



# Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh – I



**Final Narrative Report 2013-2016**

***Giving Water Users a Voice***



Financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

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## **Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh – I Final Narrative Report 2013 – 2016**

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## Abbreviations

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
BBS	-	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCAS	-	Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
BIDS	-	Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies (GoB)
BMWR	-	Bangladesh Ministry of Water Resources
BRAC	-	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BUET	-	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology
BWDB	-	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CB	-	Capacity Building
CBO	-	Community-based Organisation
CDSP IV	-	Char Development and Settlement Project IV
CHT	-	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
DWASA	-	Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority
DWGS	-	Department of Women and Gender Studies (in University of Dhaka)
DU	-	Dhaka University or University of Dhaka
EKN	-	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EKNsPs	-	EKN supported Programmes
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)
FGD	-	Focussed Group Discussions
GAP	-	Gender Action Plan
GDD	-	Gender Disaggregated Data
GM	-	Gender Mainstreaming
GO	-	Governmental Organisation
GoB	-	Government of Bangladesh
GWA	-	Gender and Water Alliance
GWAAG	-	Gender and Water Action and Advisory Group
GWA – B	-	Gender and Water Alliance - Bangladesh
GWAPB	-	Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh
GWG	-	Gender Working Group
GWI	-	Gender and Water Inventory
HH	-	Household
HRM	-	Human Resources Management
IFC-PaCT	-	International Finance Corporation – Partnership for Cleaner Textile
IGAP	-	Individual Gender Action Plan
INGO	-	International Non-Governmental Organization
IUCN	-	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWFM	-	Institute for Water and Flood Management (in BUET)
IWRM	-	Integrated Water Resource Management
LCS	-	Landless Contracting Society
LGED	-	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	-	Local Governmental Institution, Large Group Instruction

M&E	-	Monitoring and Evaluation
MASP	-	Multi-Annual Strategic Plan
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
MTR	-	Mid Term Review
MWR	-	Ministry of Water Resources
NAP	-	National Action Plan
NAPD	-	National Academy for Planning in Development (under Ministry of Planning)
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organization
NGO AB	-	NGO Affairs' Bureau
NICHE	-	Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education
NPSWSS	-	National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation
NPWA	-	National Policy for Women's Advancement
NSAPR	-	National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction
NSS	-	National Sanitation Strategy
NWMP	-	National Water Management Plan
PDP	-	Polder Development Plan
PRSP	-	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAFAL	-	Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security & Linkages
SMART	-	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
SRHR	-	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STE	-	Short Term Expert
SW Project	-	South-west Area Integrated Water Resources Management Project
ToC	-	Theory of Change
ToR	-	Terms of Reference
ToT	-	Training of Trainers
UDDP	-	Urban Dredging Demonstration Project
ULAB - CSD	-	University of Liberal Arts – Centre for Social Development
UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
VEI	-	Vitens Evidence
WARPO	-	Water Resources Planning Organisation
WASH	-	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WATSAN	-	Water and Sanitation
WDF	-	Washing, Dyeing and Finishing
WFP	-	World Food Programme, UN
WHH	-	Woman- Headed Household
WID	-	Women in Development
WIN	-	Water Integrity Network
WM	-	Water Management
WMA	-	Water Management Association
WMG	-	Water Management Group
WMO	-	Water Management Organisations
WOP	-	Water Operators Partnership

## 1. Background of Gender and Water

Water management and agricultural development need to consider the diversity of their targeted beneficiaries to be effective, efficient and sustainable: to know the needs and knowledge of different categories of people, women and men, poor or rich, rural or urban, majority or minority, with different abilities, age, religions, etc.

Staff of water and food security projects are focusing on their technical targets leaving them not much attention for the gender and diversity of the people they have to serve. That is nevertheless necessary for the prescribed equity and also for the mentioned efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The people of Bangladesh are diverse, and the differences between women and men are large, in their duties, giving them different interests and skills. On the one hand, water for the family and the hygiene of the house are the tasks of women, so women know where and when to find water of certain quality and on average men are hardly interested in WASH. On the other hand, men are responsible for that part of agriculture which is away from the homestead, so they are for example interested in irrigation, and their skills are related to these tasks.

