealed that the issue of power differentials between participants and the range of political interests appeared as strong at local level.

These meetings were lightly facilitated in that the agenda and objective was pre-defined by IW MED (to check key constraints, prioritise them and identify preliminary responses with a representative range of primary stakeholders) but the identity and range of stakeholders present was not dictated by the team. Most of the Events Reports show that the meetings were attended by “key representatives” who tended to direct the planning discussions. Typically these individuals included Panchayat officials and *bheri* secretaries. Although these representatives may have been spokesmen for the poorest, the research team, themselves, questioned the transparency of their motives:

In the workshop it has been noticed that all stakeholders who were present didn't participate in the discussion actively. Two voices were dominating - these are the president of krishak samiti and the local councillor. We tried to make the other people participate actively and asked individually to give their own views. As a result, they only expressed their support about whatever was discussing. Here, one thing should be noted that when our researchers interviewed the farmers in the field area they came up with their own views. At least they spoke something about their problems. But when we arranged the work shop in a local party office the scenario changed.

(IW MED project team; excerpt Workshop Report - Zone 11, Dhapa region).

The number of participants ranged from only 12 (Region 6, Chowbagha) to 44 (Region 8, Khayadaha). Most meetings were in the range of 20-25 participants with at least some women present. This size of group can make meaningful headway and can be considered broadly representative. In PAPD, the various planning stages comprise groups this size or slightly smaller and at this scale it is possible to avoid intimidation and encourage the less vocal. In addition, the appropriate scale depends on purpose and at this stage of PAP the purpose was to “extract” key livelihoods constraints and potential actions on behalf of poor stakeholders rather than disseminate the purpose of PAP, locally.

IWMED’s fieldwork normally focuses on issues related to the *bheris* and their representative institutions but there was no indication from the Events Reports that attendance levels corresponded to land use or these existing linkages – for instance, Region 8 with the greatest attendance is, in fact, predominantly agricultural.

The 3 multi-stakeholder planning workshops (NGO, GO and mixed)

The quality and coverage of PAP-related discussion appeared to be highest and most relevant within the first mixed or “stakeholder workshop” which was the first of the large workshops. The discussion here reflected well the concerns of all stakeholders at all levels, especially, the concerns of poor, primary stakeholders. Unlike the second mixed workshop where the research team presented its strategy, the poor were able to raise local political issues. Of particular interest were the knock-on effects on labourer income from declining fish production and the issue of rights for the ethnic groups indigenous to the Banonghata Kormoshala region. These issues were raised by affected individuals, themselves.

The quality of discussion between government stakeholders was also higher here than it appeared at the “GO workshop” where government stakeholders had made rather general pronouncements in the presence of the ADB team regarding Ramsar and broad agreement with IWMED’s draft conservation plan. At this first mixed workshop, though, government agencies openly acknowledged present weaknesses (e.g. the KMC and DoI agreed the underlying threats to the EKW related to good waste management and land policy on which they must collaborate) while other stakeholders were able to raise political issues openly (e.g. *bheri* managers raised the lack of linkages to government, especially to KMC).

The NGO and GO-specific workshops appeared to make less headway with respect to PAP. IWMED used these workshops to air their draft conservation plan and to discuss general EKW issues with the ADB team. These workshops probably served several functions in this respect, but they were not strongly directed to discuss the PAP piloting. This is acknowledged here as a weakness with the project’s planning (see below).

The final mixed workshop presented an opportunity for the research team to clarify the PAP strategy, the purpose of the project and the local issues and management requirement identified by the poor of each Region. The audience and the speakers were comprised of predominantly secondary and tertiary level stakeholders, however.

In summary, the less formal mixed workshop incorporated the type of discussion across stakeholder groups that could raise mutual awareness and support for PAP. The other workshops were intended to serve several functions simultaneously but they did not specifically discuss the concept of PAP or outputs produced by the poor.

In part, this was an issue of timing. Stakeholder consultation was progressing at the 11 regions and detailed STEPS plans had not yet been produced for public discussion. Nonetheless, PAP principles and the potential for such a strategy should have been discussed at these higher level workshops in greater detail. In retrospect, these meetings should have been more tightly framed in relation their project-specific objective and greater guidance developed with the facilitator well in advance of the meetings.

Awareness and understanding of the planning process and other methodologies

The project intended to make some headway on increasing the awareness of potential beneficiaries with respect to the prospect and function of participatory planning. All meetings facilitated by IW MED were intended to publicise the potential of the planning process, even if the process itself was evolving over time. It is likely that enthusiasm for potential actions would have exceeded interest in the planning process itself (as appeared to be the case with primary and secondary level stakeholders). However, a formal mechanism to help represent local needs to government would be welcomed by organisations such as the Save the Wetlands Committee (SWC) that are currently attempting greater political influence and control over local management interventions⁴.

The PAP message was rather complicated by the breadth of IW MED's remit and its multiple management functions in the EKW. Nitai Kandu was operating with numerous stakeholders, each with their own objective and relationship to IW MED. As a result, it was sometimes preferable for the facilitator to combine several objectives simultaneously within one meeting or workshop. While this may have helped achieve reasonable participation and external support (as was the case with ADB, their participation in two of the major workshops and commitment to support local interventions in future) it made process documentation more complicated and it is likely it detracted from the PAP strategy by obscuring the objective of this project.

In relation to the small, post-planning awareness survey, there was some indication that government stakeholders operating above IW MED did not see themselves as relevant to the planning process as was hoped. Enthusiasm and understanding of the action plans, themselves, was relatively high within the operator or manager groups at intermediate levels while there appeared potential to better include Panchayat and women at village level. In summary, it appeared that the range of stakeholders were well aware of the planning events and that the meetings and workshops had achieved considerable coverage and publicity. However, of the small sample of stakeholders consulted, it was not clear that these meetings were seen as a co-ordinated and pro-poor planning approach but rather as one-off meetings.

This may be both a function of the relatively extractive PAP approach that was piloted – compiling details of local problems and potential solutions before facilitating the negotiation process on behalf of, but largely independent of, the poor. In addition, prior to the publication of the PAP report to the EKWMC, the discussion process seemed to focus more strongly at the intermediary level (with Save the Wetlands Committee and other manager's groups) than it did within government. This may also reflect IW MED's normal domain of engagement which sees them interacting with

⁴ SWC are currently attempting to achieve NGO status in order to gain political leverage regarding new management interventions.

these stakeholders on an almost daily basis or may relate to the way in which the project and IW MED are perceived by other government agencies.

It was also hoped that the project team would gain from the project experience and learn more about PAP and process documentation. The development of the reporting formats was intended to introduce new issues to the team (the need to understand and represent the significance of what is seen during planning meetings, for instance). Although the IW MED field team was relatively young and inexperienced in the use of participatory approaches and in facilitating public events, the team members that stayed with the project did well to adopt the reporting formats and understand their purpose. Process documentation of participatory processes requires good judgement and a higher degree of initiative on the part of the researcher than the quantitative surveys that have tended to dominate natural resources research. The team became more sophisticated in their understanding of what was significant to the PAP process and, crucially, what factors might make the planning process more or less realistic or representative. Changes in personnel were disappointing but it was possible to build a good level of understanding. Feedback was provided to help guide and clarify the reporting process.

