

**NATURAL RESOURCES SYSTEMS PROGRAMME**  
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The PAP process - modifications of the PAPD approach.  
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## 1. Introduction

PAPD (Participatory Action Plan Development) principles and tools were used as the basis for the training and planning approach adopted in the EKW<sup>1</sup>.

PAPD is a workshop-based consensus building and planning tool that works by building mutual awareness of livelihoods strategies and concerns between different interest groups. The tool was developed and tested in Project R7562 by the Centre for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) in Bangladesh and the Universities of Newcastle and Durham in the UK.

The PAPD process requires intensive facilitation over 7-10 days and applies a fixed sequence of problems census, problem-solving (in separate groups and plenary), feasibility analysis and finally commitment to act and develop an implementation committee. At key points, influential stakeholders such as local political leaders are invited to witness the discussions and to add gravitas to the planning process.

Briefly, in the context of floodplain Bangladesh, PAPD has appeared to:

- instil a sense of ownership of plans by involving the range of poor stakeholders directly;
- create links between the poor and facilitating or enabling institutions such as local government;
- create widely supported and detailed plans and to devise the structure of future implementing committees;
- build mutual awareness between “competing” interests (livelihoods) groups;
- and so, build social capital or consensus, locally.

To date, PAPD in Bangladesh has been applied as a supportive activity within larger NRM projects with their own predefined sets of objectives and activities. In the case of the Community-Based Fisheries Management Project, for instance, PAPD is deployed to gain support and enthusiasm for sustainable and pro-poor management changes, local negotiation and the use of new management committees. Consensual planning is a means to highlight the inter-connectedness of floodplain stakeholders and the opportunity for simple interventions that cross-cut their needs and concerns. After the PAPD, the emphasis changes to exploring the potential of other IFM options (alternative dry season water use, effort control, fish sanctuaries etc.) with project facilitation.

In the case of this peri-urban planning for the EKW, both the context and objective were quite different. Rather than operating horizontally to develop understanding and agreement between local stakeholders, the intention here was to explore a planning process that can result in feasible pro-poor actions with government support and facilitation. This necessitated a mechanism to “report back” local level issues and suggestions to intermediaries such as farmer or fish pond-operator organisations and to government institutions. Contributions to planning by the poor, as primary stakeholders, were provided at distinct periods within the process but not continuously.

The planning process was not conducted specifically to build consensus but to develop feasible pro-poor plans with the required backing and to test the suitability of the pilot process to Kolkata and other PUI settings. The project team acknowledged that the production of new knowledge regarding PUI planning had greater priority than the successful implementation of

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<sup>1</sup> Other PU planning processes were reviewed but offered less specific guidance on mechanisms and activities (see Lewins, 2005).

a process or resultant actions. In this respect, monitoring took greater precedence than it would within established methodologies such as PAPD<sup>2</sup>.

The scale and complexity of the EKW production system provided special problems regarding proper representation and the identification of potential actions that can benefit the range of poor stakeholders simultaneously without significant negative impacts on other users or livelihood functions of the system.

## 2. Modifications to the PAPD process and their significance

The key differences between the EKW PAP and PAPD are outlined below and summarised in Table 1.

### 2.1 Scale and disaggregation of the system and primary stakeholders

PAPD operates locally, bringing in individuals from representative households of several villages, each of which interact directly with a relatively distinct waterbody. The groups and households are identified as “representative” through a pre-workshop period of social reconnaissance with key local informants whereby major livelihoods interests are uncovered and discussed. The resulting stakeholder groups are livelihoods-based but wealth-ranking can delineate these groups further (large and small farmers, for instance). Gender aspects of NRM are also considered so that women normally comprise one of the groups. Ultimately a workshop of about five stakeholder groups, each represented by 15-20 individuals, is conducted over a period of approximately one week.