Apart from the division of responsibilities, gender relations are also power relations. The power to make decisions is not always related to the specific duties, but more to gender: men make decisions at all levels. At national level very few policy makers in the water sector are women. This is similar at district and union level, and even in the household where women hand in their earnings, and have to ask their husbands for permission to go anywhere, if not for fetching water. Women are not asked for their opinion, so decisions at all levels do not consider the knowledge and interest of those who know and have the related duty. This leads to doubtful decisions.

Projects cannot address all people the same, since they have such different responsibilities, knowledge and interests. Furthermore donors require specific gender and diversity activities or even empowerment of poor women and men as impact of the projects. Project staff have other than gender expertise, so a gender specialist is looked for. But most of those who have studied gender are not knowledgeable or even interested in technical subjects. It is the link between the technical and social aspects of development that needs to be taken into account. And both are equally important.

In 2000 the Gender and Water Alliance started to develop and provide services in this interface between technology and social relations. Capacity building of water professionals and policy makers, knowledge development, by research in villages, often to find out the fact or fiction of persistent myths, developing tools and methodologies, practical approaches, which are easy to be applied and saving the time of project employees, instead of taking more of their valuable time. The learning of the employees will contribute to more equitable, efficient, effective and sustainable impact of the projects.



Monitoring workshop

## 2. Overview of the GWAPB

The Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh (GWAPB) was developed at the request of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN). Officially it started in July 2013 with a Commitment Letter (August 2013). This programme has been a unique opportunity to ensure that the voice of the poor women and men in Bangladesh is heard in more decision-making forums of the water sector in Bangladesh. It was also a great opportunity for GWA and for the GWA members in Bangladesh. Furthermore it proved to be a positive chance for the technical water and food security projects in Bangladesh, amongst them many who had too low or no budgets for gender, and/or lack of sufficient expertise. The lion share of the work and the resources of GWAPB are applied for gender mainstreaming support for the water related projects financed by the EKN (EKNsPs).

As can be expected, during the start of the project it took time to find and establish an office, recruit a team and start to develop good working relations and trust with staff of EKNsPs. An important factor of slowing down the start-up process, were travel bans and political turmoil during the last three months of 2013 and the first months of 2014. Thus it took till 2014 for the project to reach full speed.

After the Progress Report 2013 followed the Inception Report which also included the Report of Year 1. That is from July 2013 – June 2014. Then followed the reports of Year 2 July 2014 – June 2015 and Year 3 July 2015 – June 2016. This current report covers the whole project period, the three years and the Closing Period of 3 months, July 2013 – September 2016. These reports, as well as the audited Financial Report 2013-2016 can be referred to for details, including many annexes, which are not repeated in this Final report.

Political trouble, *hartals* (strikes) and travel bans covered six months in Year 1, and four months in Year 2, and again 2 months in Year 3, totalling 12 months out of the 3 years. During such times the team took risks to come to the office nevertheless. These 12 months were still used to implement various activities, but few that included travel outside Dhaka. This goes to show that not all progress is within our power.

GWA was registered formally by the NGO Affairs' Bureau (NGO AB) in October 2014, well within the timespan that is scheduled for it.

The focus of GWAPB's work is on the EKNsPs (EKN-supported Projects). In the first year strong and positive relations were built with most of them, necessary to assess their need for support with gender mainstreaming, and then to provide that support.



Role Play during CB workshop Gender and IWRM

Trust is an important aspect of the relations between GWAPB staff and the projects. This has been created through meetings but also through the Capacity Building Workshops for Gender and IWRM, in which staff of different projects and some GWA members come together and develop their IGAPs (Individual Gender Action Plans). The workshops are intensive, and most of GWAPB staff is present, to contribute and also to learn themselves how to make gender mainstreaming effective, and know about the particular needs of the EKNsPs. GWAPB staff all signed their contract including the clause to be absolutely confidential about information they have of the programmes that are financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Most EKNsPs are working in the coastal belt, in Satkhira, Khulna, Narail, Bagerhat, Barisal, Patuakhali, Noakhali and some in Dhaka. GWAPB does not focus at a particular area, but follows the EKNsPs mainly. The policy of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands did not really change over the three years of the project. Since 1975 the Netherlands and Bangladesh have an intensive bilateral co-operation programme in the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) sector, and till now it remains a priority theme of Dutch development collaboration in the country. Several projects (co-) financed by the Netherlands are aiming to create positive impact in the sectors of Water, Food security, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Women’s rights and gender equality, and Trade and economic development<sup>1</sup>. Despite years of pro-poor and pro-gender interventions, wide gender gaps still exist in many sectors. The EKN recognizes this and is aiming for a more comprehensive and coordinated effort in addressing gender concerns throughout their portfolio of projects in Bangladesh. For this reason the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) was approached by EKN, in 2012, to submit a proposal for a 3 year programme to build capacity to mainstream gender in a host of projects currently being (co-)financed by them.