The PAPD-modified PAP in retrospect

The performance of the piloted PAP and its various activities appeared to relate as much to management and facilitation of these stages as to their design or intended function. For instance, it was assumed that the large feedback workshops with NGO, GO and mixed stakeholders would provide a mechanism to clearly articulate PAP, the needs and demands of the poor and would increase a sense of responsibility and support from relevant institutions. While the quality of the regional planning workshops appeared to be relatively high and the outputs useable, the PAP message appeared less carefully articulated at higher levels. Process documentation revealed that the coverage and quality of some of these meetings was muddled by other management or political issues and other agenda (e.g. the objectives of other, partly relevant, donor activities such as the ADB biodiversity inventory). It appears important for the reporting agency (in this case, the facilitator) to separate PAP events and issues from other activities. This would highlight the significance and potential of PAP to all stakeholders, reduce their confusion and help focus planning on achievable, pro-poor action.

The one major workshop that appeared to achieve real linkage and face-to-face dialogue across the stakeholders at different levels appeared to be the mixed stakeholder workshop of 28th January 2005.

Knowledge of inter-governmental processes was not well captured by the monitoring formats. It is likely that PAP facilitators will always be compromised by publicising and appraising the role of other GOs in planning but the number, purpose and outcome of meetings could have been better documented.

In relation to PAP in other PUI contexts, this might indicate that the identity of the facilitator is key. The brief review of PAP awareness would indicate that IW MED was well placed to mobilise the participation of secondary stakeholders as *bheri* managers and labour unions but perhaps less able to explore the potential of new local and GO roles.

Table 2 provides a timeline of key PAP events together with feedback on observation and issues derived through process documentation.

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Process documentation observations</i>
May 2004	DOE arrange meetings with SWC & FPA to discuss project	Process documentation piloting (indicators related to “good” consensus building applied)
June/Aug	Problem census with primary & key stakeholder groups in 11 regions EKW management committee meet & action planning initiative is discussed	Water-related issues prioritised by primary stakeholders, themselves Little information derived from GO-IWMED meetings. Feedback required from senior PAP facilitators in future
Oct/Nov	DoE, KMDA IWMED meet to discuss plans	Process not well documented.
Nov/Dec	Officials meet with members of their organisations to present preliminary plans, elicit feedback & seek mandate to proceed	“Representatives” chair meetings & dictate discussion – structured facilitation required to ensure pro-poor voice.
Jan/Feb 2005	Project team facilitate meetings in 11 wetland regions where proposed plans are refined & greater detail added	Solutions (potential actions) of primary stakeholders reveal awareness of institutional & geographical linkages
Jan	Meetings facilitated between Government agencies & other key stakeholders to verify plan & schedule for implementation Meeting with NGOs to raise awareness & highlight opportunities for involvement	Mixed workshop appears most useful to PAP & openly discussed political constraints. NGO & GO workshops needed to better incorporate PAP principles & the identified concerns of the poor
March	Project team analyse & assimilate action planning & process monitoring outcomes Report on linkages & perceptions of key stakeholder groups Identify commonalities & win-win scenarios	STEPS reports comprise realistic & win-win interventions. Secondary level representatives appeared best informed, potential to better publicise PAP & widen process at local level (Panchayat & women, especially). Facilitator best placed to interact with secondary level stakeholders but may be limited with respect to upward influence.
April	Seek approval & support of EKW management committee for 4-5 potential pilot-scale activities	Provisional support agreed (verbal feedback – Nitai Kundu)
April	Stakeholder groups at selected sites review potential pilot-projects (4-5) using STEPS analysis Meetings facilitated to verify technical/legislative issues arising	STEPS reports reveals detailed planning, relevance of GOs & awareness of impacts on neighbouring regions
April-May	Project facilitates focus groups with local community members at pilot-sites to safeguard against negative impacts Screen outcomes & identify two feasible pilot-scale activities Key stakeholders seek mandate to proceed	Process not well documented.
May-June	Initiate implementation, negotiate external inputs & monitor & report on progress to EKW management committee	Documentation compiled & disseminated to EKWMC

Table 2. Timeline of PAP activities and summary of process documentation observations.

Section 4

The type of documentation adopted within this project has attempted to make the facilitator record the negotiation process in order to consider which events, issues and stakeholders appear key to maintaining momentum in planning. Because PAP within this project was flexible, it was important that the relevance and function of the meetings and events was gauged by the team.

In response to comments within the mid-term review, the use of indicative criteria for good consensual planning were dropped and replaced with an emphasis on the quality of planning. It is acknowledged that this reporting required interpreting in relation to the PAPD-modifications tested. For instance, process documentation such as this has provided an insight into representation of the poor during public workshops with mixed stakeholders and during local planning workshops with primary stakeholders. The piloted PAP attempted early inclusion of the poor but Events Reports suggested the convenors of some of these meetings dictated the direction of discussions and that the poor expressed alternative views off-stage. This may suggest a much stronger form of facilitation by IWMED which would by-pass more influential individuals and encourage greater input by the poor, including women.

Process documentation in future participatory action planning

Whatever the methodology of participatory action planning, it might be reasonably assumed that facilitators should be obliged to describe and defend the quality of their approach in terms of:

- representation and participation (a sufficient range of poor stakeholders are given opportunity to shape planning)
- the process adopted (what mechanisms for representation and communication of planning priorities were put in place and if / how these changed over time)
- outcomes (whether pro-poor action is achieved or headway has been made on representing the needs of the poor to supportive institutions).

In order to do this, some system of documentation is required that can note change in these features. Quantitative information may be recorded but the “quality” of process needs to be presented. For instance, any tailing-off of public participation in planning meetings can be presented numerically but qualified by its meaning with respect to pro-poor NRM. Does the decline in participation relate to a loss of interest on the part of wealthier landowners or managers rather than a lack of perceived legitimacy by the poor themselves, for instance?

With respect to interpretation, the reporting formats outlined above and drafted with the research team were intended to help formulate mini hypotheses and encourage thinking about the significance of public events and meetings. The relevance of this type of documentation will depend on the purpose and character of PAP, however. If the stages of PAP are predetermined and are intended to unfold in a prescribed sequence, documentation may focus on the successful completion of the stages as meetings, agreements and draft plans etc. The facilitator may not be required to re-think the significance of the approach but may be obliged to provide evidence that the process was properly adhered to. This is the case with local consensus building by PAPD within NRM projects. Project reports describe the stages and their outputs (lists of problems, solutions, proposed actions) rather than critically appraise their pro-poor or NRM significance, their potential or feasibility.

References

Coupe, S. 2005. Consensus for a Holistic Approach to improve Rural-livelihoods in Riverine-islands of Bangladesh (CHAR). Final Technical Report Project R8103.

