RLEP

Rural Livelihoods Evaluation Partnership

Support for University Fisheries Education and Research (SUFER)

End of Project Review
15th to 29th June, 2004

Rural Livelihoods Evaluation Partnership,
c/o BETS,
House 10, Road 135
Gulshan 1, Dhaka.
Tel: 9861531-2

James Muir
K.A. Toufique
A. Brooks

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**Support for University Fisheries Education and Research (SUFER)
Review Team Report for the End of Project Review**

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Acknowledgement

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SUFER Project address:

SUFER, University Grant Commission
Agargaon, Dhaka.
Tel: 8124308   Fax: 8124309
e-mail: zaman@ugc.org

RLEP has been established by the Department For International Development (DFID) to: i) manage the project review process for all its rural livelihood projects in Bangladesh, ii) develop a RLEP communications strategy, to identify and facilitate the improvement of systems for lesson-learning and provision of information to decision-makers, iii) facilitate improvements in project monitoring with particular focus on developing project teams' capacity in livelihood outcome monitoring and evaluation and, iv) build up national consultancy capacity.

The Rural Livelihoods Evaluation Partnership is represented by a consortium of three international and two national companies led by the UK based ITAD (Information Training and Development):-

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The SUFER EOPR was carried out from 15-29 June 2004, marking the close of a commitment of 5 years in developing capacity in the nation's primary knowledge agents in the fisheries sector. The EOPR follows an OPR completed in December 2003, which provides further detail on progress in the previous interim.

- The EOPR was carried out in consultation with SUFER staff and stakeholders, and informed by a range of project studies and overviews, and by wider perspectives developed by the DFID RLEP. In addition to assessing overall achievements, it was tasked to identify lessons learned for future investment in poverty focused research, and to determine the project's ability to change the institutional values of organisations in fisheries research.

- As detailed in DFID OPR Annex D (attached) the SUFER purpose "to strengthen human resources, skills and knowledge for poverty-sensitive aquatic resource development by increasing the capability of universities interacting with sector agents to deliver quality graduates and development-linked research" has been partially achieved, with evidence of such strengthening, but insufficient demonstration of fundamental shifts in partnerships and strategic capabilities

- As defined by output and outcome, the table below summarises achievement

Outputs – Revised MTR Sept 2000)	
1. Framework established for sectoral participation in identification, targeting and funding relevant areas of university teaching and research, interacting with regional and international agents, operational by end of year 2,	1. Partial achievement – Programme Management Committee unlikely to outlast project; Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum may have longer-term viability but incentives to continue unclear; some SUFER clients in international/regional theme networks. Fisheries Sector Review provides sector context, and DOF/WB/DFID 4th Fisheries Project is supporting strategy and action plans, in which teaching and research could be located, but little linkage.
2. Sectorally and developmentally relevant university teaching programmes established and delivered in at least 5 departments.	2. Partial achievement; significant improvement in technical content and delivery, but capacity in development-related issues still short of aims.
3. Core groups of staff in five universities develop interactive research capability in conjunction with poverty-targeted end users.	3. Achieved in some groups within SUFER system, with satisfactory evidence of understanding, but questionable whether this will continue in absence of specific targeted funds.
4. Longer-term strategy based on embedded change and good practice developed and accepted within sector networks by yr 5	4. Absence of co-ordinated sector framework (1) limits potential, though sectoral QAS (quality assurance scheme) for teaching provides partial response, and may have longer term UGC/GoB support.
Outcome Areas; (Nov. 2002 strategy	
1. Pro-poor growth in commercial aquaculture;	1. Little evidence for SUFER as links between aquaculture activities and poor groups absent or very poorly defined/understood.
2. University support to public and private sector linkage;	2. Involvement and interest at SUFER client department level with some University support, but largely reactive.
3. Diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal communities	3. Some potential in most recent round of research programmes but needs to be embedded in wider change processes.

- Useful progress can be claimed towards the project's goal, to 'sustainably and equitably manage and develop Bangladesh's aquatic resources', with further potential in longer term impacts of teaching quality and research capability. However this is compromised by the limited perspectives on equity and poverty targeting developed within the project in the time available.

- Though initiated in 1999, significant progress was not made until the Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2000, further gained after the change in TCO Project Co-ordinator in early 2002. Much of what is to be learnt, apart from the initial experience of avoidable operational pitfalls, derives from the last three years' operation. There is a clear picture of momentum and change, and growing confidence in the project and its approaches, brought short at formal closing date

- The project operated a competitive grant scheme (CGS) for both teaching support and research projects, but in a highly managed way in part because of the need to guide and support its clients through a substantial process of change, and also to be proactive in shaping development. The restricted time through which the project was genuinely operational limited the extent to which experience could be built up of the competitive process, and different strategies and mechanisms assessed.

- Although advised at several stages to widen its scope of actions to include social research and involve social development agents, the project did not ultimately succeed in developing a integrated approach to sectoral issues, or more than a small amount of common understanding, of the context in which science and technology could find a practical role in development. Ultimately, much due to the time constraints, the project had developed only a limited experience of interaction with NGOs and the private sector, and little sense amongst the university sector of strategic aims in doing so. Only a limited appreciation of the need for or value of longer term relationships was established
.
- The project's internal procedures for allocating funds for teaching and research awards, initially overly complex and obstructive, were much simplified and become more accessible to the target groups, increasing their incentive and potential ownership of the key principles. This though was to have been combined with a more rigorous approach to developing partnerships and aiming for sectoral/development relevance, and in disseminating outputs. However, this was not routinely followed through and so final outcomes were partial at best.

- An earlier recommendation to focus the project's inputs around clusters or themes and around active and progressive individuals or groups of teachers was only partially realised, by the later stages of the project, and while this resulted in a small range of potentially development-focused work, the development quality, and the impact on change in attitude and performance amongst teachers and their project partners was limited in the time available.

- The issue of poverty targeting of research, and the development of key lessons for future investment in poverty focused research, to inform and enable future investment, was raised only very recently in the course of the SUFER project, yet too early to determine which approaches were capable of developing impact. Throughout the project there has been a problem of mixed messages concerning poverty approaches, related to the difficulty of conceptualising and implementing pro-poor issues, and linking the process with national development objectives. Though these were more closely defined later in the IPRSP and the DFID CAP, there was little evidence of connections being drawn, or their issues being taken up at a practical level. As a consequence, the value of the SUFER project as a testbed was limited by its late evolution and direct closure.

- In terms of mechanisms for CGS operation, the project's results were mixed. Review processes were complex and in some cases over-rigid, and were not in themselves able to promote the creation of a longer-lasting network of development excellence, though records of selection procedures suggested the potential for a critical yet supportive

function of the type which would be required for effective, nationally owned CGS processes. However, further capacity building would be required.

- In spite of earlier recommendations to address the issue of research dissemination (brought from experience in DFID UK research programmes), a communications strategy was only developed, and as yet partially, at the very end of the project. The concepts of uptake and impact, also pointed up in earlier reviews, and again with useful lessons to be learned fro the UK programmes, have hardly been taken up at all, though in the last stages a limited study on impact of 6 research projects (out of 58) has been completed. Drafts of this suggest useful comments but an incomplete perspective and little guidance on how this may be better addressed.

- The value of international advisers in the development research processes was difficult to determine and might only have been realised by maintaining a longer-term approach such as that operated by the IFS (International Foundation for Science) similar to the PAC (Programme Advisory Committee) system operated in the current DFID UK Research programme. Though informal guidance inputs were sought from specific individuals there was no longer-term strategic guidance. The coherence of the project's approach clearly also suffered from management discontinuities at both project and DFID office level.

- SUFER has only partially succeeded in changing the institutional values of organisations in fisheries research, though this was contingent on the effectiveness of its first and third outputs, which were incompletely achieved. Its primary results were in enabling small groups of entrepreneurial teachers and NGOs to interact, potentially beyond the project, and in forming the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum (BFRF), which may gain longer term standing. SUFER research has been well received by the Department of Fisheries, and the public sector Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute participates in the BFRF. However, there is little evidence of wholesale changes in attitude or approach, the research system at this stage being largely reactive to external funding rules.

- With respect to exit strategies for the project, the value of spending a slightly longer period in embedding various late-stage developments; building capacity and promoting and building ownership of lessons learned, must be asserted, as benefits would easily have exceeded marginal costs, and risks of non-sustainability could have been reduced. That apart, the exit-strategy workshop carried out in last stages of the SUFER project was useful in stimulating thinking amongst the target group. However, it has also highlighted the significant change in resource and support faced by most SUFER clients, and the absence of substantive equivalents. The issue is then whether the capital transferred by SUFER will suffice to generate longer-term returns and promote self-regeneration and development. Though some shorter-term options may exist in linking with DFID UK research programmes, the key may well be the preparedness that SUFER teachers will now have to group together and promote their own credibility as development partners.

1. BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Support for University Fisheries Education and Research (SUFER) project is to strengthen human resources, skills and knowledge for poverty-sensitive aquatic resource development by increasing the capability of universities interacting with sector agents to deliver quality graduates and development-linked research. This supports the goal to 'sustainably and equitably manage and develop Bangladesh's aquatic resources'.

The project was approved in March 1998 and commenced in February 1999, scheduled to run to July 2004 with DFID funding of £2.45m. SUFER is located within the University Grants Commission (UGC) and managed by a DFID-appointed Project Co-ordinator. The project was proposed to use institutional change in the university sector to achieve development objectives. It worked with five Universities: Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh; providing technical support and a range of teaching and research grants.

The Mid-term Review (MTR) in September 2000 concluded that the project was not making sufficient progress towards its objectives, identifying constraints of over-complicated procedures, confusion among target groups and poor uptake. The MTR recommended structural and operational changes to improve performance. The next Output to Purpose Review (OPR) in November 2001 noted useful progress though change had to accelerate to meet End of Project (EoP) targets. It noted more positive engagement by the University community and that the restructured award system contributed better to project objectives. The OPR also highlighted continued areas of non-performance and recommended ways to improve progress in these.

An OPR in October/November 2002 concluded that some changes proposed in the OPR 2001 had started but much needed to be done. The project had not been sufficiently proactive in stimulating sectoral alliances, and if it did not do so would achieve little more than a small shift in teaching performance and graduate skills, and a small number of useful but low impact research activities. Following discussion with DFIDB the research strategy was then refocused towards three outcomes (Pro poor growth in commercial aquaculture, University support to public and private sector linkages, Diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal community).

To achieve these outcomes and in response to the OPR 2002 the project revised its strategy in January 2003, including key activities and milestones. A Mid Year Review and a specific study on "Assessing Impact of Teaching Quality" followed in May 2003. The MYR focused on two areas, i) Assessing progress towards implementing *key recommendations* made in the 2002 OPR and ii) Reviewing strategies, activities, and milestones towards achieving the 3 major outcomes and providing clear recommendations to enable the project to effectively achieve these. The assessment was that, "*The project has made good progress towards meeting the recommendations of the November 2002 OPR*"[1]. The assessment of teaching quality study reported that, "*The SUFER project has had a significant positive impact on teaching practice in all four of the five participating universities visited*"[2]

The December 2003 OPR reported that the project had continued to make very good progress in certain areas particularly teaching quality and development of university teacher skills and knowledge in poverty and gender sensitive aquatic research. Good progress had also been made in the development of sector networks and partnerships to exchange research ideas and information.

For the last six months the project has been concentrating on understanding the social and livelihoods impact of its research intervention, ultimately to lead towards achieving the 3 outcomes (should scale-up occur); to determine through consultation with partners how

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[1] Hambrey, J. (2003). SUFER Mid Year Review, May 2003. 26p.
[2] Allison, E. (2003). Assessing the Impact of the SUFER project on teaching Quality in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Bangladeshi Universities, April 27th – May 10th 2003. May 2003. 41p.

scaling-up may be effective; make progress disseminating known information and working towards a sustainable exit strategy for the partnerships, networks and pro-poor research capability.

2. EOPR OBJECTIVES

This End of Project Review follows the December 2003 OPR, which covered all but the most recent changes. Its focus was therefore to assess progress during the final phase, with emphasis on programme learning for future support to universities and grant awarding research systems, and a clearly presented synopsis of likely long term benefits and outcomes. The EOPR objectives are to:

1) Assess progress against the project information marker system (PIMS) set in the project header sheet/memorandum; overall achievement of project purpose and revised outputs; and the extent to which the project goal is likely to be achieved, using DFID office instructions as a guideline,

2) Identify lessons learned from the project including lessons for future investment in poverty focused research, which may help DFID to perform better in future.

3) Assess the extent to which it was possible for SUFER to change the institutional values of organisations in fisheries research.

Lessons learnt are to inform not only the implementing organisations but also a wider audience, and implications for future implementation of the DFID Country Assistance Plan (CAP) should be highlighted.

Details of project performance are given in the DFID OPR 'Annex D', as an attachment to this report (Appendix 1). Further details of the TOR, itinerary and key contacts are provided in Appendix 2. More details on project outcomes are given in Appendix 3, while Appendix 4 describes a future scoping exercise 'The University Challenge' carried out during the EOPR.

The report is laid out to respond to the 30 numbered reference points set out in the TOR, to assess outputs, outcomes, cross-cutting issues, and to outline the potential next steps.

3 ASSESSMENT OF OUTPUTS

(Output 1).Framework for establishing sectoral participation and linkages

1   At the strategic level, the primary approach was to develop a sectoral co-ordinating committee to take an overview role, bringing together wider sectoral interests and creating ownership of the aims and processes of the project. However, this was not effectively developed within the project, though in the later stages, SUFER support for the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum (BFRF) – see later – has the potential to be a useful element in defining and communicating sectoral research issues. Within the DFID/World Bank supported 4th Fisheries Project (FFP), and in the recent Fisheries Sector Review related sector-wide frameworks have been developed during the SUFER project period, though these are only at initial stages. A more explicit linkage across these approaches could have been promoted within the SUFER project but the opportunity was not taken up.

  At a more specific level, the project established links between the universities and other agencies through fora, seminars and subject-specific working groups. Such links are not usually encouraged in universities due to traditional attitudes, funding constraints, and above all by the absence of mediating agents. Teachers had in the past developed links only for their personal involvement in various activities or interests. Informal and diverse agents had brought teachers close to one another but not on a regular basis nor for any shared goal. The project played a mediating role in promoting such interactions between the teachers and with other sectoral agents in attaining a well-defined goal.

Links have been established in various dimensions. At field level, demonstration workshops were arranged by researchers and involved the private sector, NGO representatives and DoF officials. At university level teachers participated in inter- and intra-department collaborations. A link was established with the FFP and through it with the DoF, via a workshop presenting findings of SUFER funded projects. Links amongst teachers were also established through training programmes arranged in the AIT and in Bangladesh. These helped more to share ideas and less so to adopt strategies for pursuing broader objectives. New technologies were mainly developed through project-mediated partnerships between researchers and other actors, mainly NGOs.

2 The linkage between teachers of various universities has been well-observed, and is an outcome of the project's actions and conditions. Teachers had to participate in courses/ training programmes and workshops. Many also went overseas to develop skills and acquire more recent teaching resources. Benefits stated by teachers to derive from the SUFER project included that: they;
   - learned how to write effective research proposals
   - learned how to get funds from different sources
   - realised that pro-poor research is important and one has to go to the villages to understand the needs of the poor
   - understood that interactions with colleagues from other universities are necessary part of academic pursuit
   - changed their attitude to other disciplines and teaching aids
   - gained knowledge from SLA courses

All these have their root in partnerships and networks. These are not encouraged by the formal practices of the University system and so remain in the external domain. This change in attitude towards pro-poor research and partnerships will wane if no further encouragement is provided. Further funding or other incentives would be required to build on the gains from creating network and partnerships.

Little consideration was given to partnerships' longer term viability of in the absence of further external support, financial or otherwise. Nor had broader policy perspectives been taken into consideration in forming partnerships, rather these had focused on the development of new technology. The major pitfall here is sustainability - at the end of the project the parties get back to their initial confines. It may be argued, however, that the forming of partnerships may have served its intended purpose and the transience of opportunity in continually forming and reforming partnerships for specific tasks and outcomes may be a better and perhaps constitute a more realistic approach.

