

**Follow-Up Study of the Evaluation of the
Danish Development Assistance to Bangladesh**

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ASPS	Agricultural Sector Programme Support
CBO	Community Based Organisation
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DKK	Danish Kroner
ERD	Economic Relations Department
GNAEC	Greater Noakhali Aquaculture Extension Component
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HRGG	Human Rights and Good Governance
HYSAWA	Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
LCS	Labour Contracting Societies
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOFL	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PPSU	Policy & Planning Support Unit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSU	Programme Support Unit
SPS	Sector Programme Support
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSPS	Transport Sector Programme Support
UP	Union Parishad (lowest government administrative level)
WSSPS	Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Programme Support

Executive Summary

Introduction

The present follow-up study is a follow-up on the country programme evaluation of Danish assistance to Bangladesh. The evaluation was undertaken in 1998/1999 and the evaluation report, "Evaluation of Danish Development Assistance to Bangladesh", was published in 1999 (1999/3). The main report contains 11 specific recommendations concerning the planned revision of the country strategy paper from 1995.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the study has assessed the actions taken on the (by Danida accepted) recommendations and the effects that these actions have had. The study has also made assessments of factors, which have prevented actions on or effects of the recommendations and identified some missed opportunities from insufficient follow-up. Further actions needed and possible have also been considered on the basis of the follow-up assessments. Finally, lessons learnt on country programme evaluations and on follow-up studies are extracted from the findings.

The follow-up study is concentrated on the revision of the country strategy paper, which was initiated in 1999 and completed early in 2001. This version of the revised strategy, the Strategy-2001, was, however, never implemented due to some interruption of the Bangladeshi-Danish cooperation later in 2001. Work on the revision started again in 2002, but finalisation was delayed to enable the new strategy to be aligned with the PRSP process. A new strategy paper, Strategy-2005, was published in 2005. Though the focus is on the Strategy-2001, findings of the follow-up study include issues of the cooperation today, reflected in Strategy-2005, which relate to the original evaluation recommendations.

Main Conclusions

The general response by Danida to the recommendations were that they were either unnecessary or already being implemented. Some of the recommendations were also unrealistic or too vaguely formulated. Other recommendations have turned out, however, to be both relevant and useful recommendations at the time. Also, though none of the recommendations are relevant today in their specific wording, some of the issues, which were behind the recommendations, are still there.

It proved difficult to find clear and specific "fingerprints" of the recommendations on the Strategy-2001, though the strategy revision process started right after the completion of the evaluation. A major reason for this seems to be that priority sectors and intervention areas had already been decided upon. Thus, there was no need to "start from scratch" and as the planning resources were heavily tied up in preparation of the sector-program support, there were only limited resources for the general dialog- and analytical work recommended by the evaluation.

An effect of the lack of action towards implementing the recommendations is less learning from past experience than would have been possible, i.e. "missed opportunities". This relates in particular to the recommendations on "studies- and pilot-activities" concerning support to decentralisation, privatisation and involvement of NGOs.

There were no "further actions required/possible" (cfr. TOR) identified in the findings of the follow-up study, which can be related directly to the recommendations, as formulated in the evaluation report. However, some of the issues are still there and affect the cooperation programme as it is being designed and under implementation today:

- It is important to maintain a mechanism through which the Embassy can undertake the function of maintaining a clear up-to-date set of policies and principles, reflecting the overall Danish development assistance objectives in the Bangladeshi context at any given point in time and for ensuring that all programming work takes place within this framework
- There is similarly a need to closely follow the findings of the experiments, to record and analyse the results and to use for “replication” and “upgrading” to national policies,
- Whether continuation of the present PPSUs under the ASPS is necessary to secure vertical coherence of the ASPS II.
- Involvement of NGOs in the Danish country programme with respect to the role of each type of NGO, the qualifications required for the respective roles and the modalities for “support”, which each type of role implies.

That these issues can still be observed means that what could be called the “wider effects” (rather than the immediate effects) of the recommendations have not all been achieved. It is not however clear from the evaluation that these at the time of the evaluation were among the effects “envisaged” from the recommendations.

Key Lessons Learned

Few of the 11 recommendations live up to the general requirements for evaluations, i.e. that the recommendations should be clearly formulated, “actionable and within reach of those responsible for taking action”. To make them live up to this would have taken more time and resources and it could be questioned whether resources would be well spent on detailing the recommendations more. Alternatively, time could maybe more usefully be used to specify “envisaged effects” of the recommendations and then specify the recommendations in more general terms towards achieving these effects, which could be “wider effects”, as those indicated in the present followæup study in section 3.

More generally, the study found it difficult to assess effects, because these can be very direct (equal to actions taken) or they could be very indirect and long-term effects, as indicated by the term “wider effects” used in the present study. Also the concepts of by Danida “accepted recommendation”, “preventing factors” and “missed opportunities” are difficult concepts to work with, particularly when the follow-up takes place several years after the evaluation. The context has probably changed considerably in the meantime.

A key lesson concerns the question of whether the follow-up study should be backward looking or forward looking. There is a dilemma: The backward-looking approach would generally be of limited interest to those who are presently involved with design and implementation of a country programme, at least in cases where the context has changed considerably. The focus on the specific recommendation would, however, then be easier and more meaningful. The forward looking perspective would give the follow-up study a more useful content for those involved in the present programme, but would on the other imply more or less a new evaluation. Thus, it is important to decide what the function of the follow-up study is and to make this clear to the involved parties, including the embassies, which have to take resources away from other purposes to support the follow-up study team.

In hindsight one recommendation turned out to be impractical, i.e. the recommendation to “operationalise” the Danish development objectives in the strategy paper. However, this raises a question

of whether the strategy paper, as a paper, can fulfil the role intended for it in the recommendation. What is needed is “a strategy”, i.e. a set of policies, principles and modalities, which govern the programming of interventions. A “paper”, which is revised every five years, is insufficient for that purpose. Lack of “a strategy”, which is up-to-date and used effectively to govern the programming work of the SPSs is, on the other hand, the reason why the programming process of the ASPS II in the present case is unsatisfactory. There is a need to consider how country strategies, reflecting the specific country context as well as the Danish development assistance objectives in that specific context, can be developed and maintained as the constant frame for programming work. It is still not clear whether “poverty” means the same in WSSPS II, ASPS II and the HRGG II, though the perspective for a coherent programme seems much better today than it did in 1998/99.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The present study is a follow-up study on an evaluation undertaken in 1998/99. The evaluation concerned is the “Evaluation of Danish Development Assistance to Bangladesh” (1999/3).

The Evaluation of the Danish development assistance to Bangladesh was carried out from October 1998 to June 1999 by Development Associates, Copenhagen. The Evaluation contains a number of lessons learned in applying the Sector Programme Support (SPS) approach to the programming process. It also had 11 specific recommendations for a revision of the country strategy, which were to be undertaken after the Evaluation. The revision process started right after the Evaluation and the revised strategy was approved by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and the Danida Board in late 2000. The final approval – by the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee – was planned for February 2001. However, the approval was postponed due to the kidnapping case in Chittagong Hill Tracts in the same month and the changes of government in Bangladesh and Denmark.

The revision was resumed in 2002 and after further delays a draft strategy for 2005-09 was discussed at the High Level Consultations in Dhaka in December 2004. There was agreement on the overall objectives and the content of the strategy paper, which was approved by the Danida Board in March 2005 and by the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee in June. The strategy was published in August 2005.

In the “Review of Evaluation in Danida” (2003) the independent reviewers recommended that the Evaluation Department went one step further than just tracking the recommendations made in the evaluation reports. It was proposed that a systematic review was undertaken whether the recommendations when implemented have the intended effects on projects, programmes, or policies.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of Study

According to the Terms of Reference for this study, the “main objective is to perform a systematic assessment of the effects of the recommendations of the “Evaluation of Danish Development Assistance to Bangladesh”, which was published in September 1999, and to “identify the constraining factors preventing recommendations from being followed”.

The Follow-Up Study is focused on the first revision from 2001, in the following termed the 2001-Strategy. The second revision, the 2005-Strategy, has, however, also been considered during the Follow-Up Study.

Scope of work in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1) specifies five main areas of analysis, which in relation to the strategy revision are as follows:

- Assessments of actions taken are assessments of the extent to which the stated and by Danida accepted recommendations concerning the revision process as well as concerning the content of the strategy document have been implemented.
- Assessments of effects are correspondingly assessments of consequent changes in the 2001-Strategy (process and document) as compared to the 1995-Strategy, which provide the basis for the study.
- Brief description of preventing factors are identification and description of factors, which in the period August 1999 to February 2001 may explain why certain of the rec-

ommendations may not have been implemented, even though the recommendations were agreed to by Danida.

- Further actions, which may be possible/necessary, concern recommendations, which in the 2005-Strategy context might still be useful, but which have not been implemented so far.
- Assessment of the utility as a learning instrument of the evaluation is understood as an assessment of the extent to which the original evaluation has proved useful as an input into the development of country strategies.

Findings and hence conclusions cover all of the above aspects. The recommendations from the present study are follow-up recommendations concerning the actual Bangladeshi-Danish cooperation today. The question to be answered in this regard is what could be done today in order to increase the intended effects of the original recommendations, if required. This would to a certain degree presuppose an assessment of the situation today. Two types of lessons learned are considered: (1) lessons learned focusing on how to do follow-up on evaluations, i.e. on approach, objectives, scope of work and procedures and (2) lessons concerning better utility of country programme evaluations, i.e. through more clearly formulated recommendations, better specification of envisaged effects etc.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

The Follow-Up Study shall, in accordance with the Terms of Reference, only follow-up upon the recommendations, which have been accepted by Danida. This is, however, not always an either-or. A recommendation can be partly accepted or partly rejected. Also, formulations of recommendations are not always sufficiently clear or actionable and the Danida follow-up comments are consequently not clear either. Thus, assessing whether a stated recommendation is accepted, partly accepted/rejected or outright rejected is to some extent a matter of interpretation. The interpretations are presented in Annex 2.

The consequence of this uncertainty is that only few, if any, of the recommendations can be clearly excluded from the analyses at the outset on the ground that they have not been accepted by Danida. Thus, all the stated recommendations have been maintained in the initial analyses.

Also, there could in the Evaluation be recommendations, which were rejected, but which are still relevant. Are they to be excluded? Alternatively, the Follow-Up Study could also be used to judge the consequences of actions not being taken as recommended by the Evaluation? This type of analysis follows naturally in connection with the analyses of factors preventing implementation of recommendations.

Assessments of possible or required further actions would seem to imply the second alternative, i.e. the inclusion of analyses concerning the action, which have not been taken. Also, this possible identification of “missed opportunities” for making changes could be visualised as a basis for learning lessons on the utility of the Evaluation.