In this project, an early challenge for the research team was to deconstruct the EKW in order to provide a manageable but representative process. The scale and complexity of the EKW provided special problems as it would in most peri-urban contexts. The EKW extends over 12500 hectares and supports the livelihoods of approximately 60,000 people. It was important that the number of participants was not too large as to make the process unworkable or unwieldy but that potential plans were significant and wide enough to benefit considerable numbers of people and so achieve serious consideration and support by government agencies.

Following a pre-project phase of mapping and field survey by IW MED the project team elected to demarcate the wetlands by land use character (aquaculture, agriculture and mixed agriculture and aquaculture). The survey accumulated information on local management, livelihoods and water management issues and re-affirmed findings from R7872.

The division into eleven regions was intended to: 1) reflect broad similarities in livelihoods activities (and so NRM interests and concerns) *within* the regions and to 2) reflect distinct hydrological differences *between* the regions<sup>3</sup>.

The project did not intend to test an approach to build consensus or social capital via mutual learning between stakeholders. Acknowledging the hydrological and land-use characters of the various regions, however, helped the facilitator and participants consider externalities or downstream impacts from proposed actions (e.g. the impact of re-excavating fish-pond feeder canals on other regions dependent on irrigation for agriculture).

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<sup>2</sup> PAPD was evaluated in this way during R7562 (FTR: Section 5). PAPD was monitored for change with respect to social capital, the level of understanding within the workshops and the spread of knowledge within local communities.

<sup>3</sup> There was apparently no consideration of administrative boundaries in this classification.

*The decision to demarcate the EKW by land use*

Consensual planning theory highlights the distinction between zero-sum games that represent compromise, and positive-sum games that benefit all stakeholders simultaneously (see Lewins et al, 2001). These latter “win-win” plans are more likely to be widely supported and reach the implementation phase. In the case of the LWI in Bangladesh, water management was found to be both the consistent underlying cause of livelihoods constraints and conflict and the most likely entry point for win-win interventions. PAPD in this context is normally applied to highlight the root cause of these problems and to introduce potential interventions to the range of stakeholders. In particular, de-siltation and re-excavation of water channels can both increase water supply for the benefit of agricultural interests and increase fish recruitment and help fish production, for instance.

Before the 11 regions were identified, training on consensual planning introduced these concepts to the team. With existing knowledge of EKW, brainstorming the livelihoods constraints and NRM issues in its different regions suggested that the supply of water may be the unifying theme for fish producers, labourers as their employees and sharecroppers as agriculture stakeholders. Declining water quality for fish production (declining sewage content) and reduced water supply to agricultural zones to the east and south seemed to relate to canal maintenance and sluice gate management and did not appear mutually exclusive.

The demarcation of the EKW by land use was an attempt to deconstruct the system into manageable and representative units. The objective here was to consult with and represent the objectives, concerns and suggestions of the entire range of stakeholders. Consensual planning requires a democratic process of representation but the scale of consultation had to be sensibly constrained in a process analogous to stratified sampling.

This project attempted a consultation and planning phase with people broadly representative of the 11 regions. However, the project was careful to stress the importance of the planning process in its own right, together with the modest scale of potential interventions in the near future.

*Vertical linkages and the role of political brokers*

The political and institutional complexity of the PUI and EKW requires that potential planning processes balance or negotiate the interests and positions of multiple stakeholders at many levels. Management of the PUI is controlled by overlapping functions and responsibilities that may complement or counteract one another. Superimposed on this is the informal institutional environment that influences the way land use decisions are made within and outside government<sup>4</sup>.

The intensity and diversity of economic activity means that any proposed interventions will have knock-on impacts on other interests including departmental obligations or performance. Although the implementation of actions were not the project’s priority the research team needed to test a planning approach that would ultimately lead to pro-poor action at the EKW and beyond. In this regard, it was crucial that this planning process engaged with both the representative organisations of primary stakeholders and with relevant government institutions – what the team termed secondary and tertiary stakeholders, respectively. Ultimately, it was these stakeholders that would support or hinder interventions and the planning process was intended to communicate the interests and needs of poor stakeholders to groups.