Davies, R. 2002. *Improved Representations Of Change Processes: Improved Theories Of Change*. Paper presented at: Seville 2002: 5th Biennial Conference of the European Evaluation Society. Three Movements in Contemporary Evaluation: Learning, Theory and Evidence, October 2002.

Appendix i

Evaluating action planning for enhanced NRM in PU Kolkata

- Developing the Draft Process Monitoring Tools (May 2004)

Defining the purpose of “process monitoring” within the project

“Process monitoring” is merely a systematic approach to recording project developments and change. It can help describe the stages that led to successful outcomes (consensus, agreement, enhanced management) and *less* successful outcomes (conflict, failure to reach agreement or to improve management, for instance). Process monitoring is normally a part of project design but it has recently received greater attention (and been given a name!) because it is recognised that relationships between researchers and the various stakeholders play an important role in achieving successful and lasting outcomes⁵.

In addition to describing events retrospectively as in final report writing, for instance, process monitoring can also allow the research team to respond to unexpected changes and positive or negative developments. In projects where negotiation, discussion and agreements are the objective, process monitoring can allow project managers to assess new opportunities for agreement (new avenues to explore) and help form a systematic way for field staff to communicate progress to the whole project team. In this way process monitoring allows the project team to review progress in “real time” and to change emphasis or direction in order to exploit new developments (a supportive and influential government stakeholder or a small, positive intervention that suits numerous stakeholders simultaneously, for instance).

Key “processes” to monitor

The key theme and activity within this project is discussion or negotiation with a view to reaching agreement on the future management of the wetlands.

Initial discussion within the project team led to the development of a draft calendar of research activities and commitments. Central to this was the way in which the various stakeholders were to be engaged prior to and after two large workshops. It was agreed that there were about seven or eight key stakeholder groups that must be engaged, consulted and involved in the discussion of future wetlands management. In turn, these stakeholders could be described as primary or secondary stakeholders.

Primary stakeholders:-

Have high importance but may view themselves as having low influence. They may have a direct stake and interest in the “resource” for their livelihoods (fish farm labourers etc.).

Secondary stakeholders:-

May be important and influential and so be a key to success. They can have a very influential position in the process (government officials, powerful NGOs etc.).

(Based on: Brown, K., Tompkins, T. and Adger, W.N. 2001. Trade-off Analysis for Participatory Coastal Zone Decision-Making. Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia.)

⁵ See Draft Discussion Paper 3 for greater detail on process monitoring

The relevant stakeholder group for the wetlands included fish producers associations, labour groups and various government and NGO agencies with a role and stake in water management etc. It was suggested that these groups should be engaged as soon as possible and the project purpose should be communicated to them in face-to-face discussions. Fact sheets or other materials on Ramsar etc. may also play an important early role in this respect.

With respect to recording the process of discussion and negotiation, there are two key aspects to consider;

1. the discussions held with the stakeholder group in isolation (for instance, the level of support and enthusiasm for planning expressed by the fish producers association to the project team), and...
2. the discussions and networking between the stakeholder groups themselves (the outcomes and discussion within multiple-stakeholder meetings and workshops).

Process monitoring within other DFID-funded NRM projects has been based on a combination of at least two reporting formats – diaries and meeting reports.

Structured diaries will help document processes *within* stakeholder groups and with the research team. Meeting reports can help document processes *between* the stakeholder groups.

Draft diaries and meeting reports

It has been found useful for projects to record their interaction with stakeholder groups in a systematic and consistent way, partly because this helps to compare feedback from different members of the team. In addition, a structured approach also makes the interpretation and analysis of processes easier during report writing by allowing responses to be tallied or tracked over the span of the project.

In the case of the project, relationship-building and decision-making are key because long-term partnerships and new ways to achieve improved management of the wetlands are the project's ultimate objective. In order to achieve mutual support for new management or technical activities it will be important to engender an environment for negotiation and trust between the stakeholders. In addition, the project proposal highlights the need to promote "co-operation", "understanding" and "collective decision-making".

Diary reporting formats should incorporate spaces in which progress (or problems) in these areas can be filled in by the researcher.

It is particularly important to document change! For this reason, a special section is included in the draft below (unusual outcomes and events).

Meeting Reports in other projects have attempted to distil the essential "dynamics" and outcomes of important meetings. For this reason a large space may be provided for the researcher to enter his or her interpretation of the effect of the meeting and its significance to achieving successful project outcomes or for producing potential problems in this regard.

Previously, it has been found convenient to report the “*discussion*”, “*decisions*”, and to provide a detailed “*researcher’s summary*”. This summary might contain four bullet-points as:

- **Discussion quality** – how open was discussion, who was loudest/quietest & how clear were the agreements and plans, for instance?
- **Hopes** – what good things came from the meeting, how will these things help?
- **Fears** – with your knowledge of “behind-the-scenes” issues, what might obstruct progress and wishes of the people?
- **Recommendations** – what should be done to help? Are there tasks for the project team or the participants that should be made clear?

Finally, it may be useful for each of the project team to compile a “Researcher Activity Report” on a weekly basis. This will help provide a timeline of important project activities over the lifespan of the project and help each member report back to the team leader.

The following draft formats have been completed by myself with hypothetical responses but are meant to provide a basis for the discussion and design of workable and appropriate systems of reporting by the team.

Draft Researcher's Discussion Diary**Name:****Place:** Fish Producer's Office**Date:** 1/6/04***"Co-operation"***

(Cite new evidence of collaboration within the stakeholder group and/or with other stakeholder groups. Or cite evidence of lacking co-operation.)

Comments:

- (1) Fish Producer's Committee have agreed to meet project staff once a week – committee members will jointly allocate key spokesmen to project.
- (2) The Fish Producers have made their own arrangement to discuss project with the Save the Wetlands NGO.

Why?:

- (1) The group are enthusiastic about project are some members are too busy to meet with the project team.
- (2) The Fish Producers and the NGO have identified some areas of mutual interest before the project workshop and want to discuss in private.

"Understanding"

(Cite new evidence of understanding within the stakeholder group with respect to the project, management issues and Ramsar. Or cite evidence of lacking understanding)

Comments:

The Fish Producers understand the purpose of the project but not Ramsar.

Why?:

Ramsar has not been properly communicated to them yet (fact-sheet not finished and Ramsar meeting still to be held).

"Decision-making"

(Cite new evidence of decision-making within the stakeholder group with respect to the project. Or cite evidence of lacking understanding)

Comments:

The Fish Producers have decided to make sluice gate rehabilitation their priority objective in future meetings with other stakeholders.

Why?:

They believe sluice gate management will benefit others as well as themselves (prevent siltation etc.).

Unusual Events and Outcomes*Observations*

There is great enthusiasm for tackling sluice gate management now but there was no interest last week. The group are much more supportive of project than last week.

Explanations

Discussion between the group and the project team have highlighted the opportunity and benefits from better sluice gate management. They were also visited by government representatives in this regard.

Significance

Shows greater support and understanding of project and opportunities. Also shows linkage with other secondary stakeholders (in this case, government representatives responsible for irrigation and canals).

