

SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

COUNTRY:	Bangladesh	Project Title:	Irrigation Management Improvement Project
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project loan	Department/Division:	South Asia Department Environment Natural Resources and Agriculture Division
I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY			
Targeting classification: General Intervention			
A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy			
<p>The project will improve the performance of large-scale flood control, drainage, and irrigation schemes. It will address the two major constraints on sustainable performance of major water management schemes in Bangladesh: (i) limited capacity of public agencies to carry out effective operation and maintenance (O&M) of large irrigation schemes, and (ii) chronic system deterioration as a result of inadequate O&M planning and financing mechanisms.</p> <p>The broad development goals of the Sixth Five Year Plan of Bangladesh include achieving food security, making available adequate infrastructure, and pursuing environmentally friendly development, which will be supported directly by this project. The relevant strategies of the plan are (i) acceleration of economic growth and employment including in agriculture by raising land productivity and diversification; (ii) ensuring food security and productivity improvements, prioritizing climate change adaptations; and (iii) enhancing poor groups' factor endowment by ensuring better access to irrigated water, energy, and rural infrastructure. The common goals of the Sixth Five Year Plan and the country partnership strategy, 2011–2015¹ include enhanced and greener economic growth, inclusive social development, and environmental sustainability with a significant emphasis on climate change mitigation and adaptation. The National Water Policy² addresses issues that relate to planning, implementation, and cost recovery within large irrigation schemes but it importantly specifies that "larger schemes will be placed under private management or joint management by the implementing agency along with local government and community organizations." In addition, building the capacity of local governments to increase local participation for ensuring effective use and sustainability of rural infrastructure has been identified as a key issue to be addressed. Asian Development Bank (ADB) support will be within the objectives of its Strategy 2020³ to assist the government to address binding constraints on growth in ways that foster environmental sustainability, reduce disaster risks, and respond to challenges posed by climate change.</p> <p>The National Water Management Plan recognizes that an additional area of up to 1 million hectares (ha) can be irrigated by groundwater in the future, thereby contributing an added 5 million tons to food production. At current consumption rates, this would feed an additional 25 million–30 million people, the estimated increase in population over a 15-year period. However, increasing food production can also be achieved by improving surface irrigation performance. The problems of low irrigation intensities and productivity in the existing major surface water schemes can be addressed through infrastructure modernization and enhanced O&M. This will improve system performance and contribute to increased agricultural outputs and rural incomes and poverty reduction. Institutional strengthening of the irrigation management function of the Bangladesh Water Development Board will further improve O&M and reduce chronic system deterioration.</p>			
B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during PPTA or Due Diligence			
<p>1. Key poverty and social issues. Some 70% of poor people in Bangladesh live in rural areas with low agricultural productivity and unreliable food supplies. Therefore, promoting agricultural growth is a critical element of the government's strategy aimed at food security and poverty alleviation. Efficient and sustainable irrigation systems are central to boosting agricultural productivity and encouraging livelihood diversification. Failure to rehabilitate infrastructure and properly manage and maintain the large-scale surface water schemes has direct negative impacts on farm production, household incomes, and poverty through deterioration of infrastructure leading to reduction in the irrigated area, increased inundation, and insufficient supply of irrigation water. These factors result in lower yields, reduced farm production, and reduced demand for labor. Successful rehabilitation would bring substantial social benefits as a result of increased farm and rural incomes. Adverse social and environmental impacts would be minimal, especially as no land acquisition would be necessary.</p> <p>Sector link to poverty reduction: The benefits of ensuring efficient O&M are well established and indicate the high costs to communities and the country as a whole of failing to implement O&M properly. At present the severe deterioration of many of the major irrigation and water management systems in Bangladesh poses an obstacle to achieving more productive and efficient agriculture and reducing poverty. Therefore, there is a pressing need to improve existing scheme performance through innovative management approaches and institutional frameworks as a platform for designing and implementing a new generation of more effective large-scale surface water schemes that can contribute to national food security and poverty alleviation.</p> <p>2. Beneficiaries. Tenure in the project areas includes ownership, share cropping, renting, mortgaging, and leasing. Some households cultivate land with a mixture of tenure arrangements, while some own land but do not cultivate it. Of the total</p>			

¹ ADB. 2011. *Country Partnership Strategy: Bangladesh, 2011-2015*. Manila.