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, there is little open acknowledgement that many landowners of the EKW are opposed to sustainable management of the wetland. This affects the behaviour of government institutions such as the KMDP.

The EKW's proximity to Kolkata increases the diversity of economic interests and increases differences in the capacity to exert economic and political influence. Although PAPD attempts to deconstruct the "community" and acknowledges differences in power, it is assumed that PAPD participants are similarly dependent on NRM improvements and are all vulnerable. The negotiation process in PAPD can be termed "horizontal" in that the stakeholder groups that participate are directly linked to a local and delimited resource and are peers.

Although the issue of institutionalisation of the PAPD process has recently been addressed in the context of Bangladesh charlands (see Coupe, 2005), integration with existing government structures and functions has not been attempted. PAPD has operated in project environments with pre-arranged *modus operandi* with key institutions such as local fisheries departments and their staff and most of these roles are related to project objective (establishment of sanctuaries, training etc.).

In the context of EKW, however, a vertical form of planning had to be tested. Actions with the potential to benefit meaningful numbers of poor will require permission and developing a planning process with key government stakeholders is the most realist way to increase coverage and attempt an ongoing process. The approach combined distinct, formal, interaction as one-off workshops and meetings with secondary and tertiary stakeholder with more ad hoc discussions (see below).

## **2.2. The role of the facilitator**

IWMED have close working relations with several of these secondary stakeholders. The intention was to utilise their existing linkages and leverage with government and their perceived legitimacy and support by their members. Ultimately, they were to function to sanction and negotiate implementation of plans on behalf of primary stakeholders.

During the project, IWMED has sought to meet the demands and objectives of donors such as ADB and DFID in addition to accommodating Ramsar, Federal and State requirements. In this respect, the facilitation by Nitai Kundu and IWMED apparently functioned to meet numerous objectives simultaneously. Three large workshops were intended to discuss and publicise the planning process and preliminary plans but additional stakeholders were invited and related issues discussed. This process helped meet the needs of IWMED but should also have functioned to increase publicity of the PAP process and created new options for financial or technical support in future.

The facilitator in PAPD should primarily be concerned with increasing the level of understanding and empathy between livelihoods groups at the local level. Any implementation of plans is an additional achievement and might occur one year or more after PAPD. Facilitation in this context is about managing the various workshop sessions and guiding participants through a process of learning. The facilitator must ensure that the dynamics between participants remains productive but links between the facilitator and secondary stakeholders are not crucial to PAPD.

PAPD requires good judgement by the facilitator during the early reconnaissance of the locality and the filtering of problems and clumping of solutions but the overall approach is well defined and structured enough to be simply replicated by others.

Testing a PAP methodology in the context of the EKW required a more flexible approach to facilitating dialogue (the ability to exploit new opportunities for discussions as they arise etc.) and with respect to what might constitute a "positive" development (see Lewins, 2005). As a

pilot project, the facilitators were required to document progress and breakthroughs as had been the case for PAPD during Project R7562.

### **2.3. Timing**

PAPD comprises a proscribed sequence of participatory tools and activities along a relatively fixed timeline over one week. The sequence is carefully designed to accommodate all contributions of the participants but to contain the depth and scope of debate within NRM and to move planning towards feasible and acceptable actions. Key to this process are the plenary sessions which provide an end-point to the intra-group planning stages and the opportunity for mutual learning between groups.

The PAP approach piloted at the EKW deliberately adopted a similar sequence of activities and tools but modified the strategy to incorporate the constraints represented by scale and complexity in the PUI context and the different purpose. The key sequence included equivalent reconnaissance, problem census, problem solving (including STEPS) and plenary phases but these activities proceeded over a period of approximately 18 months to incorporate the input of all project regions. In this last respect, problem census and STEPS had to be repeated 11 times.

Where possible, existing knowledge (from the previous project and baseline survey) was used to accelerate the process of demarcating stakeholders/regions and in the facilitation of the STEPS activities to identify potential actions.