3 The project has developed some capacity to interact with sector agents but this would need to be cemented by mutual interests and incentives of the agents. The two major links, between the teachers and between teachers and the NGOs, show little significant hope for sustainability. The knowledge constraint of the teachers has been relaxed but the institutional links with various sectoral agents have not been promoted, The long-term viability of the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum (BFRF) may also be doubtful. This has been created with project support and will depend on it in the near future unless it succeeds in generating its own funds. So far it has not undertaken any effort to do so. The World Fish Centre has offered communications support but this is yet to be taken up. More positively, it has developed a constitution but its legal status still needs to be defined. Its position is also not yet clear with respect to networks such as the Bangladesh Zoological Society and Bangladesh Fisheries Society, and it may draw upon members from these societies to a large extent. Unless it has a clearly widened and development-oriented mandate, bringing in a much wider range of disciplines and professional interests, the benefits of creating a new organisation must be uncertain.

The last OPR recommended including more social scientists in the Forum. However, the constitution has provided only a minor role for such people, and it is questionable how much its development is genuinely demand driven. Though the assembly of diverse interests in the public, NGO and university sectors has been very welcome, further incentives beyond SUFER support alone will be required. Its very limited progress in the last couple of years indicates the need for much more collective effort by its architects to carry forward its mission and to generate internal revenue and attract external support. It should be noted that the forum has had a very encouraging start with excellent attendance based on professional interest and motivation not 'encouraged' by allowances and per diems.

Given the current context of management of fisheries research in Bangladesh, the sustainability of any knowledge development or information exchange forum depends on the logic of its existence and on its ability to generate funds. It has to serve broad national development goals, providing services demanded by diverse actors, and requires clarity in its role and aims. Thus the constitution's statement that "The Forum shall operate its activities throughout Bangladesh for Research, Development and Extension of fisheries sector" (Article 2, p. 4), implies a link through to extension (and its agents and mechanisms) that has been little addressed amongst research agents to date, and should require inclusion of appropriate interests and expertise. At the same time the constitution does not highlight the role of advocacy and communication, which would arguably also be critical in a more strategic approach. While the private sector institutions play an important role in these activities (i.e. the shrimp exporters), no broad policy guideline comes from the fisheries profession.

4   Collaboration with international institutions has been limited to a small number of players. The AIT was the main link, with SUFER-funded syllabus strengthening workshops for the teachers, and training on proposal, scientific paper and report writing skills. Through this, local links to Kasetsart University and to AARHI (Aquatic Animal Health Research Institute) were also arranged. There was also some collaboration between Stirling University and ITDG, NRI and CU, BAU and ICL, FRI (Vietnam) and the NGO COAST and the USM (Universiti Sains Malaysia). In these ventures the award holders played a key role in establishing and maintaining the collaborations. The main collaboration between the AIT and teachers is over. Its spin-off benefits will stay as long as teachers can retain the skills they acquired. However these may be lost if not applied in subsequent research or their knowledge base is updated. This depends on funding possibilities. It also depends on attitudes of teachers and the orientation of faculty members towards development focused research. Here, universities which have included livelihoods courses in the curricula may be better placed. Some collaboration may continue post-project because of the nature of the collaboration (such as those involving graduate studies). Others will disappear, particularly the AIT link, though informal networking may exist and will depend on individual motivation and incentive.

Externally mediated international collaboration is less likely to sustain unless the clients of the mediator do not carry forward the opportunities opened up by the initial network. The local capacity to conduct collaborative research has to be enhanced. Large skill differentials amongst the partners makes collaboration more complex and hence less attractive to external parties. However, if a critical number of champions emerges from project fostered collaborations, the possibility of long lasting collaboration would also increase, and with the appropriate approaches and action, the BFRF might also have a role. It has to be noted that individually motivated international collaboration existed before the SUFER project and will continue after it. What is missing is department level collective effort to build international collaboration.

(Output 2) University teaching programme reform

5   The project has made useful advances in promoting the concept of quality appraisal (in-house student-teacher appraisal forms), and in the form of a QAS (quality assurance scheme) has actively engaged the interest of the UGC, for whom this is a useful component in modern university management strategy. Within the target Universities the highly positive motivation for both teachers and students created by the project's inputs has also been clearly noted and has raised awareness of how such things could be very tangibly improved elsewhere. This in turn may provide a stronger case for representation by the UGC to the GoB in respect of budgetary resources. At a practical level, current teaching award materials and facility improvements are likely to have at least 5 years positive impact, and potentially longer if staff have adequate access to on-line and other materials, and are able to take advantage of international network support.

6   The new SLA course introduced into university curricula appears to be widely accepted and valued within the departments concerned, though their use of the content and materials varies. Full course materials are currently available on the DU website and would potentially be accessible more widely. The interest of key staff and of students is such that these components will continue but in the absence of longer-term structural linkages, the potential to update and develop these is questionable.

7   There is little evidence at this stage of the incorporation of livelihood principles into faculty forward thinking, research agenda, teaching and higher level faculty management and administration It is indeed unclear whether livelihood principles were ever presented to teachers in such a context, or whether they were encouraged to think much beyond the rural village environment
.

(Output 3) Development of interactive pro-poor research capability

8   Though the project management had suggested that research proposals and implementation had improved as a result of SLA training, a number of other influences may have been at play, and the question could also be posed as to whether teachers simply became more adept at the rules and the language. One deficiency perhaps is that research proposal formats were not structured to invite explanations of expected livelihood outcomes. This would have required proposers to think such things through, and in doing so build on their learning and practice. The proposal review procedure should have had an equivalent process, which in turn would build the understanding of the 'customer'. Though interaction with NGOs of various types could be seen, it is uncertain whether collaboration and mutual recognition had really developed sufficiently to establish a longer-term capacity.

Finally, the whole issue of 'pro-poor' research caused confusion, reflecting also perhaps the changing perspectives of DFID and others. An initial attempt by teachers to ignore such questions, or offer unsubstantiated, uninformed, or highly fanciful claims for relevance was transformed into an almost doctrinaire idea that research had to focus on access to production or earning opportunities by poor people. This was then overtaken by livelihoods exercises which gave sometimes spurious validity to primarily technical proposals. The more sophisticated yet perhaps more realistic concepts of pro-poor growth, and the understanding for the essential role of social and market research, were very late to enter, and are not clearly well established. The connection with maintaining the resource base has been very rarely considered.

9   The teachers widely confirmed the value of training in research proposal writing, at least in terms of their confidence in doing so, and some measure of improvement was reported in later rounds of proposal submission to SUFER. The effects in success elsewhere are more difficult to define, though the raising of confidence itself was likely to be positive. A number of teachers expressed a healthy awareness of tailoring proposals to meet the needs of funding bodies, and were not automatically programmed to offer up

livelihoods proposals when technical bids were sought, or vice-versa. Here also, the funding environment is less than ideal for many areas of adaptive research, and arguably the SUFER project could have done more in addressing such issues, raising awareness of wider funding opportunities, and promoting the cause for (or at least developing the debate in) development-related research investment by others.

10 Research quality could potentially be assessed:

- at the concept note/design stage, based on appreciation of issues, partnerships, methodologies and proposed outputs,
- while the work was under way, based on conduct, engagement with partners, scope, nature, clarity of findings
- post-hoc, based on availability of findings, uptake – accuracy of use, scope, sustainability, and on impacts – both intended and unintended.

While some aspects of the first were dealt with during the selection procedure, it appeared that this primarily focused on the quality of the scientific procedures rather than the relevance of the questions or the usability of the results. Apart then from the requirement to deliver quarterly and final reports, mainly as evidence that the work had been carried out as proposed, there were no formal mechanisms of quality assessment. The recently commissioned exercise of assessing livelihoods impacts of 6 case study research projects (Ireland 2004) was useful in picking out indicators but suffered from being 'bolted on' at a late stage, having only cursory opportunities to explore wider issues, and not examining how well positioned the research had been in the broader context. In a longer-running process, much more could be expected in developing the capacity of the oversight/selection body, and in setting out an impact framework for research, as had been developed in the DFID UK Research Programmes. Arguably, an opportunity had been lost to learn from this, as the issues had been pointed out in earlier reviews.

(Output 4) Strategy and good practice development within the sector networks

11 The OVI of "*good practice identified*" (OVI 4.1) is a potentially useful measure of the effectiveness of the project's commissioned work to be completed, analysed, set into context and applied to intended beneficiaries, whether at household, commercial, sub-sectoral, management or policy level. The need for a communication and dissemination strategy was identified quite early, but perhaps because of the idea that this was not a priority until results emerged; it was not set out until the final 6 months of the project. While the strategy is itself useful, and recognises the different stakeholders, their aims and concerns, the messages they need and their potential means of delivery, it should have been developed much earlier, and used to guide the design and selection phases of the project's research. As things currently stand, there are very few well-validated 'good practice guidelines' though some useful technical findings have been developed and shown their potential value in limited areas of application.

12 Unfortunately, due primarily to the constraints already identified, there is little evidence of "*embedded change*" for practices developed by participating organisations within the sector networks. Firstly, sector networks have been very slow to become established. Then there has been insufficient time for interactions to develop and a sense of shared understanding and commitment to emerge. Although the project provided workshops to help stimulate introductions, and the project selection process created a 'pull' mechanism to encourage collaboration, there was little evidence of partnerships being seen as providing a 'win-win' outcome beyond the immediate 'win' of the project funds. The most promising avenue for further collaboration might be the BFRF, whose constitution requires a good level of sectoral representation, but as noted earlier, it is unclear how much momentum this will have post-project, as it will ultimately depend on the motivation and commitment of its members. Otherwise, the project appears to have influenced the DoF to a degree – interesting HQ staff in research ideas and findings,

though influence at the local (Thana and Upazila) level appears to have been much more limited. There was little evidence of wider networking – eg to local government administration, LCOs and other Ministries or Departments. This was partly due to the more conservative position and attitudes of teachers, but also due to what appeared at times to be self-imposed limitations by the project in breaking down barriers, or using funds creatively to challenge the existing order.

13 In a more focused way, the SUFER project had better impact in assisting the UGC and universities to set up a QA approach. Initiated within the client departments, the approach was timely in terms of international trends for performance evaluation and quality assessment in the tertiary education sector, and the UGC were very ready to explore its potential. This was further stimulated by their recent obligations to find the means to accommodate the growing private university sector in a way which would not constrain growth and capacity but ensure that national accreditation could be based on definable and applicable standards. Here, the project provided valuable piloting, and by example showed Universities what could be achieved with relatively moderate inputs. However, the widespread adoption of more detailed and evolutionary QA approaches may be long to arrive, and could be counter-productive if over –bureaucratised..

4 ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES

Outcome 1 Diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal community

14 The project has developed interesting technical initiatives with potential in enhancing and diversifying output from aquatic-related activities in coastal areas. Key elements include nursing shrimp PLs, fattening and hardening soft-shelled mud-crabs, and growing molluscs. These activities have all been shown to be viable under various locally and institutionally specific conditions, but their real potential in "diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal community" is unclear, as a range of supporting studies would be required, and processes would need to be initiated to test the concept of widening involvement.

Some attempts have been made to ascertain verifiable indicators of change, wider livelihoods impact and diversification of options for poor people living in coastal areas, through research and commissioned studies (see also Point # 21). However, short studies are limited by their snapshot nature, and by the absence of analyses of socio-economic issues. Further, completion of initiatives with potential for impact is so close to the end of project, that uptake has not had time to gather pace. Information on uptake status, potential for scale-up and livelihood impact is given in Annex 3 (Table 1a for coastal communities) as evidenced from the aforementioned studies and interviews with stakeholders. Essentially, all technologies developed have the potential to enhance the operator/owner's income, food security and a wide range of livelihood benefits but none can yet be assessed as 'likely to <u>sustainably</u> impact upon the livelihoods of the client group'. The potential for scale-up and thus impacting upon a larger number of people is therefore even more unlikely, based on evidence to date. It is important to remember that this was not a direct project output. However, for future project design it is important to define expected research impact and the roles of stakeholders in achieving outcomes.

Outcome 2 Pro poor growth in commercial aquaculture

15 A range of research has been relevant to commercial aquaculture interests, ranging from micro-enterprise level to larger business, including exporters. A small number of links had been developed, though not substantial or strategic. For the domestic market sector a very large number of small-scale artisanal producers come up against small-medium scale commercial enterprises with strong expectations for growth. There is little evidence so far of substantial cross-ownership or consolidation in this sector, or of the associated development of standardised methodologies applicable at a wider scale. The challenge

of exploring knowledge deficiencies and applying lessons has not been a major issue, and dissemination arrangements have been relatively ad-hoc and often projectised, whether via DoF extension initiatives, large NGO training and field school programmes, or through private sector routes such as small NGOs and input suppliers. Scaling up of specific initiatives has been rather haphazard, though the model of training packages as developed through FTEP2 and via some larger NGOs has specific potential.

This outcome is not a project success indicator or logframe OVI, but evidence of sustained growth in promotion of pro-poor technologies would be a useful indirect measure of project impact and focus. However, because of the very limited time in which its findings have had the chance to create impact, and as there were no specific uptake and impact provisions in the project, as in the case of diversification of livelihood options for coastal communities, there is little to offer at this stage. Here again, initial project delays and the closure of the project on its original schedule have limited the potential to deliver and demonstrate gain.

The development of cage and pond culture systems seems to have led to positive gains for some trial participants, but apart from 20 new cages (unassisted by the project) established next to the research site there has been no firm evidence of other research initiatives becoming 'commercial' in terms of scale. (see Annex 3, Table 1b) The project financed dissemination events (included with the award) and promotion materials. (see Annex 3). Some projects did no more than provide a completion report, while others produced papers, led to workshop or conference presentations, and a smaller number, to farmer and extension promotion, press coverage and other initiatives. Where carried out, this generated interest among farmer, business and NGO groups but with no follow-up it is difficult to tell what impact this has had on technology promotion. However, RDRS, ITDG and CARE have included some technologies in their extension programmes and thus their long term impact could be significant. It is unfortunate that a strategic link with DoF could not be established in the time available, thus missing an important conduit for new findings to be incorporated into their currently developing extension programmes.

Strategic links for expansion of pro-poor growth in commercial aquaculture also needed to become embedded into the university organisational culture for other SUFER promoted commercially oriented activities (e.g. links with DSAP, private hatcheries and DFID UK research programmes such as the AFGRP). New professional contacts may have resulted from this work but without strategic alliances larger focused and coordinated research advances may be missed (e.g. international institutions, universities and funding bodies accessing development grants would be attracted to work with like or complementary departments having a keen sense of vision and purpose staffed by dynamic and skilled professionals).

During the last OPR the project was asked to consider not extending these technologies through events and dissemination materials (apart from those included with the research award) but rather seek mechanisms for realistic and workable uptake pathways through networks developed by SUFER. However, a consensus on appropriate mechanisms including detailed attention to procedural structures and processes has not been defined.

16 The issue of commercialisation favouring production and economic growth, often accompanied with better technical efficiency, though sometimes also greater social and environmental impact, is important in aquaculture development and has been the subject of justified concern in Bangladesh. Though most of this has centred on export sectors, particularly marine shrimp, similar dynamics and potential impacts may arise in domestic production (see eg Fisheries Sector Review and Future Development study, 2003). The technologies which have been addressed in the project have had broadly positive potential for sectoral growth, but would often be preferentially accessible for better off, or at most middle-poor groups. Though some technologies could be accessed by the poorest within financially and organisationally supported project conditions, capital

requirements, risks and cash flow characteristics could be inappropriate, or in some cases opportunities and profitability would be such that resources and technologies would readily be captured by the wealthier and more powerful. Unless part of a comprehensive and effective social support mechanism there would be little chance for poor households to retain the opportunities. As noted above, implications for poorer groups are little understood. Also no exploration been made of the ways in which rural growth associated with the aquatic sector would impact on poorest groups, and how that might differentiate with location, resource base, social and ethnic context.