Major Meeting or Workshop Report

Name: Venue: Date: 1/6/04
Agenda: Future sluice gate management
Participants: 12 Fish Producers / 6 Save the Wetlands reps. including Chairman
Chair: Professor Ghosh

Discussion

(e.g. main points discussed, who said what, suggested activities or plans etc.)

The project activities & progress were highlighted by project team.
 Discussion centred on sluice gate management –especially future roles and responsibilities (government and beneficiaries).
 Alternative management arrangements were suggested – including a new role for Department of Irrigation etc.

Decisions

(e.g. any agreements on suggestions made, summing-up etc.)

Agreed that the appropriate GOs must be involved in next stages of discussion (in this case Dept. of Irrigation, etc.).

It was agreed that operators should be responsible for day-to-day maintenance etc. but that government must provide greater support in training and resources/funding of gate operator.

Researcher's summary

Discussion quality:

Input from both groups was good and productive and Fish Producer and Save the Wetlands Chairmen were in agreement.

Hopes:

Agreement to involve GO stakeholders could release funds and support for improved sluice gate management.

Fears:

It will be difficult to build support from GOs and to encourage change in practice.

Recommendation:

Research team should act as brokers (intermediaries) on behalf of Fish Producers and Save the Wetlands.

This issue should be raised at next project meeting with the relevant GOs.

Researcher Weekly Activity Report

Name:

Date: 1/6/04

Meetings & other work undertaken:-

- Provisional meeting with Fish Producer's Organisation held at their office.
- Agreement reached with labour union and fish producers on site and date for Ramsar discussion.
- Workshop invitations sent to
- Private conversation with Fish Producer's Chairman regarding meals and costs at workshop.
- Presentation for workshop agreed with project team and finished.
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Appendix ii

Evaluating action planning for enhanced NRM in peri-urban Kolkata :-

Modifying the process monitoring

Background

Having piloted the draft diary for tracking developments and processes in the action planning, it was obvious that there were some problems regarding the suitability of this format.

Firstly, this format had been modified from process monitoring in other DFID NRSP projects where the intention was to track positive or negative developments in the interaction between projects (their staff and activities) and local stakeholders. However, in R8365 the purpose of process monitoring is to provide a detailed overview of the evolution of action planning, where in the process key events, decisions and agreements were made, and which steps in the discussions were crucial to achieving breakthroughs or agreement. Recording these processes will also provide a means to explain changes in direction or strategy of the planning.

The review of the Inception Report highlights this and questioned the relevance of this type of format.

Secondly, initial feedback from the project team indicated a need to standardise the approach to completing these formats, to make the formats more targeted and to assist the team in identifying key events and developments in meetings and discussions.

Thirdly, as the strategy for action planning was developed further during this visit, it became obvious that some form of process monitoring should occur at the three levels of activities and planning proposed;

4. at the local level in discussions held directly with a mixture of stakeholders in each of the regions,
5. in meetings where secondary stakeholders (taken here to mean representative bodies and committees for local stakeholders such as the Save the Wetlands Committee and the Labour Union) meet together or independently, and
6. at a tertiary level where discussions between the Institute of Wetland Management and Ecological Design (IWMED), other government agencies or donors take place.

Finally, given the decision to attempt planning on a series of potential actions at each of the 11 regions, a simple tool – STEPS analysis – was introduced to the team. The purpose here was to provide the team with a systematic way to record and check the feasibility of any provisional plans.

Refining the diary

A new approach was piloted during a meeting with the Save the Wetlands Committee. The research team discussed key areas of reporting and note-taking before the meeting (see *“Meeting with Save the Wetlands Committee :guidelines for observing & recording key developments”*) before compiling and analysing feedback in the office (see *“Observations”*). In addition, a meeting was held with the Chairman of KMDA and the main points and feedback from the meeting are presented below.

Meeting with Save the Wetlands Committee: *guidelines for observing & recording key developments*

The meeting will provide two functions for the project:

- 1.) it allows the project to introduce more detail to these secondary stakeholders about potential “actions” so that negotiations and feedback will begin, and
- 2.) it will allow us to develop a common approach to observing and recording meetings and key issues.

Observing and recording meetings and key issues.

When observing meetings it is useful to make notes of key comments (whether +ve or –ve) and attitudes (general group and any factions). When the project negotiations and discussions begin to start we will need to look for changes and developments (e.g. independently held meetings between certain stakeholders).

The following are examples of important criteria or “areas” to observe.

- ***Agenda / topic***

For example, “what was the purpose of the meeting?”

- ***Attendance / participation***

For example, what groups were represented, how many attended?
Any notable attendants or absentees?

- ***Issues discussed***

Consider the topics aired. Were these expected or unexpected?

- ***Commitments & decisions***

Were any agreements reached? What were they? For example, it was agreed to meet with other stakeholder groups next week.

- ***Breakthroughs or obstacles***

For example, what positive developments have occurred over the past days or weeks? What problems have arisen (perhaps failure to act on previous decision)?

Note-keeping

Reports (diaries and meeting reports) should include quotes from individuals where it helps to support our claims (“*We will hold a meeting with the Fish Producer’s Organisation as soon as possible to discuss renovation the pump to keep water levels sufficient*”: Chairman SWC). These can be compiled from field notes and our thoughts back in the office

Observations List

SWC Provisional Meeting

3/11/04

(back in the office - random order)

- Mr Ghosh was the key stakeholder
- Ghosh's primary interest was sewage water
- 2 EcoDev consultants were present (motivation unclear)
- Mr Ghosh expressed the potential to help both agriculture and pisciculture
- A cooperative have had recent discussions on Zone 2 problems
- Mr Ghosh suggests dividing the region to high, medium and low sewage in relation to planning and our project
- *"Communication to and from Government should increase"* - Ghosh
- Ghosh said there 4 key stakeholders (Labour Union, SWC, FPA, the cooperatives)
- They stated that sewage had decreased although, in theory, it should have increased
- Sluice gate management had operated in the past (with Dr Kandou) but had failed under the KMC – 7 or 8 people run some gates privately on behalf of Ghosh etc.
- The objectives of planning within the project were introduced
- Mr Ghosh, Dr Rana, Dr Saha and Dr Kandou were present
- ADB project discussed – negative impact (STP)
- Ghosh said that data on sewage was available
- Dr Rana said that evaluation was required
- *"increasing sewage would solve 50% of the people's problems"* – Ghosh
- *"lack of coordination among government agencies is a bottle-neck"* – Ghosh (in addition to lack of specific guidelines)
- Agreement was reached to organise 2 workshops on 22nd and 23rd November (Labour Union followed by, FFPA)

Events Report (discussions, meetings & workshops)

Date & location: 3/11/04 Mr Ghosh's house (?)

Agenda & purpose: Introduce planning concept / seek commitment from SWC

Stakeholders present and attendance: SWC & FFPA

Key representatives: Mr Ghosh (SWC & FFPA) & Dr Kandu

Discussion

e.g. main points discussed, who said what, suggested activities or plans etc.

The project was introduced in greater detail (the strategy & regions, planning).