The PAP approach attempted to channel local level planning options vertically to the relevant enabling institutions. This required the problem census and STEPS first to identify potential interventions (taking about 6 months) and a parallel process of less directed dialogue with secondary and tertiary stakeholders. Three major workshops were held approximately half way through this process and functioned to publicise PAP objective and discuss early options with representative stakeholders.

These modifications reflect the purpose of PAP in EKW (to pilot a planning approach and gain new knowledge) as distinct from PAPD (to build local level consensus and agreement for future project activities). Accordingly the role and type of participation also differed (see below).

### **2.4. The role of participation**

The planning phase was punctuated by key activities and events intended to test the capacity to develop and promote plans on behalf of the poor. In this respect, participation performed two functions: 1) to enable representative groups of poor to demonstrate local constraints and potential solutions to their livelihoods and; 2) to increase the level of support of enabling institutions such as producer's organisations and government agencies.

In the former case, and relative to PAPD, participation was relatively extractive because discussions focussed on the quick identification of problems framed by the research team - in this case, NRM issues related to water management. The role of participation could be described as "functional" in that the scope of the contribution of participants was pre-determined by project facilitators and purpose (Pimbert and Pretty, 1994). In the PAPD context, although the scope of discussions and planning is carefully focussed on NRM and problems with potential solutions, the workshops include carefully facilitated exercises (such as resource use mapping and drawing of seasonal timelines) intended to include all those present.

The local level meetings for problem census and STEPS analysis were less structured in the EKW PAP. The research team convened open meetings with the various stakeholders represented on an *ad hoc* basis. The timing and location of the meetings was discussed with local representatives in advance and the “quality” of discussions and the broad composition of participants and contribution by women recorded (See Annex B-x process doc).

The principles of problem and solutions identification and STEPS analysis were applied but not in the strongly-guided, workshop environment of PAPD. Instead, the facilitators were briefed on the value of STEPS as a planning tool but, crucially, as a means to direct open discussion towards ideas for acceptable and feasible actions for and by local people. In this respect, STEPS provided a checklist to help guide and record the contributions of participants.

The early and extractive stages of problems and solutions identification and STEPS was to provide material for discussion and support at other levels but poor stakeholders at local level were to be provided with feedback on the plans of all 11 regions and the status of government or intermediary support<sup>5</sup>. As a week-long workshop process, PAPD provides no structured mechanism for this verification and feedback regarding secondary stakeholder support. In this case an implementation committee might be expected to liaise with the relevant institutions report back to the community without facilitation.

In the case of participation by relevant institutions in the EKW PAP, the form of interaction was less prescriptive with organisations such as the SWC proactively seeking IW MED regarding proposed interventions<sup>6</sup> or government agencies discussing PAP issues in the context of general EKW meetings.

## 2.5. Significance of the modifications

While the guiding principles of PAPD proved useful to the project with respect to developing well-considered plans and subsequent political backing, the mechanism by which this is achieved required modification in the context of the PUI. The enormous range of interests and the differences in power (the ability to influence change or to block it) between all stakeholders, contrasts with the relatively contained LWI settings where PAPD has been applied. These characteristics are not unique to the EKW or West Bengal and it is likely that participatory planning processes require similar approaches elsewhere.

The key features of these modifications related to representation and the sequence of the activities – starting with local planning and moving to higher-level verification and backing. It is acknowledged here that the demarcation of stakeholders and the land use areas functions to simplify the EKW and may overlook some local level issues and concerns. Similarly, working through influential stakeholders such as the bheri owner associations may result in some concerns of the poor becoming distorted or overlooked. However, the project team recognised the potential role these stakeholders can play in brokering change that will benefit the poor.

It should be noted here that the nature of discussions with these secondary stakeholders as enabling groups, differed from those had with primary stakeholders in the local STEPS planning activities. In the former case, the discussions related to preserving the interests of

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<sup>5</sup> This process will occur after project end and will centre on the discussion of the draft report.

