Participation in Integrated Floodplain Management in Bangladesh[1]

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Integrated floodplain management –
Institutional environments and participatory methods

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Introduction

The purpose of this review is to highlight the role played by the participatory process in IFM initiatives in different contexts. As may be expected, there are often discrepancies between project proscribed mechanisms, their intended role and purpose, and the situation that unfolds at the ground in reality. For this reason, the following review complements feedback from project-level interviews and literature with additional observations compiled during process documentation.

Section 1 discusses the role of participation in the nine case study projects and local initiatives analysed for process documentation. The discussion approaches the case studies as representative of three distinct types; GO-facilitated initiatives by DoF and BWDB, NGO-facilitated initiatives by BCAS and MACH and autonomous, locally-facilitated and autonomous initiatives.

Section 2 outlines a framework to describe the participation process and develops a simple typology of the various approaches/objectives of the case studies.

GO-facilitated initiatives by DoF and BWDB[2]

The participation processes in OLP and the Jalmohal Project

Rather than an attempt to explore the potential role of community-based fisheries management or co-management, the OLP is probably better considered as an experiment in community participation in closed water body stocking. The baors were identified as sites of high potential production and the structure and function of the groups that were introduced in 1991 reflected the sectoral objectives of DoF and, at that time, the technological emphasis of Danida.

THE OLP mode of operation was particularly rigid, adopting a “blue-print” approach in rolling-out the various structures an activities to be undertaken. The criteria for project membership (an annual income of less than Tk. 10,000, landholding of less than 0.5 acre and full participation in fishing) and the role and relationships between the various project bodies were all pre-defined. The “bio-socio-technical” approach, as DoF have termed it, restricts the number of fisher group members to 2 per hectare of baor area. Women have been included in the project as members of the Fisher Farming Groups but their impact has been restricted by their limited social legitimacy and by physical constraints for suitable lake-side sites (Khan & Apu, 1997).

The formal role of DoF staff is to form the groups, provide technical advice and support and to help facilitate decisions-making and problem-solving. Process document at Hamdipur revealed a case of “light facilitation” whereby groups had established a loose routine of operation and interaction with DoF for lease fee collection, discussion etc.

Although the objectives and activities within the Jalmohal project are also pre-defined and fixed between the project sites, the process of discussion and negotiation seems to be less structured. In other words, the project structures, themselves are not fixed but appear to evolve, particularly with respect to membership and influence. The National Fisherman’s Association was asked to appoint genuine fishers as members but this process does not appear transparent or participatory in any way. Again,

[2] See Annex B-viii for a more detailed review of BWDB’s Guidelines for People’s Participation.

ongoing DoF responsibilities centre on lease fee collection and support in credit and account management.

In summary, the objectives and approaches of both DoF projects are fixed. The design of OLP is very rigorous (set groups with set responsibilities and relationships to one another) while the Jalmohal project is effectively concerned with distributing inputs (fingerlings) as effectively as possible with minimal negotiation or consolidation of groups.

The participation processes in CPP

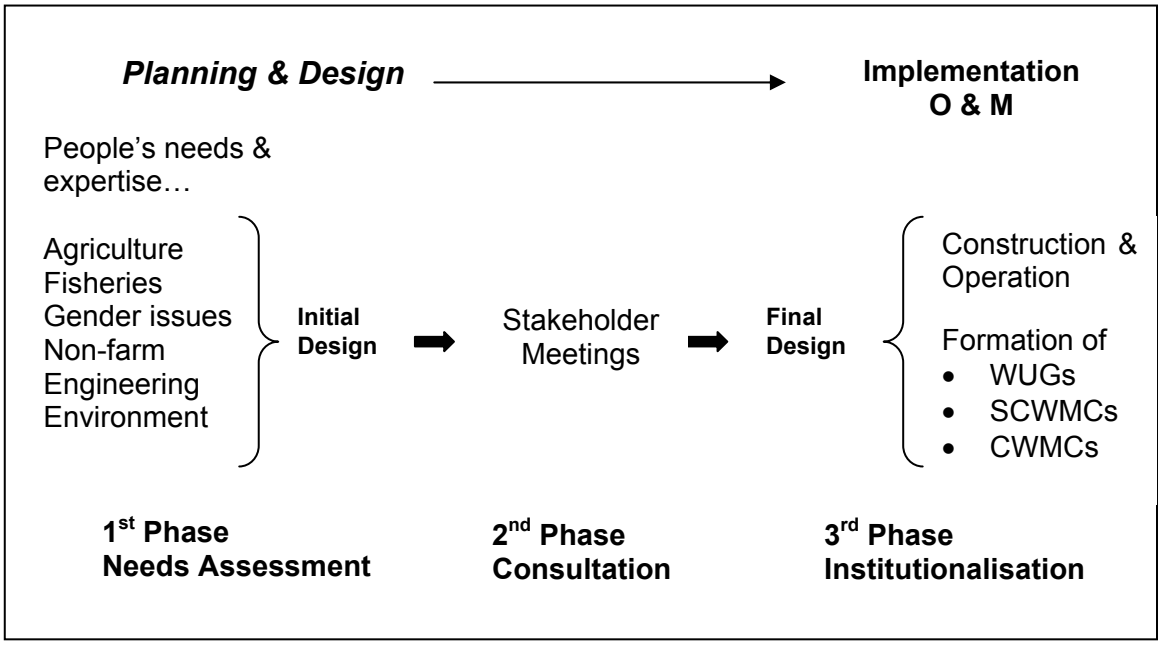
The CPP literature placed great emphasis on participation and its institutionalisation, either through the use of existing institutions or the establishment of new project-specific bodies. Linkage with local government was to be strengthened and water management was to be treated as a continuous process whereby project systems would be reviewed and modified accordingly. The key structure to achieve improved water management was to be the three-tier model of Water User Groups (WUGs) or Chawk Committees, Sub-Compartmental Water Management Committees (SCWMCs) and Compartmental Water Management Committees (CWMCs).