It should in this connection be emphasised, however, that the present study is not intended as either a new country programme evaluation or an evaluation as such of the new strategy (neither the 2001-Strategy or – even less – 2005-Strategy). The study is intended as an assessment of the extent to which Danida has taken up the accepted recommendations of the original Evaluation, taken the actions required and achieved the effects envisaged.

However, for a number of the recommendations made, it is somewhat unclear what the envisaged effects of the recommendations are. In order for a follow-up study to assess effects of the recommendations made and accepted, it is therefore necessary to interpret the recommendations made in the Evaluation with respect to what were intended effects or consequences to be achieved from implementing these recommendations.

Some effects are very direct effects, e.g. that a decision is taken or a workshop is held. Such effects could, however, also be said to be the actions to be taken to implement a given stated recommendation. The distinction between actions and direct effects can be difficult to make, but needs to be made.

Effects are also more than the direct effects. There is in principle a whole chain of “effect-cause-effect” changes, which can be said together to constitute “effects” in the sense of the abovementioned scope of work. How far should the analyses go into these chains?

It is suggested that the recommendations of the Evaluation concerning revision of the country strategy ultimately aim at two overall or “wider” “effects”: Increased participation in and ownership of the Bangladeshi side of the strategy and an improved specification of the Danish poverty objective and cross-cutting concerns in the specific Bangladesh context. An issue is to what extent it is possible to assess the follow-up on actions taken or not taken in the perspective of achievements in terms of such ultimate goals. Though the more direct effects are easier to assess, these ultimate goals say more about what was intended achieved by the original recommendations, irrespective of the specific formulations of these, the specific actions imagined or the envisaged direct effects. Thus indicators for changes in ownership and poverty focus could suggest, which “effects” have been relevant since the Evaluation was undertaken.

This points to an important methodological aspect of the Follow-Up Study: Even though the 2001-Strategy shall be in focus, as mentioned above, the 2005-Strategy would still appear relevant. This is so first of all because the effects of the recommendations could and should still be part of the strategic framework for the Bangladeshi-Danish development cooperation. Analyses of the changes between the 2005-Strategy and the 1995-Strategy would thus be an important supplement to the corresponding analyses of the changes between the 1995-Strategy and the 2001-Strategy. The 2005-Strategy is also relevant in relation to “possible/required further action” as this version is the context to which possible further actions will have to be adapted.

Analyses of the strategic basis for the present cooperation should thus be useful. It should, however, be focused on the areas in which the recommendations of the original Evaluation were made. The study is, as mentioned above, not intended as an evaluation of the 2005-Strategy as such. The work on the 2005-Strategy, as well as that of the 2001-Strategy, shall be limited to what is relevant for assessing the effects of the original recommendations.

Assessment of the Evaluation as a “learning instrument” could imply conflicts of interest, as the Team Leader of the Follow-Up Study was chosen to be the same as the Team Leader for the Evaluation. This is acknowledged as a possible limitation on the value of the Follow-Up Study, but this choice also has obvious advantages. It has in particular proved useful since “envisaged effects” have had to be included “ex-post”, as such effects are not specified in the Evaluation. Also, the issues of assessing the recommendations in the context today and relating these assessments to the “wider effects”, i.e. the issues that were behind the recommendations of the evaluation and still considered relevant issues, would not have been possible without the insight of the Follow-Up Study Team Leader in the past context.

1.4 Strategy Revision and Programming Processes

Parallel with the process of revising the country strategy, the three SPSs had been under preparation. Due to the phasing out of bilateral assistance to India, the Bangladeshi country frame increased considerably in 1998/99. On this basis it was decided to increase the support to the transport sector with a suggested budget amount to one billion DKK. A formulation mission was undertaken in April 1999 and a government agreement was signed in September 2000. The Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Programme Support (WSSPS) was approved in June 1999 and the Agricultural SPS (ASPS) approved in June 2000.

In 2002 the country frame was reduced from DKK 320 million to 270 million per year. This was further reduced to DKK 230 million when Denmark decided to cancel the Inland Water Transport Component under the Ministry of Shipping due to some problems with the Ministry's use of the funds. No co-operation with the Ministry of Shipping has taken place since.

In April 2003 a country selection analysis was undertaken. On this basis a Concept Paper was prepared by the Embassy as an input to a meeting with the Programme Committee in October 2003. Five priority sectors were proposed: 1) water and sanitation, 2) agriculture 3) rural roads 4) HRGG including special effort in Chittagong 5) Non-formal education. Due to the reduced country frame (DKK 200 million per year from 2005 to 2009) and new strategic principles emphasis more sector concentration the non-formal education sector support was cancelled and the rural roads was integrated into the ASPS. Three programmes were decided to be included in the future country programme: The ASPS, the WSSPS and the Human Rights and Good Governance (HRGG) Programme.

In November 2003 a country analysis was conducted, which was used as input for discussions at the Embassy, including discussions related to HRGG. An English draft was prepared in 2004 and discussed with the Bangladeshi stakeholders, which was followed up by a joint meeting in ERD with representatives from relevant line-ministries. A revised draft was hereafter prepared and consultations with Danish stakeholders were held in November 2004. In March 2005 a final draft was presented to Danida Board and in May to the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. The country strategy was approved and published in August 2005.

At the time of the Follow-Up Study the WSSPS II and the HRGG II Programme had just been finalised. Preparations for the second phase of WSSPS started in late 2003 and was approved by the Danida Board in October 2005. The HRGG II had been appraised and was presented to the Danida Board in December 2005. The ASPS II was not yet finalised. The preparation of the ASPS II began in 2004 and as a part of ASPS II design process, several activities and missions have been organised including the organisation of identification, formulation and feasibility missions. A appraisal mission is expected to be undertaken in February 2006.

2 Follow-Up on Strategy Revision 2001

2.1 Time perspective and Synchronisation (R1)

To undertake the revision of the Country Strategy Paper using an eight-year perspective, of which the first three years should be considered a transition phase during which the above-mentioned adaptation can take place. A major revision of the strategy can then be undertaken after the transition period and be synchronised with the government's anticipated new development plan

Recommendation 1 was not agreed to by Danida, as it was considered unnecessary to bring the country strategy to correspond with the planning period in Bangladesh. No actions were therefore taken.

The recommendation is no longer relevant, as the five-year development planning process in Bangladesh has been replaced by the PRSP process. Considerable efforts have been made to align the 2005-Strategy with this work. The revision of 2005-Strategy was postponed with the aim to align the strategy with the PRSP. Thus, in a way the recommendation was followed in the second revision of the strategy.

2.2 Operationalisation of the poverty objectives (R2)

The Evaluation carried out in 1998-99 found that the 1995-Strategy was basically drafted as a paper summarising the aid activities, which at the time were already ongoing or planned to be implemented during the coming five-year period. Furthermore it was noticed that the programming process basically took place as three separate SPS processes and to a lesser degree as part of the overall framework provided in the Country Strategy.

The Evaluation recommended that efforts were made to operationalise the Danish objectives in the Bangladeshi context in the revised strategy.

That the necessary analytical work is undertaken in an effort to operationalise the objectives of poverty-reduction and cross-cutting concerns to a reasonable degree, based on the SPS work, and taking into consideration overall as well as sectoral development perspectives and constraints in Bangladesh

The aim of the recommendation was to utilize the initial preparatory work for the planned SPS as input to the revising of the country strategy. The past identification and programming work and the analytical work foreseen for the revision of the strategy could provide a basis for operationalise the objectives in relation to poverty-reduction as well as to cross-cutting concerns.

As response to the recommendation Danida refers to ongoing donor-coordinated poverty-studies, but does not indicate how these studies can or will contribute to operationalise the Danish poverty-reduction objectives. In respect to cross-cutting concerns Danida would undertake studies, which will be taken into account during preparation of the SPSs.

The draft 2001-Strategy was based on the 1995-Strategy. The three chosen sectors, water and sanitation, agriculture and transport, were still considered relevant. On this basis Danida did not find it necessary to conduct any new or updated studies.

The preparatory work for the planned SPS and the experiences gained do not seem to have been utilized to develop an overall strategy for the Danish assistance to Bangladesh. The Sector Programme Coordinators drafted the sections related to their respective sectors and the results

were more or less a summary of the draft SPS documents. Only few meetings and discussions related to the overall strategic focus and issues took place. The discussions, which took place, were mainly related to new policies introduced from Danida's side, such as reduction of the number of advisors, budget support and further sector concentration rather than to the specific needs of Bangladesh. However, Chittagong Hill Tracts was given more attention, and was added to the list of priority areas.

Overall, the recommendation has not been followed up and the 2001-Strategy has therefore not been improved in relation to its function as a guide to the future programming and implementation. The strategy provides an improved strategic focus on Bangladeshi ownership and coordinating role, but it does not specify how this will be achieved. Except from introducing the Chittagong Hill Tracts as a priority area, new focus areas or activities, which might have been relevant to poverty-reduction and cross-cutting concerns, have not been identified. The strategy does not explain why the sectors and intervention areas chosen are of particular interest of Denmark. Neither is it explained why other sectors, such as education and health will not be supported in spite of the fact, that these sectors were high priorities of the Bangladeshi Government at that time.

There seems to be different reasons why continuity rather than major changes in Danish development assistance to Bangladesh is to be found in 2001-Strategy. One is that the three SPSs were more or less formulated and close to approval, which prevented new components to be identified. Also, many activities were already ongoing making limited room for introduction of new programmes and activities. From the Embassy's point of view, it would be meaningless to start from scratch. This can be said to be true. On the other hand more analytical work and greater utilisation of the experiences already gained could have improved the poverty focus in the country programme.

In the revision process of 2005-Strategy, more efforts have been made to operationalise the Danish objectives in the Bangladeshi context. On the basis of a country analysis undertaken in April 2003 the Embassy prepared a Concept Paper that was presented to the Danida Programme Committee. This work was used as a starting point for the revision of 2005-Strategy. In November 2003 another analysis was conducted, which was used as input for discussions at the Embassy, including discussions related to HRGG. However, this latter revision process can also to a certain degree still be characterized by a "sector approach", where the strategy is "build around" the sector interventions.

With the benefit of hindsight the recommendation appears either practical or realistic. A strategy, which is revised every five year, is insufficient to be used as a guide to the future programming and implementation. The context is constantly changing and new development policies are introduced, which require that policies, principles and modalities are operationalised in the specific Bangladeshi context on a more current basis.

2.3 Dialogue and cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh (R3 and R4)

The 1995-Strategy was apparently not a result of a dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), as it was drafted in Danish. Furthermore the programming process that had taken place at that time had been rather "donor-driven" with lack of involvement of GoB. As improved ownership through close dialogue was an essential element in the SPS approach, the Evaluation recommended that steps were taken to intensify the dialogue with GoB in the future. It was recommended:

That as far as possible, the analytical work should be undertaken in cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh, and in any case used as an opportunity for and input into dialogue with the Government.