Mr Ghosh (SWC & FFPA) believes all problems ultimately relate to water management, particularly sewage supplies ("*increasing sewage would solve 50% of the people's problems*").

Mr Ghosh expressed interest and support for the project but stated that - "*lack of coordination among government agencies is a bottle-neck*"

Ghosh said there 4 key stakeholders (Labour Union, SWC, FPA, the cooperatives)

A major problem has been sluice gate management and the distribution of sewage to downstream users (sluice gate committee failed under KMC). This problem has recently been debated by a cooperative in Region 2.

Other participants (EcoDev) expressed their own expertise, stating that evaluation and alternative management should be considered.

Decisions

e.g. any agreements on suggestions made, summing-up etc.

Agreement was reached to organise 2 workshops on 22nd and 23rd November (Labour Union followed by, FFPA)

Ghosh said that data on sewage would be available to the project and to IW MED.

Breakthroughs or obstacles

e.g. what +ve or -ve developments have occurred today or since last time?

The objectives of the project were well communicated and provisional support and enthusiasm was received (Ghosh suggested the meetings & will help organise).

Ghosh recognised solutions could benefit all stakeholders (agriculture & pisciculture).

Ghosh recognised the problem of government communication between departments and with local stakeholders, however.

Additional notes

e.g. what needs to be done now to ensure success?

The meeting did not represent a full range of SWC members as hoped but was useful in initiating major meetings with secondary stakeholders in November.

It also secured the support of a very influential individual (Ghosh).

The presence of EcoDev provided little, they are not a stakeholder, but did publicised the project a little further.

The need now is to plan for these November meetings/workshops and to ensure that stakeholders are well informed and in attendance on the day.

After these group meetings, the local-level planning discussions with primary stakeholders could be undertaken.

Events Report (discussions, meetings & workshops)

Date & location: 4/11/04 KMDA

Agenda & purpose: Introduce planning concept / seek KMDA feedback & support

Stakeholders present and attendance: KMDA, IW MED team

Key representatives: Bandyopadhyay (CEO), Barari (Chief Environment Officer) and Dr Kandou.

Discussion

e.g. main points discussed, who said what, suggested activities or plans etc.

SB introduced the project's purpose.

The CEO challenged the assumption that wetlands should be protected at all costs.

KMDA's remit is to develop the city's infrastructure.

The CEO supports the Management Plan and IW MED but he stated he required additional evidence of the value of the wetlands.

Decisions

e.g. any agreements on suggestions made, summing-up etc.

The project team agreed to keep CEO informed.

Breakthroughs or obstacles

e.g. what +ve or -ve developments have occurred today or since last time?

The project has been introduced to KMDA.

However, the discussion was not productive or of mutual benefit.

Additional notes

e.g. what needs to be done now to ensure success?

The CEO's stance was defensive and may make productive meetings and agreements difficult to achieve. It will be important to highlight potential political advantages of cooperation to KMDA in future meetings.

Hopefully, future government level meetings (without foreigners) may be more productive and relaxed.

STEPS analysis

STEPS analysis was a tool deployed in the DFID “Consensus Building” project in Bangladesh to help order the discussion of potential actions with local stakeholders. For example, if (after identifying the major local problems and their potential solutions) local people believe that the canal needs re-excavation, the next stage is to test the feasibility of this intervention.

STEPS provides a checklist of the important requirements needed to successfully implement this choice of plan. For instance “*what funds are required and where will these funds come from?*” or, “*what permission is required and how will it be obtained?*” or, “*what expert advice do we need and who will provide it?*”

In the context of this new project, STEPS could be used to provide a checklist to the IW MED research team in their discussion with primary stakeholders in each of the regions. Rather than formally working through each column (Social, Technical, Economic etc.) on a flip-chart it may be more appropriate just to explain the importance of thinking through these categories. It will be important for the IW MED team to prompt the local stakeholders to attempt detailed requirements for potential plans and to provide advice if suggestions appear unlikely or inaccurate.

Piloting STEPS in the office

The IW MED team worked through a proposed plan by Mr Ghosh – linking Region 2 fish farms with three distinct types (gauges) of piping to provide equal access to sewage across the area.

One outcome of this exercise was that the “Political” category was problematic. It was felt that this phrase would cause confusion or worry because it implied that government agencies and secondary level organisation were in some way “political”. It was agreed that Political would be change to “Institutional” and treated together with “Social” requirements (see below).

Another outcome of the exercise was that each potential requirement or precursor to action could be expanded and explored more deeply. For instance “*technical advice should be sought*”, “*advice regarding water levels is needed*”....“*advice would be received from the Engineering Department*”....“*advice should be sought before contacting potential donors for support*” etc.

In this way STEPS can provide a means to investigate potential actions in greater and greater detail, highlighting the need for in-depth thinking from stakeholders themselves and encouraging them to contribute to detailed planning.

Finally, completed STEPS should be compiled by the team, maintained on monitoring files and updated when new developments and decisions are made.

Piloting STEPS in the office			
Proposed solution: - “introduce three feeder pipes of different gauges” (Region 2)			
Social & Institutional Requires local support	Technical Materials_	Economics NCDC funds required	Environmental Increased fish production via better sewage management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inlet pipes (1,3,5 metre) Gates and outlets Pumps 		
To avoid conflict, charge must recognise socio-economic status (fair revenue generation)	Advice from DOF and DOIW (technical support) on water height and volume	External support for set-up, DFID etc?	Potential health/pollution issue?
Potential problem (upstream vs downstream) – requires negotiation body	Water gravitation flow must be sufficient	Business plan need for maintenance	Continued water or sewage supply
Leaseholder has limited power		NBARD to provide support?	
Consent required from			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOE DOIW Panchayat (verbal) Labour Union leaders (local sanctioning) FFPA 			

STEPS Report Sheet

Date & location:

Key identified local problem:

Suggested solution:

Key representatives present (including project staff, technical advisers and local representatives such as Panchayat or Labour Union officials):

Discussion

(outline the issues discussed, proposals made, points of agreement/disagreement)

1. Social / Institutional Issues (e.g. consensus required, potential conflicts with neighbours and required agencies identified)

2. Technical Issues (e.g. the equipment required & physical feasibility of the proposal)

3. Financial Issues (e.g. the predicted costs of each part of the plan and who will pay for them)

4. Environmental Issues (e.g. the predicted environmental effects –good/bad - of different parts of the plan)

5. Sustainability Issues (e.g. the potential constraints to keeping the pilot useful & ways to overcome this)

Consensus and Decisions

(e.g. how far has the discussion gone – complete agreement & detailed planning of pilot or inability to reach a consensus etc.?)

Breakthroughs or obstacles

e.g. what +ve or -ve achievements have been achieved today?

Additional notes

e.g. what needs to be done now to ensure success?

In summary, STEPS allows us to think systematically and efficiently when taking part in discussions with stakeholders about potential solutions to their problems. STEPS helps us think deeper about potential solutions so that all logistical and technical problems and tasks are properly considered by the stakeholders before the meetings are concluded.

It is hoped that STEPS tables can be compiled for each of 4 to 5 potential pilot activities. These will then be considered by the relevant agencies and any concerned or relevant local stakeholders (neighbouring villages etc.).