Local representation was built from the base during the early needs assessment phase of CPP. Consultations with community representatives identified individuals willing to participate within sluice gate committees termed Chawk Committees[3]. In turn, a Chawk Committee member was chosen to represent local interests at the sub-compartment level. The SCWMCs were an important interface between primary stakeholders, projects staff and local government (several members of the Union Parishad were included in the committee). The CWMC was intended to coordinate the operation of the entire polder and the allocation of labour groups. As such, the CWMCs comprised BWDB staff with engineering expertise and other local GO personnel.

The Guidelines on People's Participation in the Planning and Design Phase (May 1994) demonstrates clearly that the project's preferred model of participation was one of co-management whereby partnership between the three tiers and with supporting GO experts was to be fostered. In this respect, the guidelines are explicit in rejecting the notion of participation as the empowerment of communities in isolation.

The CPP was intended to roll-out in three phases (Box 1.). Interestingly, the movement towards community-operated structures within CPP was partly driven by a consideration of cost. In the past, compartment management by the implementing body (usually the BWMC) had proved costly and ineffective. The strategy was to ensure that local stakeholders benefit directly and had an interest in maintaining project infrastructure.

[3] Once project activities had started BWDB's Water User Groups had been re-aligned to the polder context and renamed Chawk Committees.



Box 1. The three phases of CPP activities. (Modified from "Guidelines on People's Participation in the Planning and Design Phase", May 1994.)

Participation at the planning and design stage was considered essential if local support was to continue through to later phases. It was also intended that there would be cross-fertilisation and sharing of experience between CPP and the Systems Rehabilitation Project. However, as a project with a strong sectoral and government involvement, planning and participation still tended to be framed in terms of "*how to implement set goals and objectives*" rather than as a means to assess local needs and re-align joint-strategies.

Several reviews of the participation process were commissioned during the lifespan of CPP, both to update donors and to inform a GO and professional audience of potential problems and suitable practice within the project. In 1992, for example, a baseline survey was conducted to assess the level of participation in the project and the level of local knowledge of existing institutions (Tangail Interim Report: Annex 1.3 Multi-disciplinary sub-compartmental survey, September 1992). Participation levels were low across all stakeholder groups but fishers were better informed of NGO, co-op and credit activity in the Tangail district.

Given the technical constraints and remit of CPP, it was acknowledged that only some of the proposed community management options could be accommodated and, in this respect, the project had to be careful in presenting its purpose from the outset. In turn, the project's preferred use of participation as a means to collaboratively design and develop local institutions also required local input from the earliest stages. It was intended that institutionalisation (the consolidation of the Water User Groups) would occur simultaneously with the consultation process.

Surveys such as those within the Tangail Interim Report were intended to provide two-way feedback (not just to update project managers and staff, but to discuss development options with local interest groups). Interest was to be promoted by demarcating project boundaries and firming up details of potential project activities.