<sup>6</sup> What Pimbert & Pretty (ibid) might term “interactive participation” with the participants contributing to and shaping the process. However, the motive here was to check the progress of local-level action plans (not all associated with the project) rather than headway on representation in the planning process itself (Lewins, 2005).



producers and ensuring political backing for renovation of the system and other technical support. In the case of the STEPS activities, the demands and plans were much more locale-specific and defined (e.g. the feasibility and impact of proposed technical interventions).

The facilitation and management of participatory planning in the PUI is complex in that it is necessary to keep the interest and support of players at multiple levels and to do this simultaneously. In this respect, the approach is not unique. For example, the DFID project *Joint Wetlands Livelihoods* (JWL) in Northern Nigeria is attempting to develop integrated water resources management by demonstrating examples of community planning and action to higher level political stakeholders. JWL maintains dialogue with government agencies as the community plans are developed and implemented. Again, the scale and complexity of the setting requires engagement at several levels.

The logistics of facilitating participatory planning processes in the PUI probably necessitates some simplification and compromise in design. It is not possible to engage all stakeholders in a constant process of discussion and planning and this would obviously not be in the interests of the participants, themselves. What was attempted in this approach was a combination of informal discussion with key stakeholders punctuated by distinct public workshops and planning sessions and strategic points across the EKW to maintain enthusiasm and understanding.

### **3. Summary**

The modifications of the PAPD process were intended to make a testable EKW PAP achievable in the context of the PUI. The key differences related to purpose (to test a planning process rather than to build social capital and reach local consensus) and to scale and political complexity (geographic scale and the number and range of stakeholders). The stages were less structured and were, in fact, adapted during the project but several PAPD principles were retained including the importance of public verification in plenary (in this case, Kolkata meetings), the need for good facilitation in interpreting and filtering potential solutions and the attempt to include relevant enabling stakeholders early on.

Finally, the flexibility of the EKW PAP had consequences for process monitoring. As the planning strategy evolved, the means to record progress had to be adapted from more open-ended reporting to that focussing on key events such as the regional meetings or major workshops that punctuated the planning period.

<b>Modification &amp; its Purpose</b>	<b>PAPD</b>	<b>PAP at EKW</b>
<p><i>Scale &amp; reach</i></p> <p>EKW size requires process to extend beyond village workshop to engage government &amp; user groups &amp; 1<sup>o</sup> stakeholders from entire system. Political complexity of PUI requires vertical links &amp; formal, but more <i>ad hoc</i>, interaction.</p>	<p>Normally LWI sites comprising several villages – project delineated waterbody with agricultural land.</p> <p>Primarily local issues &amp; horizontal negotiation.</p> <p>Minimal role for Union level government representatives &amp; other local/regional service providers such as Local Government Engineering Department.</p>	<p>The mosaic of inter-connected land-use &amp; hydrological zones over 12500 hectares &amp; providing livelihoods (directly &amp; indirectly) to 60,000 people.</p> <p>Local or “regional”* issues discussed but presented as symptomatic of system-wide issues where applicable.</p> <p>Major role for government institutions** &amp; resource user representative groups (fish producers’ organisation, agricultural cooperatives etc.) in negotiation &amp; prospective implementation.</p>
<p><i>Deconstructing the system</i></p> <p>Micro-issues as potential targets for planned actions should relate to livelihood concerns but were predicted to correspond to water use &amp; so be determined by hydrology &amp; existing economic activity.</p>	<p>NRM interests &amp; positions considered to relate to 5-6 broad livelihoods groups. The groups are identified with key informants &amp; may be re-defined by wealth ranking. A subset (approx 20 people) participate form each group.</p>	<p>EKW interests and positions in relation prospective interventions considered to relate to hydrology and economic activity – relating to three basic zones (fish production, agriculture production &amp; mixed). These zones sub-divided by facilitator (IWMED) to 11 regions based on existing knowledge &amp; transect study. Problem census &amp; STEPS conducted with open groups with range of stakeholders from each region (approx. 30 people). Key 2<sup>o</sup> and government stakeholders identified by facilitator.</p>
<p><i>Timing</i></p> <p>Institutional complexity, geographic scale and no. of stakeholders impacts on logistics. Requires repeated engagement with each of 11 regions &amp; re-verification &amp; facilitation between 3 distinct levels of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Approx. 7 day process. Situation &amp; stakeholder analysis before week-long workshops of problem identification, filtering, cause &amp; effect analysis, STEPS and plenary. Finishes with commitment to develop implementing committee.</p>	<p>18 month process. Analysis of EKW stakeholders occurred prior to project over several years (material existed). Similar sequence of problem census, identifying potential solutions, STEPS and plenary. Problem census and STEPS repeated for 11 regions over extended period (approx. 6 months). 3 stakeholder workshops equivalent to PAPD 1<sup>st</sup> plenary – verification process with government and 1<sup>o</sup> stakeholders will work as 2<sup>nd</sup> PAPD plenary after project end.</p>