*Hanging Toilet, not to be seen any longer in 2030*

GWAPB is not just meant to help the EKNsPs with gender mainstreaming, but also to strengthen the Bangladesh water sector as a whole from a gender perspective. To do so, we utilise the contacts we, GWA and GWAPB staff, have with academic institutions, including universities and research institutes, government organisations, International organisations and other NGOs. The approach is to utilise good relations and connections, to effectively build new relations. This approach proved fruitful, in

the sense that right from the start we were involved in giving lectures on Gender and IWRM, or Gender and WASH, etc., to technical students, researchers, and government officers, all by invitation.

The work of GWAPB was divided in five components:

Component 1: Collaboration, Networking and Coordination

Component 2: Capacity Building, Training and Coaching

<sup>1</sup> These form the five areas of focus within the most recent EKN Multi Annual Strategic Plan of 2014-2017

Component 3: Knowledge Development

Component 4: Communication: Dissemination, Sharing, and Advocacy

Component 5: Monitoring

The work in each of the components is briefly described in section 5.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been included in all the Capacity Building work from 2015 onwards, when they were accepted in September.

In the beginning of 2015 we were informed about a Mid Term Review (MTR). The process and the results were not helpful, even though the findings were mostly positive: most EKNsPs appreciate the work of GWAPB, and like to continue to make use of the services; a lot of work has been done by GWAPB, many activities and the spending was low. Some negative points were: it is not always clear who the contact person between the EKNsPs and the GWAPB team is; and it is difficult to assess the progress of the project's work. GWAPB was advised to diminish the number of EKNsPs, which were supported. A management response was written, nevertheless the EKN followed the recommendations of the MTR indiscriminately. This meant that we had to cut the budget with 36%, and the number of EKNsPs to only six, leaving out all other organisations and cutting many of the planned activities. At the time of the MTR the reasons for all this were not clear to us, and much later we realised and heard that the endeavour was related to the need for funds for refugees in the Netherlands. If we had known, we would have understood and acted ourselves as required.



*Women's Group in CDSP IV to learn Women's Legal Rights*

At the end of the project period a Final Evaluation took place, with largely the same Terms of Reference (ToR), informants and available time as the MTR. Then also the EKNsPs were mostly positive and interested in more support in mainstreaming gender, by GWAPB.

### CONCLUSIONS of the Final Evaluation Report <sup>2</sup>

**Conclusion 1.** Within the timeframe, the frequent political unrest, mainly at the beginning of the Project and the modality set-up provided for the Project together with activities carried out, the Evaluation Team (ET) has assessed the Project to be highly relevant and successfully carried out, and outcomes are considered adequate. However, the ET has some observations and recommendations, which imply focussing on substantial adjustments to the set-up of the triangle between the EKN, the EKNsPs and GWAPB – the modality of the Project.

<sup>2</sup> The Final Evaluation was conducted by PME Consult, a Danish Consultancy firm, not known to us before.



**Conclusion 2.** The ways to achieving gender results and gender mainstreaming are complex and depend on a variety of institutional and contextual factors. The evaluation learned that demonstrating a direct correlation between GWAPBs facilitating efforts and actual measurable development results was challenging for a number of reasons as the missing mandate of the EKN, short timing to measure outcomes based on the initiated gender approach, etc. However, assessing the project by looking at its strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, considering the Bangladesh context of the past three years, and the work which can only indirectly be in the benefit of poor women and men, the ET assessed the work of GWAPB to be carried out successfully and with great engagement.