² The Ministry of Water Resources, 1999. *National Water Policy*. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

³ ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank 2008–2020*. Manila.

sample, 73% cultivated land and are classified as farming households. The proportion of farming households was highest in the Muhuri Irrigation Project area (96%), proposed to be modernized under the Irrigation Management Improvement Project. Share cropping is high in the Muhuri Irrigation Project area, being applicable to more than 50% of the households surveyed. About 75% of the farming households cultivate less than 0.8 ha of land, with 25% cultivating more than that. Only 5% of the total sample prospective project areas are comparatively large cultivators, cultivating more than 2.02 ha of land. Thus, the primary beneficiaries will be irrigation farming households. About 75% of these cultivate less than 0.8 ha, while more than 50% of these are share croppers. The key problems faced by these farmers are unreliable irrigation supplies and inundation of crops during monsoons, since silted-up canals that also serve as drains do not function. Approximately 50% of the extreme poor and more than 50% of the poor rely on agriculture for wages and subsistence, while a further 25% of the extreme poor depend solely on seasonal agricultural labor for their livelihood. Damaged crops from flooding and unreliable irrigation water supplies diminish the labor opportunities for the poor, while reliable and productive agriculture increases the demand for their work and reduces the uncertainty in their livelihood and food security.

3. Impact channels. Improved water pumping and conveyance systems will lead in savings for the small farmers and increase their ability to pay pumping costs and improve budgets for other necessary inputs, including employing labor.

4. Other social and poverty issues: There is a dearth of employment opportunities, particularly in poor households that are headed or managed by women (widows or women with husbands who are sick) and have no male members that can contribute to household income. Civil society organizations, funded by donor organizations, organize female labor gangs and secure contracts for them on government infrastructure projects such as roads.

5. Design features. The project design incorporates technology-based elements and mechanisms that institute transparency and equity in pumped water acquisition, distribution, and delivery; eliminate elite capture; and benefit all farmers, including small farmers.

II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. Summarize the participatory approaches and the proposed project activities that strengthen inclusiveness and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable in project implementation. A review of Participatory Irrigation Management/Irrigation Management Transfer irrigation management systems of selected schemes throughout Asia concluded that there was a need to move beyond the participation paradigm and involve the private sector in private–public partnership. Output 1 of the project Design and Monitoring Framework states that self-sustaining irrigation management private operators (IMOs) are to be established. The approach views individual farmers as consumers of water supplies through prepaid cards that will ensure transparency in the use of water. The project will, however, support strategic emphasis on beneficiary participation with due attention to the diversity of their interests and possible vulnerability. The strategy includes (i) enforcement of policy measures to equalize opportunities and access and support equal representation of the irrigation system head, middle, and tail reach farmers, and increased participation of vulnerable groups including women and minority groups; (ii) specific actions and programs targeting vulnerable groups including women in order to establish links to the existing poverty reduction programs (such as self-help groups); (iv) compliance with social safeguards measures; and (v) enhancement of extension service delivery. The project agreement incorporates clauses that ensure government subsidies for O&M and government endorsement and support for cost recovery by the IMOs. The Project Administration Manual reflects this requirement.

2. If civil society has a specific role in the project, summarize the actions taken to ensure their participation. NA

3. Explain how the project ensures adequate participation of civil society organizations in project implementation. NA

4. What forms of civil society organization participation is envisaged during project implementation?

Information gathering and sharing (N) Consultation (N) Collaboration (N) Partnership (N)

5. Will a project-level participation plan be prepared to strengthen participation of civil society as interest holders for affected persons, particularly the poor and vulnerable?

Yes No. A participation plan was prepared to guide consultations with the stakeholders.