The separate interest group meetings during Phases 1 & 2 were not dissimilar to some stages of PAPD. A sociologist was to introduce the concept of the project (and

the meeting) and an engineer explain the technical aspects of the project. The team would then prepare a matrix to show the planned technical interventions and their potential positive and negative impacts. This would help elicit input from the group and highlight any potential conflicts between users so that plans could be modified. Finally, a specialist allocated to the stakeholder group in question (an agronomist, female sociologist etc.) would facilitate questions and answers. The second phase arranged combined meetings to demonstrate the main concerns of each interest group to the wider community and to seek alternatives to reduce conflict. This phase was to be conducted by the team sociologist and the comments recorded were passed on to the project planning team:

> *"Once all first phase meetings in a sub-compartment are finished, the project planning team goes through the reports to see if the planned interventions can be adjusted in the light of the comments received."*

While the institutionalisation of local project activity was a priority, the project reports demonstrate that there were, in fact, significant problems. From the beginning it was felt that local government representation was required at certain levels within the three-tier structure. In particular, Union Parishad members were to be represented at SCWMC level but later project reviews revealed some reservations over the role of local government. For instance, the Donor Review Mission (1997) recommended that local government representation should be limited within the SCWMCs. The report suggested that gate operation was carried out at a personal level by project staff rather than through committee agreement and went on to recommend that NGOs and GOs (including BWDB personnel themselves) should not have an automatic right to representation within these committees. It was felt that their role as facilitators and advisors, rather than participants, had to be reinforced[4].

By Phase 3 of the project a better understanding of these institutional shortcomings had been established. 15 SCWMCs and 100 Chawk Committees had been established and the following observations were made by the Mission report (1997):

- The management objectives of the compartments are not well understood by the SCWMCs or the ChWMCs.
- Farmers are better informed than other groups.
- The interests of low land and high land former groups were not being specifically accommodated.
- There was some conflict over water management decisions during the monsoon.

At this stage, the emphasis was on upscaling the project horizontally and of ensuring that operational rules of the various project bodies were well defined and understood. Upscaling was to be achieved by demonstrating Chawk Committee formation and the development of management plans so that these might be taken up by all chawks within the sub-compartment. In turn, each Chawk Committee was to be represented within its corresponding SCWMC. Confusion over committee remit was to addressed by establishing clearer TORs down to the level of the sluice gate operators. There was also now an acknowledgement that participatory water management within the polders had to reconcile the different interests of a greater number of groups than previously anticipated:

[4] Project reports suggest that CPP recognised both the need to accommodate local government and of the potential problems that might result from this. The Donor Review Mission (1997) implies that gate operation decisions may heave been influenced by the Union Parishad while in the Semi-Annual Report (1998) it was recommended that four Union Parishad members should be included in each SCWMC to increase its authority.

"The water management organisation to be evolved during the final phase has to install a capacity to operate the water management system according to a set of rules and regulations formulated by project satisfying requirements of the land users. The organisation must be adequately represented by different interest groups. The organisation should also be able to solve conflicts between different interest groups and between the water management units (Chawks, Sub-compartment, Compartment)." (Donor Review Mission, 1997).

The participation process in DWMP

DWMP acknowledged that water development projects to enhance agricultural production had all faced serious constraints to their sustainability. By 2001, in excess of 550 projects had been undertaken by BWDB but there was seen to be a serious problem with the lack of local O&M for completed infra-structure and facilities. The participatory approach adopted by DWMP was intended to avoid the decline in infrastructure experienced at the SRP sites and build in some element of cost recovery that EIP had failed to do[5]. The document "*People's Participation in DWMP*" (2000) emphasised a need to move DWMP's approach to participation beyond BWDB's "blue-print" approach of establishing target numbers of Water User Groups, Water User Committees and Water User Associations each with fixed membership rules and remits. The strategy at Dampara was to keep the design of stakeholder groups as participatory as possible.

In retrospect, DWMP's approach to participation was also framed by external aspirations, in this case that a flood control embankment would indeed be built in the area. In addition, although participation was established very early in the implementation of the project, it was primarily an attempt to quickly and efficiently identify the land to be used, introduce a mode of negotiation and reduce conflict between the plot-owners[6]. However, the project's emphasis on real, early public inclusion was commendable and, in keeping with the Guidelines on Participation in Water Management, was intended to increase the prospects for sustained O&M after project support (see Box 2.).

The early negotiation phase was very effective in securing general agreement on the alignment of the embankment and the formal acquisition of the land by the government. Discussions were held in public to ensure transparency and build the level of trust between project staff and the community and between community members, themselves. Community Development Officers answered queries in public or private and helped the landowners with the legal an bureaucratic aspects of selling

[5] Reviews of the EIP emphasise some of the O&M problems related to the withdrawal of BDWB from the projects and the subsequent decline of infrastructure requiring expensive GO interventions (for example, Datta et al, 1998). Reviews of the SRP experiences also stressed the inability of projects to design appropriate forms of self-maintenance and revenue generation. As Soussan (1998) states; "*At present the organisational base, social legitimacy and legal basis for cost recovery are all absent and it is likely that the costs of collection will be greater than the sums collected. The chances of successfully developing cost recovery in flood control and drainage schemes (most SRP schemes), where the benefits are less direct and means of collection less apparent, can consequently be considered minimal unless there is an appropriate, locally-based institutional structure in the first place*."