The revision of the Country Strategy Paper should be undertaken in close cooperation with the government and its time frame and approach to planning should be adopted. A follow-up workshop of the present evaluation, at the same time initiating the strategy revision process, would be one motivating step in that direction. The analytical work needed for the revision process, which would then follow, would provide more opportunities for inputs into the dialogue.

Danida agreed. The comments from Danida state that the Embassy will co-operate with the co-ordinating Ministry of Finance and with the relevant line ministries during preparation of the revised strategy and that a workshop with all stakeholders is planned to take place in October 1999 in Dhaka. Regarding the analytical work this will be undertaken as an integral part of planning of the SPSs. It is, however, unclear to what extent the Bangladeshi stakeholders will be involved in the analytical work, and to what extent the work will be used as input to dialogues with GoB on the revised strategy.

At the Annual Consultations in May 1999 the preliminary findings of the Evaluation were presented and it was stated that the strategy was to be revised before the end of 1999.

Discussions about the findings and the time frame in relation to the GoB's own planning or other donors' revision processes do not seem to have taken place. The involvement of Bangladeshi stakeholders in the revision process was rather limited. The dialogue mainly took place between the Embassy and ERD. Other relevant line ministries was involved to a certain degree, but was mainly consulted through the ERD. The corporation with and contributions by the government agencies in the formulation of the various components of the sectors do not seem to have been utilized as an input into the dialogue related to the revision of the strategy. Neither have the analyses and studies carried out as a part of the programming of the SPSs been used to promote a dialogue at higher level. It seems that the higher-level discussions on the strategy have been more or less separated from the discussions taking place within the sectors. The workshop, which Danida had planned, was never held.

It is uncertain if the limited involvement of GoB is due to a lack of interest from the Bangladeshi side, lack of efforts from the Danish side or the fact that many discussions and agreements had already taken place in the preparations of the sectors. Whatever the reasons are, the result is that the dialogues with the GoB and their ownership to the strategy and the future programming were not improved, as envisaged. In fact, after agreement of 2001-Strategy was obtained, GoB requested that Denmark included the educational sector as a priority sector. This indicates that the discussions have not resulted in a common understanding and consensus about the strategic focus in the Danish country programme.

The revision process of the 2005-Strategy has been much more participatory in its approach, allowing more stakeholders to be involved. A meeting at ERD was held with participation of all relevant ministries. This meeting was the first of its kind and the participatory approach was very well received by the Bangladeshi government officials. However, the dialogues have to a large extent been limited to the central government level and views of e.g. grassroots, private sectors and NGOs are not much reflected in the Strategy.

2.4 Guide for the further development of the SPSs (R5)

In 1998-99, when the Evaluation was undertaken, the SPS approach was still in its early stage. All three SPSs were still under preparation, although the WSSPS was close to being finalised. Based on the work done and the preliminary drafts available, the Evaluation found that the SPS approach would lead to a too technical focus in the overall country programme and that too little attention would be given to the cross-cutting concerns and to cross sector interventions. Furthermore, the Evaluation found it necessary that the revised strategy provided a framework for the further developments of the SPSs as well as of the non-SPS activities. It was thus recommended that:

Intervention areas are specified in the revised country strategy in such a way that this document provides a guide for the further development of the SPS in each of the three selected sectors, but at the same time is flexible enough to allow for the financing of activities which cut across sectors and which contribute to coherence of support within and between sectors.

Danida's response to the recommendation focuses on how the vertical and horizontal coherence will be achieved. It states that vertical coherence within the sectors will be strengthened through combination of central institutional activities with ground level activities. Horizontal coherence will be enhanced by strengthened geographical concentration. However, the comment does not reflect the issue concerning the specification of intervention areas as a guide for the further development of each SPS.

A first step in relation to this recommendation would be to exchange views and experiences across the sectors, which could include technology, extension strategies, poverty-oriented strategies, sectoral constraints, cross-cutting issues etc. The sharing of experiences in relation to the overall Danish objectives could be useful to identify opportunities for cooperation across the sectors and identify new activities, which could supplement the ongoing activities and hence contribute to a more coherent total country programme.

Discussions in this regard have been limited. Sectoral discussions during the preparation and formulation of the SPSs have taken place. Only few meetings across the sectors have, however, taken place in relation to revision of the strategy. 2001-Strategy states that the numbers of districts has been limited so as to target efforts on particularly poor areas and to achieve optimum synergy between individual sector and sub-sector efforts. This is, however, not the case compared to 1995-Strategy. The number of districts was actually increased by adding Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is also unclear how synergy will be achieved. The strategy does not provide any guidelines for how to utilize the area approach and mechanisms to enhance inter-linkages between the activities are not described. In WSSPS one of the main strategic principles is to ensure interaction between water resource management, drinking water supply and agriculture. Attempts would also be made to generate correlation between agricultural production development and the transport network. Based on the 2001-Strategy paper it is not clear how this will be done.

2.5 Cross-cutting, cross-sector and institutional issues (R6 and R7)

The sector allocations in the indicative planning of the country frame specify funds for these cross-cutting activities, which could include part of the unallocated funds under the respective sector-support programmes

Further SPS developments will initially need to focus on the institutional issues and on institutionalising the sectoral dialogues. The use of unallocated funds under the SPSs would presuppose such sectoral dialogues and would contribute to creating a broad-based dialogue for the revision of the country strategy as a whole

These two recommendations were basically not accepted by Danida. In the response to R6, Danida argues that cross-cutting concerns would be handled under the SPSs and that procedures for use of unallocated were sufficiently flexible to allow for the SPS developments over time. Some misunderstanding is involved here, however, as the Evaluation is using the term “cross-cutting”, whereas the meaning intended is “cross-sector”. Thus, the Danida response is understandably somewhat beside the point.

Recommendation 7 is also unclearly and vaguely formulated on the part of the Evaluation. There was little doubt that difficult institutional issues were at stake at the time. However, the Evaluation does not specify either what the issues were or suggest any solutions. The use of unallocated funds under the SPSs was only a minor aspect of this. As the institutional issues found in 1998 to some degree still exist, these issues are taken up again in Chapter 3.

2.6 Assistance to human rights and good governance (R8)

The Evaluation considered continued dialogues and identification and formulation work as essential for achieving GoB ownership and coherence in the total country programme. This relates to further SPS developments within each of the three sectors as well as to non-SPS interventions. HRGG was in this context seen as a clear opportunity:

The commitment to continue assistance outside the SPS framework, for example, to human rights and good governance, provides similar opportunities for dialogue with both government and NGOs in respect of identification and formulation work in this and possibly other areas. This work will cut across, and hence help to knit together, the sector supports.

Danida agreed to this recommendation. The response states that the dialogue with the Government and NGOs concerning human rights issues, democratisation and good governance does supplement the support to the sector programmes. A study on decentralisation and on how Danida can support the institutional development of local governments was at the time under consideration.

At the Annual Consultation in November 2000 the Danish Delegation confirmed Denmark’s interest in supporting the HRGG, including the decentralisation process. A pre-identification mission had taken place in February 1998, and an appraisal mission was undertaken in 2001 in order to appraise the programme document covering a package of Danish supported projects within the area of human rights and democratisation. The increased focus on human rights and democratisation is reflected in 2001-Strategy, where the support to these areas has been increased from 2 per cent to 10 per cent of the total country budget frame.

This indicates that actions were taken, affecting the role played by these areas in the revised 2001-Strategy. However, the GoB has not been much involved in the identification and formu-

lation of HRGG activities, in spite of the fact that they have been encouraged to give comments on the pre-identification report as well as on the formulation undertaken in September 1998. The main reason seems to be a lack of real interest for HRGG issues from the Bangladeshi side and the lack of a national strategy for HRGG. Another issue is that HRGG cut cross the ministries “allowing” them to disclaim the responsibility.

However the activities supported seem to have achieved good results. The “Violence against Women” project has shown that cooperation between the ministries is possible even though the political lack of interest seems at stake. The HRGG areas remain high priority areas in the Danish assistance. A second generation support programme is now under preparation and its share of the total country frame is expected to increase to 38 per cent by the end of the 2005-Strategy period. These intervention areas do also continue to play a major role with respect to achievement of both vertical and horizontal coherence of the total country programme. It is taken up again in Chapter 3 below.

2.7 Assistance to privatisation and decentralisation (R9)

Participation of the private sector in development, as well as decentralisation and devolution of power were among the policy priorities of the GoB at the time of the Evaluation. In the view of the Evaluation these policies also represented important areas in relation to the Danish development objectives. They were again areas, which constituted opportunities both for further cross-sector interventions and for development of the SPSs towards a larger degree of coherence. They were relative new areas for Danish support in Bangladesh and the Evaluation suggested on this basis that pilot activities were carried out with the aim to identify potential windows-of-opportunities for support in these.

Specific provisions are made in the revised country strategy to undertake pilot projects in the areas of privatisation and decentralisation.

Danida agreed to this recommendation. The response of Danida states that pilot activities will be considered within the planned SPSs.

In 2001-Strategy, decentralisation of the public sector is highlighted as one of the Bangladeshi development goals, which is considered relevant for Denmark to support. The support to decentralisation is mainly addressed in the section related to the cross-cutting issues, where it is mentioned that support to the initiatives employed by Bangladesh within the area of decentralisation will be granted through strengthening of institutions. Additionally, decentralisation is mentioned as a focus area in the WSSPS. However, the strategy does not provide clear guidelines or principles for how to support decentralisation and specific provisions to undertake pilot activities within the area have not been made. Neither is any attention is given to the Government’s declared objective to continue privatisation of the public sector.

According to the comments of Danida it was considered to undertake pilot activities within the SPSs as well as outside of the SPSs. As far as the Follow-Up Study has been able ascertain, pilot activities in the area of decentralisation and privatisation have only been done within the Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Component. Furthermore private management of Roads and Highway Ferries in Transport SPS was a deliberate move towards leasing functions to private sector. Attempts to gain experience in order to develop an overall strategic focus and framework for support to decentralisation and privatisation have not been made. The WSSPS II, however, seems to have incorporated experience gained from pilot activities under WSSPS I to a certain degree.

The 2001-Strategy gives the impression that support to decentralisation will mainly be given through the assistance to HRGG. A mission carried out a study on how to support decentralisation. The ideas were however rejected by the GoB. Due to this it was decided to cancel the planned support to decentralisation within the HRGG Programme I.

Decentralisation has been an ongoing process for quite some time. One tier of elected local government (Union Parishads, UPs, in rural areas and Pourashava in municipalities) is now established. The devolution of power remains very limited, though, and funding of the UPs is initially very low. However, increased political willingness to strengthen the local governments is observed and increased block grants in line with increased functional authority have recently been agreed, starting of the next fiscal year.