III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: Effective Gender Mainstreaming

A. Key issues. Like elsewhere in Bangladesh, the division of labor between men and women is spatial. Except in the poorest households, the role of women is very limited and is similar throughout most rural areas. Women observe the traditional purdah and stay within the household compound (except when going to fetch water, firewood, or other fuel or to visit a nongovernment organization for a loan or attend a health center). Except in the poorest households, women are generally not involved in farming, wage labor, trading, skilled crafts, or running businesses and market stalls, nor do they migrate seasonally for work. Women perform household chores, care for elders and children, and help with post-harvest processing such as threshing, cleaning, boiling, and drying of crops (men also take part in post-harvest processing). If the opportunity exists, women also make handicrafts for sale or home use, although a lot of skilled home-based craft work such as weaving cloth and pottery is done by men. Women from the poorest households and communities, including women from low-caste Hindu communities, take laboring work, particularly seasonal agricultural labor, when it is available. Wages paid to women are substantially lower than those paid to men, although for most agricultural labor there is little difference in the productivity of men and women. In this segregated society women do not share the public domain with the men, including interaction for irrigation water. Considering such social constraints due to conservatism, seclusion, and the purdah system, some of the gender targets have been set quite low.

B. Key actions. The following measures will be taken to enhance the inclusion of women in the project that will

contribute to improving women's access to the project's benefits: (i) creating one staff position within the staffing of the irrigation management operator to look after the vulnerable groups and support the deployment of female staff at the field level; (ii) developing training programs for project-based staff to enhance gender participation; (iii) increasing women's participation in the field implementation teams; (iv) establishing links with the Department of Women and Child Affairs extension services; (v) generating 10% of employment from civil works, and reserving 20% of employment related to smart card recharge vending for women; and (vi) undertaking gender-disaggregated surveying, monitoring, and reporting.

Gender action plan Other actions or measures No action or measure

IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

A. Involuntary Resettlement **Safeguard Category:** A B C FI

1. Key impacts. No land acquisition is proposed and no resettlement impact.
2. Strategy to address the impacts. Not applicable. A resettlement framework has been prepared for the entire MFF.
3. Plan or other Actions.

Resettlement plan Combined resettlement and indigenous peoples plan
 Resettlement framework Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples
 Environmental and social management system arrangement Social impact matrix
 No action

B. Indigenous Peoples **Safeguard Category:** A B C FI

1. Key impacts. No impact. There are no indigenous peoples as defined in the Safeguard Policy Statement for operational purposes in the project areas. Is broad community support triggered? Yes No

2. Strategy to address the impacts. NA.

3. Plan or other actions.

Indigenous peoples plan Combined resettlement plan and indigenous peoples plan
 Indigenous peoples planning framework Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework
 Environmental and social management system arrangement Indigenous peoples plan elements integrated in project with a summary
 Social impact matrix No action

V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS

A. Risks in the Labor Market

1. Relevance of the project for the country's or region's or sector's labor market. High (H), medium (M), and low or not significant (L).

M unemployment M Underemployment L retrenchment M core labor standards

2. Labor market impact. Describe the impact of the project on the local labor market (if relevant) and summarize labor-market-related actions taken in the project to address unemployment risks, underemployment risks, retrenchment risks, and lack of adherence to the core labor standards.

B. Affordability. There is a possibility that small farmers who now pay at the harvest for their pumping charges may find it difficult to afford prepaid arrangements foreseen for water delivery under the project. An evaluation will be conducted during the first year of operations and appropriate measures proposed if small farmers are struggling with the prepaid arrangement.

C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks

1. Indicate the respective risks, if any, and rate the impact as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):

L Communicable diseases L Human trafficking
 NA Others (please specify) _____

2. Describe the related risks of the project on people in project area: NA.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Targets and indicators: Increased irrigation area (30%), cropping intensity (20%) including high-value crops (20%). Increased crop production 30%. Improved efficiency in water use (area [30%]) and production [50%] per unit of water. Average yield of irrigated winter paddy (boro rice) increases from 2.4 tons/ha in 2011 to 4.1 tons/ha.

2. Required human resources: A separate safeguards cell will be established in the Bangladesh Water Development Board with a full-time social safeguards officer. The loan consultant will incorporate specialist international and national support for ensuring safeguards for the preparation of the Ganges Kobadak Irrigation Project and the Teesta Barrage Project modernization feasibility and detail design studies. A provisional sum has been allocated for recruitment of (i) an independent national organization to monitor social safeguards, and (ii) a nongovernment organization to implement the resettlement activities.

3. Information in the project administration manual: The manual will set out the key requirements for social and poverty safeguards and requirements for monitoring.

4. Monitoring tools: The irrigation management operators in their contract will be required to monitor the project performance including poverty and social indicators. There will be independent verification by independent organization.

Source: Asian Development Bank.