[6] The area had been surveyed by the BWDB three years previously and local land owners were both nervous of losing their plots and resentful that BWDB may dictate the path of the embankment.

land. A process that may normally take between 12-18 months was completed within 3 months.

Early efforts to encourage group formation during this negotiation phase were unsuccessful and were met with suspicion. There had been no local experience of transparent or accountable management or any form of revenue collection that was not controlled by the elite. By offering advice on group formation, the drafting of bylaws and other forms of light support, this distrust was overcome and by 2000 all 12 communities had formed groups with draft bylaws, elected members and group funds. An organisational model had been suggested by DWMP but this was taken forward and moulded by the groups into something rather more flexible. The groups were especially adamant that they did not require facilitation or support by local NGOs. Under the facilitation of the Community Development Officer, these Embankment Groups (EGs) took on greater responsibilities eventually negotiating their maintenance responsibilities with BWDB in return for new income opportunities via the embankment plantations.

A second set of CBOs were initiated by CIDA, this time with the support of the local NGO, Sabalamby Unnayan Samity (SUS). The function of these Channel Groups was to manage the operation of flood regulators along each of the two flood prone channels. The NGO's interesting organisational model was applied here (representative numbers of poor, medium and rich stakeholders are elected to a Village Development Committee (VDC), each of which is then allocated distinct channel management responsibilities).The 16 VDCs then formed a single Regulator Operation and Maintenance Committee (ROMC) to oversee management during times of flood. It was intended that this ROMC would negotiate O&M responsibilities with the BWDB.

The participation process in KJDRP & EIP at Polder 22

In December 1996, a four-tier system of Water Management Organisations (WMOs) was established under KJDRP. This rigid structure was to form the basis for participation in the project area and was intended to follow the Guidelines for People's Participation and Guidelines for Participatory Water Management[7].

The key participation function within the project was intended to operate at the third and fourth tiers of the KJDRP model within the Water Management Association WMAs and the Water Management Federation (WMF), respectively. At the time of their formation, the WMAs were seen as an important step towards beneficiary participation in design, construction and O&M because they represented a convenient focal point for BWDB interaction with local stakeholders. The WMAs were subsequently registered as multi-purpose cooperative societies, legally obliged to operate as 'joint partners' with BWDB to conduct O&M in each project zone. The local beneficiaries that participated at the local level (members of the households in the project area) did so by becoming WMG members and shareholders.

The Landless Groups (LLGs) and Fisher Folk Groups (FFGs) were formed to widen participation in the project at each catchment and were later registered under the Cooperatives rules.

[7] However, there are several examples of local initiatives for water management in the area (eg. the Beel Dakatia public cuts in September, 1990 and Beel Bhaina public cuts in 1998-99).

At Polder 22, and in the light of previous SRP and EIP experience and recommendations, water management initiatives have attempted to gain the support and participation of local target groups. Embankment Maintenance Groups (EMGs) and the Landless Contracting Society (LCS) were involved in local earthwork. During EIP, local stakeholders successfully undertook the construction and maintenance of water management structures but the level of participation has declined post-project (see Section PD). BWDB activity at Polder 22 has been strongly linked to NGO activity and facilitation, first through Delta Development and then by "Nijera Kori", post-project. Delta Development's early approach focussed on the participation of local stakeholders through local management committees and linkage with secondary stakeholders such as local government and relevant departments.

Guidelines for Participatory Water Management - Ministry of Water Resources (2001)

The Guidelines were intended to complement the National Water Policy of 1999 and were drawn up by a task force including DAE, WARPO, Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) , DoE, DoF and DoL. By consulting widely, the intention was to learn from the experiences of different sectors and to ensure its relevance to the full range of water-related agencies.

The central objective of the Guidelines is to develop the long-term capacity of local stakeholders in the management of water resources, to develop a local ownership ethos and to ensure fair outcomes for project-affected persons (PAPs). In this regard, the Guidelines were intended to apply to public–funded and private water development initiatives, all stakeholders (including NGOs) and to all stages of the project cycle. The Guidelines emphasised that management and participation should centre on the hierarchical model of Water Management Organisation, comprising the Water Management Federation, Water Management Associations and, at the local level, the Water Management Groups. The emphasis was very much on devolving decision-making and O&M responsibility to the WMOs at all stages of projects and cost recovery and financial sustainability appeared to be a key objective.