The 2005-Strategy reflects this new situation. Increased emphasis is given to support for decentralising planning as well as capacity building at the local level. According to the strategy efforts will be made to build and support decentralisation to local government structures within the SPSs. This will mainly be done within the new WSSPS by introducing the Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply (HYSAWA) Fund. In addition, support to local governments will be given within the HRGG programme through strengthening of the UP's Standing Committees, capacity building of public representatives and establishment of their associations and networks.

The 2005-Strategy paper puts more emphasis on support to decentralisation. However, it is not clear how the activities are part of an overall strategy for support to decentralisation. As this type of support is a relatively new area and as the devolution of power to local government is still in its birth, piloting activities are needed. It is still necessary to gain experience in the field with the view of assessing potential approaches and strategies. In this regard the WSSPS II should be seen as a "large scale pilot", and so should the HRGG II activities. This is taken up again in Chapter 3 below.

2.8 The cooperation with NGOs (R10)

The use of NGOs was in the Evaluation considered to be a strategically difficult aspect of the Danish country programme. The Follow-Up Study finds that this still is a difficult aspect and that the difficulties are not quite understood all around. Neither were the issues fully understood by the Evaluation in 1998/99 and recommendations was therefore to undertake a study:

A special analysis be undertaken of the Danida experience, as well as of that of other donors, in development cooperation with local NGOs. The results of this analysis should be used as a basis for formulating guidelines in the revised Country Strategy Paper for such cooperation in the future.

2001-Strategy outlines three concrete steps to be taken in relation to the cooperation with the NGOs. Due to increased number of applications it is considered necessary to establish a unit at the Embassy to take care of the contacts with NGOs and to assist the Embassy in assessing the applications. Furthermore, the Embassy will outline and conduct an analysis of the civil society in Bangladesh and regular meetings at the Embassy is planned to be held with representatives from Danish and Bangladeshi NGOs.

A study of the NGOs was undertaken. This was, however, done too late to be used as a basis for formulating guidelines for the future cooperation with the NGOs and the study also proved to be too vague to be used for this purpose. The unit at the Embassy was not established, but as part of the HRGG Programme I a HRGG Support Unit was established in 2002, which was housed

outside the Embassy. The function of the Unit was to assist the Embassy in management of the programme, which includes monitoring of the activities undertaken by the NGOs and assessments of the applications for support from the NGOs working in the field of human rights and good governance. The Unit also facilitated regular meetings within the Bangladeshi-Danish NGO Forum with representatives from the Embassy.

The initiatives implemented seem to have improved the dialogues between the NGOs and the Embassy and also more clear selection criteria have been developed, including crosschecking procedures with other donors. However, no visible changes in the use of NGOs have been observed, which indicates that the initiatives have not focused on the development of a clear strategy or on developing guidelines for how, when and under what conditions the NGOs could and should be used.

Based on consultations with persons involved with the assistance to Bangladesh at that time it is clear that a concern existed that the scaling up of service delivery by the NGOs might undermine the Government's role. Also the dominance of micro finance in the NGO activities was looked at with scepticism. In spite of these concerns no major change in the use of the NGOs in implementing the Danish assistance can be observed.

The concerns were shared by DFID, which undertook a study of the big NGOs in 2001. The study supported the fears that NGOs were becoming a "parallel State" but also argued for more support to organisations that were the voices of the poor, rather than being voices for the poor. On this basis DFID made a shift in its approach to the NGO sector.

In the Country Analysis undertaken in November 2003 it is recommended that the Embassy re-defines its understanding of partnerships with NGOs. The analysis shows that it is still not clear how, when and under what conditions NGOs are used in implementing the Danish assistance. This was confirmed during fieldwork of the present study, where confusions about the roles and functions of the NGOs were observed.

In the HRGG II, which was presented to the Danida Board in December 2005, a new strategy regarding the use of the NGOs is introduced. The plan is to reduce the number of NGO-projects by phasing out the support to small NGO-projects. The main reason for this seems to be a matter of resources and administrative capacity to manage all these NGOs rather than concern about their role and functions. The Follow-Up Study therefore urges that attention is given to issues raised by the heavy involvement of the NGOs.

2.9 Channelling of funds (R11)

Ideally, funds for specific activities should be allocated and budgeted as part of the Government's own allocation and budgeting procedures for various government units. Also, Danish funds, which are supposed to finance part of the budgeted activities, should ideally be transferred to the Ministry of Finance and from there to the ministries and concerned government units, in the same way that the government's own funds are transferred. In 1998 the Evaluation observed that funds were channelled through project accounts, controlled by Danida project advisers. It was recommended that steps in the direction of the SPS ideal should be taken. First step would be to analyse the existing system for allocation, budgeting, accounting and auditing. The Evaluation suggested identifying a "pilot" ministry or an agency and then record the process and monitoring over a financial year. On decentralised levels, it was suggested to synergise the project's and the district's budgeting procedures.

An analysis of the government system of budgeting, accounting and auditing is conducted and that the revised Country Strategy Paper gives guidelines for how SPS-activity budgeting and Government budgeting can be synchronised at local levels.

According to Danida the central government system of accounting and auditing was relatively well known, but an analysis of the decentralised budgeting, accounting and auditing on local government level would be conducted as part of the study on decentralisation.

The recommendation was followed up by a mission carrying out a study on decentralisation. However, the persons involved in the revision of strategy do not recall that the study was used or discussed in relation to new approaches for channelling of funds, and piloting activities were not undertaken. According to the persons consulted the widespread corruption, which exists in Bangladesh, prevented that funds were channelled through the government system. The traditional project modality was continued allowing the Danida funding to be kept mainly in the hands of the Danish advisors.

The recommendation did not suggest that funds should be transferred through the government systems overnight, but that efforts was made to adapt the new modalities reflected in the SPS approach taken into account the Bangladeshi context. This could include pilot activities, but they were not undertaken and 2001-Strategy did not reflect the issue. It stresses that GoB has been reluctant to adapt the new SPS approach and not yet organised the approval and budgeting procedures according to this approach. It is also stressed that control of accounting and auditing functions is necessary due to inadequate capacity and systems to ensure reliable accounting procedures and the widespread corruption in Bangladesh. The accounts of the Danish fund disbursement will therefore be under supervision of advisers and Embassy-appointed accountants. In parallel with the exercising control, support will be granted to institutional development of accounting and control procedures on relevant government agencies, at both central and local level. This is new compared to the 1995-Strategy.

As this aspect is an important element in the issue of national “ownership” to the Danish country programme, it is taken up again in Chapter 3 below.

3 2005-Strategy Issues

Though focus of the Follow-Up Study is to be on 2001-Strategy, several of the issues behind the recommendations are visible also today. These are taken up this chapter.

It should in this connection be emphasised that the recommendations concern the poverty orientation and the ownership or alignment aspects of the strategy, but not e.g. donor harmonisation and general governance/corruption aspects. These two latter aspects are equally important today, but they are not aspects of the 11 recommendations of the Evaluation. Maybe these aspects should have been covered in the Evaluation, but certainly they would have to be aspects of an evaluation to be undertaken today in the presently existing context.

Also, assessments of effects suffer from the same general “attribution problem” as all evaluation assessments of effects of interventions. Thus, the findings below concern the question of whether the programme today is in accordance with the envisaged (“wider”) effects rather than whether they were actually “caused by” the recommendations, as they basically are not. Thus, the analyses of “the envisaged wider effects” are concerned with the question of whether the features of the programme today are in accordance with what was expected from the recommendations, without being necessarily “caused by” the recommendations. But the analyses are limited to those features, which can reasonably be related to the recommendations in this way.

3.1 Strategic principles and poverty focus in country programme

The objectives to be achieved through the Danish development assistance programme are in the 1995-Strategy specified in terms, which are so general that they provide only limited guidance for the specific programming work for the country programme interventions. Through Recommendation 2 it was envisaged that the specific programming work underway or to be started at the time of the Evaluation for three SPSs would be used in the general work of revising the strategy. The SPS preparatory work could, together with needed general country analytical work, be used to formulate the Danish poverty reduction objective for the country programme and the cross-cutting concerns more specifically in relation to the context in Bangladesh. The strategy would then also be useful as a guide for the required continuous developments of the SPSs as well as for programming of non-SPS interventions as intended with Recommendations 5 and 8.

These effects were not achieved in the 2001-Strategy, as mentioned above, and the 2005-Strategy is also relatively general, as is the PRSP to which it is aligned. It can on this background be questioned whether a strategy document could and should be more specific and hence whether the stated recommendations in this respect are relevant. The experience from the recent past indicates, however, that there continues to be a need for considering the interactions of strategic decisions on the one hand with the work on programming of interventions and intervention areas on the other. Findings from the present study are indicative of this issue:

There are several “strategic principles” or decisions, which are not found in the 2005-Strategy, though it is only recently published. The geographical focus on the North and Northwest of Bangladesh is not found in the paper. The decision that an SPS can have only three components and each of them only three sub-components (Guidelines for Programme Management, Danida) and that each SPS should only have one “host” at the national level are also “strategic principles” not found in the strategy paper. Similarly, there seems to be a constant “pressure” to reduce the use of technical assistance. Such general considerations are, however, actual strategic principles, which heavily influence the programming work. This is particularly evidenced by the

problems with programming ASPS II. Some of these principles seem to have come in right in the middle of the programming process and as a surprise for all technical persons involved in the process. Although North and Northwest of Bangladesh are poverty stricken areas, MoA officials and advisors questioned whether this should imply Danida involvement in these areas. Many other donors support these areas already and agriculture might not be the right sector in that context. The content of the second generation ASPS and hence the degree to which support to the agricultural sector for the coming five years is as focused on poverty reduction, as it could and should be, is at the time of the Follow-Up Study uncertain.

A very important experiment is being developed (since 2002) under the ASPS I, by Greater Noakhali Aquaculture Extension Component (GNAEC) II and the minor roads component in cooperation. A similar cooperation takes place in Greater Barisal. The focus is on establishing employment and other income earning opportunities to the poorest areas (charlands) and for the poorest groups in these areas. Results so far indicate that the poverty focus of the programme is strengthened. This experiment with new strategic principles should hence continue as a central element in the new ASPS. It would be a great loss in poverty focus, if these activities were to be stopped, reduced or to become less efficient with reference to overriding “strategic principles” such as “only one national “host” for each SPS” or pressure to reduce technical assistance under the programmes. An issue in the above is whether that of “having a strategy” is the same as that of “having a strategy paper”. A lesson from the present study is that a strategy paper becomes outdated very quickly and that revisions every five years, with possible delays, are insufficient for the paper to have the function of guiding the programming work. Such guidance is, on the other hand necessary. A strategy should be constantly updated from experience gained through the interventions as well as from new policy decisions and other changes in key strategic principles. The strategy should be able at any time to provide the needed guidance for the programming work to be undertaken in a consistent and effective way and to bring in “the actual Bangladeshi context”. The strategy paper is not sufficient in that respect.