Instances of elite capture are well known and documented in Bangladesh (e.g 4th Fisheries Project and CBFM-2) and some evidence of potential capture and exclusion of the poor was emerging during the review (usually acquired through informal discussion):

i) 'touts' or *masthans* were beginning to take over the SUFER led initiative to process shrimp waste from local processing plants such that women project beneficiaries were becoming labour for their previously 'owned' income generating enterprises;

ii) Landowners and *pager* (ditches/ponds in *beels*) owners were benefiting from higher productivity resulting from the SUFER supported SIS research project[3] but excluded traditional fishermen who previously had access to an 'open' floodplain;

iii) the new grass carp cage owners are 'well-connected' and if the aquatic grass (fish feed) is in short supply the poorer members (project clients) will be the first to be prevented from harvesting the grass.

The commercialisation process and its effects on exclusion of the poor is not well understood and lessons emerging from the pro-poor research projects reiterate the need for complete and thorough social analysis and advice before during and after the project.

Outcome 3 University support to public and private sector linkage

17. NGO-teacher partnerships were based on two approaches. Most commonly, researchers developed a topic and an NGO linked to the project. Alternatively, an NGO developed a proposal and a researcher was chosen to take part. Scoping funds helped to develop these links. However, in the two projects examined in Chokoria, this partnership incentive was lost post-project. The researcher had no resources to re-visit the field site to assess uptake, and this responsibility was not defined. Thus participating households were in effect deserted by both researchers and NGOs. The seabass-tilapia project showed potential for participating households but the NGO would not provide them with credit. They then reverted to the low-cost aquaculture which the project had aimed to replace on the grounds of poverty reduction, and risk minimisation. ISDE, the NGO concerned, offered many reasons not to provide credit, even though they not only witnessed the project's financial and social prospects but also participated in generating its outcome, through interactions with the university researchers. ISDE stated that participants were not in their credit programme, and even if so, they would only be lent a maximum Tk. 4,000 as new borrowers, whereas the seabass-tilapia farmers would require at least double that amount (reported by 4-5 respondents to vary from Tk. 8,000 to Tk. 20,000). This does not indicate that the NGO sector-University links could not produce any positive outcomes. A sizeable amount of externalities from this partnership have been internalised. The teachers found an institutional route for reaching the poor, interact with them and learn about their technological constraints. The NGOs also learned about the way teachers work and how research projects are conducted professionally. The costs of reaching and understanding the poor would be rather high in the absence of the NGOs.

The link between private sector and the teachers has been weak and did not develop much from that observed in the last OPR. This may be partially a casualty of the focus

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[3] 'Conservation of small indigenous species (SIS) in Mailjani beel under community management at Nagarpur Upazilla, Tangail'.

on developing other networks and links. Private sector agents were informed about technologies developed, but no noteworthy relationship could be cited. Where they did occur, links between the private sector and teachers had been present at individual level before the SUFER project. Here too, even if the SUFER project could have enhanced these connections, interaction was limited to specific research demands rather than geared towards attaining wider aims. The history of private sector growth in Bangladesh's fisheries has shown few links with universities in technology development, most being imitated (shrimp industry) or learned by word of mouth (private aquaculture). Though some donor projects have helped this sector to grow, technological capability is very limited and had developed in an *ad hoc* manner. Though there are opportunities to link research with the private sector these have not been fruitfully explored and exploited.

The strength and long-term viability of NGO/private sector/university partnerships facilitated by the project is questionable. There is little evidence of long-term partnership commitment, though feedback suggests that in most cases, experience of collaboration was not negative, and that gains had been made in understanding respective aims, approaches, and strengths. The perspective is that participants had learnt to respond to the requirements of the SUFER project, but unless a similar external funding mechanism became available, there would be little incentive to build on existing relationships. There was little evidence either of larger NGOs or private sector interests recognising that specific areas of knowledge development would benefit them materially and that they could invest in university sector skills. The BFRF may have some potential in maintaining linkages and developing the case for wider collaborative investment but it is unclear at this stage that there are specific champions for this. More broadly, the rural/agricultural development sector is currently without a substantive development-oriented research strategy and investment approach. In the absence of this, though a strong investment case might be made, the small amount of resource available is likely to over-intensify competition or simply discourage much innovation. Some options however may be available for linking research and uptake/impact processes with existing development projects - thus the SUFER coastal aquaculture programme could be usefully developed within the polder component of the Fourth Fisheries Project. DFID UK research programmes, potentially extending to March 2006, may also find it effective to engage with the Bangladesh research community to promote specific initiatives. However, in the latter in particular, technical research to develop new knowledge will be a very small element, if present at all, and much of the emphasis will be on uptake and on social, market, institutional and policy enquiry concerning the processes and impacts of technology application.

18. A number of lessons can be learned from specific linkages promoted by the project e.g. fish seed quality enhancement programme. These include:
   - The advantages of thematising and clustering various elements, but the need to have a well developed framework. The SUFER project (or more accurately its DFID co-ordinator) had some sense of the bigger picture but this did not seem to have been shared and taken up in ownership by sectoral interests.

   - The need to have a clear idea about the uptake routes and the potential impacts, and defined approaches for dealing with these. Using a communication and impact strategy before programme design, rather than as an afterthought.

   - The need to be more specific about the role and approaches of linking partners; for NGOs in particular, the need to clarify their functions, capacity and expectations, and to avoid generalising about potential.

   - Use CBOs or LCOs more widely as partners to develop and widen out the scale and impact of various developments.

- The need to have specific processes of confidence building and partnership development to strengthen partner relationships.

- Promote thematic networks with a range of interested parties; sing workshops and other tools to compare approaches and methodologies.

- Develop good practice guidelines based on rational assessments of experience – using good evidential procedures and analyses.

5 ASSESSMENT OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

19. An important question to emerge is the broader issue of engaging NGOs and the private sector to identify, implement research, extension and scale–up. To the extent definable in the SUFER project experience, the mechanisms, benefits and constraints of these agents are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Function and performance of SUFER partners

Agency/role	Mechanisms	Benefits	Constraints
NGOs Identification	Close involvement with client groups, awareness of constraints, routine interactions	Direct livelihoods understanding, relevance and immediate needs, sense of potential impacts	Limited ability to frame or assess nature and tractability of research issue; biased ideas or aims for client groups.
Implementation	Action research, field schools, client partnerships, managed client groups, less emphasis on recording more on process	Interactive process, in client context, practical potential, explored through local indicators, good sense of risk and returns, leads well to uptake	Only suitable for some work, may expose clients to excess risk, may not be well enough managed to validate results, messages may be wrong
Extension	Normally through existing client support packages, NGO staff, leaflets, field schools	Fits in well with existing programmes, trust of clients, developed for local contexts with client interaction.	NGO may be very proprietary, can link with less useful aspects of social control, limited interaction with public sector agents
Scale-up	For large NGOs through national or district strategies, for smaller, via NGO networks	Potentially very efficient for larger NGOs provided scale-up issues understood.	Very limited in small \NGOs and networks won't capture finer detail of local adaptations
Private sector Identification	Specific need or competitive constraint; or approached by researcher with ideas	Benefit potential clearly understood good motivation to test and adopt, context of research often very clear.	Important issues may not be those raised; concern about knowledge ownership; difficult to capture issues from multiple micro-enterprises
Implementation	Laboratory or field trials with defined production/ performance objective	Clearly defined protocols to which technical staff can operate and report, private sector often highly involved	May not be well enough designed to reveal most critical issues, or overly focused on individual context.
Extension	By internal communications, expansion, provision of services, leakage to other interests	Usually commercially validated, benefits and risks understood, may have simple standard context	Could be limited to specific commercial interest, need to organise licensing other IPR agreements.
Scale-up	By commercial growth, takeover, redevelopment, or through provision of services	May be capital limited by individual firms.,	Needs resource and market understandings which is often not present

Of the two, NGO relationships proved to be the most important, yet also very sensitive. As noted earlier, the NGO link benefits were lost at the end of the two projects examined in Chokoria, and the selection and effectiveness of NGO partners clearly requires care.

The assumption of a mal-performing state has historically attracted donors to perceived windows of opportunity offered by NGOs. This has to be examined seriously in terms of the motivation and institutional context of many NGOs, and hence the expectations of longer-term, development-focused and supportive roles. Evidence from the 4th Fisheries Project suggests that the performance of NGOs has been as limited as that of the DOF. As in other sectors, it looks more like a marriage of convenience cemented by donor funds than a sustainable partnership based on mutual incentives and gain.

In practical terms, contracts (i.e. MOU) between NGOs, SUFER and researchers did not clearly spell out the role of the NGO. Much was left to the researcher and the NGO to decide. While this is not easily avoided and may have positive outcomes, it is important to clearly specify the longer term output of NGOs. Certainly in the right circumstances, NGOs can provide a missing market for accessing the poor and this was well taken up by some SUFER projects. They have a large client base, local logistics support (ISDE provided the MSc students with lodging) and can be very familiar with the neighbourhood. But the project expected more than just access routes to the poor, and a wider and more realistic perspective could have been developed.

Researchers who participated in networking with NGOs expressed mixed views. It is common knowledge that there are large, small, good and bad NGOs. The attitude of NGOs towards research varies for many reasons for these and other factors. Teachers appreciated the logistics support, their cooperation in selecting participating households and their help in overall progress of the project. But they were not hopeful of a stable and sustainable relationship. In particular, they wanted to see their projects adopted by the participating households and also thought the NGOs could have taken care of that. They were willing to provide technical input for a follow up informally but the relationship ceased to exist post project. The issue is more complex than may meet the eye, without being clear how good the technologies actually are from a financial or technical point of view, or how they actually fit with the need of the poor. While a study was later commissioned for investigating the livelihoods impact of six selected SUFER projects, none was commissioned to examine the technical merit of the technologies developed. Many gains from the new technologies are only potentially so, claimed by the interested parties rather than demonstrated.

The strength and longer-term viability of these linkages and partnerships depends on many factors:

- **First;** on the number of sector agents the project could interact with. Beyond NGOs and the university sector, the project could not establish meaningful or potentially long lasting relationships with others. Interactions with donor supported projects have and networking at international level has not had the necessary time to gain momentum. The project failed to create any relationship with the DoF largely due to the latter's lack of interest (although DoF did appreciate the presentations on research findings). The next points are therefore based on linkages and partnerships between the teachers and between the teachers and the NGOs.

- **Second**, there should be a minimum overlapping of incentives for the concerned parties. The teachers see teaching as their main responsibility. Whatever research is done is driven by availability of funds and the ability of teachers to win them. After finishing the SUFER assignment teachers have in most cases gone back to full-time teaching or to research that is not related to what they have learned from the linkages. NGOs are, above all, interested in funds and will not undertake any activity unless returns are assured. New technology, even when adopted by educated and non-poor households, can be risky. The probability of losses is high and returns do not come immediately. These aspects of adoption were commonly subsidised by SUFER, but techniques developed had shown little sign of further investment by

NGOs. This explains why NGOs are more keen to show the success of their technologies in quantitative terms (size or number of outputs, profits etc.) than in uptake performance indicators or livelihoods outcome. The link with the private sector has not developed sufficiently to make any comment with respect to linkages and partnerships, although scope for them exists but not exploited by the SUFER project.

- **Third**, NGOs vary in their experience and interest in fisheries. Large NGOs had the capability of linking up with the SUFER project within their overall strategies. Thus CARITAS could easily link up with a SUFER project, linked in turn with their ongoing involvement in the UNDP funded SEMP project. PROSHIKA has had a long experience of networking in a manner similar to that promoted by SUFER. Small NGOs with no sector experience could be much more risky partners, though SUFER experience showed that local NGOs could sometimes perform well (Sushilon in Satkhira). The choice of partner NGO is a big decision for managers of any CGS to face. There should be clear understanding on their potential commitment and interest of the NGO and contractual obligations have to be spelled out clearly.

- **Fourth**, attitudes of researchers and partners have to be complementary. Thus some teachers reported problems related to attitudes of the NGOs. Though often to do with inter-personal relationships this could constrain the potential to develop linkages. Some teachers felt that they could carry on poverty focus research without the NGO. The validity of this can be tested in the future, but in many cases an NGO link is almost inevitably required.

- **Fifth**, pitfalls of collaborating with NGOs require serious consideration. A large NGO can have a negligent attitude towards a project if it is small and does not fit in its overall long or short term interest. Worse still is the case when the NGO forces their clients to adopt their technology, which can generate serious negative impacts. The client can derive many benefits from his/her relationship with the NGO and therefore it may not be easy to see how a potential technology can benefit the poor. The poor household could be over-supported by the NGO to show the efficacy of a research project undertaken by the NGO-teacher partnership initiative.

20 The use of "evidence-based" mechanisms by the project for technology scale-up through networks had been proposed, but at this stage had been little developed. The main exceptions might be where larger NGOs had considered the use of project technologies within training packages. However the extent to which 'evidence' had been established and validated, particularly in terms of wider applicability for poorer groups, was minimal. It is thus not possible to judge the relative effectiveness of the approach. This is a further example of where an extended project period would have been very valuable. The previous OPR recommended that a clearer understanding of the potential impact and diversification of livelihood options may be gained from a social development study of the most advanced pro-poor technologies and those showing most potential. The draft report available for the review (IDL, 2004) highlights a number of specific livelihood gains. However, due to time constraints an in-depth social change analysis[4] had not yielded sufficient information to make clear assumptions on potential livelihood impact.

21 While it argued that human capital of participating households had accumulated and they were more empowered (by interacting with teachers), the study noted that outcomes were not appropriate and affordable by the poor themselves, and uptake was limited to participating households. It emphasised the importance of process and partnerships and stated that uptake was constrained by the limited ability to understand how poor people make decisions. It did not deal much with gender issues but stated these were also

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[4] e.g poverty outcomes, social change and interactions, equity, quality of participation, well-being, direct benefits, trade-offs, opportunity costs, potential user conflict and wider community impact.

poorly understood and no gender analysis was undertaken to inform the research process (see later).

Though constrained by the absence of baseline data, and with evidently poor uptake of the technologies developed, the study could not find any changes in poverty status brought about by the projects examined. However, over the SUFER project as a whole, and reflecting also the continued resistance to incorporating social research into the programme, no provisions for impact studies were made, and no methodologies incorporated into technology projects. The central issue of any impact study, whether detailed or a rapid appraisal, is to assess how many people gain or lose, how much were the gains/losses and what these mean in terms of broader livelihoods outcome.

In most cases here, impact is limited by finite project life span and small numbers of participants, typical of short commissioned research pieces. Participants benefited from technology involved but did not continue when the NGO and researchers finished. Benefits were often derived from passive participation, with hardly any costs or risks to bear, and no institutional mechanism for support at the end of project. No demonstration effect was observed beyond such claims such as "others are interested", or "others were planning to take up this method". Impacts were limited for a number of reasons.

- **First**, there is a strong capital constraint issue. The financial cost of adopting the technologies is higher than the poverty line income of Bangladesh.
- **Second**, the technology is not transferred to agents to an extent where they can pursue it independently. This is further complicated by participating households working with instruments foreign to them. A woman asked if she has to measure the weight of fish on a scale where the numbers are written down in English.
- **Third**, marketing issues need to be understood. In one case, an improved solar drier produces output that adds to product differentiation and to production costs. A monopolistic buyer can seriously affect farmgate prices and make the project financially unattractive to producers.
- **Fourth**, selection of inappropriate households. In one project, participants were too old to understand the technology while others were too poor to undertake it without project support. The seabass-tilapia polyculture project selected households who were extreme poor and may not have needed new technology but social support or improvement of existing technology. Some were already receiving social support; a couple of households received houses from the state from the *ashrayan prokolpo*. Some were living in property owned by others, with only use rights over their homestead land and the ponds used in the research project.