Where local O&M was to be the responsibility of WMOs and PAPs, local government and NGOs were also to be active partners and facilitators in projects and initiatives. The Union Parishad, for example was to provide support to project activities while NGOs were hoped to provide feedback on PAPs and undertake the participatory work. The Guidelines were intended to extend the range of agencies responsible for successful interventions and to shift responsibility from BWDB and LGED as projects develop: -

> *"The future role of the implementing agencies will gradually reduce and thereby make room for other stakeholders to participate in different stages of the project cycle for participatory management."*

Six phases were envisioned:-
The *pre-feasibility study* was to resemble problem census with a full range of local stakeholders at public meetings. The *feasibility study* would uncover potential positive and negative impacts on PAPs and would encourage local discussion of trade-offs and alternatives ("…identify any opposition to a proposed intervention and mitigation measures acceptable to the PAPs"). *The Planning Design and Stakeholder's Institution Building* phases were intended to uncover local alternatives to expert design. The emphasis was technical, providing the project team with additional information for the preparation of plans and providing a source of local knowledge. This phase would include the design and registration of the WMOs and the development of compensation plans for PAPs and would establish a "scheme portfolio" (problems, plans and costs). An Implementation agreement between the WMOs and the implementing agency will be signed to stipulate roles and responsibilities. The *Implementation and Trial Operation* phase includes trial activities achieved through local participation and physical support to construction by the WMOs and the Labour Contracting Society (LCS). *Operation and Maintenance* will encourage an ownership mentality and highlight local responsibility for cost recovery and maintenance. Conflict resolution plans will be applied. *Monitoring and Evaluation* will draw on local people's perspectives of important issues and focus on project progress.

Membership of the WMOs, is intended to be completely open and may represent a range of formal and less formal groups (WMAs must be registered, however). The Guidelines and their implementation will be monitored by the Task Force for Participatory Water Management on behalf of WARPO, who will, in turn, report to the Ministry of Water Resources.

Box 2. The Guidelines for Participatory Water Management (Ministry of Water Resources, 2001) summarised.

NGO-facilitated initiatives by BCAS and MACH

The participation process in SEMP

Women were intended to play an important part in informing the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of the project. SEMP placed great emphasis on involving women in educational activities and key individuals were to be trained as "conservation educators" or as environmental monitors.

The Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) was to draw on previous experience with participatory approaches at Chanda but SEMP had a pre-defined model for the approach to participation and its role within the project. The first phase ("Assessing & Planning Sustainable Wetland Management") was to incorporate an early assessment that would allow villages and the project team to reach an understanding of local options. This was to be followed by a planning component that would lead to the joint-development of an action from staff and the community. This latter provided a similar function to problem census within PAPD – joint-identification of key issues and areas requiring intervention which then lead on to developing suitable indicators for detecting changes.

The next phase of the SEMP ("Ecosystem Analysis & Planning") was to expand this identification of priorities and options into the development of a strategy together with a framework for implementing these activities and monitoring them. It was anticipated that a wide range of PRA tools would make this process participatory and public[8]. Project activities were intended to be participatory from the outset. For instance, a baseline survey was to be conducted by both staff and local participants to form a basis and checklist for future monitoring and data collection. This "Participatory Resource Mapping, Assessment and Prioritisation of Habitat Restoration Interventions" was intended to build awareness and support of project activities and provide feedback to the community.

The participation processes in MACH

MACH attempts awareness raising through a number of approaches (community introductory meetings facilitated by MACH personnel, schools environmental education programmes, music and theatre performances etc.). Project participants may also interact with Caritas as recipients of skills development schemes but there is apparently no set mechanism by which participants can influence the approach to training or discuss and resolve related livelihoods issues.

However, the continued interaction between primary stakeholders and the project is centred around the running of the Resource Management Organisations (RMOs) and the implementation of their plans at sub-committee level. Staff from the Centre for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) have the main responsibility to facilitate communication between the project and local people through the running of MACH workshops with a range of stakeholders. Initial interaction with the community aimed at explaining project objectives in an attempt to sensitise local people to environmental issues and to address any "socio-psychological queries and worries". The meetings were conducted at several levels (village or courtyard Uthan Baithak meetings, for instance) with a wide range of stakeholders or in sessions dedicated to just one stakeholder group.

[8] SEMP documentation outlined two sets of activities for the haor and floodplain sites. However, activities and approaches largely overlapped between the two contexts.

The coverage of the introductory meetings was impressive. At the Hail Haor site, for instance, 37 of the 40 target villages held meetings that attracted around 1300 people and 28 Uthan Baithaks were scheduled for the two to three years of the project. These early meetings also functioned to select representatives for the RMCs based on their motivation and participation in discussions. A wide range of participants were included (UP members and Chairmen, elites, fishers, farmers, Caritas group members, local media, teachers, leasees etc.).

Other mechanisms to foster involvement (rather than participation, perhaps) included community actions and festivals and environmental awareness raising activities such as Earth Day, Environment Day and Wetland Day, each of which have been observed at all three sites every year. Help was given to design slogans and bill boards with conservation-related slogans.