It was agreed that the following STEPS report format should be compiled by the team, maintained on monitoring files and updated when new developments and decisions are made.

Final notes - reporting protocol and maintaining a database

Feedback from the team suggested that it would be more productive for the reporting formats to be completed collectively from all group notes, thoughts, observations and “gut-feelings” back in the office. This would allow the team to debate the significance of what they had seen, to fill in missing gaps and to provide more consistency in the style of reporting.

Important: The “Researcher Weekly Activity Report” should be renamed the “Research Team Weekly Activity Report” to reflect this collective approach.

I would suggest that at least five distinct folders are kept and updated at IW MED:

1. Events Reports with primary stakeholders,
2. Events Reports with secondary stakeholders,
3. Events Reports with tertiary (government, donor etc.) stakeholders,
4. STEPS tables derived in consultation with different level stakeholders
5. Research team weekly activity report (compiled jointly for the team)

Important: Finally, I think it is important that findings and observations are shared with the whole team once every month. This will help ensure that we have a suitable approach in place and that the planning process is progressing as we had hoped.

Appendix iii

Analysing Regional Management Requirements – sorting and clustering feedback

The team introduced the purpose of the project and the following list of identified problems (from a pre-project scoping phase) at 10 Regional meetings:

The participants were asked to order these in order of importance and to suggest remedial solutions.

Region	Problems	Solutions
1	1.) <i>sewage quality (quantity & pollution)</i> 2.) <i>siltation</i>	1.) <i>de-silt Khasmasal Canal</i> 2.) <i>de-silt outlet pipe</i>
2	1.) <i>lack of water</i> 2.) <i>sewage quality (quantity & pollution)</i> 3.) <i>siltation ponds & feeder canal</i>	? Meeting to repeated without Mr Ghosh
3/4	1.) <i>adequate sewage</i> 2.) <i>pollution</i> 3.) <i>poor infrastructure</i> 4.) <i>lack of water in 7,8 & 9</i>	1.) <i>Bidyadhari must be desilted for 7,8 & 9</i> 2.) <i>Divert Chowbagha water station water South (via Chak-kolar Khal, Boynala khal, Kheyadaha 1&2 and Bidyadhari) Desilt Bantala to Tarda, Paran Chaprashir khal, Ghosher khal and feeder canal.</i>
5	1.) <i>sewage quality (quantity & pollution)</i> 2.) <i>siltation ponds & feeder canal</i> 3.) <i>adequate sewage</i> 4.) <i>lack of infrastructure</i>	1.) <i>prevent tannery influx</i> 2.) <i>desilt ponds</i> 3.) <i>better sluice gate – gate management at Bantala</i>
6	1.) <i>sewage quantity</i> 2.) <i>siltation</i> 3.) <i>water quality / pollution</i> 4.) <i>infrastructure problems</i>	1.) <i>desilt Chowbaga canal (Andanapur canal), Boynala canal</i> 2.) <i>desilt branch canals (Khayer khal & Dongasara Noror khal)</i> 3.) <i>unblock 2 siphons near Lalkuthi</i>
7	1.) <i>lack of sewage</i> 2.) <i>lack of irrigable water (February-March)</i> 3.) <i>poor quality (cow sheds gone & pollution)</i> 4.) <i>poor infrastructure</i>	1.) <i>desiltation</i> 2.) <i>better water flow / increased depth</i> 3.) <i>better water management with Bantala lock gate</i> 4.) <i>stop chemical discharge</i> 5.) <i>health centre</i>
8	1.) <i>sewage quality</i> 2.) <i>siltation</i> 3.) <i>infrastructure (roads) for desilting</i> 4.) <i>lack of funds</i>	??
9	1.) <i>lack of irrigable water</i> 2.) <i>lack of sewage</i> 3.) <i>siltation of Bidyadhari canal</i>	1.) <i>“Link to channel sewage from Chowbaga to south?”</i>
10	1.) <i>lack of water for rabi crops</i> 2.) <i>lack of sewage</i> 3.) <i>mismanagement of sluice gate & settlements on canal using water</i>	1.) <i>conduct survey of landowners & explore diversification</i> 2.) <i>develop cooperatives for new pisciculture</i>

11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) <i>urban encroachment</i> 2.) <i>pollution from "china khal"</i> 3.) <i>lack of sewage</i> 4.) <i>lack of water</i> 5.) <i>polluted environment</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) <i>desilt main canal (Dhapa to Chowbagha canal & the feeder canal connecting Makaltara)</i> 2.) <i>prevent pollution in "China khal" (new canal or unblock section)</i> 3.) <i>excavate feeder canals for irrigation</i> 4.) <i>Government control of pollution</i> 5.) <i>demarcation garbage dumps</i>
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The Regionally-identified management problems and potential solutions. Problems and solutions are ranked but do not correspond to one another.

Appendix iv

Stakeholder feedback – the attitudinal survey

25th July 2005

This activity is intended to check the perception of key stakeholders regarding the project activities and their usefulness, especially with respect to the potential of the planning process being adopted. This will provide material with which to guide the project as it enters towards a phase implementing small pilot activities and as it seeks extra support for extending and coordinating planning in the future. In summary, the survey feedback may suggest modifications that could help see planning and implementation better institutionalised.

Background

Early in the project, the team discussed dividing the range of interest groups and stakeholders into two basic levels i.e. “primary” stakeholders dependent on the wetland directly for their livelihoods and “secondary” stakeholders with an indirect interest in their status and management.

As discussed in the Inception Report...

“It was agreed that there were about seven or eight key stakeholder groups that must be engaged, consulted and involved in the discussion of future wetlands management. In turn, these stakeholders could be described as primary or secondary stakeholders⁶.”

Primary stakeholders:-

Have high importance but may view themselves as having low influence. They may have a direct stake and interest in the “resource” for their livelihoods (fish farm labourers etc.).

Secondary stakeholders:-

May be important and influential and so be a key to success. They can have a very influential position in the process (government officials, powerful NGOs etc.).

The relevant stakeholder group for the wetlands included fish producers associations, labour groups and various government and NGO agencies with a role and stake in water management etc.”

However, there is clearly another level of stakeholders that operate in between these two groups. This level largely corresponds to institutions comprised of representatives, or managers of, primary stakeholders. These stakeholders may represent the interests of their primary constituents or more likely the interests of owners, leaseholders and operators of parts of the wetland. The Save the Wetlands Committee is a good example of a stakeholder/group of stakeholders that sits between primary stakeholders and government institutions. Labour unions and

⁶ Based on: Brown, K., Tompkins, T. and Adger, W.N. 2001. Trade-off Analysis for Participatory Coastal Zone Decision-Making. Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia.

Panchayat, as local level administrative bodies can also be considered in this middle tier.

A brainstorm identified the following as tertiary, secondary and primary stakeholders:

Tertiary

DoE, DoF, DoForestry, DoI&W, Land & Land Records, Dept. of Panchayat, District level administrative bodies, KMC, KMDA, KEIP, ADB, NGOs (including PUBLIC and 150 registered bodies in the State).