A solution might be to have a “strategy and context function” at the Embassy and a person designated specifically to maintain the “current strategy” with the main strategic principles in the actual context updated on a continuous basis in such a way that it can provide the needed programming guidance. This “function” should also ensure, however, that changes in key strategic principles are not made operational “overnight”, disrupting the continuously ongoing programming and implementation processes and causing inefficiencies.

3.2 Coherence of country programme

It was envisaged that the Recommendations 5, 6, and 8 would lead to a larger degree of coherence in the country programme as a whole. It was at the time of the Evaluation felt that the SPS approach (which was new in Bangladesh at that time) would lead to a too technical focus in the overall country programme. There was a fear that general institutional, cross-cutting and cross-sector aspects would receive too little attention and that the programme hence would become less oriented towards poverty reduction. There was a conceived risk of poverty reduction becoming one type of approach in the ASPS, another in the WSSPS and a third in the TSPS. Coherence means that the interventions are mutually supportive and reinforcing each other within a reasonably well-defined and self-contained programme area. Non-SPS interventions, mainstreaming of cross-cutting aspects in the SPSs and further developing the SPSs towards increased effectiveness in relation to poverty reduction were seen as the way forward to give the overall intervention portfolio a coherent poverty orientation.

Effects on the 2001-Strategy of these recommendations in terms of principles, policies or guidelines for increased coherence are limited. However, with the merger of the rural roads component under ASPS II a larger portion of the country frame has been allocated to interventions outside the two remaining SPSs (agriculture, water supply and sanitation). The second phase of the HRGG programme has a much larger budget than the first programme. The two remaining SPSs have also been formulated with strategies, approaches and interventions that are promising in relation to increased effectiveness in poverty reduction. There are, however, still issues of coherence in the overall programme:

The extent to which gender has become mainstreamed is not clear. The new HRGG programme could give good opportunities for supporting and knitting together the sector programmes, but whether these opportunities can be realised is still to be seen. The HRGG programme document does not provide guidelines for how to mainstream the cross-cutting issues. Firm steps forward towards increasing horizontal coherence at the field level are, however, found. The cooperation established between the minor roads activities and the GNAEC is an example. The WSSPS II is intending to support capacity building of the UPs, as is the HRGG programme, and strengthening of these local government institutions is essential for the GNAEC and minor roads interventions to replace NGO implementation with local government implementation in the longer run. With the known experience from GNAEC and minor roads and the design of the second-generation WSSPS and HRGG programme, the perspectives for a horizontally coherent intervention portfolio at the field level seems very good. However, it is on paper still and little experience exists from which to judge the likelihood for success.

Vertical coherence shall ensure that experience from field level activities is brought to bear on national policies and institutional capacity building at the national level and that policies address the problems at the field level. The first generation SPSs has activities at both the field level and the national level. Similarly, the second generation SPSs also seems institutionally well established at the national level as well as field levels. This is particularly true of the WSSPS II, which is established under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Local Government Division. Management is placed with a National Programme Director, who is assisted by a senior Danida advisor. This set-up is new and there is no implementation experience as yet. With respect to ASPS II, vertical coherence seems less secured since the anchoring of the programme at the national level is not yet well established.

Presently there are policy and planning support units in both Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL). In addition Department of Agricultural Extension as well as Department of Fisheries are supported with technical assistance at technical levels. The Policy and Planning Support Units (PPSUs) are not perceived to have had the intended impact during the first ASPS. They have not been able to have major influence on policies, it seems. However, this is probably too much to expect achieved by a small donor with a small programme supporting only parts (though important parts) of the ministries' and department's operational areas. The units seem to have good possibilities for strengthening the interaction between the ministry (policies) and the departments (implementation) levels and thereby the field level.

The main issues related to horizontal coherence are those of mainstreaming gender and of integrating HRGG with the ASPS and the WSSPS, though some initiatives have been taken to mainstream HRGG in the sector programmes. With respect to vertical coherence, it should be reconsidered whether the PPSUs should be abolished under ASPS II as the two support units

under MoFL are indicative of the scope for such units to be able to contribute to vertical integration of activities within a ministry.

3.3 Institutionalisation of sector programme support

Institutional anchoring of the SPSs was a major problem at the time of the Evaluation. If an SPS, like e.g. ASPS, is to encompass the whole agricultural sector and at the same time have only one national policy institution as its “host”, there was a problem. There were two central ministries (MoA and MoFL) and one could not be the “lead” or “host” ministry, if the corresponding SPS contained activities that were under the other ministry’s jurisdiction. The Transport Sector Programme Support had similar problems, whereas WSSPS could be anchored effectively under Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (Local Government Division).

The Recommendation 7 concerning these institutional issues is not clear. It relates to the assumed intended evolution over time of the SPSs, including use of the unallocated funds. A clear anchoring of each SPS is clearly a condition for a dialogue to take place on such evolutions, including decisions on the use of unallocated funds. The recommendation does not, however, suggest how to solve the initial institutional problem.

At the time of the present study, second generation SPSs are under preparation. The WSSPS II remains under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. There will be no Transport SPS, but the minor roads component is expected to continue, but changed to a lower classification of roads (feeder roads) and included under agriculture. The HRGG programme will contain three components and a number of interventions with no central national institution as host. Coordination will be made directly from the Embassy and Programme Support Unit is to have a main role in the implementation, which will include use of/support to NGOs.

The ASPS II is still to find its final form, but is intended in addition to the feeder roads component to contain activities under the MoFL as well as under MoA. Either of these two ministries can still not be accepted as the “lead” over the other. Thus, the problem identified in 1998, is still there as far as the agricultural sector is concerned. A basic idea in the new ASPS seems to be a focus on a “unity extension approach”, which will have to be under the MoA, since only MoA has extension workers beyond the Upazilla level (district level).

The Follow-Up Study does not find it meaningful in the Bangladeshi context to keep insisting on one national “host” for a small programme from a small donor like Denmark. It is suggested that a programme is established with each of these two ministries with activities in each aiming at supporting the initiatives necessary to move towards a unified extension system in the longer run. The important aspects of the SPS approach, vertical and horizontal coherence within a reasonably well defined and self-contained policy area, can be maintained within each and they can be mutually supportive. Danida seems so far to have had good cooperation at the national level on implementation of field activities as well as on policies in both ministries. These good relations should be maintained with both ministries.

3.4 Private sector participation, decentralisation and NGO involvement

Decentralisation, private sector development (including development of CBOs) and the involvement of NGOs in implementation of projects and programmes are central features of the Danish country programme today. Though the Recommendations 9 and 10 in the Evaluation have not been implemented, they are not today relevant as formulated in 1999. There are in the future country programme pilot activities on decentralisation as well as on private sector developments. NGOs also continue to be heavily involved in implementation of the future programme, as it looks at the present time.

The GNAEC and the minor roads projects are undertaking a number of pilot activities towards private sector development, which include developing community based organisations (CBOs), private service providers, enterprises and agribusinesses. The activities are aiming at developing poor areas by supporting development of the private sector in these areas. These activities are very poverty focused. It should therefore be ensured that the “experiment” implied in these activities, trying out a “model” for developing poor areas, is being maintained in the future country programme. The activities constitute a coordinated support to the poor themselves, to private service providers and enterprises (including Private Sector Programme supported), creating employment and income earning opportunities in very poor areas. Possibilities for “replication” and “upgrading” to national level strategies and policies should be pursued. Baseline data should be collected and a monitoring system established to ensure recording and analyses of the results of these experimental activities for the purposes of possible “replication” and “upgrading” to national level policies.

The WSSPS II including the HYSAWA Fund is intending to provide support to development of the local government institutions (Union Parishads, UPs) with activities at the same levels as the GNAEC- and minor roads activities. The same is the case with the HRGG programme. These activities imply support to strengthening the lowest level of (elected) government and would contribute to development of the public sector at the same level as the GNAEC and minor roads activities are experimenting with development of the private sector. With integration of these activities, it is envisaged that the UPs can be strengthened to undertake proper public sector functions at this decentralised levels and hereunder, the role of extension service delivery to the upcoming private sector in stead of NGOs in the future. Similarly NGOs should not in the long run operate revolving funds. CBOs should be supported to take over the micro credit functions.

There is little doubt that NGOs in general are providing many relevant services to the poor. To a large extent they are providing services, which in the longer run should be provided by a government institution (or maybe by a private enterprise) and are in this sense replacing the government at the decentralised level. As the Danish country programme, as indicated above, is aiming at developing both the public and the private sector at this level, care should be taken to ensure that the use of NGOs for programme implementation is not counterproductive. In their role as “project implementers”, the NGOs replace project technical assistance. They should therefore be qualified to provide the support, which a project like GNAEC needs to provide, to ensure proper implementation of a complicated experiment. Not all NGOs would have the required expertise for that and there should in all cases be a clear exit strategy for their involvement. As all three programmes are experimenting with new approaches (CBO, UP and private sector developments) technical assistance than more NGO involvement is required.

Alternatively, an NGO may have a specialised expertise in a certain professional area. A specialised “consultancy service” can then be provided on a contractual basis on private market determined conditions. Finally, an NGO can be supported for its “advocacy role” in which case

the support should be a block grant to the “mother organisation”, not financing of “a project”, specified in details. It is important that these different functions of an NGO are kept in mind when the NGO sector is involved in the country programme. Though the same NGO may undertake all the functions there is a risk that NGOs are “being supported” without a clear reason why, if these functions are not seen as quite different functions. Lack of this could contribute towards the “NGOs taking over the government”, which would be contradicting Danish support towards democracy. It is the legitimacy and qualifications of the respective NGOs for each of these functions and in their respective roles that are at stake.

3.5 National ownership of Danish country programme

The Recommendations 3, 4 and 11 were meant to contribute to creating a higher degree of cooperation with and involvement of central government as well as of other public and private stakeholders. The idea was to take the opportunity of sector programming and strategy revision work ongoing at the same time to do analyses together, to take discussions for cross-fertilisation of the two sets of processes and to combine inputs into the new strategy. The envisaged wider effects of this would be better mutual understanding and a higher degree of reflection in the new strategy of Bangladeshi policies and priorities. The ultimate aim of this was to increase the perception of ownership to the Danish support, not only to central government, but also to other main stakeholder groups.