Other processes of group formation were conducted by the Centre for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) during early socio-economic baseline survey and during the development of the RMOs. The initial socio-economic review by CNRS utilised Participatory Community Planning (PCP) within pre-defined project zones and reduced stakeholders to occupational groups (fishers, farmers, women and landless) for problem census and ranking. The intention was to progress from problem identification and prioritisation to the formation of RMCs and the planning and management of specific interventions on the ground.

CNRS were responsible for the "training of the trainers" (ToT) and of the RMC representatives and an emphasis was placed on participation and group discussion (techniques included group brain-storming, game-playing, lectures, practical demonstrations and role playing). RMCs were encouraged to devise a guidelines manual for wetlands management and a description of the committee formation process and its future role.

Each of the 15 RMOs have regular planning meetings and have developed their own short and long-term management plans. According to the MACH Annual Reports, all action plans and subsequent requests for assistance have originated within the RMOs, themselves. However, the project did intervene when RMO representation was obviously skewed towards elites and professionals. Baseline MACH studies demonstrated that 60% of benefits derived from the wetlands accrue to the poor and the project has subsequently insisted that 60% of the members should be fishers (Mahbur Rahman, pers. comm.).

RMO management plans have stressed fishing restriction and approximately 110 communities have participated in fishing closures or the establishment of sanctuaries.

Significantly, the MACH 2nd Annual Report stresses the need for time in the institutionalisation of sustainable resource management – both in terms of providing visible benefits and returns from project activities and with respect to the establishment of RMCs/RMOs as viable local resource institutions.

However, capacity building activities aimed at the RMC tend to concern the development of technical skills and group understanding (via the Training of the Trainers (TOT) manual of CNRS) rather than support for committee cohesion or decision-making, for instance. The TOT manual provided to the RMC members has an educational function with respect to natural resource management, the

importance of biodiversity and options for local management but also provides advice on the formation and role of the RMCs.

MACH claims that environmental degradation stems from the lack of local economic alternatives combined with the inability of local government to make land-use and resource management decisions. Project reports suggest that short to medium-term objectives have been met and that environmental degradation has largely been arrested.

Locally-facilitated and autonomous initiatives.

The local initiatives (discussed in Annex B-i and B-ii) vary with respect to the groups that influence decisions and with respect to the range and number of users involved in actions. It is clear that at both the Chaptir Haor example documented by the SRP team and the Laksmi Proshad Beel case studied within process documentation that landowners and farmers dictate the timing and characteristics of interventions (embankment cuts, repairs etc.). Additional local activity, such as the establishment of fish traps and fish-guarding groups, then seems to be a function of these decisions made by richer groups. The visible effect is a set of local level initiatives that are apparently consensual. The likelihood is that participants willingly participate in these local initiatives because there are no gains for non-participation.

In the local initiative of swamp forest management at Sunamjang, a rather more complex arrangement operates. A committee, based on the mosque and *samaj*, has evolved as a decision-making body with local legitimacy for some aspects of NRM. The mosque committee now operates a sophisticated, self-financing mechanism of access control and sanctions for resource users. Although the committee has become formalised and transparent with regular public meetings it is not clear to what extent this translates to participation and influence in decision-making. Local residents participate in the sense that they opt in to the system of access control, penalties and fees for resource use.

These cases represent three rather different forms or levels of participation then. They might be represented, as increasing levels of participation in decisions and action, as; collective support and adherence to rulings by locally respected and permanent *samaj* committee (Sunamjang), collective responses by the poor to landowners' initiatives (Laksmi Proshad Beel), and collective activity related to decisions made by formal/informal groupings of influential (Chaptir Haor).

Section 2

The participation process adopted within these case studies can be reviewed with respect to several criteria. Pimbert and Pretty (1994) have developed a typology of participation that focuses on the role played by the actual participant. There is a range of potential roles played by the participant, from "*passive participation*" where stakeholders are totally directed, to "*self-mobilisation or active participation*" where people undertake initiatives in complete isolation from a third party (see Table 1). The three broad categories discussed above (GO-facilitated, NGO-facilitated and locally-facilitated initiatives) differ in the approach they adopt to engage participants, the function that participation is intended to provide and, related to this the duration of the participation process.

Form of participation	Characteristic
Passive participation	People are consulted or directed & with no feedback mechanism from stakeholders. Information gathered is for the 3rd party.
Participation in information giving	Information is extracted but not cross-referenced with stakeholders.
Participation by consultation	Stakeholders are consulted on their opinion of pre-defined options for pre-defined problems. Stakeholders are not required to enter into decision-making.
Funded participation	Stakeholders have cash or food incentives for participating but these incentives may be short-lived.
Functional participation	People participate within externally-facilitated groups, often later on in the project cycle.
Interactive participation	People interact with facilitators to deign locally-appropriate groups ore refine existing ones – potentially cross-sectoral.
Self-mobilisation/ Active participation	Initiatives independent of a 3rd party but perhaps unable to challenge *status quo*.

