



Land-Water Linkages in Rural Watersheds Electronic Workshop

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Case Study 13

Indo-German Watershed Development Programme Gujarat

**Baseline Survey carried out by the Centre for Advanced Training
in Agricultural and Rural Development (CATAD)**

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INTRODUCTION

The ecologically fragile areas in the semi-arid and drought-prone regions of the state of Gujarat are characterised by a deteriorating natural resource base, causing increasing difficulties for the local population to gain their livelihood through farming activities. The causes for this deterioration are manifold and are mainly seen in the close to complete absence of soil and water conservation measures, population pressure on the land, inappropriate land use and insufficient social coherence within their village communities to undertaking a coherent effort to change their situation. The consequences are low productivity, poverty, and seasonal migration with all its negative social consequences and a generally low standard of living.

To improve the livelihood of the people living in such conditions the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has submitted a request to the Government of Germany through the Indian Ministry of Finance for implementation of a Watershed Development Programme in Gujarat. The request is fully supported by the Government of Gujarat.

The programme's objectives and major activities

The envisaged objective of the programme under Financial Cooperation (FC-programme) is to improve the agricultural potential and utilisation of this potential in the ecologically fragile hilly areas in the semi-arid and drought-prone regions of the State in order to improve the living conditions of the benefiting rural population in a sustainable manner. The programme's measures shall focus on biological and technical soil and water conservation measures, following a ridge-to-valley approach. The villagers themselves will implement the programme with technical and organisational guidance from Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs), which will preferably be local NGOs.

It is expected that the FC-programme's concept will follow a threefold strategy to achieve this objective. With its physical measures, the programme will aim to improve the soil and groundwater household, and thereby agricultural productivity of highly degraded watersheds. The types and combinations of physical measures to be taken up in each individual watershed will be concluded during an intensive participatory resource and land use planning process, which the involved PIA has to undergo with the population of the concerned villages. Whereas erosion control and water conservation shall be the main focus of the programme, it might be necessary in some cases to start with measures which are ranking higher in the villages' priority list (e.g. horticulture, purification of drinking water, etc.) but fit into the overall concept of the programme.

The second part of the programme's strategy would aim at developing and strengthening the social coherence of the participating communities as well as their technical competence and their responsibility to actively take part in the development and protection of their resources. It concerns the active involvement of all concerned local interest groups from the starting point of each single project, as well as their cooperation with the PIA in charge of the project's implementation and the cooperation with involved Government bodies such as the representatives of the Forest Department. Apart from improvement of technical know-how concerning soil and water conservation management (SWCM), some of the major aspects of this strategy are land use planning, conflict management and organising the villages in order to create and train Village Watershed Committees (VWC) that are the direct communication partners to the PIAs and from the villages' side responsible for the proper planning and implementation of the agreed project measures, as well as for the future maintenance and of the structures created.

The third part of the programme shall aim at opening income-generating and development opportunities for the traditionally weaker groups in the villages: women, landless and scheduled

castes/tribes. Supportive measures under the programme could entail assistance for formation of self-help groups, funding of and assistance with development activities such as primary health care, primary education, as well as supporting individuals or groups in taking up income-generating activities, such as nursery raising, food processing and agricultural services.

Programme Implementation and selected programme area

The Programme's conceptual design shall be based on the experiences gained under the Indo-German Watershed Development Programme (IGWDP) Maharashtra, as well as on the experiences gained under programmes of the Government of Gujarat.

The following five priority districts have been selected on a preliminary basis: Bharuch, Panch Mahal, Sabarkantha, Kutch, Bhavangar. Kutch has arid climatic conditions with an average annual rainfall at 350 mm. The other four districts have semi-arid conditions with annual rainfall ranging from 595 to 989 mm.

Institutional Set-up

As mentioned above, the Recipient and Project-Executing Agency of the FC-programme will be NABARD. The role of the Government of Gujarat as well as all management arrangements on the state level will have to be defined during the further preparation of the programme.

It is proposed that the programme shall be implemented on the village level by the villagers, organised in a Village Watershed Committee or a similar body, with assistance of a Project Implementing Agency (PIA), preferably an NGO.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT AND SCOPE OF THE CATAD-GROUP'S SERVICES

A multidisciplinary team of junior experts from the Centre for Advanced Training in Agricultural and Rural Development (CATAD), Berlin, Germany has been contracted to conduct a baseline survey and to make a first assessment of the quality of the state government's watershed development programmes.

For the CATAD-group the following research topics and questions have been defined:

1. Identification of issues related to watershed development on state, district and watershed level
 - What are the main environmental, economic, social, and political characteristics on the three levels?
 - What is the nature of resource degradation in rural areas?
 - What are the main reasons for natural resource degradation?
 - What are the main impacts of resource degradation?
 - What are the potential sand constraints of forestry and agricultural production?
2. Identification and analysis of potential stakeholders of the planned watershed development programme in Gujarat
 - Who could be involved in the planned WDP?
 - What are the stakeholders interests in the planned WDP?
 - Are the interests of the stakeholders compatible with the concept of the IGWDP?
 - What are the potentials of all stakeholders at all levels?
3. Identification and analysis of potential capacity building institutions
 - Which organisations have experience in capacity building?
 - What are their main characteristics and organisational data?

- What are the strengths and potentials of these institutions?
4. Identification and description of the major government-funded rural development programmes
 - Which government-funded rural development programmes are relevant for WD?
 - What are the main characteristics of the selected government programmes?
 - What are the strengths and potentials of the selected programmes?
 - What lessons can be drawn out of the government-funded programmes for the implementation of the IGWD in Gujarat?
 5. Target group analysis supplying data relevant for the implementation of the proposed WDP of NABARD/KfW
 - What are the general social, political, economical, environmental characteristics of the sample watersheds?
 - Which subgroups / interest groups can be distinguished?
 - What are the problems, needs and requirements of the subgroups?
 - Is the population affected by environmental degradation
 - If so, is the target group aware of the problems caused by environmental degradation?
 - How do they react?
 - Are the proposed measures under IGWDP compatible with the needs of the target group?
 - Which groups are likely to be positively or negatively affected by the programme?

The study is carried out by six junior experts from CATAD under the supervision of a senior consultant as team leader. The team will be in Gujarat for three months, from end of July until end of October 2000. The group is looking forward to making available and discussing first results during the online workshop.