While these examples may not extend to all SUFER projects, it was evident in a number of higher profile and potentially 'successful'; activities. Why did this happen and what lessons can be learned? The central problem is that the relationship between poverty and technology appears to be poorly understood by the researchers and perhaps by project managers who closely interacted with the researchers, NGOs, and households. Why technological progress takes place is still debated. Historical data on many countries has shown that human capital accumulation is more important than physical capital accumulation and recent literature focuses on technological capabilities and not on technology as such. Technological capabilities of the poor have been given little attention. Much technical progress (although limited by international standards) in the growing sectors of the Bangladesh has come from individual initiatives and has been slow. This is true for the shrimp industry. Even the (well-off) actors there took long time to develop their technology (say, from block freezing to IQF). Technological progress in the RMG sector has also been slow and most involves imitation. Fast growth progress has been observed in the crop sector in surface water irrigation, mechanised tilling and adoption of the seed-ware-fertiliser technology in general. However, in most cases it has been imitation rather than innovation.

The poor would typically require labour intensive technology, low investment, less risk, assured markets and support services, and such constraints must be taken into account These have not been adequately addressed by SUFER, which failed to see the broader picture. The poor develop their own technology in the process of their own interactions and these have to be internalised by researchers. More time was required to understand the needs and constraints of the poor and largely due to start-up delays the project was unable to do this. The fusion of social with biological sciences was inadequate. From the CGS perspective this can be largely attributed to the disciplinary background of the managers and their clients (the university teachers), almost all of whom are fisheries biologists. At least one technical manager should have had a social science background and more social research presence made in the PMC (project management committee). Any future CGS aiming at alleviating poverty through technology has to incorporate social scientists. This is also an important lesson for the BKPF.

Some projects were not directly linked to households but to the private sector, with no NGO involved. Subjects were cryopreservation of silver carp, and major Indian carps and compensatory growth of *pangas*. This work had not been taken up but would definitely have potential if claims made were valid. However it appears that the SUFER peer review mechanism, while approving the technical merits of the proposals, did not require a means by which these findings would be taken up, thereby repeating much of the deficiencies of the bulk of the country's public sector research to date. There should have been clear approaches for applying and validating the research results.

The study brings up issues that are relevant to pro-poor research in particular and to development in general. It shows that while the opportunity of enhancing human capital base and empowering the poor can be opened up by a project like SUFER, a similar project may also constrain them by failing to address issues that are more relevant to the households who would potentially adopt the technology. These relate to the importance of understanding the needs and constraints of the poor before any technological intervention is made. Failing to do that may result in poor uptake of the technology and this has been a common trend in most SUFER funded technologies. In some cases the poor are not assured of the market for their products, in others they are not willing to adopt the technology because of high setup costs or longer gestation period of the technology. Although the NGO-researcher-households partnerships can generate positive benefits for all the parties, the potential pitfalls should not be ignored. The SUFER project has shown that the NGOs often failed to identify an appropriate technology for the poor or might have altogether ignored the issue for the sake of pursuing their own objectives. A technology that addresses the problems of the poor should be made attractive to the poor through a genuine effort to understand the reality in which the poor find themselves. It is not only important to identify the poor but understanding the process that keeps a household poor is often more rewarding. The researcher and the NGO should share their view about the constraints of the poor. Higher profitability from adopting a technology or an impressive growth of fish stock should not blur the poverty determined constraints that may fail to deliver these results.

22 The project has interacted with a range of gender issues at strategic and specific levels, and though awareness of issues could be discerned, and reminders issued at various review stages, this has not been a very explicit feature of the project's actions. Arguably, the increased intake and opportunities for female students could create an inbuilt positive impact, as could the application of livelihoods principles in research projects. However, as earlier noted, this application has had a rather limited targeting and outcome. A number of dimensions can be considered, including institutional awareness and training, targeting women and their quality of participation (research staff and beneficiaries).

Institutionally driven changes are noted in more women being recruited to the Fisheries Departments (presently 13 out of 113 total staff in 5 universities). Since the project lacked a pro-gender focus in project design at the institutional level (gender policy or strategy for the UGC, universities and departments) emphasis concentrated on an inclusive approach to involve women in the project management committee, gender sensitive training and research technologies that could benefit poor women; described in previous review documentation. With the emphasis on the technology *per se* and not how the technology may address gender issues (e.g through gender sensitive stakeholder analysis) the quality of participation, trade-offs, cost and gains was not integrated into the research sub-projects. Ways needed to be found for analyses of these social dimensions when developing new technologies and promoting technology transfer. New interventions in communities, complex in their social relationships, hierarchical structures and nuances represent a significant challenge to the researcher emphasising on targeting the communities' poorest and vulnerable segments (often women). The importance of the social element of this research is often under-estimated.

During the latter stages SUFER commissioned one research award entitled "Women and Fisheries: Level of involvement and scope for enhancement" which had the potential to reveal more information relating to impacts on women involved with six SUFER supported technologies. Unfortunately the report was not complete at the time of the review. The draft 'short' report provided to the team in the absence of the final report was insufficient in analysis to assess potential livelihood impact for women. Some positives and negatives were highlighted; i) women's contribution to family income had increased but so had the workload at a time when it was becoming more difficult to find firewood and drinking water leading to stress may result in ill-health; ii) women involved with the project felt that their position in the family as well as in the community was better than those not involved with the project.

It suggests that one important lesson is to ensure that the social and gender elements are addressed throughout the adaptive research process and designed in such a way that a process approach to the research may be embraced to ensure that negative elements of social change are quickly redressed. This will mean that a higher budgetary allocation will be necessary to engage technical and social scientist professionals during the entire research period (although experience to date shows that they must be given principal investigator status and autonomy in managing their own (linked) programmes). Some of these issues may be attributed realigning project activities to support women's involvement at all levels post project design and start-up.

23 Towards the end of the project period and with the support of a previous OPR, a programme of interdisciplinary or composite research was initiated to investigate mollusc culture for poor fishing communities. As well as attempting to focus most specifically on research processes relevant to poor groups, this was to act as a means of bringing social and technical scientists together as co-researchers. However, as with other late-stage projects discussed earlier, the opportunities to develop the research, promote uptake and impact, and create a platform for wider learning were much limited by the time available. Further, the lack of apparent ongoing opportunities appeared to make it more difficult to attract a wider network of researchers.

An issue which had been less noted in earlier project reviews, in part because of the need to explore and verify practical experience, was whether it had been realistic to expect to attract other researchers, particularly those in social/economic/institutional fields. Though efforts to do so were less focused in earlier stages, the project became more proactive, but with limited success. It appeared that for many such researchers, in high demand in the development business, other avenues of work appeared to be more professionally interesting or financially beneficial. The alternative approach, adopted in part by the project, had been to promote the development of 'hybrid' researchers, normally originating in aquatic biosciences, but developing postgraduate skills and

further research experience in social, economic or institutional fields. While the smaller number of individuals concerned were very active and showed good promise (and indeed the precedent is well recognised and accepted elsewhere), their relative lack of experience, and the lack of professional mentors in the local context, limited their potential. This was further constrained by the limited degree of social research leadership within the project management system, and by the lack of an agreed set of development criteria for assessing proposal merits, implementation effectives and output quality. This emphasises again the need to have such features clearly embodied in any development research management context.

24 The broader issue of common themes and activities is one which had occupied strategic interest from early project stages, with a number of commissioned overviews to provide baselines and identify particular areas where research demand was likely to exist. This was circulated to the teachers, but in earlier project stages did not generate a significant thematic response. It was only in later stages, encouraged to be more proactive, that the project promoted common themes and activities. Key aspects of achievement include:

- **First**, it had to change attitudes of teachers towards others and towards themselves. When done to an acceptable level, this created a launching pad from which the project managers could address other issues such as taking the teachers from the confines of the laboratories and field stations to the realities of the poor and poverty.
- **Second**, the project took the initiative to develop a research theme (mollusc culture) around which different teachers from different universities started to work simultaneously on its various aspects identified by the project.
- **Third**, it developed a system of awarding scoping funds granted to teachers and NGOs to identify suitable research topics.
- **Fourth**, it organised many workshops, seminars, training courses that cut both ends - it improved the human capital base of the teachers and also helped them to network and collaborate with other sector agents in varying degrees.
- **Fifth**, it developed an supported partnerships between teachers and NGOs, though experience has been mixed.

However, the project had not been able to sustain these partnerships, nor had it been able to develop effective monitoring and evaluation strategies. Although promising progress had been made in developing common themes and activities, the approach to dissemination and uptake had been inadequate, partly because of the lack of time to do so, but also because these were not fully built in to the approved work programmes, and in consequence, researchers and their partners did not have the opportunity to learn how to respond to such demands. Neither, arguably, did the project and its management system learn how to tackle the issues of developing competence in delivering outcomes.

A related constraint had been the lack of opportunity to develop a truly integrated framework of enquiry and knowledge development, with processes built in to exchange knowledge and express and relate it across disciplinary boundaries. However, this is a generic issue in much development research. Though the livelihoods framework provides an interesting context it is by no means an automatically accessible and logically robust system in which disciplinary questions can be tested, meaning developed and lessons learned. Based on experience in DFID UK Research programmes, considerable and continuing effort is usually required to create such an environment and context, and ongoing debate usually ensues about whether cross-disciplinary meaning can be generated, effectively creating new fields which are more than the sum of the contributing disciplinary elements, or that separate disciplines can do no more than state queries and findings in their own separate languages. There were no explicit mechanisms in the project to tackle and manage such issues, but these would be required were such approaches to be adopted in the future.

25 The role of project communication in gaining wider impact is clearly very critical. It is not clear what processes were adopted for developing the SUFER communications strategy though it aimed at sharing research findings with a wide range of audience including its direct and indirect beneficiaries, is partners and the global audience. Though common to most current development approaches, a stakeholder communications needs assessment, carried out before deciding on the content or means for communication with the audience was not done. In practice the SUFER communication strategy has mostly focused on disseminating the type of research activities it has promoted, who it should go to and how. An important analysis missing from the strategy is "why," i.e. why it should go to a particular stakeholder group and for what purpose, although for the research findings, the aim of dissemination of the technology is implicit. Without explicit indicators and no evaluation process in place the outcomes from the communications activities are not known.

One component of SUFER communications has been informing DFIDB and UGC of its project activities and progress through QMRs, Midterm Reviews and consultancy reports. Therefore, the focus has mainly been on activity monitoring and not so much towards reflection on the lessons learned.

Leaflets, TV spots, seminars and workshops have been useful in widening access. The approach was to communicate findings of each research project to three audience types; client (farmers), other researchers and policy makers/donors. For most projects training and dissemination materials (leaflets and posters) were delivered to farmers (part of the grant allocation and within the design proposal). For other researchers and fisheries extension officers, scientific papers were distributed and seminars arranged. No recorded activity was evident for policy maker/donor but this was arguably not an important target for much of the research output, particularly in early stages. For this group, informational content should have focussed on lessons learnt from the project relating to overall implementation and management (e.g. *identification and prioritization of research; approaches to commissioning and managing research portfolios; partnerships and coalitions to address identification, implementation and extension of research; dissemination and uptake (scaling up/out); monitoring and evaluation etc).* Communication of research findings to policy makers probably weakens the opportunity for policy dialogue. Finally, the communications materials known to the team were of high quality. However, the use of mass media communication activities (e.g. TV spots) must be questioned when the technology has not been fully appraised and piloted.

However, and again mainly due to shortage of time, an evaluation of the effectiveness of this work, particularly impact upon intended beneficiaries had not materialised. Ideally, aims and goals with measurable impact indicators should have been incorporated into the process and linked with original needs assessment. Furthermore, the university researchers had been more oriented towards communicating their research to other researchers. Therefore, the communication material of such volume and language would not be suitable for other users who are not researchers. This has also weakened the opportunity for policy dialogue.

Towards the end of the project period SUFER was involved in a writeshop[5] with RLEP where actually they did a stakeholder analysis for the purposes of communications and identified themes where important lessons have occurred. SUFER has important lessons on networking and partnership development, managing pro-poor research, social and economic viability of the technologies and many other themes that can be important for future programme and policy development.

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[5] A collective event in which participants develop a specific written output addressing one or more specific themes, topics or issues.

An important lesson here is that a clearly defined communications strategy must be incorporated into project design, ideally as an output contributing to overall project purpose. The strategy must include multi-dimensional analyses of key findings and lessons relating to the processes tested and experienced by the project as well as the dissemination of technological innovations to relevant stakeholders. Care should also be taken to be sure that the technology is well proven to succeed (rigorous piloting with limited scale-up) and is most likely to bring significant benefits to the poor.

Due to shortage of time and because M & E of communications was not an integral part of the project (to assess research projects completed in 2002/03), an evaluation of the project-led communications effectiveness, in terms of outcomes, particularly any impact upon intended beneficiaries has not been done. The in-house evaluation work to date assesses progress of communications activities. Ideally, the aims and goals with measurable impact indicators should have been incorporated into the communications process and against the original needs assessment. The important lesson here is to ensure that the strategy design incorporates the necessary elements of effective communications and may require external assistance to develop this.

26 With respect to the overall sustainability of the project, a number of observations can be offered. While its specific funded actions could not necessarily be expected to be sustained, institutional and human resource changes, built on the physical capital provided during the project, should be expected to create a much more positive context for knowledge development and its wider application in the sector. The project made several interventions; it increased the human capital (embodied in research and teaching activities) of the fisheries faculty members, their networking capabilities have been enhanced and curricula changes are made and physical capital improved. The teachers have been brought close to each other through several training programmes organised by the project. A group of potential institutional entrepreneurs was identified and brought under the formal umbrella of the BFRF. Obviously, curricula changes will stay, so will the improvement in physical facilities for some years to come. The future of the QAS depends on the role of the UGC in carrying forward this idea and implementing it in other departments and universities and stretch beyond the pilot stage. New skills will last as long as they are gainfully used, otherwise they will rust. There are three ways through which the changes brought by the project could sustain.

- **First**, through individual nurturing of the skills (teaching, research and networking) acquired by the teachers. This can wane for lack of enthusiasm or opportunity to carry out research with objectives similar to the SUFER project.
- **Second**, the partners of the teachers (NGOs and the private sector) substituting for the role played by SUFER to some extent. For example, the NGO can carry out existing or new research in collaboration with the teachers or the private sector can find gains in funding research housed in universities. The SUFER failed to establish these relationships and a potential opportunity for making changes brought about by the project sustainable is lost.
- **Third**, if the BFRF could play a role similar to that of SUFER, the achievements of the project could be enhanced and sustained. This depends on two factors; individual motivation of the teachers who will provide the leadership and on the availability of funds. While some positive signs of the former can be identified from the attitude of some potential teacher-leaders, the latter remains still uncertain.

In the absence of funding, the project is less likely to be sustainable in its main budget supported elements. There is hardly any chance of the Bangladesh university system carrying forward the SUFER idea in foreseeable future. The state has been in effect bypassed or if included could have taken the strategy the university system has already taken. Under these circumstances the sustainability of potential and actual gains from

the project remains in the entrepreneurial role of the fisheries teachers in developing BFRF as a viable institution and the possibility of future funding.

An earlier exercise had been carried out by the SUFER management team to draw out the perspectives of the teaching groups in developing an exit strategy (see SUFER internal documents, 2004). To explore this more widely a 'future scoping' exercise, the 'University Challenge' (Annex 4) was carried out with the SUFER departments, inviting them to put forward their expected approaches to the challenges posed by the current PRSP aims and modes of action. This was designed to test the teachers' appreciation of the nature of such development issues and the ways in which policy is set out, to explore whether and how they could recognise potential directions for their own involvement, and to offer them a chance to set these out at a workshop for SUFER clients and partners convened at the BRAC Centre in the final stages of the review. The outcomes of this exercise were revealing in that in spite of the exposure to development issues provided by the SUFER project they demonstrated the substantial gulf remaining between the departments' priorities and perspectives, and the evident demands of the sector. Though some individuals showed a more open view, it unfortunately generated very technical and specialised responses, together with the typical supply-led 'wish-lists' for resources. In consequence, the potential to think beyond this, and hence to genuinely move towards more self-sustaining conditions, must be in doubt.