Table 1. A typology of participation in natural resource management. (Source: Pimbert and Pretty, 1994).

A review of consensus building for NRM in Bangladesh revealed several distinct "types" of approach which reflected both the character of the intervention (the identity of the facilitator, the approach adopted etc.) and, crucially, the desired end-point (Lewins et al, 2001). In this latter regard, there appears to be a gradient between those projects that have predefined objectives and technical targets and require participation to ensure their objective, and those that apply the participatory process in an attempt to identify locally acceptable and sustainable activities and institutional arrangements. In turn, the purpose of participation tends to relate to the facilitator, and so the sector. It is possible to demarcate the case study approaches to participation as a function of their purpose, character and the structures deployed (Table 2.).

Participation Type	*Passive*	*Consultative or Functional*	*Interactive*	*Self-mobilisation*
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Case study	OLP Jalmohal Project	DWMP / CPP KJDRP / EIP	MACH / SEMP	Local Initiatives
Sector & Facilitator	Fisheries (DoF)	Water (BWDB)	Fisheries/Environment (MACH NGOs & BCAS)	(elite, mathbor & mosque)
Purpose	Maintenance of new stocking regimes	Early planning on alternatives O&M of technical interventions	Early consultation, local awareness building Sustainability of RMIs	Seasonal resource maximisation or community sanction
Character of Interaction	Early, 3rd party group formation & light facilitation	Community meeting for planning & inception Group formation & instruction	Continuous, frequent interaction & guidance (conflict resolution, advice, mediation with GOs)	Annual *ad hoc* landowner discussion / formal mathbor groups / samaj – related discussion
Structures	Fixed groups & committees	Hierarchical units based on hydrological scale (WMOs)	Beel, river or village management groups & AIGA-based groups	Loose allegiances between different stakeholders or decisions within pre-existing mosque committee etc.

increasing flexibility in activities

Table 2. The participation process within the IFM case studies as a function of their purpose, character and the structures applied.

Summary

As discussed, the character and purpose of participation within the case study initiatives relates to the objective of the intervention and the remit of the facilitating agency. In the externally facilitated initiatives, the purpose of the participation process, and the institutional structures that develop, become more subtle and sophisticated as they move from implementing pre-defined, sectoral and production objectives to broader community-based NRM issues.

Passive participation in GO-facilitated initiatives (DoF)

As a large Danida-supported project, OLP was able to establish formal roles for BRAC in credit provision and management at the level of the Lake Management Groups. In contrast, although training and technical support are provided under the Jalmohal Project, there is no external expertise available for group formation or other modes of participation. Upazilla level DoF staff have the main responsibility of establishing project meetings and discussion but these duties must be carried out in parallel with the normal DoF remit.

Although, activities within OLP were perhaps less negotiable than they are under the Jalmohal Project, there appears to be a weakness in the process facilitated by the

National Fishermen's Association (NFA). Process documentation has revealed that project participants appointed by the NFA tend to be linked politically, rather than by livelihood or socio-economic characteristics (see Report xx.).

Although there may have been a political pronouncement in this autonomous DoF project, by-passing NGO input and facilitation also had a pragmatic and financial, cost-cutting basis (Begum Anwari, Jalmohal Project Director, DoF). The input of NGOs (particularly national NGOs) would require additional resources but an alternative DoF arrangement appears to be evolving within the Choro Beel Development Project. In this case project management has been devolved to the District Fisheries Officer and DoF staff interact directly with participants without an intermediary.

The current, post-project, situation within OLP may be described as one of "light facilitation" on the part of credit providers and DoF staff. The linkages have been institutionalised over time and there are small but tangible incentives for all these stakeholders to maintain links. The project cannot claim participation as a central theme either during its funded period or post-project, however. The directed and blue-print approach to project management started as early as group formation with DoF's pre-defined "*Criteria of Poverty*" and the exclusion of non-genuine fishers and the strict ceiling on participant numbers would have been divisive. The project literature later outlined additional livelihoods training and support to women and non-fishers but there appears to have been little or no facilitation in this regard. Concerted attempts were made to establish female fisher groups for the management of ponds, however, and these have been relatively successful (Niaz Apu, Socio-economist, Fourth Fisheries Project, pers. com.)[9].

The Jalmohal Project appears to be poorly facilitated with no formal direction to DoF staff or NFA personnel with regards to remit or relationship building. DoF provide their technical expertise in stocking but have no responsibility or skill in negotiating community-wide interventions.

Consultative/Functional participation in GO-facilitated initiatives (BWDB)

The various water sector guidelines on participation are detailed and well-considered but their function and effects need to be analysed in a political and administrative context. Participation was to perform the dual function of ensuring locally-relevant and acceptable interventions and long-term support and local O&M – both of which relate to issues of efficiency. By championing the role of participation, the water sector has effectively been broadening the range of stakeholders responsible for successful and sustainable management (socio-economists, NGO community-organisers, local government institutions etc.).