But another important factor was the complexity of gender programming. Complexity is intrinsic to such programming, which addresses issues that are deeply rooted in cultural norms, values and belief systems at both the individual and societal levels, and where much of the achievement of results is dependent on factors outside the control of GWAPB. Moving to gender-transformative change and gender mainstreaming will require a longer lead time, and EKN will need to make a sustained commitment and ensure adequate funding for a second phase. Phasing out of GWAPB in such a critical and important time-frame would be a real missing opportunity for the sectors and hinder the process of achieving gender equality in the water sector. It is evident that the water sector in Bangladesh still requires visible and strategic outcome in terms of gender and IWRM as in all phases of water management there are very few women leadership, not adequate funding for gender in the water sector, lack in gender sensitive M&E and very few focused projects on gender mainstreaming in IWRM, factors that are hindering the overall achievement in the sector.

**Conclusion 3.** The ET assessed the trends in EKNsPs’ practice in gender mainstreaming over the three years to have developed in the right direction because of the continued support and guiding from GWAPB.

Most of the EKNsPs had even employed or had considered to employ gender facilitators, not because GWAPB did not fulfil their task - on the contrary. GWAPB had through their sustained efforts managed to change the mind-set of the EKNsPs regarding the importance of gender equity and gender mainstreaming to receive better results and to respect individuals as an important resource. But as many of the EKNsPs explained to the ET, the GWAPB will be indispensable as a facilitation unit to continue to support this process and to be a link between the projects - and the ET assessed, ultimately, with great potential to develop into a true resource centre for gender equity and gender mainstreaming in the water sector in Bangladesh.

The Evaluation Team recommends a second phase for GWAPB, not to lose the valuable learnings and inputs of the first phase, as well as the team and office. They have many more recommendations, for the EKN, for GWA and for the EKNsPs. See the Final Evaluation Report GWAPB.

This Final Narrative Report does not repeat the details about many activities, projects, partners, etc. This report is an overall reflection at the end of 39 months of unusual and important work in Bangladesh, with its opportunities and obstacles, and how these were utilised, taken advantage of, and dealt with.



*Victims of SIDR in Sorankhola Cyclone Shelter, to discuss their experience from 10 years ago*

### 3. Theory of Change

During the Inception Phase a Theory of Change (ToC) was developed, with input of staff and EKN. It is very complicated for this project in which the impact of our work has to be measured in the EKNSPs, which is indirectly and not within our power.

The elaborated text for the Theory of Change is to be found in the Inception Report, which is not repeated here, with the following paragraphs:

- Overall problem globally
- Specific problems addressed by GWAPB
- Causes of this problem
- GWAPB Inputs
- Components
- Activities and outputs in the five components
- Assumptions why the Input leads to Output
- Risks between Input and Output
- Output Indicators
- Intermediate Outcomes
- Assumptions why the Output results in the Intermediate Outcomes
- Risks between Output and the Intermediate Outcomes
- Intermediate Outcomes Indicators
- Outcomes
- Assumptions why Intermediate Outcomes result in Outcomes
- Outcome Indicators
- Impact
- Assumptions why Outcomes lead to Impact
- Impact Indicators
- Overall objective or Goal
- Goal Indicators
- Goal Assumptions
- Goal Risks
- Purpose
- Purpose Indicators (effect)
- Purpose Assumptions
- Purpose Risks
- Diagram

#### **Problem statement:**

- Gender inequality is persisting in Bangladesh notwithstanding the attention for women in development work overall. Empowerment data show that 50% of the population (women) lags behind in benefitting of economic growth.
- Water management is only efficient, effective and sustainable if interests, and needs are taken into account and knowledge tapped of all involved categories, women, children and men of different positions and backgrounds.
- Decision making in water management at all levels is male-dominated, whilst the work with water at the grassroots level is mainly done by women. This work of women is not sufficiently recognized nor taken into account. Therefore decisions are bound to be inadequate.

## Risks

Here we will only look at the risks that were envisaged, listed in the ToC, and how these proved to be in practice.

There are four levels.