6 THE NEXT STEPS…?

27 Based on composite findings from this review, a number of lessons can be offered to contribute to future funding mechanisms for grant awarding processes and support to pro-poor adaptive research. The SUFER experience shows that more is required to develop long lasting relationships between researchers, NGOs and the private sector, and that clear shared outcomes need to be defined. The link with the private sector has always been weak, indirect, and informal whereas the link between the NGO and the university teachers was purposively nurtured, direct and formal. The role of each party has to be clearly specified and respected and possible conflicts of interest have to be addressed in the design and management process. For example, the teachers were trained in livelihoods analysis whereas the NGO, who may have long experience at the ground level, may lack expertise to understand or at least articulate complex livelihoods issues. Being with the poor does not necessarily mean knowing more about poverty. This would create a communication gap between the partners.

The grant awarding process should make sure that the poverty constraints of the clients are properly assessed by the researcher and the partner NGO. SUFER evidence shows that this has not been the case with many new technologies. Although gender issues were addressed, in many instances researchers and partners did not give the attention it deserves particularly where technology targeted women involvement. More time should also be given for technology and partnerships to mature. The technologies are often hindered by seasonal availability of inputs such as fingerlings of some species of fish that can delay the project. Repeated trials have to be made to get the desired results. A longer time horizon would able all the parties to met their responsibilities.

Communication strategies and scope for impact analysis should be included in the design of the research project. These should not be left as afterthoughts. External support may be given to the researchers to carry out communication and impact assessment activities. The system could also hire an independent impact assessment agent. There should be more representation of social scientists in the project proposal approval committees of the CGS system. This committee need not be fixed and may bring in expertise from outside when needed. At the management level technical skill has to supplement social science skills so that the big picture is not lost and the broader

social issues are internalised at the implementation stage of the research project. A project may suffer from technical problem in the implementation stage; it can also suffer from addressing an altogether wrong issue. For example, a project may include extreme poor households who may not be appropriate for participating in the research project.

Finally, the state cannot be kept in the sidelines, at least in the longer run. Donor pressure on Bangladesh government is increasing on improving governance and law and order issues. On the other hand the local component of project funding is also increasing. This would in the long run have an impact on the performance of the state. If the state feels left out from a process that generate pro-poor technologies then it would be difficult to get co-operation from it at a later stage. Technology changes the relationship between people and nature and ultimately it will be state which expresses societal choice with respect to preferred routes for change and development.

28　The future for greater participation and involvement of the private sector in joint research programmes with the universities will continue to be limited unless more specific and purpose-defined strategies are taken up. However, given the rapid growth and change in the sector, and increasing values of both domestic and export markets, there is a growing potential for developing this link. This would require several steps.

- **First**, attitudes of teachers must change. They should take initiatives to formalise routes for greater private sector involvement. Since no formal recognition of benefits from collaboration is observed, teachers should try to make these clear to the private sector and to university authorities. Communication and impact assessment strategies can play a big role in this regard.
- **Second**, attitudes of NGOs must change. Large NGOs often have their own research programme and tag other programmes with the technology sector. While this is understandable, some large NGOs do not take a small research programme seriously. On the other hand small NGOs often cannot carry out research because of funds constraint and lack of purpose. A mechanism for repeated interactions with the NGO sector should be formed that would help forge the right type of partnership.
- **Third**, in limited cases particular NGOs could be approached to conduct collaborative research based on their priorities and understanding of the needs of the poor. This was done in a limited scale by SUFER but its scope has to be widened in the future.
- **Fourth**, attempts should be made directly with agents outside the NGO domain to establish links for research collaboration. Pro-poor focus does not necessarily mean links cannot be established with large farms as long as the poor benefit indirectly (lower output prices, selling labour power and so on).

The major constraint for pro-poor research initiatives undertaken by a profit-driven private sector is poverty itself. The nature of poverty limits the choice poor people can make and pro-poor research initiatives cannot bypass these social constraints that limit poor people's livelihood options.

29　Throughout its course, and with the active support of the SUFER management team, the project has developed an extensive local knowledge sharing and idea forming network. This has primarily involved research scientists and has gradually extended to include technology transfer specialists, government administrators and field staff. Useful connections had also been made to some development projects, to the Worldfish research programme, to funding agencies such as the IFS (International Foundation for Science) and the EU 5th and 6th Framework for research. Links had also been made with relevant parts of the UK DFID research programmes, notably the PHFRP (Fisheries Post-Harvest) and AFGRP (Aquaculture and Fish Genetics). Supported by the SUFER

project, the development of the BFRF represented a significant move to establish a longer-lasting and potentially self sustaining resource.

It is clear that much less of this would have occurred without the resources of the SUFER project, but there are important qualitative issues. The project tapped into and promoted the growth of a substantial for change and human capital development. It also operated in a field in which, often lacking the formal mechanisms for funding, particularly for public goods, external financial support is the norm. The key issues are perhaps whether the project improved the capability of its stakeholders to articulate their goals and related them to development objectives, and whether a strong enough realisation arose of the importance of addressing these in a strategic and collaborative fashion. The picture arising from this review is that a number of encouraging elements are in place, but that the project itself did not the have the time to test these well, demonstrate the important lessons, and promote a wider round of best practice and policy guidance from these. Unfortunately also, current shifts in development thinking and practice mean that shorter term processes for taking up these lessons and reinforcing the positive aspects through a new funding round are absent. Though a broader mechanism for competitive research funding has been identified and is potentially available as a framework for donor support, it is unlikely to proceed quickly enough to pick up the immediate momentum of the project and the networks it has created. During the final project stages, however, some potential had been identified in collaborating with the DFID AFGRP, which would allow at least part of the sectoral interest to be maintained and in particular could strengthen experience in uptake and scale-up, in developing wider and more integrated research approaches, and in demonstrating impact. The role of the BFRF would probably be critical in this, and much would rest on the commitment and strength of purpose of the key individuals and groups involved.

30 Finally, a primary goal of the SUFER project had been to develop human resources across a wider front by generating the multiplier effects arising out of the influence of university teachers, firstly in educating successive generations of students who would then take their place in private, public or third sector employment and in society as a whole, and secondly as senior and influential technical professionals contributing in the affairs of the country more widely. The SUFER project has clearly benefited both individual teachers and their institutions, and there is increasing evidence of this in turn creating a wider impact. Though not directly detected, there is also potential for the greater relevance of the teachers knowledge and their confidence in interacting with others to be reflected in a greater level of respect, though once earned this would need to be reinforced.

At a more structural level, the lessons of the project appear to have been widely appreciated, leasing in particular to interest a UGC and GoB level in issues concerning competitive funding, staff capacity development and quality assurance. Changes in ideas and attitudes are important here, but targeted funding support would also be required to embed these and extend their benefits. It would be useful to carry out a broad-ranging cost:benefit analysis to set out the issues and demonstrate more specifically where investment would yield the best longer-term national returns, expressed across a 'total economic value' or livelihoods/human development capital basis. Suitable indicators could also be set out. Such an approach would be valuable for both GoB and donor investors and would clarify the case for further engagement.

APPENDIX 1. DFID PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT – Annex D

Type of Report: PCR

For quarterly monitoring, complete Part A and C; for annual review complete Parts A, B and C

Load Review

For Project Completion Reports complete Parts A, B and C but it is not necessary to complete the Outputs/OVI field in Part A.

PART A.

Country:	Bangladesh	Project:	Support for University Fisheries Education and Research (SUFER)
Project Officer **Date of Visit:** **Date of Report:**	Najir Ahmed Khan 15-29 June 2004 27 June 2004	**Start Date:** **End Date:** **MIS Code:** **Risk Category:**	October 1999 July 2004

Project Budget	Spend in period under review	Cumulative spend	Forecast for current financial year
Goal Statement		**OVIs**	
To sustainably and equitably manage and develop Bangladesh's aquatic resources		Wide range of beneficiaries from maintained and improved diversity and quantity of aquatic biological base	
Purpose Statement		**OVIs**	
Human resources, skills and knowledge for poverty-sensitive aquatic resource development strengthened through increased capability of universities inter-acting with sector agents to deliver quality graduates and development-linked research.		Practical responses to poverty-linked constraints in five sub-sectors developed and applied through joint university-sectoral linkages Graduates acquire and apply improved vocational skills in priority areas of skills deficiency. University departments adopt and apply redefined objectives and	

	goals

Outputs /OVIs	Progress		Comments
	Planned (period under review)	Actual (including comments if required)	Planned for next period
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			

General /Overall progress assessment - Project Purpose	3 = likely to be partially achieved

Justification - a range of improvements in capacity to develop human resources, skills and knowledge, but poverty-sensitive approaches have not been embedded, nor are wider perspectives of poverty issues with and around the sector well established. Technical issues of aquatic resource development have been strengthened, and teaching products much improved with students now exposed to current thinking. Some development-linked research, but not strongly developed through longer-lasting partnerships, and impacts as yet only explored to a limited extent. The client group now represents a valuable resource but there is concern for the extent of current opportunities as development models have shifted away from the areas in which they can interact directly. Departments have developed on the basis of very successful teaching awards but this has not led to fundamental shifts in

objectives and goals. However, the younger generation of teachers is positive to change and will have rising influence over the longer term.	
General /Overall progress assessment - Project Outputs	`3 = likely to be partially achieved`
Justification Output 1– *Framework established for sectoral participation in identification, targeting and funding relevant areas of university teaching and research* - Programme Management Committee unlikely to outlast project; Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum may have longer-term viability but incentives for continuation unclear; there are some SUFER clients in international/ regional theme networks. The Fisheries Sector Review provides sector context, and DOF/WB/DFID Fourth Fisheries Project is supporting strategy and action plans, in which teaching and research could be located, but with little specific linkage for SUFER clients. Output 2. *Sectorally and developmentally relevant university teaching programmes established and delivered* - There has been significant improvement in technical content and delivery, but capacity in development-related issues is still short of aims. Output 3. *Core groups of staff develop interactive research capability in conjunction with poverty-targeted end users*; this has been achieved in some groups within SUFER system, with satisfactory evidence of understanding, but it is questionable whether this will continue in absence of specific targeted funds. Output 4. *Longer-term strategy based on embedded change and good practice developed and accepted within sector networks*; Absence of co-ordinated sector framework (O1) limits potential, though sectoral QAS (quality assurance scheme) for teaching provides partial response, and may have longer term UGC/GoB support. Project would require more time to prove approaches and impacts.	

Log Frame Level			
INPUTS/ACTIVITIES		PERFORMANCE RATING	COMMENTS
(a) Appropriateness (quality):	(a) DFID	3	Effective management of inputs and processes but initial TCO Co-ordinator difficulties. Later networking and outcome delivery could have been strengthened

	(b) Partner	3	Very good response to teaching and interest in broad themes of research but little proactive response to more explicit development –linked research criteria and partnerships, which required more project input
(b) Efficiency (quantity):	(a) DFID	2	Good delivery of project inputs and planned spend
	(b) Partner	2	Complete uptake of teaching and research awards though some push needed for the latter
(c) Sufficiency (timeliness):	(a) DFID	3	Only just at this level – considerable delays in early stage implementation and later output delivery, and in dissemination/communication.
	(b) Partner	4	Time of response very slow - partly due to difficulties in early project stages – but continued resistance to the level of change expected; Decision to focus on themes and most active teachers in later stages much improved this.
OVERALL ASSESSMENT*****:		3	Overall a good level of partial achievement, very good teaching response and impact but limited social content or restructuring; some useful research but limited interactions and longer-term uptake and impact; Sectoral network and partnerships developed but not strongly embedded. Given initial delays a modest project extension would have been advisable and cost-effective, and would have lifted the score to 2, but this was not possible.

(*) Including conditionality aspects where relevant

PART B.

Purpose /OVIs	Progress	Comments
Practical responses to poverty-linked constraints in five sub-sectors developed and applied through joint university-sectoral linkages	Increased awareness of poverty-related issues in many of the sub-sector areas, and specific research actions in some aspects of this, but little evidence of university-sectoral linkages addressing this at strategic level. Partial achievement of practical responses through a range of poverty focused research initiatives. More than 12 technologies completed for promotion to beneficiaries.	Baseline study identified situation in early phases of project, but there was little concerted ownership process for subsector issues and approaches by SUFER and its clients. Also uncertainty surrounding justification for scale-up. One more year would have allowed for further piloting, socio-economic and marketing analyses.
Graduates acquire and apply improved vocational skills in priority areas of skills deficiency.	Good progress related to improved teaching materials and structures, better field projects and opportunities to work in development areas, but only developed in latter stages of project	Exposure to field work and potential to deal with social/community issues had enthused students, and probably led to much improved concepts and skills, but improvements were not objectively measured. Long term provision for this post-SUFER is uncertain as strong sector framework is not in place
University departments adopt and apply redefined objectives and goals	Good progress in quality assessment, and in adopting livelihoods components, plus some faculty and curriculum level changes, but existing structures and systems are largely unchanged	Support of UGC has been helpful but effectiveness of longer term impacts will be highly dependent on GoB education policy and implementation

Attribution
Range of project reports, last SUFER OPR, impact study on selected research projects, research

completion reports, interviews and discussions with UGC, SUFER staff, teachers, Programme Management Committee, members of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum.

Purpose to Goal
There have been useful gains in improving quality of training for fisheries professionals, improved confidence in some parts of university sector in understanding broader issues and ways of addressing them, but very limited opportunity to consolidate these and bring about longer-lasting changes. However teaching impacts will be sustained and will continue to feed through benefits for some years – at least 5-10 years by typical course updating standards., The implementation of 58 research projects involving a wide range of stakeholders, particularly partner agencies may ultimately result in a long term impact on the sustainable management of aquatic resources. Increased poverty focused awareness within the universities improves the preparedness of researchers to deliver pro-poor research if macro-level changes in the sector are put into place, but dependent on sector-wide responsiveness to PRSP and continued and improved engagement within the sector.

DOES LOGFRAME REQUIRE REVISION?
n/a

DO PIMS MARKERS REQUIRE REVISION [Mandatory for projects approved prior to 1.4.98]
n/a

Quality of Scoring
Last OPR holds true, quality of scoring is good

Lessons learned, and suggested dissemination. For PCRs please comment on (i) Project/Programme Level Lessons, (ii) Sector Level or Thematic Lessons, and (iii) General Development Lessons
(i) Project/Programme Level Lessons   - Early intervention to address implementation and management problems, and closely timetabled and monitored review recommendations would have improved project focus and performance.   - The complex and locally challenging approach of the project needed strong early champions; - the network group could have been established much earlier, so that issues could have been better debated, understood, communicated and built into strategy.

- An attitude survey of key stakeholders at the initial stages would have allowed perspectives and motivations to be more clearly understood, so that project approaches could be better targeted, and impacts better measured.
- More proactive interaction with clients and potential partners from the earliest stage would have greatly improved progress to intended outputs, and have delivered more lessons earlier.
- Project management required broad perspectives on themes and proven experience in interlinking social, technical and institutional issues, so that the project and its activities and interactions could be guided more effectively.
- Early engagement of social research/development expertise to address livelihood complexities of rural communities and develop understanding of market and economic linkages.
- A proactive approach to building capacity in the programme management committee, and the establishment of clear guidelines would have improved its selectivity and ability to deliver effective feedback to applicants.
- Setting outcomes in the later stages of the project was a useful exercise but could have benefited from indicators.