Participation was also an attempt to improve the O&M of water management structures which has historically been problematic. In part, this reflected the project cycle and the emphasis on O&M in latter stages of project interventions – by the time project funds, and so the presence of BWDB declined, O&M mechanisms were still to be put in place. However, the emphasis on participation appears not to have had the desired impact on institutional sustainability and O&M. Soussan (ibid.) comments how the institutional structures appear to lack the capacity to undertake cost recovery and O&M responsibilities. Process documentation within this project (Annex B-ii)

[9] Initial resistance to these female groups has resulted in some conflict or the inclusion of male members, however.

suggests that this may be both a function of limited facilitation/guidance and incentive (differential impacts of water structures and perceived limits to their amelioration).

The engineering focus of the water sector interventions would have influenced the type of expertise deployed and perhaps the character of local institutions. For instance, the hierarchical design of project institutions within CPP seemed to be a reflection of the hydrological units represented by the polders rather than any social, livelihoods or administrative considerations. In effect, the polders provided a spatial means to demarcate responsibilities and control that coincided with the projects main purpose of flood management. The same design feature was apparent within KJDRP and Polder 22 where the WMAs were situated within drainage units with distinct and delineated hydrological boundaries (referred to as "zones" in the project literature).

Interactive participation in NGO facilitated participation

There is little doubt that the MACH and SEMP projects aim to achieve some form of interactive participation. Although the structures, their remits and their mode of interaction with project staff and the wider community are rather proscribed, the projects attempt to institutionalise local decision-making on behalf of a relatively wide range of local stakeholders. This is particularly the case with MACH, which has developed a detailed exit plan aimed to consolidate project institutions and their links with local government.

As foreign-supported and facilitated projects, MACH and SEMP have added stability and the capacity to engage skilled NGO partners. As a result, interaction between project staff and participants is relatively intense and focussed (partners have distinct remits relating to group formation and facilitating the contributions of these groups to the management of the project).

It may be more accurate to describe interaction in these projects as *de facto* "functional" participation, however. Donors and project managers probably have greater pressure to establish and document participatory NRM than GOs do and the most efficient mechanism for rolling-out these structures is to have their function and mode of operation pre-defined. However, structures and approach must be considered in relation to project objective and in the case of MACH and SEMP, it is probably necessary to fix RMI responsibilities to pre-defined sub-sets of wetlands/fisheries and AIGA management.

As with all externally-facilitated NRM interventions, the role and character of post-project participation is less clear. MACH intends to formalise the various RMI tiers through registration and by establishing detailed modes of operation with local government institutions. In this context, there are issues relating to representation and incentive. At present, the emphasis is on consolidating small habitat management activities in local resource Management Committees that are financially-self-supporting. Without external facilitation, however, it is unclear that formal structures can either maintain the interest of the wide range of local stakeholders or counter-balance more powerful and less representative interests.

Self-mobilisation within locally-facilitated and autonomous initiatives

As discussed above, the three examples of local initiatives (LIs) differ with respect to the role of different groups in decision-making and action. In the case of the mosque committee at Sunamjang, participation, in its widest sense, really only extends to local adherence to committee rules and decisions. The decision-making process,

itself, appears to be exclusive to the *samaj.* The management arrange would appear to work because the *samaj* has the necessary social kudos or respect to enact decisions. In this respect, this LI is in keeping with Pimbert and Pretty's definition of *self-mobilisation / active participation* that stresses that existing assets and power (the status quo) may go unchallenged.

The other LIs discussed have less formal structures and are more significant on a seasonal basis. Embankment cutting and repairs at both Chaptir Haor and Laksmi Proshad Beel are largely the result of declarations by loose affiliations of landowners or farmers. In Chaptir Haor, these discussions may be formal in the sense that they take place at pre-defined locations, such as school buildings, and with locally-recognised mathbor leaders and elites. The process is on a smaller scale and rather less structured at Laksmi Proshad but the outcomes are similar. What make the LIs interesting and significant with regards participation, is the wide range of interest groups that willingly take part in actions. As discussed elsewhere, it appears that in these case the local water management issues cross-cut the interest of most stakeholder groups so that fishers, labourers, share-croppers have mutual concern to complete the work. Although it may be possible to free-ride and enjoy the benefits of other people's labour, there would appear to be personal incentives for participating.

The situation is in contrast with the way local management decisions are made at water sector interventions and the apparently low level of participation within WMGs. This may relate to the way in which structural interventions have polarised the interests of local stakeholders (damaged fishing opportunities or intensified agricultural production for landowners etc.) and inadvertently reduced the potential for collective action through consensus.

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