Some improvements over the previous strategy was achieved with the 2001-Strategy revision process, but it seems mostly to have been ERD and Embassy staff and to some extent advisers that have been involved. In these respects the 2005-Strategy is a further improvement. This latter revision process seems to have led to clearly increased ownership. However, ownership is still an issue today and maybe even more so than in 1998, when the Evaluation took place. In spite of the more participatory process of revising the strategy, particularly the latest, lack of ownership is evidenced in several respects:

The support provided in the country programme is still to a very large extent provided as project support rather than as programme support. Bangladesh is still approving and managing foreign aid on a project by project basis and lack of transparency in financial matters make donors reluctant to move towards more programme-oriented aid forms. Channelling of funds is typically from the Embassy to a project account for which only the Danida senior advisor signature in some cases is required or needed. Projects are also to some extent still managed by the advisers rather than by the counterpart GoB staff, as the advisers are supposed to be closer to the staff of the Danish Embassy, where decision-making seems to be concentrated. There is generally good cooperation atmosphere, however, and Danida seems to have a good reputation as a serious cooperation partner. The perspective in the future for increased national ownership appears good given the support intended to the decentralised level of GoB mentioned above.

At the time of the Follow-Up Study, however, several negative aspects have been observed. The 2005-Strategy work has been completed and published in August 2005. At the same time the programming work of the ASPS II, WSSPS II and HRGG II had been under preparation. The “strategic principles” referred to in Section 3.1 are not to be found in the newly published strategy paper. Furthermore, the identification, formulation and (pre-) appraisal activities for the ASPS II have so far been undertaken in a way, which is creating a great deal of confusion among government officials, counterparts and advisers. Despite considerable efforts to strengthen participation, it is at the present time rather unclear to the stakeholders what the ASPS II will look like. These problems are clearly causing a setback in the perception of the Bangladeshi ownership of the Danish country programme. Furthermore, several of the advisers are uncertain

are uncertain about their function and mandate. Do they report to the Embassy or to the Programme Director? The way the Embassy is using some of the advisers is not optimal and GOB officials (e.g. in MoFL) do not know whether they can use them for their own work or not. This adds further to the perception of lack of ownership at present and does not fit in well with the new guidelines for the Technical Assistance, which emphasises that the use of technical assistance should be determined by the needs and demands of the Bangladeshi stakeholders.

There is an urgent need to carefully reconsider the formulation of the ASPS II. There would appear to be a number of issues (including those mentioned above) that need to be clarified before a formulation is ready for an appraisal (scheduled for February 2006). The Performance Review, April 2005 recommended that a “Matrix Approach” be used to plan and monitor progress, step by step, in transferring ownership to the Bangladeshi stakeholders. Steps are underway with the new programmes and the Follow-Up Study supports the recommendation of the Performance Review to identify and monitor progress step by step.

4. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

4.1 Conclusions

According to the Terms of Reference, the Follow-Up Study shall only follow up on those recommendations, which were accepted by Danida. This, however, is not clear-cut. Only few of the recommendations are either clearly accepted or rejected. Most of them are somewhere in between. Generally speaking, however, the Danida response has been either that the respective recommendations were unnecessary or already being implemented. With the benefit of hindsight it must also be admitted that some of the recommendations were unrealistic (ex: R2) or rather vaguely formulated (ex: R7) and as most of the country programme for the coming five years was already determined, the need for a major revision work could at the time be questioned. Neither of the recommendations are relevant today in their specific wording, but many of issues, which were behind the recommendations are still there, as suggested in the analyses of Chapter 3 above.

It has thus been difficult to find clear effects, i.e. “fingerprints” of the recommendations upon the 2001-Strategy, which resulted from the revision process started right after the Evaluation. The envisaged effects on the strategy as becoming a “guide” for programming work are thus basically absent in the strategy. The poverty focus was not strengthened (as later developments show it could have been), coherence remained weak and the dialogue did not become as intensive as the later 2005-Strategy revision process shows it could have been. Only in the areas of human rights and good governance was there a determined active follow-up on a Recommendation (R8). Overall national “ownership” of the 2001-Strategy and the consequent programme must on this basis be questioned, as discussions on sector priorities both before and after finalisation of the 2001-Strategy paper also indicate.

One reason why the strategy revision became only a minor revision is, as mentioned above, that the sectors and basic intervention activities were already decided upon and were to a large extent ongoing when the revision work was undertaken. There were thus no funds for new activities and hence no need to “start from scratch” and undertake major analytical work. The strategy as well as the first generation SPSs became very much “a circle around” activities, which were already ongoing. Many resources were used in preparing the new SPSs and hence there was a lack of resources for new analytical work to be undertaken and for preparing new support activities to be included in the 2001-Strategy. Another “preventing factor” seems to have been a perceived lack of government interest and political will, e.g. to go into HRGG issues and lack of commitment to pursue decentralisation. Such factors may still prevail to a certain extent, but a new HRGG programme has been prepared, bringing these issues more to the fore than they were in 2001-Strategy and support to decentralised developments is a main feature of the country programme as it is emerging today.

There are also missed opportunities in terms of less learning from past experience than had been possible. The recommendations concerning “pilot projects” (decentralisation and privatisation, R9) and “studies” (NGO, R10) were intended to bring past experience into the strategy and to increase the value of the strategy as a guide to development of the SPSs (including through optimal use of the unallocated funds). This was done to a limited extent, but the projects undertook pilot activities by themselves (cf. the GNAEC and minor roads) and the results appear extremely useful for the second generation SPSs now under preparation. Similarly, time has shown that the use of and support to the NGOs is a major issue. DFID, the World Bank and others have undertaken studies, which provide evidence of the fear that the NGO sector is taking

over the Government's functions and are becoming a "state in the state". DFID has on this basis changed its strategy and approach to the NGO sector considerably. Danida certainly missed the opportunity to come first with this, but more importantly, the Danida strategy is still today not as clear as warranted on this point.

None of the recommendations of the Evaluation are relevant in the context today in their specific wording. Thus, there is no "possible/required further action" (cf. TOR), which can be related directly to any of these to the 1998/99- context specifically formulated recommendations. Several of the issues, which lie behind the recommendations, are, however, in some form or another still visible and can be related to the 1999 recommendations as "envisaged wider effects" as the intention of the recommendations was, of course, that a better strategy should lead to a better programme. Issues related to the programme today are as follows:

- *It is important to maintain a mechanism through which the Embassy can undertake the function of maintaining a clear up-to-date set of policies and principles, reflecting the overall Danish development assistance objectives in the Bangladeshi context at any given point in time and for ensuring that all programming work takes place within this framework*
- *There is similarly a need to closely follow the findings of the experiments, to record and analyse the results and to use for "replication" and "upgrading" to national policies,*
- *whether continuation of the present PPSUs under the ASPS is necessary to secure vertical coherence of the ASPS II.*
- *involvement of NGOs in the Danish country programme with respect to the role of each type of NGO, the qualifications required for the respective roles and the modalities for "support", which each type of role implies.*

4.2 Lessons Learned

Though there are basically two types of lessons that could in principle be learned from the present study, i.e. lessons on country programme evaluations and lessons on follow-up studies, these are interrelated and no attempt is made in the following to keep them separate.

The Follow-Up Study shows that it is important (including for the Follow-Up Study) that recommendations in the original evaluation are clearly formulated, "actionable and within reach of those responsible for taking action". Few of the 11 recommendations of the Evaluation live up to these requirements. For that to be the case more time and discussions, than is normally available, would have been required in order to detail the recommendations to the relevant specific administrative organisational structures and procedures. External evaluators will not in general have such detailed knowledge. It should, on the other hand, be considered whether it is optimal to spend resources on detailing recommendations in these respects. A "dialogue" between Danida and the Evaluation Team on the content of the recommendations would, however, have been a good idea in any case. Misunderstandings (as e.g. on R6) could in this way be avoided.

Alternatively, recommendations could be formulated in relatively general terms and more time be spent on describing the intended outcome of the recommendations, the "envisaged effects". This would appear a more useful alternative. It leaves it up to the implementers to decide more specifically how to achieve the intended results. Furthermore, the follow-up can become a

broader exercise focusing on the intended outcome rather than on specific actions and effects (analogous to focus on output/outcome rather than on input in the LFA terminology).

As the Follow-Up Study reveals, “the effects” of recommendations is, however, a difficult concept to deal with in practise. Effects are “chains of effects”, from very direct effects, which may rather be called actions, to “wider effects”. A decision to undertake a study could e.g. be an action, to actually undertake the study is a very direct effect, whereas using the study to change strategic principles and through this to improve the country programme are wider effects. Thus, the question of whether a recommendation has had “effect” or not is not a simple question. In the present case, R10 (study on NGOs) is illustrative: It took time to find out whether a decision to undertake the study was actually made. There appears, however, to have been a study, but seemingly not very useful (and it could not be found) and no effects on the 2001-Strategy was found. Had the analyses stopped here, the Follow-Up Study would have had limited interest to those involved in planning and implementing the country programme today. However, the intended “wider effect” of the recommended NGO study was to achieve a more efficient use of NGOs in implementing the Danish Assistance. The Follow-Up Study could not, however, make an assessment of this, only indicate that the issue is as relevant today as it was in 1998.

Also the by Danida “accepted recommendation” concept is difficult. Only in one of the 11 specific recommendations is it clear, whether the recommendation was accepted or not. It can on this basis be questioned whether this distinction is actually useful. Also, a follow-up could still be interesting even if a recommendation is not accepted. Maybe the recommendation, with the benefit of hindsight, turns out to have been a wrong recommendation. Maybe important lessons could be learned from that. Or, time could have shown the recommendation as being a very relevant recommendation and that important opportunities have been missed because the recommendation was not accepted.

Similarly, “preventing factors” and “missed opportunities” turned out to be difficult concepts to work with and to get sufficient information about seven years after the Evaluation was undertaken. Thus, it is too late to undertake a follow-up study after such a long period. What has been identified in these respects in the present study does not appear of great interest. Thus, “recommendation not considered necessary” and “less poverty reduction than could have been the case” are the general findings in this connection.

The above “lessons” raise the question of whether the follow-up studies should be designed more as forward-looking rather than as backward-looking exercises. A difficulty is, however, that a follow-up study in a sense is a new evaluation, but not a full new evaluation. In the present case, the Evaluation contains recommendations concerning the cooperation strategy and the SPS programming processes. A forward-looking follow-up exercise would have focused on these aspects today, i.e. the present strategy, 2005-Strategy (rather than on 2001-Strategy) and on programming of the second generation SPSs (rather than on the interactions between the first generation SPS programming processes and 2001-Strategy). A “compromise” between the backward-looking and the forwards-looking approach was developed during the Follow-Up Study. The backward-looking perspective, focused on 2001-Strategy and the first generation SPS programming processes was used to follow-up on each of the 11 recommendations, Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 the perspective is forward-looking, focusing on the cooperation today and on the programming processes of the second generation SPSs. It should be emphasised, however, that Chapter 3 is in no way a “full new evaluation”. Time and resources have been too limited for that and it is not part of the Terms of Reference for the Follow-Up Study. Chapter 3 is dealing with those aspects of the cooperation today, which can be related to the 11 recommendations

as envisaged “wider effects”. This means e.g. that the assessments are not as “deep” as warranted and that aspects, such as donor harmonisation and general governance are not dealt with, as such issues were not part of any of the 11 recommendations.