(ii) Sector Level or Thematic Lessons,
- The limited degree of cross-sector donor co-ordination during the earlier project period made context-setting more challenging and project aims difficult to take forward.
- The core competitive element of the project was effective in creating a 'pull' but could only be moved at a level and rate within reach of the clients. This suggested the need for a longer term interaction.
- It is arguable that the approach should have deliberately targeted wider sectoral interests – eg water, conservation/environment, agriculture, and through partnerships would justifiably be programmed over longer (eg 10-year) period.
- Considerable research management experience was already in place in DFID UK and other sectoral groups and should have been the initial reference point – much time could have been saved and efficiency improved.
- Organisational change and influence upon policy processes is improbable through relatively small sector level projects, though they create useful impetus and lesson -learning; For more comprehensive and embedded change, higher level programmatic approach through the UGC with institutional development purpose level indicators would be required; pro-poor research agenda and cross sectoral linkages emphasised

- Inter-agency partnership arrangements need to be better understood (especially new linkages) using rigorous stakeholder interest, skill and needs analysis to ensure complementation of requisite assets and expected benefits.
- Pro-poor research linking NGOs and private sector with university teachers does work but funding may have to be conditional unless real win-win gains can be clearly identified by relevant parties.
- Though potentially justifiable in a context such as this, HR capacity building costs are high and require lengthy exposure to poverty linked research so that researchers fully understand livelihood complexities of the poor and to understand their own limitations (which may require the expertise from non-fisheries professionals)

(iii) General Development Lessons
- This project sat across natural resources/education sector interests for donor, but limited co-ordination opportunities at that stage made it difficult to take forward as such
- Gender perspectives should have been addressed proactively though there were encouraging elements. Exposure to livelihoods concepts and approaches alone did not achieve this, and indeed may have blunted the issues.
- University sector institutions and their dynamics were little understood in the early stages, but could not be ignored or assumed to be unconnected with delivery and performance.
- NGO and private sector characterisation and motivations were not well understood nor was this much developed during the course of the project – would have improved and made more realistic the partnership aims and implementation.
- Better indicators for performance and outcome could have been set out at an early stage, and impact issues given more prominence
- There was little connection with governance issues, and an unfocused approach to overarching institutional capacity at university, NGO or private sector level had limited the longer term sustainability and impact of project; connections with line/sectoral agencies and with decentralised governance systems were poorly developed and would have improved sustainability.
- There was a need for more joined up approaches at DFID country level and more widely – the disconnected sectoral context limited the scope for interaction and longer term partnership development.
- Human and Institutional capacity issues and processes are not separable from the promotion of development-relevant research, and within a funding programme, whether allocated or competitive,

> resource needs to be available to address these. Viewed solely from the immediate research output perspective this may be judged as an unacceptable transaction cost, but the process and outcomes need to be more widely drawn.
>
> - DFID management and operational processes resulted in only one person – a reviewer - having full institutional memory of the project; this person's involvement in the final stages was fortuitous. Is management by relay efficient or coherent?
>
> **Suggested dissemination:**
> EoP workshop and discussions; RLEP documentation and workshops; DFIDB website, background papers to ARI and/or other initiatives; position papers to UGC, Planning Commission, Ministries of Education, Fisheries and Livestock, Water

Part C

Key Issues / Points of information. For PCRs please comment on Sustainability
Given the delays in effective implementation, and in engaging with the clients positively and productively, the overall performance of the project was good, with a high level of uptake and application in teaching and field work, and although involving fewer staff, a positive and response to the challenges of development and poverty-targeted research. As a broader community, sectoral teachers, and other stakeholders, developed a strong awareness and appreciation of the project and its aims and approach. At University level, and via its setting in the University Grants Committee, the thematic issues of activating and energising teachers, encouraging their participation in the wider development needs of the country, developing and applying internal quality standards, and communicating up to date knowledge, positively engaging and motivating students, was highly appreciated, and provided valuable lessons for wider strategic application in modernising structures and practices in national education sector. Although the competitive grant system, a central element of the project's approach, was not in itself novel, and familiar to a number of teachers, its focus on development-related issues and in most cases poverty-targeted research provided particular challenges to many, and articulating the connections between traditional disciplines, or modifying approaches, working with others with different backgrounds, attitude, experience and motivation, was not easy. The demand 'pull' mechanism proved its effectiveness and tended to focus on change where its need was most clearly expressed and its mechanisms best explained. However its effectiveness also depended firstly on the project staff, and also on the Programme Steering Committee, in their ability to understand the issues and select or advise accordingly. Notwithstanding these constraints, a number of very useful and potentially rewarding pieces of research were carried out, and development partnerships showed promise. However, due to time constraints, very few of these had the opportunity to be tested more widely and scaled up, and in a number pf cases, the processes of change induced by new technologies did not appear to have been though through. The use of livelihoods workshops proved to be valuable, and gave a certain number of teachers a very good insight into the nature and processes of poverty, and the more complex sets of issues which surround impoverishment and its hold on parts of the population. However, while the descriptive power of SL was clear, success in translating this into research formulation or for example various forms of action research, with stakeholder-owned knowledge processes, was much less evident. More broadly, with a small number of exceptions, gender issues were not well addressed,

with perhaps the concept that because SL is holistic there is no need to isolate and understand these, or to consider the need for specific gender-related responses. Broadly too, issues such as this highlighted the continued constraint in social research, and the difficulty apparently faced by the project in finding suitably qualified individuals or agencies who were sufficiently motivated b the project's potential, to contribute more actively. A partial solution was obtained by building up the capacity of younger staff with a biology background but a strong interest in developing social research and development skills, but this did not fully cover the implicit demands of the development issues concerned.

Though links with NGOs and the private sector were not strongly established, some experience was gained. However, links with wider institutional agents and with decentralised government were virtually non-existent. While this may partly have been the consequence of a reluctance of public sector agents to be involved, or a lack of interest, these avenues are potentially important, would improve potential sustainability and impact, and in terms of national development and investment strategy, cannot be ignored.

Opportunities to promote the work of the SUFER project and its clients were not strongly developed, though some useful initiatives occurred. Arguably, timing was an issue, as much of the more interesting and developmentally valuable work had only started to emerge in the later stages of the project. However, although a communications/dissemination strategy was recommended earlier, this had not been applied as an integral element in the research process. Given the very short time now available and the limited resources remaining, the potential for a number of valuable initiatives may be impeded. However, the BFRF (Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum) though as yet in its early stages of development is a potentially a useful organisation and could have great value in representing sectoral aims and defining priorities on the national stage.

The sustainability of certain parts of the project's outputs is potentially good – human and institutional capacity changes will lead to longer-term benefits and have strong internal motivations for continuance. Linkages between project clients and wider networks of stakeholders and development agents have been built up in certain instances but have not been developed long enough for the advantages of longer term collaboration to be realised or understood. At this stage, further input and support, even at a modest level, but allowing more time for the current momentum to realise its potential would have been both beneficial and cost-effective. In the circumstances, any options for the university sector to maintain and build connections would be valuable.

In the longer term, the introduction of a more strategic competitive funding structure for agricultural sector research could provide a very positive opportunity for SUFER's more motivated clients, and the experience gained in the present project will be invaluable in allowing them to respond. In the absence of such a scheme however, the ground may be rather barren, and while good staff will find some funding opportunities in international or regional programmes, the environment for development-oriented research may not be so positive, and its importance as a driving force may diminish. Arrangements currently under discussion to link parts of one of the UK-based DFID research programmes (AFGRP) with the network will be welcome and will provide some continuation and a chance to explore impacts, but this is at best a partial means of maintaining momentum and drive.

Recommendations	Responsibility	Date for completion
1. Complete impact review with additional perspectives on social development issues	IDL	31 July 2004
2. Strengthen institutional review and ensure it links with the impact review to provide a thorough and well argued assessment and recommendations	IDL	31 July 2004
3. Finalise exit strategy findings and disseminate to stakeholders	SUFER, BFRF, Universities	31 July 2004
4. Confirm shorter-term programme linkages – eg AFGRP and CABI initiatives, other possible approaches; agree co-ordinating agency	JM, BFRF	31 July 2004 initial, AFGRP funds confirmed by September 2004
5. Check possibility of linking co-ordinating body with equivalent being developed within FFP; also with longer term network of agencies, agree shared interests and workplan	SUFER/FFP/DoF	31 July 2004
6. Confirm prospects to link coastal themes with FFP polder component and with ICZM	SUFER/FFP/DoF	31 July 2004
7. Consider ways to scale up/integrate/develop key findings from research programmes	DoF, NGOs, BFRF,	Initial 31 July (with 4) then by 30 September 2004
8. Explore funding environment and define priorities for sector-related research	SUFER and BFRF	July 31 2004

9.Consider options for piloting partnership themes as part of interim ARI – by taking forward most promising cluster(s) and awarding on impacts	BFRF and other funders/ partners	Initial 31 July , then periodically

Review team:	Kazi Ali Toufique (KAT), Alan Brooks (AB), James Muir (JM)
People met:	Dr Md Mufakker, Project Director UGC; Mr Chris Morrice/ Dr David Brown Project Co-ordinator, Dr Md. Akhteruzamman, Technical Manager, SUFER Project; staff of Khulna, Dhaka, BAU, Chittagong Universities, communities in Mongla and Satkhira, staff of NGOs Sushilan, Proshika; members of Project Management Committee, members of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum (BFRF).; Prof. M Asaduzzaman, Chairman, UGC.

Scoring system:
1 = likely to be completely achieved   4 = only likely to be achieved to a very limited extent
2 = likely to be largely achieved   5 = unlikely to be realised
3 = likely to be partially achieved   x = too early to judge extent of achievement

APPENDIX 2 SUFER END OF PROJECT REVIEW DETAILS

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The purpose of the Support for University Fisheries Education and Research (SUFER) project is to strengthen human resources, skills and knowledge for poverty-sensitive aquatic resource development by increasing the capability of universities interacting with sector agents to deliver quality graduates and development-linked research. This supports the goal to 'sustainably and equitably manage and develop Bangladesh's aquatic resources'.

The SUFER project was formally approved in March 1998 and commenced operations in February 1999. The project was scheduled to run to July 2004 with DFID funding of £2.45m. SUFER is located within the University Grants Commission and is managed by a DFID-appointed Project Co-ordinator. It has been established to use institutional change in the university sector as a means of achieving broader development objectives. It works with five Universities: Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh; providing technical support and a range of teaching and research grants.

The SUFER Mid-term Review (MTR) was held in September 2000 and concluded that the project was not making sufficient progress towards its objectives, identifying constraints of poor uptake, confusion among target groups and over-complicated procedures. The MTR recommended a number of structural and operational changes to improve project performance. After MTR, annual review (OPR) held in November 2001, commented that the project was making progress though the rate of change needed to be accelerated to meet End of Project (EoP) targets. The OPR noted more positive engagement by the University community and that the restructured award system was better contributing to overall project objectives. The OPR also highlighted continued areas of non-performance and made recommendations to improve progress in these and a number of other areas.

An OPR held in October/November 2002 concluded that a number of changes proposed in the OPR 2001 to accelerate progress have been started but a sizeable distance still remains to successful outcome. The OPR team commented that the project has not been sufficiently proactive in stimulating sectoral alliance, and at the current levels the project would be unlikely to achieve much more than a small shift in teaching performance and graduate skills, and small number of useful but low impact research activities. Following discussion between the project and DFIDB the project refocused its research strategy towards three outcomes (Pro poor growth in commercial aquaculture, University support to public and private sector linkage, Diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal community).

To achieve these outcomes and in response to the OPR 2002 the project revised its strategy in January 2003, including key activities and milestones. A Mid Year Review and a specific study on "Assessing Impact of Teaching Quality" followed soon after in May 2003. The MYR focused on two key areas, i) Assess and comment on the progress made towards implementing *key recommendations* made in the last OPR (October 2002) and ii) Review the current strategies, activities, and milestones towards achieving 3 major outcomes and provide clear recommendations to enable the project to effectively achieve these outcomes. The overall assessment was that, "*The project has made good progress towards meeting the recommendations of the November 2002 OPR*"[1]. The assessment of teaching quality study reported that, "*The SUFER project has had a significant positive impact on teaching practice in all four of the five participating universities visited*"[2]

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[1] Hambrey, J. (2003). SUFER Mid Year Review, May 2003. 26p.

[2] Allison, E. (2003). Assessing the Impact of the SUFER project on teaching Quality in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Bangladeshi Universities, April 27th – May 10th 2003. May 2003. 41p.

This EOPR follows on closely to a previous OPR completed December 2003, therefore, it is unlikely that significant changes will have taken place since then. The December 03 OPR reported that the project had continued to make very good progress in certain key areas particularly teaching quality and development of university teacher skills and knowledge in poverty and gender sensitive aquatic research. Significant progress had also been made in the development of sector networks and partnerships to exchange research ideas and information.

For the last six months the project has been concentrating more on understanding the social and livelihoods impact of its research interventions which are ultimately to lead towards achieving the aforementioned outcomes (should scale-up occur); determine through a consultative process with partners how the scaling-up process may be effective; make progress disseminating known information and working towards a sustainable exit strategy for the partnerships, networks and pro-poor research capability.

The scope of work herein appears extensive but these are guiding tasks to <u>build</u> <u>on</u> existing information. The main focus of this review must be to assess progress during the final phase of the project with emphasis upon requisite programme learning for future support to universities and grant awarding research systems, and a clearly presented synopsis of likely long term benefits and outcomes.

Objectives

The overall objective of the consultancy was to:

1) Using DFID's office instructions as a guideline, asses the progress against the project information marker system (PIMS) as set in the project header sheet/memorandum; assess overall achievement of the project's purpose and revised outputs; and assess the extent to which the projects goal is likely to be achieved.

2) Identify lessons learned from SUFER project including key lessons for future investment in poverty focused research, which may help DFID to perform better in future.

3) Assess the extent to which it was possible for SUFER to change the institutional values of organisations in fisheries research.

Methodology

The consultancy was seen as working very closely with the TA team, with greatest emphasis upon determining overall performance according to tasks set in the project documents and periodic review recommendations and, to highlight key lessons learnt, not only for the implementing organisations but also a wider audience. Implications of these key lessons learnt for future implementation of the DFID Country Assistance Plan (CAP) were also to be highlighted.

Along with the tasks below, this contributed to the EOPR, in a format decided by the Team Leader, covering issues indicated in this TOR, as well as completion of the standard DFID OPR ('Annex D') form (see Appendix 1).

The team received a briefing from DFID and RLEP with regard to the TORs. The SUFER project team and RLEP Team Leader were responsible for the operational aspects of the review. The itinerary was finalised on arrival in Bangladesh.

The team members undertook meetings and field visits as required to address TORs and met with project, UGC officials, project beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. In addition to conducting the review, they participated fully in writing a draft report for submission to DFID prior to departure. At the end of the review, the team members presented their findings in a briefing workshop to DFIDB, and outlined the lessons learned.

Scope of work

The consultants reviewed project documentation, and worked with staff from the UGC, the universities, DFID and SUFER project team, participating communities and other key agencies to address the above objectives. They also considered issues covered in previous OPR reports, and in some cases, completion of outputs and OVIs already documented, avoiding the need to revisit, but rather update and build on previous findings for the EOPR. The specific 'scope of work' tasks given here directed the team to focus on specific outstanding issues to be addressed by the project, especially those noted at the last OPR.

The project is directed by four time-phased outputs and in November 2002 the project developed a strategy to refocus and organise the activities of the project along three key outcome areas as shown below.

Outcome Areas (Nov. 2002 strategy)	Outputs (Logframe – Revised MTR Sept 2000)
1 Pro-poor growth in commercial aquaculture; 2 University support to public and private sector linkage; 3 Diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal communities	1. Framework established for sectoral participation in identification, targeting and funding relevant areas of university teaching and research, interacting with regional and inter-national agents, operational by end of year 2, 2. Sectorally and developmentally relevant university teaching programmes established and delivered in at least 5 departments. 3. Core groups of staff in five universities develop interactive research capability in conjunction with poverty-targeted end users. 4. Longer-term strategy based on embedded change and good practice developed and accepted within sector networks by yr 5

The scope of work sub-headings directed attention to the most important issues to be addressed, building on achievements and addressing shortcomings previously documented. The tasks focus on specific issues relating to the **outputs**, their **outcome areas** and associated **cross-cutting elements**, as outlined below**.**

Outputs

Framework for establishing sectoral participation and linkages (Output 1).

