Process Monitoring for PUI Planning in the East Kolkata Wetlands

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R8365: FTR - Annex B-b3

Project R8365

Evaluating action planning for enhanced NR management in PU Kolkata

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Contents

This report comprises 4 sections.

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

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

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

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

Supporting material is provided in Appendices i-iv.

Section 1.

Process documentation within this and other NRSP projects (R8103, R8195 and R8306)[1] has performed a range of functions depending on project objective. In all cases, there was a need to track change attributable to the project. In particular, it was important to follow social and institutional developments often overlooked in conventional monitoring[2].

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

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

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

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

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

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[1] R8103 - *Consensus for a Holistic Approach to improve Rural-livelihoods in Riverine-islands of Bangladesh (CHAR),* R8195 - *Integrated floodplain management: institutional environments and participatory methods,* R8306 - *Better options for integrated floodplain management – uptake promotion.*
[2] Project R8195 suggests that the relationship between project facilitators, themselves, and potential beneficiaries may evolve in quite unexpected ways and will influence the type of outcomes that outlive projects. These relationships are a sub-set of the informal institutional environment and relate to process. For instance, in Project R8103 the char-modified PAPD required an extended period of familiarisation and confidence building between the facilitator and the community before large, more entrenched, issues could be addressed. This feature was recorded in the project team's diaries which revealed increasing participation and confidence by local people over time (for instance, autonomous meetings or interaction with secondary stakeholders, community-modified activities etc.).

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

- *Documenting change attributable to the planning process*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deductive ◄─────────────────────────────────► *Inductive*

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

Section 2

Development of the monitoring strategy

The initial strategy

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

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

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

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

Modifying the strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Events Report (discussions, meetings & workshops)

Date & location: 3/11/04   Mr Ghosh's house
Agenda & purpose: Introduce planning concept / seek commitment from SWC

Stakeholders present and attendance: SWC & FFPA
Key representatives: Mr Ghosh (SWC & FFPA) & Dr Kandu

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After these group meetings, the local-level planning discussions with primary stakeholders could be undertaken.
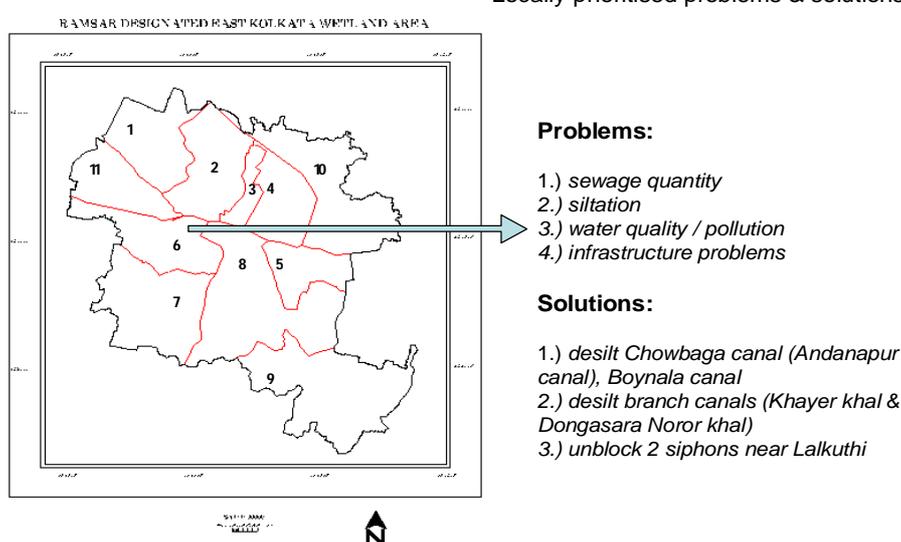
Box 1. Example of completed Events Report.

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

Consultations with local stakeholders   *Region 6*

Locally-prioritised problems & solutions

RAMSAR DESIGNATED EAST KOLKATA WETLAND AREA

Problems:

1.) *sewage quantity*
2.) *siltation*
3.) *water quality / pollution*
4.) *infrastructure problems*

Solutions:

1.) *desilt Chowbaga canal (Andanapur canal), Boynala canal*
2.) *desilt branch canals (Khayer khal & Dongasara Noror khal)*
3.) *unblock 2 siphons near Lalkuthi*

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

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

Section 3

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

The Regional planning workshops

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Awareness and understanding of the planning process and other methodologies

The project intended to make some headway on increasing the awareness of potential beneficiaries with respect to the prospect and function of participatory planning. All meetings facilitated by IWMED were intended to publicise the potential of the planning process, even if the process itself was evolving over time. It is likely that enthusiasm for potential actions would have exceeded interest in the planning process itself (as appeared to be the case with primary and secondary level stakeholders). However, a formal mechanism to help represent local needs to government would be welcomed by organisations such as the Save the Wetlands Committee (SWC) that are currently attempting greater political influence and control over local management interventions[4].

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

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

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

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

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

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

The PAPD-modified PAP in retrospect

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 4

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

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

Process documentation in future participatory action planning

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

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

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

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

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