**Table 1. PUI planning as applied in the EKW – modifications of the Participatory action planning approach (PAPD).**

<p><i>The role of facilitator</i></p> <p>EKW facilitator required to interact with larger constituency of 1° stakeholders &amp; crucially political stakeholders as representatives (unions etc.) &amp; government stakeholders. EKW facilitator acts as intermediary between these 3 levels.</p> <p>The multiple interests of government/donors required facilitator to operate PAP events in parallel with other commitments (to ADB etc.).</p>	<p>Facilitating agency strongly influences identification of stakeholder groups, directs planning activities &amp; sorts/filters feedback in isolation. Facilitator required to achieve broad agreement on feasible intervention at plenary sessions. No negotiation between government stakeholders &amp; facilitator. Facilitator switches to other project related activities post-PAPD.</p>	<p>Facilitating agency identifies stakeholder groups/constituencies independently.</p> <p>Facilitator seeks support for <u>planning process</u> rather than implementation of actions.</p> <p>Facilitator interacts with primary stakeholders, their representative organisations and government stakeholders.</p> <p>Interaction occurs both at discrete events (planning workshops &amp; meetings) &amp; continuously and informally.</p> <p>Facilitator expected to extend the implement phase after project end.</p>
<p><i>The role of participation</i></p> <p>Commitment to planning required input of government and stakeholder representatives.</p> <p>Participation of 1° stakeholders was intended to prove local ability to plan carefully. Plans were extracted for promotion elsewhere by facilitator, <u>not</u> by 1° stakeholders themselves – local political reality required the facilitator to navigate the government and institutional landscape on behalf of the poor.</p>	<p>A sub-set of representative interest groups participate in planning.</p> <p>Participation in planning lasts 1 week, participation in implementation dependent on successful establishment of committee &amp; action.</p> <p>Participation is a means to extract options for interventions, engender ownership &amp; increase local legitimacy of plans.</p> <p>Participation of government stakeholders occurs at two plenary sessions to increase legitimacy &amp; commitment to act.</p>	<p>A sub-set of broadly representative stakeholders from each of 11 regions participates in problem/solution identification and one-off plenary as workshop.</p> <p>1° stakeholders are passive in workshops – representative groups and government agencies state their positions.***</p> <p>Participation is primarily a means to extract options for intervention types for promotion at government level.</p> <p>Participation of government stakeholders occurs at two workshop sessions and <i>ad hoc</i> meetings/discussions with facilitator. Government participation intended to gain support for planning process and intervention types.</p>

**Table 1 - continued. PUI planning as applied in the EKW – modifications of the Participatory action planning approach (PAPD).** \*The 11 regions as defined by the research team and based on hydrological and land-use characteristics. \*\*PAP's function will be dictated by role of DoE, DoI etc. \*\*\*Workshops had potential to validate the contributions of primary stakeholders in planning but meeting format failed to do this (see Annex x).

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