In choosing between the forward-looking and the backward-looking follow-up studies, it should be borne in mind that such studies are typically made several years after the Evaluation was undertaken. Programmes, policies and contexts more generally have often changed considerably. It is therefore not necessarily meaningful to follow up on very specific recommendations, which were tailored to a maybe quite different situation at the time of the Evaluation. It is therefore necessary to make it clear to the involved parties what the intended role of the Follow-Up Study is in each specific case. In the present case, the focus on 2001-Strategy is mainly of historical interest, whereas the Embassy, as well as the authorities of the cooperating country, was more interested in looking forward. The role of the Follow-Up Study in the present cooperation context should therefore have been clarified with the Embassy and the Bangladeshi authorities.

Though the recommendations are judged to be basically relevant at the time of the Evaluation (some of them were too general), there is one recommendation (R2) on which a lesson should be mentioned. The recommendation was to “operationalise” the Danish development assistance objectives in the specific Bangladeshi context in the revised strategy paper. This does not today appear either a practical or a relevant recommendation. What is needed is “a strategy”, i.e. a set of policies, principles and modalities, which govern the programming of interventions. A “paper”, which is revised every five years, is insufficient for that purpose. Lack of “a strategy”, which is up-to-date and used effectively to govern the programming work of the SPSs is, on the other hand, the reason why the programming process of the ASPS II in the present case is unsatisfactory. There is a need to consider how country strategies, reflecting the specific country context as well as the Danish development assistance objectives in that specific context, can be developed and maintained as the constant frame for programming work. It is still not clear whether “poverty” means the same in WSSPS II, ASPS II and the HRGG II, though the perspective for a coherent programme seems much better today than it did in 1998/99.

Copenhagen, 12 July 2005
Eval. j.no. 104.A.1.e.50

TERMS OF REFERENCE

EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE DANISH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO BANGLADESH.

1. Background

The evaluation of the Danish development assistance to Bangladesh was carried out from October 1998 to June 1999 by Development Associates, Copenhagen. The evaluation contains a number of lessons learned in applying the Sector Programme Support (SPS) approach to the programming process. It also had 11 specific recommendations for a revised country strategy.

In Annex 1 all 11 recommendations are listed in the left column. In the right column are listed the follow-up actions which Danida has agreed to take. The annex is the so-called follow-up memorandum which is part of Danida's evaluation system. After each evaluation a follow-up memorandum is prepared taking note of Danida's position on the recommendations and identifying the departments responsible for the agreed follow-up activities. The memorandum is signed by the head of Danida and the Evaluation Department checks the implementation of these activities.

The check normally takes place one to two years after the evaluation. In this case a note dated January 2001 describes the progress made since July 1999 in implementing the agreed follow-up activities. The note is attached as Annex 2. Since January 2001 no follow-up has taken place.

The note describes how a proposal for a revised strategy was drafted in close cooperation with the local authorities. The strategy was approved by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and the Danida Board in late 2000. The final approval – by the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee – was planned for February 2001. However, the approval was postponed due to the kidnapping case in Chittagong Hill Tracts in the same month and the changes of government in Bangladesh and Denmark.

The revision was resumed in 2002 and after further delays a draft strategy for 2005-09 was discussed at the High Level Consultations in Dhaka in December 2004. There was agreement on the overall objectives and the content of the strategy paper which was approved by the

Danida Board in March 2005 and by the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee in June. The strategy will be published in July 2005.

In the “Review of Evaluation in Danida” (2003) the independent reviewers recommended that the Evaluation Department went one step further than just tracking the recommendations made in the evaluation reports. It was proposed that a systematic review was undertaken whether the recommendations when implemented have the intended effects on projects, programmes, or policies.

2. Objective

The main objective of the study is to perform a systematic assessment of the effects of the recommendations of the evaluation of Danish Development Assistance to Bangladesh and to identify the constraining factors preventing recommendations from being followed.

3. Scope of Work

The study shall comprise, but not necessarily be limited to:

- An assessment of the action taken on each of the accepted recommendations in the evaluation report indicating which steps have been taken.
- An assessment of the effects of each of the accepted recommendations on projects, programmes, and policy. Were the effects as intended in the evaluation?
- A brief description of the main factors preventing accepted recommendations from being followed.
- An assessment of the necessity/possibility of further action on each of the accepted recommendations.
- An assessment of the utility of the evaluation as a learning instrument.

4. Method of Work

The Consultant will carry out the study in phases:

- Brief desk study of key documentation available in Copenhagen.
- Preparation of questionnaire to be used for guidance during the round of interviews with stakeholders in Copenhagen and Dhaka. The questionnaire will be distributed in advance of the field study in Bangladesh.
- Interview round in Copenhagen and Bangladesh where the questionnaire shall form the basis for the in-depth interviews with key persons and more in-depth studies of the implementation and the effects of the main recommendations. Collection of additional documents will be carried out in Dhaka.

- The interviews and supplementary documentation collected during the field study will be analysed in the Consultant's head office and a draft report (max. 30 pages including a two-page Executive Summary) will be prepared and distributed to all stakeholders for comments.

5. Timing

The interviews in Copenhagen should take place in September. The field study shall take place in October-November. The draft report shall be ready not later than mid-December 2005 and the final report three weeks after having received the comments from the stakeholders (through the Evaluation Department).

References:

- Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Result Based Management, OECD 2002.
- Timeline of key documents: Bangladesh Country Strategy and SPSs dated 11 July 2005. All documents listed are available as either paper copies or electronically or both.
- Overview of the three SPS components. Grants and disbursements as per mid-July.
- Danida's Annual Reports 1999-2004.

Interpretations of recommendations and follow-up comments

Recommendations	Envisaged outcome	Danidas comments	Interpretation of Danida comments
<p>1. Time perspective and synchronization</p> <p>To undertake the revision of the Country Strategy Paper using an eight-year perspective, of which the first three years should be considered a transition phase during which the above-mentioned adaptation can take place. A major revision of the strategy can then be undertaken after the transition period and be synchronized with the government's anticipated new development plan.</p>	<p>The synchronization would give an incentive for the Government to use resources for the preparatory work needed for the revision of the Country Strategy, because it would at the same time be used as preparatory work for the Government's own planning of their 5-year development plan. This would strengthen the dialogue between Danida and the Government and lead to Country Strategy with a stronger degree of support from the Government.</p>	<p>The revision will be undertaken using a 10-year perspective with operational budget for 5 years in accordance with Danida planning procedures. The Sector Support Programmes will be synchronized with the Government's annual budgets and planned and implemented in accordance with the Government's 5 year plan</p>	<p>Not agreed.</p> <p>1) Danida does not find it necessary to bring the Country Strategy to correspond with the planning period in Bangladesh.</p> <p>2) Danida will ensure that the SPS's are in accordance with the Government's 5-year plan. This is, however, not part of the recommendation.</p>
<p>2. Operationalisation of the objectives of poverty-reduction and cross-cutting concerns</p> <p>That the necessary analytical work is undertaken in an effort to operationalise the objectives of poverty-reduction and cross-cutting concerns to a reasonable degree, based on the SPS work, and taking into consideration overall as well as sectoral development perspectives and constraints in Bangladesh.</p>	<p>The idea of this recommendation is to combine and co-ordinate the initial preparatory work for the planned SPS with the more general analytical work needed for revising the Country Strategy. This should lead to a better operationalisation of the Danish development objectives in the Bangladeshi specific context, and it would also save on the resources used for the revision of the Strategy.</p>	<p>Danida has in cooperation with the Like Minded Group of Donors in Bangladesh and the Government supported poverty studies and poverty monitoring since 1991. Cross-cutting concerns are studied and taken into account during preparation of the Sector Support Programmes.</p>	<p>Partly not agreed.</p> <p>1) Concerning analytical work on poverty Danida refers to ongoing donor-coordinated poverty-studies, but does not indicate how these studies can or will contribute to operationalise the Danish poverty-reduction objectives. 2) In respect to cross-cutting concerns Danida will undertake studies, but they do not specify how these studies will be used to operationalise the cross-cutting concerns more generally in the Bangladeshi context.</p>
<p>3. Co-operation with the Government of Bangladesh</p> <p>That as far as possible, this ana-</p>	<p>Recommendation 3 should be seen in combination with Recommendation 4.</p>	<p>Agreed. Is being implemented</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

<p>lytical work is undertaken in cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh, and in any case is used as an opportunity for and input into dialogue with the Government.</p>	<p>Direct effects of 3 and 4 are studies and other analytical work completed in co-operation with civil service and other stakeholders in Bangladesh.</p>		
<p>4. Workshop</p> <p>The revision of the Country Strategy Paper should be undertaken in close cooperation with the government and its time frame and approach to planning should be adopted. A follow-up workshop of the present evaluation, at the same time initiating the strategy revision process, would be one motivating step in that direction. The analytical work needed for the revision process, which would then follow, would provide more opportunities for inputs into the dialogue.</p>	<p>The above should lead to a closer cooperation and more intensive dialogue with the government, which would allow the government to participate more actively in the programming process, strengthen the national ownership and help to ensure national support for the programmes. Furthermore the participation of relevant stakeholders would ensure that the strategy is designed in a consensus-based way.</p>	<p>The frames for the revision were agreed during the annual consultations in May 1999. The Embassy cooperates with the co-ordinating Ministry of Finance and the relevant line-ministries during preparation of draft revised strategy. The analytical work is being undertaken as an integrated part of planning of Sector Support Programmes. The studies will be completed in September 1999. A workshop with all stakeholders is planned to take place in October 1999 in Dhaka</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>5. Guide for further development of the SPS</p> <p>Intervention areas are specified in the revised country strategy in such a way that this document provides a guide for the further development of the SPS in each of the three selected sectors, but at the same time is flexible enough to allow for the financing of activities which cut across sectors and which contribute to coherence of support within and between sectors;</p>	<p>Strategy document shall have sections (intervention areas) on perspectives for development of each SPS towards increasingly specific and relevant (immediate and intermediate) objectives and outputs.</p>	<p>Vertical coherence within the sectors will be strengthened through combination of central institutional activities with ground level activities to relate the policy level tasks with wishes and needs of the target group. The horizontal coherence between different sector programmes will be strengthened through geographical concentration of the majority of activities on priority districts to enhance the synergy effect among the different activities undertaken in the same areas. Geographical and decen-</p>	<p>Partly agreed.</p> <p>Danida will enhance horizontal coherence by strengthened geographical concentration.</p> <p>However, the comment does not reflect the issue concerning the specification of intervention areas as a guide for the further development of each SPS.</p>