Secondary

Panchayat, Save the Wetlands Committee comprised of bheri owners, leaseholders, union leaders,

Primary

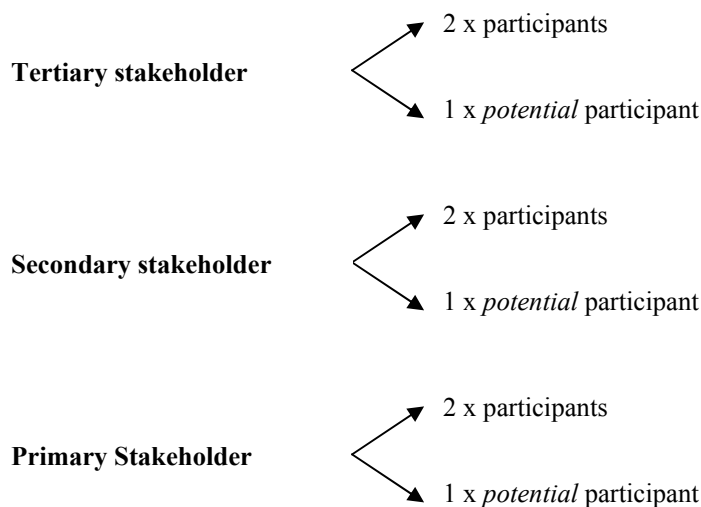
Labourers (bheri workers, farm labourers, maintenance & construction workers) ragpickers, women,

These groups either interact with the project directly or have some stake in the outcome and performance of the project (see Figure 1 below).

The methodology

It was suggested that a sub-sample of representative individuals from participating stakeholder groups should be interviewed to gauge the influence and potential of the project. These individuals may have attended the major workshops (government agencies, NGOs etc) or been involved in some aspect of local STEPS planning (local service providers, labourers etc.).

In addition, it was intended to interview representatives of other stakeholder groups currently uninvolved in project planning or on its fringes. This would help ascertain the spread of knowledge of the project's purpose and the potential of widening involvement to other stakeholders supportive of, or reliant upon, the sustainable management of the wetlands. A provisional sampling strategy is provided below:



A semi-structured interview is required to carefully guide (and listen to) the discussion in order to meet several pre-determined areas of interest. Record background details of the interviewee – his/her stake, occupation, position etc.

The following is a checklist of useful types of feedback to help guide the interview. Record these comments even if you think that the interviewee is mistaken.

Participation & engagement:

How has the interviewee been involved in the project? Have other stakeholders like him/her been involved? The frequency of interaction and duration of involvement.

Knowledge:

What does the interviewee know about the action planning process and any activities associated with the project? How did he/she come to know this (participation in meetings, via friends etc.)?

Attitude:

How useful does the interviewee believe the project activities, approach and objectives are? What are the positive and negative aspects of the project according to the interviewee?

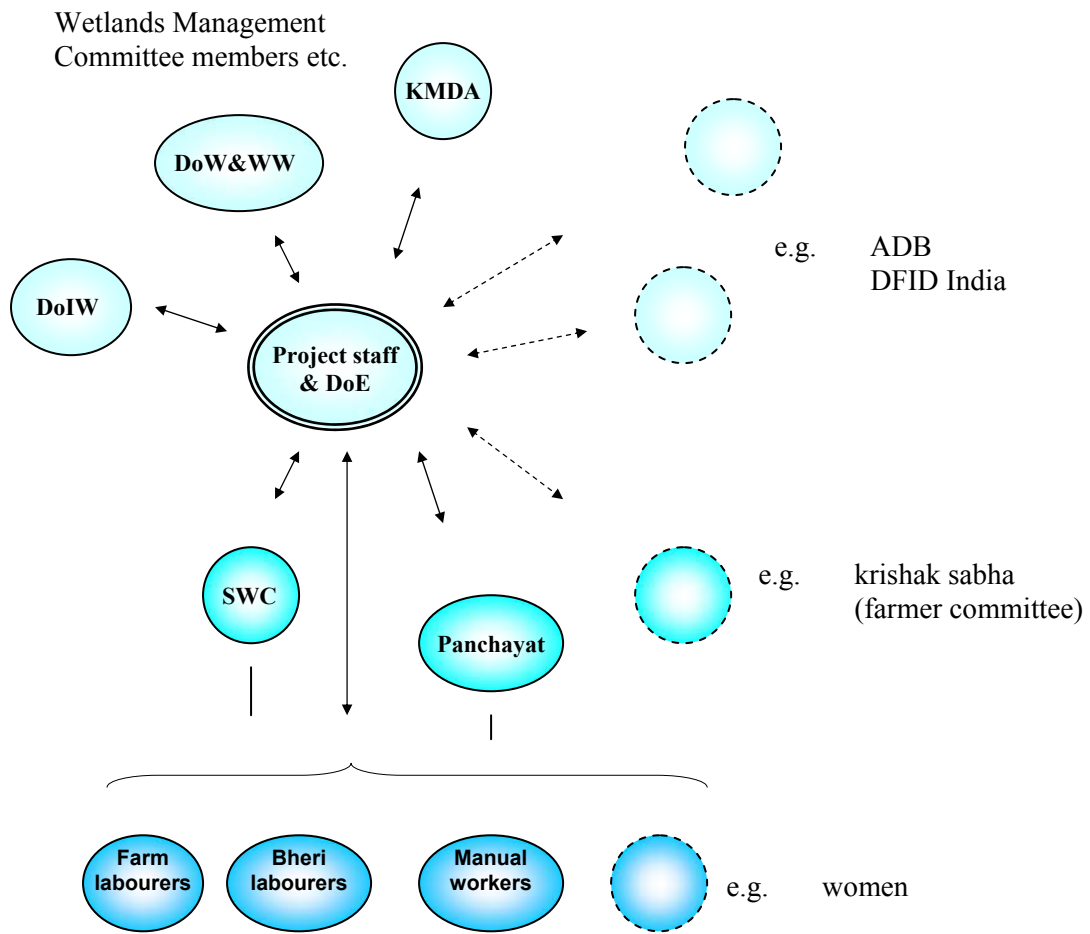
Potential:

What are the prospects for engaging with this type of stakeholder? In what capacity are they (the individual or the stakeholder type) useful to future action planning and implementation? What potential does the planning process have according to this individual?