1 Comment on National links established between universities and other agencies (e.g. fora, seminars and subject-specific working groups for teachers) and building on previous reports, determine how successful these linkages have been in sharing ideas, strategies and promotion of new technologies.

2 Assess the potential strength and long-term viability of these linkages and partnerships facilitated by the SUFER Project. What are the key lessons for promoting "…*increasing the capacity of universities interacting with sector agents …*" (excerpt from project purpose statement).

3 What is the perceived long-term viability of BFRF? From the lessons learnt here and elsewhere comment on how important information exchange fora may be sustained in the future?

4 To what extent has the international collaboration helped build up networks, develop key research and teaching areas. Is the collaboration likely to continue after EoP and what can we learn from this?

University teaching programme reform (Output 2)

5 Assess to what extent the project has influenced universities to develop strategies to ensure that teaching quality is actively continued in the future?

6 How sustainable is the new SLA course introduced into university curricula (linked to strategies above)?

7 Comment on how livelihood principles have been integrated into faculty forward thinking, research agenda, teaching and higher level faculty management and administration i.e. those who may be able to influence and facilitate long term sustainable reform.

Development of interactive pro-poor research capability (Output 3)

8 Previously, the project management suggested that research proposals and concomitant implementation had improved as a result of SLA training. Comment on evidence-based lessons learned from the capacity building processes to develop interactive poverty focussed research capability.

9 How effective has the training in research proposal writing been? Continued field based adaptive research is currently dependent upon external funding. Is there evidence of potential for researchers to access funding from external sources after EoP?

10 Has the project assessed research quality and what lessons can be learned for funding agencies in the Bangladesh context especially if research results are directly linked to poverty-linked outcomes.

Strategy and good practice development within the sector networks (Output 4)

11 Comment on the project's approach to "*good practice identified*" (See OVI 4.1) and effectiveness of its dissemination strategy. Did the timing and development of a communications strategy (in the final 6 months of the project) have an important role in this process?

12 Is there evidence of "*embedded change*" for practices developed by participating organisations within the sector networks? Essentially, in the broadest sense, who (in addition to universities) has been influenced by what over 5 years of SUFER project intervention? Identify reasons for and against non/active participation from an internal and external project influence perspective.

13 Review progress in assisting the UGC and universities set up a QA scheme for government-led university accreditation initiative.

Outcome Areas

Diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal community

14 Comment on the potential for new livelihood options within the coastal communities based on 8 research awards having direct (8 awards) and indirect (10 awards) impact on the poor.

Pro poor growth in commercial aquaculture

15 Previous OPR reports document how the project supported research and collaborative links have had a role in promoting commercial aquaculture development but are mechanisms emerging for potential scale-up including tangible evidence of sustained growth in promotion of these pro-poor technologies (not a project success indicator or logframe OVI).

16 Commercialisation can often exclude or exploit poor people. What lessons are learnt from how has the project achieved 'pro-poor growth' in this sector?

University support to public and private sector linkage

17 Assess the strength and potential long-term viability of NGO/private sector/university partnerships facilitated by the SUFER Project and suggest mechanisms for future support.

18 What lessons can be learned from specific linkages promoted by the project e.g. fish seed quality enhancement programme

Crosscutting issues

19 Review the mechanisms, benefits and constraints of engaging NGOs and private sector to implement research, extension and scale–up.

20 Assess the relative effectiveness of the "evidence-based" mechanisms used by the project for technology scale-up through networks.

21 Since the last review the project commissioned a study to assess social development and livelihoods impact of some pro-poor technologies introduced to communities. Comment on the results of this study and its wider implications for promoting these technologies for the benefit of poor people especially women.

22 How have gender issues been tackled by the project in terms of institutional awareness and training, targeting women and their quality of participation (research staff and beneficiaries). Comment on the methods of evaluation and lessons learned from realigning project activities to support women's involvement at all levels post project design and start-up. [Consider the low female staffing levels and institutional processes outside project control]. What are the key lessons learned for DFID in relation to women's participation in research and the new CAP.

23 Interdisciplinary or composite research initiated by the project to investigate mollusc culture for poor fishing communities has the potential to overcome difficulties in bringing social and technical scientists together as co-researchers. What can be learned from this approach and comment on its implications for future field-based research requiring analyses of the socio-economic/cultural dimensions of the intervention.

24 Comment on the progress made by the project to identify common themes and activities and distil out learning or recommend actions to distil out learning in a suitable format to inform key stakeholders in both the current projects and future pro-poor, demand-led agricultural research agricultural research processes. [*Such themes could include: identification and prioritization of research; approaches to commissioning and managing research portfolios; partnerships and coalitions to address identification, implementation and extension of research; dissemination and uptake (scaling up/out); monitoring and evaluation*].

25 Are there any tangible outcomes evidenced by in-house evaluation and analyses of the project-led communications activities.

26 Comment on the overall sustainability of the project including steps taken by the project to introduce more sustainable processes and practices established by the project, UGC, universities and participating stakeholders.

The Next Steps…?

27 Based on the composite findings from this review what lessons contribute to future funding mechanisms for the grant awarding process and support to pro-poor adaptive research. The institutional processes are already underway with BKPF, make recommendations regarding future operation of CGS within Bangladesh research context.

28 Is there a future for greater participation and involvement of the private sector (NGO or commercial) in joint research programmes with universities? Based on the SUFER experience what needs to be done to develop this further? Consider constraints for pro-poor research initiatives undertaken by a profit-driven private sector.

29 The project has developed extensive knowledge sharing and idea forming network involving mainly, research scientists, technology transfer specialists, senior government administrators and field staff. Are these merely marriages of convenience cemented by project money? Or, has the project succeeded in identifying a sustainable process to maintain these networks and if not, what is required to support these very important linkages and partnerships.

30 Previous reports clearly state the project's success in improving teaching quality. In the broadest sense, what systemic changes need to be made to ensure that this quality is maintained within the university system.

2 REVIEW TEAM

The members of the team are listed below:

1. James Muir (Team Leader) – Institutional and university research programme development.
2. Alan Brooks (Team Leader - RLEP). Project implementation and evaluation, livelihoods approaches, technology transfer, aquaculture technologies and training & extension by public sector institutions.
3. Kazi Ali Toufique (National Consultant). Village level livelihoods research, social development and livelihoods impact assessment, partnerships and networks.

DFID-B staff were available to attend the OPR presentation, join the review team for some or all fieldwork, and to comment on specific aspects of the review.. These include:
- Najir Ahmed Khan, Deputy Programme Manager (and SUFER Project Officer)
- Martin Leach, Programme Manager (Pro-poor Growth Group).
- Duncan King, Rural Livelihoods Programme Adviser.
- Eric Hanley, Senior Social Development Adviser
- Amita Dey, Social Development Adviser (poverty, equity and gender issues)

The Review and RLEP Team Leaders were responsible for coordinating different aspects of the review in liaison with the SUFER project team and DFID advisers.

3 TIMETABLE AND ITINERARY

The main in-country review took place from 15th to 29th June, 2004, the national consultant starting one week before on 7th June to develop background and context, working with the researchers and other reviewers addressing livelihoods impacts and institutional issues.

Mon 7	National consultant commences work
Sun 13	Team Leader (JM) departs for Dhaka
Mon 14	Main review commences, initial briefings
Tue 15	DFIDB meeting, BETs office; plan university interactions for EOPR
Wed 16	Meeting UGC, National Co-ordinator, SUFER office, discuss key issues, agree inputs from SUFER team
Thur 17	Background reading, overview of teaching and research projects; Initial outlines of responses to EOPR issues
Fri 18	Further reading and report drafting
Sat 19	To Jessore, drive for Munshiganj, Satkhira; meeting at CARITAS, visit Mud crab fattening programme, discuss with farmers, field visit and discuss with farmers participating with TIK research, PL nursing in cages, to Khulna
Sun 20	Meeting teachers of FMRT Discipline, Khulna University; discuss project experiences and post-SUFER plans; return to hotel
Mon 21	To Mongla, visit Mud crab fattening programme, return to Khulna, then Jessore, fly to Dhaka.

Tue 22	Dhaka - BETS office, work on SUFER and on lessons learned materials;
Wed 23	Report drafting; meet Arne Andreasson (FFP) and Harvey Demaine (DANIDA) re possible SUFER follow-on for coastal regions
Thu 24	Dhaka University – meeting with SUFER linked teachers, discuss project experiences and post-SUFER plans
Fri 25	Report drafting
Sat 26	Visit BAU Mymensingh - meeting with SUFER linked teachers, discuss aspects of BFRF, project experiences and post-SUFER plans
Sun 27	SUFER workshop on overviews and perspectives of University partners, BRAC Centre, Dhaka; discussions on current and future issues; discussions on potential BFRF roles.
Mon 28	Meetings at UGC (Chairman) to discuss overview findings, WFC (ICLARM) re future research partnerships, to BETs office for report drafting, preparation for DFIDB meeting.
Tue 29	DFIDB presentation and discussions, finalise and submit Annex D, complete draft report and summary, BETs office. JM departs for UK pm.

4 PERSONS MET

Prof. M Asaduzzaman, Chairman, UGC.
Dr Md Mufakker, Project Director UGC;
Mr Chris Morrice/ Dr David Brown Project Co-ordinator,
Dr Md. Akhteruzamman, Technical Manager, SUFER Project;
Staff of Khulna , Dhaka, BAU, Chittagong Universities,
Communities associated with SUFER projects in Mongla and Satkhira,
Staff of NGOs Sushilan, Proshika;
Members of SUFER Project Management Committee,
Members of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum (BFRF)

5 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Project Memorandum
2. Mid Term Review 2000
3. SUFER OPR Final Nov 2001
4. Second OPR November 2002
5. Mid Year Review May 2003.
6. SUFER Progress Report November 2003
7. SUFER OPR Report Dec 2003
8. Quarterly Progress Report. Jan – March 2004
9. Sustainable Livelihoods Training Report May 2002
10. Report on Participatory Fisheries Research Identification and Implementation November 2002
11. Assessing the Impact of the SUFER Project on Teaching Quality in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Bangladesh Universities July 2003
12. SUFER Policy Process Consultancy Report August 2003
13. Evaluation of Socio-Economic Impact and livelihood outcomes of six SUFER funded Research Projects – Draft, June 2004
14. Second visit progress report. David Brown May 2004
15. A Review of Communication Strategies in the DFID Bangladesh Rural Livelihoods Programme. RLEP 2003.
16. A Review of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in the DFID Bangladesh Rural Livelihoods Programme. RLEP 2003.

17. Participatory Gender Review and Strategic Planning for DFIDB's rural livelihoods programme. Final April 2004
18. "*Women and Girls First*". DFID Bangladesh Country Assistance Plan 2003 – 2006.
19. Breaking New Ground: Livelihood choices, opportunities & tradeoffs for women and Girls in Rural Bangladesh. Final June 2004

Appendix 3. Status and potential of technologies delivering on two project defined outcomes.

Table 1a. Selection of research awards delivering on outcome; "Diversifying the livelihoods of poor coastal communities"

Research Award	Technology and risk[1]	Status of uptake[2]	Potential for scale-up[3]	Livelihood Impact[4]	Link studies
Crab Fattening	Culture system easy to manage. Dependent on wild stocks. Profitable and relatively low risk	10 households continue practice with cages given by the project. Local *Arotdar* keen to provide cages to crab collectors (presently gives traps).	Limited to sites and stock. Anecdotal evidence suggests good potential uptake. In most cases improves existing practices thus increasing likelihood to scale-up. NGOs 'considering' loans for new ventures. High capital costs may deter uptake.	Increased income which can lead to a range of livelihood gains but details unknown due to lack of analysis. Women participate in guarding and feeding. Men purchase crabs from markets or collect directly from the wild. Positive impact for poor households	Marketing and stock assessment studies. Ph.D award
PL Nursing	Short season. High risk. Returns variable. Easy to manage from homestead. Sites may be limited.	NGO increased 20 cages on capital sharing basis with SUFER project for cage cost. Members purchasing own PLs but not cages. COAST discontinued ("due to other commitments")	Uncertain. Requires further piloting. Return of Tk 150 within 3 days appears attractive but input cost for this return is high at Tk 2000-3000. Assessment of risk insufficient (financial loss for one cage could not be recovered in one season)	Alternative to banned and hazardous wild PL collection for women. Personal safety and security improved. More time for other activities particularly child care. Potential impact significant if compare to wild PL collection.	Ph.D award on low cost feed for PL nursing.
Mussels	Unproven	None	Too early to comment	Information not available	Meat quality, marketing and stock assessment
Solar Drier	Efficient system but gains in product quality (cf traditional system) unrealised until market develops.	Continuing with trial units for 40 members. COAST NGO market existing product and are exploring market potential	Market and marketing processes to become defined. Early signs indicate no non-project scale up (relatively high investment cost). Technology developed as an alternative to pesticide use and uptake could rise dramatically if GoB bans (and rigorously enforces) application of	Alternative to toxic pesticide use. Benefits to long term health. Involvement of women groups. Fish drying contributes small proportion of household income and livelihood activities. 40 persons participating (mainly women) to continue	Marketing potential study by NGO possible. Socio-economic status of dry fish producers

			pesticides for drying fish.	with this activity	
Sea bass-tilapia culture	Polyculture in existing pond. Fingerlings difficult to obtain. Management simple	Limited to trial sites	Uncertain. Insufficient progress beyond research experimentation	Unknown.	Comparison study of shrimp and Sea bass Tilapia can be undertaken to assess the cost and return analysis

1. Capital requirement necessitates NGO credit involvement in most cases.
2. Most research awards recently completed thus limiting potential uptake.
3. Information generally scant and anecdotal. Partly due to research work completion recently
4. The lack of socio-economic analyses accompanying technology interventions precludes accurate information on poverty outcomes, social change and interactions, equity, quality of participation, well-being, direct benefits, trade-offs, opportunity costs, potential user conflict and wider community impact.

Table 1b. Selection of research awards delivering on outcome; "Pro-poor growth in commercial aquaculture"

Research Award	Technology and risk[1]	Status of uptake[2]	Potential for scale-up[3]	Livelihood Impact[4]	Link studies
Grass carp cage culture	Relatively easy to manage. Moderate risk in use of cages. Profitability low to medium. Profit low in first trials mainly due to high cost of fingerlings (availability low) and sale of total stock to small local market depressing selling price.	NGOs increased additional 20 cages in 2 areas with their own members.	Site dependent. Availability of aquatic grass may limit cage units. Early signs of good potential for scale-up with new unassisted cages established at one site. Operational costs low.	Women involved in research group but men have developed new unassisted cages. Some evidence of men taking over roles of women for cage management and the latter returning to previous *bidi* rolling.	Nursing of grass carp in cages up to stockable size for cages
Pangas carp polyculture	High cost of pellet feed (>80% total input costs). Cost benefit ratio 1.47	All participating farmers reverting to carp monoculture probably due to low profitability of Pangas	Low potential at present (dependent on higher Pangas price) NGO unwilling to extend credit for feed unless project provides fish seed.	Minimal benefit due to low profit. Some prestige gained by participating farmers working with university researchers.	Pangas poly culture with Indian major carps
Management of spawn	Efficient. Increases survival of fish (larvae) fry.	Only operational in three government	New units expensive. Fry collectors observe units in	Increased income for 200 participating fry collectors resulting	

fishery		hatcheries. 200 fry collectors benefiting from increased income	Government hatcheries before investment. Illegal fishing and over-exploitation of stocks. Increased siltation of river bed will hamper scale up.	in livestock purchase and payment of school fees. Increase in confidence and social networks but presently confined to research participants.	
Cryo-preservation of fish sperm	Early stages of experimentation. Good results in fertilisation trials	Not relevant	Too early too comment. Depends on government involvement	None at present. Long term potential could be significant if growth rate of carps improved by overall improvement of genetic quality	Ph.D award
Compensatory growth of Pangas	Simple modification of feeding routine. Easy to adopt.	According to researcher some farmers practicing this technique but total number unknown.	Presently limited. Participating NGOs requested funds to develop further pilot trials.	Unknown	Pangas poly culture with Indian major carps
Recruitment SRS culture	Simple culture modification	RDRS, ITDG and CARE have reportedly taken up this technology to extend to their farmers	Scale up likely if incorporated into other extension programmes.	Unknown	
Conservation of SIS in *beel* ditches	Fenced ditches in receding canals of *beels* stocked with SIS brood.	Continuing post-project at the same time.	Expansion to one other site discussed. Sustainability of management committee to oversee ditches 4-5 months uncertain. Unlikely to scale-up without agency involvement.	Separate social study reveal unequal distribution of benefits. Traditional fishermen excluded from the beel resulting in stakeholder conflict. Landowners or 'pager' owners benefit from higher fish production.	Associated studies with CBFM-2 project

1. Capital requirement necessitates NGO credit involvement in most cases.

2. Most research awards recently completed thus limiting potential uptake.

3. Information generally scant and anecdotal. Partly due to research work completion recently

4.The lack of socio-economic analyses accompanying technology interventions precludes accurate information on poverty outcomes, social change and interactions, equity, quality of participation, well-being, direct benefits, trade-offs, opportunity costs, potential user conflict and wider community impact.