		tralised co-ordination will be emphasized.	
<p>6. Specification of funds for cross-cutting activities</p> <p>The sector allocations in the indicative planning of the country frame specify funds for these cross-cutting activities, which could include part of the unallocated funds under the respective sector-support programmes.</p>	<p>More funds (greater share of total country frame) spent on cross-sectoral activities should lead to greater coherence in the Danish country frame in relation to the Danish objectives of poverty-reduction and cross-cutting concerns</p>	<p>There is considerable flexibility with regard to use of unallocated funds within the budget and each programme. Cross cutting issues are not separate activities, which require specified funds.</p>	<p>Not agreed.</p> <p>The use of the term cross-cutting activities in the recommendation is misleading (as the term should have been cross-sectoral activities). The Danida comment on cross-cutting issues is therefore misplaced.</p> <p>However, Danida does not seem to find it necessary to specify particular cross-sectoral activities, because the use of unallocated funds within each SPS is considerably flexible.</p>
<p>7. Focus on institutional issues and on institutionalising the sectoral dialogues</p> <p>Further SPS developments will initially need to focus on the institutional issues and on institutionalising the sectoral dialogues. The use of unallocated funds under the SPSs would presuppose such sectoral dialogues and would contribute to creating a broad-based dialogue for the revision of the country strategy as a whole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fora for sectoral dialogue are established and institutionalized. - A broader based dialogue is established and used as input in the revising of the strategy. - Decisions to use unallocated funds from each SPS are coordinated and contributing to coherence across sectors 	<p>Planning and appropriation procedures for disbursement of unallocated funds enable a flexible approach to further SPS developments.</p>	<p>Partly not agreed</p> <p>Unclear to what extent Danida recognizes the need to focus on the institutional issues in the further SPS development and to institutionalize the sectoral dialogues.</p> <p>However, Danida agrees that use of unallocated funds should enable SPS developments.</p>
<p>8. Assistance on cross-cutting issues, as human rights and good government</p> <p>The commitment to continue assistance outside the SPS framework, for example, to human rights and good governance, provides similar</p>	<p>As for (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inputs from dialogues used in the strategy revision process. - Achievement of greater coherence in total country programme in respect to the Danish objectives. 	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The dialogue with the Government and NGOs concerning human rights issues, democratisation and good governance does supplement the support to the sector programmes. A study on decentralisation and on how</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>However, it is not clear whether or how the dialogue will be used as inputs to revising of the strategy.</p>

<p>good governance, provides similar opportunities for dialogue with both government and NGOs in respect of identification and formulation work in this and possibly other areas. This work will cut across, and hence help to knit together, the sector supports.</p>		<p>Danida can support the institutional development of local governments is under consideration.</p>	
<p>9. Pilot projects in the areas of privatisation and decentralisation</p> <p>Specific provisions are made in the revised country strategy to undertake pilot projects in the areas of privatisation and decentralisation.</p>	<p>Experience has been gained on how to support privatisation and decentralisation.</p>	<p>It is being considered within the planned Sector Support Programmes.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Though the recommendations also intended general studies across sectors.</p>
<p>10. Analysis of the cooperation with local NGOs</p> <p>A special analysis be undertaken of the Danida experience, as well as of that of other donors, in development cooperation with local NGOs. The results of this analysis should be used as a basis for formulating guidelines in the revised Country Strategy Paper for such cooperation in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A study of the cooperation with the local NGOs is undertaken - Guidelines on modalities of operation are established and included in the strategy 	<p>Danida is supporting co-operation between the Government and NGOs within the Agriculture Sector Programme and the Water and Sanitation Sector Programme. This formal co-operation is new in Bangladesh and will be further developed. Strategic issues will be formulated in the Country Strategy and an analysis will be undertaken in 2000.</p>	<p>Partly agreed.</p> <p>Experience from actual co-operation will be used to develop a strategy.</p> <p>However, it is not clear to what extent a special analysis will be undertaken and used as a basis to formulate a future strategy</p>
<p>11. Synchronize of SPS-activity budgeting and Government budgeting</p> <p>An analysis of the government system of budgeting, accounting and auditing is conducted and that the revised Country Strategy Paper</p>	<p>The study should lead to timely and effective implementation of planned Danida financed activities.</p>	<p>The central government system of accounting and auditing is relatively well known. An analysis of the decentralized budgeting, accounting and auditing on local government level will be conducted as part of the study on decentralisation</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>However, an analysis of the government system of budgeting, accounting and auditing <u>will not</u> be conducted, as it is already known.</p>

gives guidelines for how SPS-activity budgeting and Government budgeting can be synchronized at local levels.			
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PERSONS CONSULTED AND FIELD ACTIVITIES VISITED

Copenhagen – 5th of October - 9th of November

Ove Fritz Larsen (Telephone interview)	Deputy, Sep 1997 – Mar 2003, Dhaka
Jørgen G. Jensen	BFT, Agriculture
Frode Neergaard	Country desk officer, Aug 2000 – Dec 2001
Jan Møller Hansen	BFT, Water (1997 – Sep 2000)
Preben Gondolf	Counsellor, Water, Sep 1998 – Sep 2002, Dhaka
Henrik Larsen	1. Secretary, Water, Apr 2002 – Sep 2005, Dhaka
Finn Thilsted (Telephone interview)	Ambassador, Jan 1997 – Sep 2001, Dhaka
Tom B. Hansen	Deputy, Water, Mar 2003 – Sep 2005, Dhaka
Thorsten Strand (Telephone interview)	Programme Coordinator, Transport, Nov 2000 – Oct 2002
Bjørn Blau (Telephone interview)	1. Secretary, Transport. Sep 1999 – Mar 2002, Dhaka
Paul Erik Schmidt	Counsellor, Agriculture, Sep 1999 – Sep 2003, Dhaka
Jens Erik Bendix Rasmussen	BFT, Transport
Finn Nielsen	BFT, Water
Bolette Nyrop	
Wagn Winkel	

Dhaka – 13th of November – 30th of November

The Royal Danish Embassy	
Niels Severin Munk	The Ambassador
Michael Andersen	Counsellor, Agriculture and Fisheries
Arifur Rahman Siddiqui	Programme Officer, Agriculture and Fisheries
Lars Møller Larsen	Counsellor, Transport
Harun ur Rashid	Programme Officer, Transport
Poul Richardt Jensen	Counsellor, Water & Sanitation
Abdul Motaleb	Programme Officer, Water & Sanitation
Mohsena Islam	Programme Officer, HRGG
Mahal Aminuzzaman	Programme Officer, HRGG
Ministries	
ERD	Deputy Chief and desk officers
Ministry of Agriculture, Planning Wing	Joint Chief and Senior Assistant Chief
Policy and Planning Support Unit, MoA	Danida senior adviser & counterpart
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	Joint Chief
Policy and Planning Support Unit, MoFL	Danida senior adviser
Ministry of Shipping	Joint Chief
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	Joint Chief and Senior Assistant Secretary
Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning	Joint Chief, responsible for fisheries
Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning	Joint Chief, responsible for agriculture
Governmental departments	
Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE)	Advisors and GOB partners
Department of Fisheries (DoF)	General Director, Danida adviser, FPSU & Programme adviser, Mymensingh
Department of Livestock Services (DLS)	Danida Senior Adviser & Project Director
Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)	Sector Programme Coordinator & Project Director

Local Government Division, MoLGRD & Cooperatives	Deputy Chief
Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)	Additional Chief Engineer & Danida Senior Advisor
Unit for Policy Implementation, LGD, MoLGRD & Cooperatives	Danida Senior Adviser, Watsan sector
Other institutions	
CARE	Governance Coordinator & Project Coordinator
Human Rights & Good Governance Support Unit	Deputy Programme Coordinator

Field Programme in Noakhali – 19th of November – 22th of November

19/11/2005	
Meeting in Area Co-ordination Office, SLDP-2	District Livestock officer, Area Coordination Officer, Upazila Livestock officers. NGO Representatives and Area office staff
Visit of field activities of SLDP-2 in Amanthpur Village Organization	CODEC (NGO) Representatives and beneficiaries
20/11/2005	
View Sub-base laying by Labour Contracting Societies (LCS) group on Anderchar road	District Engineering Advisor, LCS officers, beneficiaries
View activities within Stackyard (sub-base mixing, brick chipping by LCS, childcare centre)	District Engineering Advisor, LCS officers, beneficiaries
View activities at BITA Training Centre	BITA coordinator, LCS officers
Meeting with Chairman, Raipur Pourashava and PWSS Staff	Chairman, Commissioners and advisors
Meeting with UP chairman and Member of Watsan Committee	
21/11/2005	
Project briefing at GNAEP Office	Extension and Training Advisor and Program Manager
Visit Upakul Freshwater Prawn Hatchery	Managing Director, Program Manager
Visit Community-based Organisation	Community Development Officer, Institutional Development Officer, beneficiaries
Visit Cluster Village Pond: Test Netting	Community Development Officer, Institutional Development Officer, beneficiaries
Visit Women-headed household juvenile nursery	Community Development Officer, Institutional Development Officer, beneficiaries
View SSUS (NGO) field activities: Farmer Field School	NGO representatives, beneficiaries
Discussion with Female Farmers Association	NGO representatives, beneficiaries
Observe field activities: Nutrition Session, Local supplier impact	NGO representatives, beneficiaries
Discussions about LIFT-Union Parishad joint activities	

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Country Strategies *(The documents are listed chronologically)*

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- Country Strategy 2000-2004, English draft, 7 Oct 1999
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- Country Strategy, English and Danish draft, Oct 2000
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- Country Strategy 2005-2009, English and Danish draft, June 2005
- Country Strategy 2005-2009, Oct 2005

Agricultural SPS *(The documents are listed chronologically)*

- Sector Programme Support Document, Agricultural Sector Programme Support: Crops Production, Aquaculture and Livestock Development, April 2000
- Appraisal Report, Agricultural Sector Programme Support, April 2000
- Styrelsens møde d. 12. april 2000, Sektorprogrambistand til landbrugssektoren
- Sector Programme Support Component Description, Agricultural Sector: Aquaculture and Livestock Sub-Sectors, Policy and Planning Support Unit, MoFL, April 2000
- ASPS, issue-oriented consolidated sector progress report for January - June 2001
- Annual Sector Review Agreement for Agricultural Sector Programme Support, January 2002
- Note of Mandate for the second Joint Sector Review of the Danida Sector Programme Support to the Agricultural Sector in Bangladesh, March 2003
- Joint Sector Review Agreement (JSRA) for Agricultural Sector Programme Support, May 2003
- Technical mid-term review of the Components for Policy and Planning support and Aquaculture development under MOFL and MOA, 16 - 28 May 2004
- Debriefing Note, ASPS II, Strategic Framework Document, Identification Mission feb/march 2005
- Strategic Framework Document, ASPS Phase II, march 2005
- Concept Paper – ASPS Phase II, 14 April 2005
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