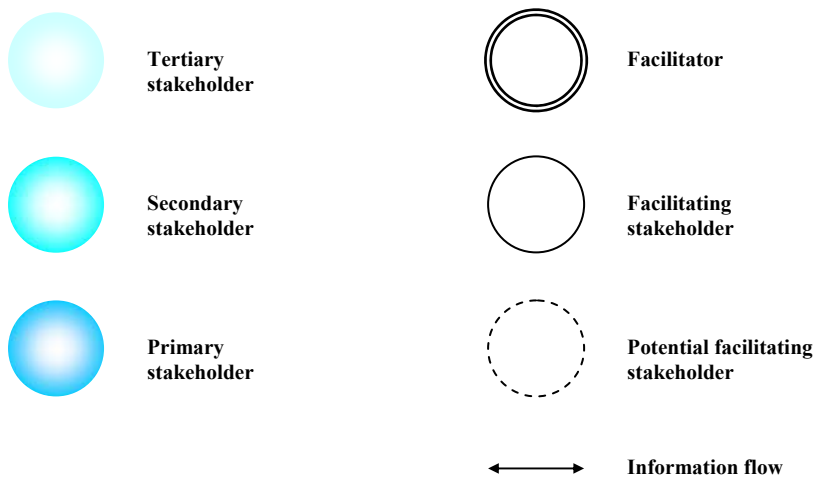
Depending on the level of knowledge of the interviewee some background to the objectives and approach of the project will need to be provided during this discussion.

This approach should let us develop a summary report that outlines Participation & engagement, Knowledge, Attitude, and Potential across a range of stakeholders.

Figure 1. The stakeholders interacting with the project.



Key



Stakeholder Feedback

Tertiary stakeholder 1 (Mr Barari, CEO Dept. of Environment)

Participation & engagement:

The interviewee had been involved in two of the three major stakeholder workshops in the city (government and stakeholders' workshops).

Knowledge:

The CEO was aware of the project's purpose but did not appear well-informed of the process adopted or of progress made.

He was aware that desiltation was the main constraint in the wetlands and a major focus of the project.

He explained the significance of the pending High Court declaration with respect to future integrated planning in the wetlands.

Attitude:

He believes sustainability to be the main concern and expressed his interest in micro-level planning

Potential:

The High Court ruling will allow the EKWMC to perform a planning function. He discussed potential sources of funding such as JICA for local planning and desiltation efforts.

He stated that the KMC should be supportive of desiltation initiatives.

Note:

There appears to have been limited communication between the project and the CEO. However, within the DoE, IW MED are best placed to facilitate regular planning at the wetlands level.

Tertiary stakeholder 2 (B.P. Ghosh, Executive Engineer Dept. Irrigation and Waterways)

Participation & engagement:

B.P. Ghosh had been involved in the Government and Stakeholder workshops.

Knowledge:

The EE appeared unaware of the specifics of project purpose and its activities but aware of the wider EKWMC remit and recent desiltation plans.

Attitude:

The EE expressed an interest in the STEPS-formulated local plans and is keen to see draft plans and check canal status on behalf of the project. However, the feeder canals (private and local canals) identified as potential pilot projects appear not to be under the jurisdiction of the DoIW (see below).

Potential:

The remit of DoIW does not extend to the local level canals discussed within STEPS (apparently the responsibility of the panchayat) so the DoIW's role in facilitating local planning may be limited. However, their role in an overall strategy for the wetlands is obviously key while at an intermediate level they have provided support to fish pond interests through sluice gate management and the pending installation of new pump-sets.

Note:

The discussion focussed on DoIW's remit and financing constraints (difficulties raising local fees for extraction etc.) rather than a role for the project.

Secondary stakeholder 1 (Mr Tamal Dey – bheri leaseholder and SWC)

Participation & engagement:

The interviewee had been involved in one of the three major stakeholder workshops in the city (29th January – stakeholders' workshop).

His involvement in the project and the team appears to be through his regular contact with Nitai Kandu as SWC member discussing aquaculture-related problems and plans over several years - rather than through particular contributions to project-specific activities.

Knowledge:

The interviewee could not differentiate between this project and the overall process of research, consultation and EKWMC formation and work over the last three years.

He correctly acknowledged the workshop as a means to “discuss sustainability and plans for land-use”.

Attitude:

He believes that the workshop generated useful interaction and reasoned discussion.

He appreciates the work and dedication of Nitai Kandu.

His only complaint related to the limited funds available for local initiatives, not the project.

Potential:

The discussion process was valued – “it can raise awareness of illiterate and government alike”.

Small beneficiary committees should be established in order to implement plans (a potential next stage after STEPS).

There is great potential for farm diversification (floriculture, ducks and pig rearing etc.) and infrastructure development (electricity, roads and markets).

A nodal management agency is required to coordinate planning in the wetlands as exists in the Sundabans.

Secondary stakeholders 2&3 (Mr T. Ghosh and Mr. S.D. Ghosh - SWC members & co-operative secretary / bheri leaseholder, respectively)

Participation & engagement:

The interviewees had been involved in two major workshops (NGO and stakeholder's workshops) as well as the regional problem census and earlier reconnaissance. They were not involved in the STEPS activities

Nitai Kandu has regularly interacted with these two bheri representatives before and during the project, particularly concerning the establishment of a new pump-set which will improve the supply of water/sewage to the fisheries of Regions 2, 3 and 4.

Knowledge:

They understand the project is trying to reach agreement on the sustainable development of the Wetlands but see the fisheries as its focus. It is unlikely they see the project as attempting to institutionalise or influence the process of planning in the future or that the various project activities are intended to link local concerns with management for the area in general.

Attitude:

They appreciate their linkage to IW MED and the efforts of Nitai Kandu on their behalf.

Mr. S.D. Ghosh was willing to read and give feedback on one of the local interventions derived through STEPS.

Potential:

The interviewees expressed the potential for developing the capacity of the fishery, rather than any participatory planning process or integrated approach to management of the wetlands (this centred on public awareness and economic diversification).

They stated that long-term planning could be achieved.

They were investigating ways to register the SFC as a NGO under a new name to gain greater influence with government initiatives.

Note:

The coordination of the major workshops is seen by several stakeholders as a project achievement or endpoint in its own right.

Most project activity has overlapped with secondary level stakeholders (in particular, the various members of Save the Wetlands Committee) rather than related departments at government level.

Secondary stakeholder 4 (Potential participant) – Panchayat member (education & health) Sagar Mondu, Region 4)

Participation & engagement:

n/a

Knowledge:

The member was not aware of the project, its activities or purpose.

The Panchayat member provided some detail on the process of local desiltation (most local link canals come under the jurisdiction of the Panchayat, not DoIW, for instance).

For private desiltation, permission is not normally required.

Each Panchayat will know which canals are under their jurisdiction.

Attitude:

The Panchayat official seemed enthusiastic about the approach of the project – “*bottom-up is possible*”, “*they should talk to us*” etc.

She believed that local people should consult together with Panchayat in discussion and planning activities such as STEPS.

Potential:

Specific Panchayat members are assigned to desiltation and canal issues. The agreement and support of these members should be sought in future.

Primary stakeholder group 1 (women, Region 4 – derived through FGD).

Participation & engagement:

A problem census and discussion of potential solutions had been undertaken at the site - the women that attended did not participate in this FGD, however.

The women were from a village about 4 miles from the nearest STEPS planning and were unaware of it.

Until this time, the project had not pro-actively engaged with women at this or any other site.

Knowledge:

They have no knowledge of project-specific planning.

Attitude:

It is not clear that these women any interest in a potential planning role.

Potential:

It is not clear that these women would have interest, or a sanctioned role, in new local planning. They expressed their disinterest in planning issues.