APPENDIX 4 'THE UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE'

1 The proposal

The following request was made to the SUFER departments, to invite their contributions to the EOPR workshop held at the BRAC Centre on Sun 27 June.

The current PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper)[1] recognises the importance of the fisheries sector in national development. In issues such as food supply, security, employment and income it has particular value in reaching the poor. National agencies and donors share these values and seek improved ways in achieving these development objectives. In moving away from the project approach, donors are increasingly adopting new sector-wide funding strategies, developed and owned by national stakeholders e.g. Sector Budgetary Support. Universities have potentially a very important role in developing this new approach.

A number of interlinking elements would be required to meet these development needs. These would include: i) human capacity building; ii) the creation of an enabling environment (e.g. necessary conditions are in place for operational management and implementation); iii) knowledge generated and applied effectively and; iv) performance appraisal and impact assessment.

In this context well argued cases for investment are likely to capture significant interest. We invite you to put forward a case for investment for your own institution. Explain what the issues are, where the priorities lie and how to address them?

Discuss this new investment strategy within your faculty. Develop a 15-20 minute presentation to share with the SUFER review team, project staff, UGC members and other university staff.

2 Workshop structure

<div align="center">

The University Challenge

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Programme
Date   **: Sunday 27 June 2004**
Venue   **: BRAC Meeting Room, BRAC Inn, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka**

09:30	09:40	Welcome Address; **Mr. Mohammad Mufakker** Project Director, SUFER Project, UGC-DFID
09:40	10:00	Overview of the University Challenge **Prof. James Muir,** Team leader, SUFER EOPR Team
10:00	10:20	Presentation by **Prof. Abu Tweb Abu Ahmed** Department of Zoology, University of Dhaka

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[1] The PRSP is an overarching government owned national strategy to address poverty, developed collaboratively with the international community and wholly supported by the donor community.

10:20	10:40	Presentation by **Prof. M. A. Wahab** Faculty of Fisheries, Bangladesh Agricultural University
10:40	11:00	*Refreshment*
11:00	11:20	Presentation by **Prof. Hossain Zamal** Professor, Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Chittagong
11:20	11:40	Presentation by **Prof M. Saifuddin Shah** Professor, FMRT Discipline, University of Khulna
11:40	12:00	Presentation by **Dr M. Altaf Hossain** [2] Department of Zoology, University of Rajshahi
12:00	12 30	**General discussion**
12:30	13:00	Closing remarks by **Chris Morrice**, SUFER Project Coordinator
13:00	14:00	*Lunch Break*
14:00	15:00	Discussion between Review team and SUFER **Project Management Committee (PMC)**
15:00	16:00	Discussion between Review team and Executive Committee of **Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum**

3 Responses

University challenge
- Prof Ahmed of DU – Support the university to offer SLA courses and diplomas to NGO workers and DoF and provide grants for MS/MPhil/PhD. No reference was made to research or the necessary 'enabling environment'. During discussion another important point was made by Prof. Ahmed, "for a Dept in University to be pro-poor, UGC has to have an in-built mechanism to identify departments that has strategy and enabling environment for pro-poor research" and referring to the PRSP he mentioned that, "the PRSP is not a new thing, its just in a different coloured bottle. Our role is to teach and to build capacity of human resources in the country".
- Prof Wahab, BAU - training extension agents, involvement in coastal aquaculture; research topics not well addressed by SUFER; a list of apparently supply-led research topics with little note of development justifications, impacts.
- Prof. Zamal, CU - upgrade labs but no link to development focused research agenda except for one statement; "require funds for poverty focus research awards". Also mentioned that SUFER approach needs to be maintained (but no reference to emulating it in this presentation) but to do so UGC must change first.
- Prof Shah, KU - a supply-driven research list with little connection to development needs; considered that donors need to help mediate between universities and international organisations – questions sustainability of SUFER inputs.
- Mr Mufakker noted that PRSP was not even approved by Cabinet and so at this stage the system was not mandated to consider pro-poor research. This raises the question that donor expectations may be too high. The point was further noted by the Chairman, UGC, at a later meeting.

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[2] Unable to attend.

Appendix 5

Comments on EoP Review Final Report by SUFER and DFIDB and the Review Team Response – August 31st 2004.

Comments from SUFER and DFID are provided in two parts, A) and B) with review team responses following each point as relevant.

A) SUFER
Most comments relate to 'Annex D' DFID progress tables, Appendix 1 herein.

General Comments

1. Overall a very disappointing and unjustifiably negative review.

Reviewers Response
An understandable opinion – can't comment on disappointment but the review simply attempted to answer the questions posed based on the evidence available. Are there justifiable alternative interpretations?

2. The reviewers frequently comment upon the lack of time allocated for the Project's successful implementation, which begs the question of whether the project should be reviewed within the context of the existing outcomes and time frame or as a mid term review of a 10 year Project? This would remove a lot of the negativity seen in this report and as such specific comments here are limited.

Reviewer's response
OK but this wasn't the point. But even then, how many of the changes supported by the project had been embedded sufficiently to give confidence in a longer term outcome without further external support/?

3. A further review in three – five years time would give a much more balanced view of sustainability and impact, which would greatly contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of what is possible and why in this sector.

Reviewers response
See above. We're talking about the practicalities of the development business, not what might be good to have...

4. Given the question of time was there fault with the Project design? Were the goal and purpose realistic? Sixty six months for a project tends to suggest a quick fix attitude when in reality the ground shift in attitude to development, expected within the university sector, would demand at least a 10 year donor commitment. However during the design phase it would have been reasonable, at that time, to expect an extension, providing sufficient progress was made. Unfortunately for SUFER the Project existed during a period of fundamental change within DFID's strategy for development and as such became a victim of it. This does not appear to be adequately recognised by the review team.

Reviewers response
a) For Project design, there was a clear sense within DFID that if the first five years showed useful change there would be a strong case for continuation. It had to be ambitious enough to be challenging and interesting to fund, yet have long term potential. It also attempted to (informally) connect two different DFID domains – NR and education.
b) It wasn't within the remit of the team to criticise DFID's overall change in approach and strategic direction.

5. There appears to be a dichotomy within the reporting which brings into question the final score. The wording of Part C would strongly suggest an overall mark of two compared with the three awarded from the phraseology of parts A and B. Also if the quality of the "last OPR holds true "and "is good" why does this review disagree in terms of overall score?

Reviewers response
Phraseology is Part C relates more to the project achievements in the shortened time-frame (due to implementation delays)

6. This also calls into question the validity of the considerably more positive reports given by John Hambrey (mid year 2003), Eddie Allison (May 2003), Mark Langworthy et al (OPR Nov 2003) and Claire Ireland with Steve Ashley (Livelihood and Institutional Impact, May 2004). With the above in mind and the extremely positive response of the client group to the Project the SUFER team wondered whether a different project had been reviewed.

Reviewers response
Except for the OPR Nov 2003, these were reports on specific issues within the project, or reviews of specific gains over short periods of time. The reviewers doubt that the OPR Nov 2003 could be described as 'considerably more positive'.

7. Are the expectations embodied in the Purpose and Outcomes realistic in the terms of the Bangladesh context and indeed the university sector from a global perspective? (see also Eddie Allison's report). This is an area which has been perpetuated throughout the life of the project from a few key reviewers who failed to understand or compromise ideals within the existing realities present in the university sector. Again this is an area which would probably have been met and resolved with a longer project time frame.

Reviewers response
The project's job was to challenge 'existing realities'. Was it worth pursuing the project if change was not expected? Or should we have 'dumbed down' the challenges once the project had been approved? It would probably have been axed.

General response to Points 2 to 7
a) The main issues raised in points 2-7 relate to time allocation and realistic outcomes. The project has done well (reflected in Part C and commented below in Bullet # 5) but the scoring reflects extent of achievement against objectives set for the full project term, not inclusive of start-up or implementation delays which, the reviewers state could have been redressed with a modest extension ("lift the score to 2").
b) A longer project term is another issue and the review team emphasises that to achieve modest 'embedded change' a longer project is essential and thus not necessarily a criticism of the project.

8. The analysis of the Outcome Areas; (Nov. 2002 strategy) in the main report provides serious concern about the objectivity of the review team. For example it had been pointed out that there was considerable overlap between Outcomes 1 and 3. Does the review team only consider pro poor aquaculture to occur in freshwater?

Reviewers response
Unclear statement. No reference to overlap in the report.

9. Despite the strong Bangladesh experience of the review teams, past and present, key recurrent personnel have never managed a Project within the country. An understanding is needed of the negotiating and management skills necessary to marry, often very hostile, elements within and between the client and stakeholder groups of this particular Project. Indeed elements upon which SUFER was assessed were frequently outside its possible sphere of influence.

Reviewers response
Credit was given to the project in Part C as mentioned in bullet point #5 But there is also the case that this was supposed to be the first test of a 'demand pull' mechanism, and the business of developing that market was certainly demanding. Excellent management of the 'elements' was endorsed by the very positive feedback to the team during the review from the client group (e.g. teachers, NGO partners, UGC directors and Chairman)

Specific points

These are limited for reasons outlined above.

General /Overall progress assessment - Project Purpose

Justification

- The quite positive comments do not suggest a "3". Embedding has started and reflects the opening comment in General section above.

Reviewers response
The definition of '3' is consistent with this.

- "Wider perspectives of poverty issues" Does sector refer to the wider fisheries arena? If so the relevant comments should not be included here as these are outside the remit of the Project.

Reviewers response
Not sure what the distinction is with 'wider fisheries arena' – SUFER clients were supposed to be working with most parts of the sector, except of course that it was unsuccessful in pulling in the social, policy, economic researchers, as it was encouraged to do. In any case the comment applies in most sub-sectors – the livelihoods exposure for example should have led to SUFER clients understanding poverty and its dynamics more broadly, and being able to offer proposals which reflected this. Likewise, the PMC should have been able to question and challenge proposals on these grounds.

General /Overall progress assessment – Project Outputs

Output 1-
- The Programme (Project?) Management Committee was **never** intended**,** nor indeed required, to outlive Project. Has this happened in any other project?

Reviewers response
It was intended to be a forum which had the potential to continue as a means of co-ordinating interests and becoming a possible funding channel.

- Fisheries Sector Review completed very late within the SUFER time frame and therefore difficult to link into. Successful linkages were started with DoF through FFP and BFRF. These appear to have been missed by the review team.

Reviewers response
a) Agreed that publication of main FSRFD documents quite late, but workshops and overview document provided good opportunities earlier. SUFER clients indeed quite active for inputs – but why, indeed like BFRI weren't they clamouring for a role in the ensuing processes?
b) Linkages with DoF constituted workshops to present findings of the researchers

Output 3-
- "He who pays the piper calls the tune" (See John Hambrey mid year review). Obviously this will depend upon the objectives of the funding agency. However the project can justifiably claim that most active teachers/researchers are now capable of accessing external funding and adapting strategies accordingly.

Reviewers response
Unfortunately this capability is not proven. Some teachers have accessed research funds since SUFER but in same manner as before (not poverty focussed either) and not independently or more importantly through a department-wide strategic initiative to international agencies. This also relates to the 'most active teachers/researchers' which are certainly a minority group.

(ii) Sector Level or Thematic Lessons

- The Project **did** target wider sectoral interests with research proposals resulting from close co-operation with MACH, GEF component of FFP and NGOs. SUFER also provided input to ICZM.

Reviewers response
Yes, targeting of wider sectoral interests did improve significantly in the latter stages of the project. Close cooperation requires a longer time period for relationships (essentially universities with other agencies) to mature and cement.

- *Research Management experience* was sourced by the both TCOs but research linkage was considerably impaired when the role was taken over by the DFID Project Officer in early 2002. Similar experience for other projects. Experience was also provided by Prof Muir (Head of AGFRP), a frequent reviewer.

Reviewers response
Yes, with fundamental changes in DFID/DFID(B) gaps arose and during the transitional stages there was a lack of DFID level coherence about research and its role.

- *Inter-agency…..* This was clearly understood by the SUFER team, which was responsible for the approach used in determining partnerships that were workable within the constraints of each stakeholder.

(iii) General Development Lessons

- *University sector institutions…..* In the early stages the Project suffered from the failings of the BAU link programme and its externally imposed development strategy which failed to incorporate client opinion and experience. This resulted in a legacy of hostility to change. This was successfully overcome by fostering change in teaching and research development perspectives from within. This process should ensure long term implementation from the engendered ownership.

Reviewers response
There had been a lot of discussion in the period between BAU and SUFER to explain the shift in approach, yet at the same time encouraging interaction – initial expectations of Departments – particularly those outside BAU were strong, but subsequently dashed…

Part C

A communication strategy was applied and it is surprising that the review team did not pick up on this given the considerable media involvement. An attempt to include the DFID media section however failed. It is worth noting that it was only in the last two years that the Project had anything worth communicating, which given the take up time for research to be identified and implemented is not surprising. There is a danger here of comparing SUFER with PETRA which had considerably more resources in terms of numeric human capacity.

Reviewers Response
The communications strategy is being confused with an information dissemination strategy. Communications is much more than dissemination. Dissemination is about handing out, or distributing information to various audiences. It aims to increase awareness about a product. A communication strategy is a plan, a framework of action for achieving defined communications objectives. SUFER communications strategy looks more like a dissemination strategy which doesn't have clear objectives and therefore no indicator to assess whether these objectives have been achieved. In a communication strategy the end-users of products are quite central to communication and they need to be involved in the process of designing the strategy. The lack of understanding is common to most projects. SUFER distributed attractive high quality printed matter, sponsored TV programmes, held workshops/rallies and developed a website for BFRF but that does not alone constitute a communications strategy.

B) DFID

E-mail dated 17th August 2004 (edited)

1. There are useful lessons from this review (and PETRRA) that can positively inform DFID's (and other development partners) approach to managing competitive research funds and, in particular, the BFPF in delivering agricultural technologies, which directly benefit poor people the agricultural research process in Bangladesh.

2. It would be very useful to synthesise these lessons and produce a key briefing note for wider circulation. Duncan King's meeting with Jonathon Wadsworth from DFID's Central Research Department in July indicated that he would be interested in the outcome/lessons from these reviews.

3. Whilst the project has had some impact the report does raise serious questions about long-term sustainability, scale and uptake. This relates to having a well informed understanding of the existing incentive structures, mutual interests and relationships and how far can we expect a CGS process in changing values to support pro-poor developmental outcomes. The review states that there is little evidence of wholesale change in attitude or approach and the research system is largely reactive to external funding rules.

4. The Review Team Leader makes some suggestions on how to take this forward. However, is this sufficient incentive to ensure fundamental shifts in attitude and behaviour to deliver pro-poor research that are wholeheartedly embraced by development institutions, NGOs and private sector if the incentives are perceived to be a weak.