Risks between Input and Output	Practice and how we dealt with the risks	Real risk able to solve
1. Gender experts with an open and flexible approach and knowledge to link the social with the technical aspects of projects may not be sufficiently available, whilst earlier this was assumed, based on CVs and enthusiastic GWA members.	1. This risk became true: it is difficult to find such gender experts, for the EKNsPs and also for GWA.	Real risk
2. Money cannot buy everything. The competition between different organisations for gender expertise is stiff. It is a risk that team members once they have familiarised themselves with the project, leave nevertheless.	2. The in house training of staff was very important and had to take place regularly, because when staff have learned and are able to do the work independently, they have the tendency to move abroad and leave the project.	Real risk
3. Government rules and regulations make it difficult to get expertise from outside Bangladesh, when certain specialists are not available.	3. This was not a problem, because we always tried to do the work with our own staff, to make them learn, and with Bangladeshi Short Term Experts. Those who came from outside the country did not have a problem.	able to solve
4. The political situation leads sometimes to <i>hartals</i> (strikes) and other obstacles that block a speedy process. In such a context 3 years are not sufficient for all planned activities, and less money will be spent.	4. In total of the three years, about 12 months were disturbed by political turmoil. Some work we just continued, but other work, involving a lot of travel, we had to postpone. It became true that this was one major reason for underspending.	Real risk
5. If the EKN supported projects cannot be convinced that to collaborate is in their own interest, the work will be obstructed. For GWAPB to force them is no solution.	5. The EKN had not been very clear to the projects about the mandate of GWAPB, so it was crucial to build trust by our own actions, and behaviour. But that takes time. For example some projects did send the high employees, but others only sent lower administrative staff, who would not benefit from the training. Only towards the end of the GWAPB period, these latter projects started to grasp that they may have missed an opportunity.	Real risk able to solve
<b>Risks between Output and the Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>Practice and how we dealt with the risks</b>	
<b>Component 1: Coordination, Networking and Collaboration</b>		
1.	1.	Real risk

Stakeholders delegate only their staff members who are responsible for gender or staff who have no decision-making power to the meetings.	One or two projects did this. Most projects were using the opportunity, which had a visible different impact after 3 years.	
2. Relations between the various stakeholders may not be conducive to cooperation and require significant work and time to build trust	2. Effective coordination depends on such mutual trust. Between the different stakeholders such trust did not always exist. The MTR blocked this process.	
3. Low levels of interest from EKN funded programmes and GWA members and its partners to participate and contribute to the implementation of the activities	4. This risk did not get true. Most of the EKNsPs and all the GWA members, are very keen to participate. They still are.	
4. GWAAG (Gender and Water Action and Advisory Group) are not yet functional by lack of time of GWAPB staff (lots of demands from GoB, EKN and others)	5. GWAAG was not institutionalised based on the recommendation of the MTR.	
5. All or some of the mentioned assumptions (3) prove not to be true.	5. The assumptions were rather positive about the willingness of the various stakeholders to form and join a network.	
<b>Component 2: Capacity Building</b>		
1. Qualified and committed gender and water professionals are not available as trainers at all levels in the needed numbers.	1. The interactive and participatory flexible training method of GWAPB demands a lot from trainers. Almost all were involved in all the training workshops. The P.C. still needed to be leading most workshops.	
2. The GWA approach of participation and open involvement takes more time than available for the project.	2. The GWA approach takes much time and also much expertise from facilitators. The commitment ensured quality. Originally many more CB workshops were planned, which was not possible and also not directly needed.	
3. Trainees are not sufficiently motivated or their superiors do not allow them to implement their IGAPs or the GAP of the project.	3. Most trainees, if selection had been done correctly, were very motivated and implemented their IGAP well. The GAP of the project never was the responsibility of one person.	
4. All or some of the mentioned assumptions (8) prove not to be true	4. The assumptions are positive, though realistic. Most came true (5), but not all (3): - The trainees of the ToTs (STEs to be), were not all sufficiently knowledgeable on gender. - One or two of the EKNsPs did not select the employees for our training, who could have helped the project most. - The GWAPB team was very committed, but more expertise would have been needed.	
<b>Component 3: Knowledge Development</b>		
1. The information and knowledge presented are dismissed by the policy and decision makers.	1. This did not happen, with a few exceptions.	
2.	2.	

The weather and local political conditions do not allow travel to or in the coastal polders in the periods this is required.	Our team was not scared off by bad weather. With political conditions such as Union elections, we reckoned.	
3. Management of institutions, necessary to approve certain studies, do not approve these.	3. This happened in most cases, notwithstanding the fact that the reports were not at all negative for them.	
4. All or some of the mentioned assumptions (8) prove not to be true.	4. Some assumptions were too positive (3), others came true (5). Too positive to come true: - EKN, EKNsPs, GoB etc. made available only a small part of their documents. - Insufficient support of EKN and GOs - Difficult to mobilise sufficient gender and IWRM capacities at all levels.	
<b>Component 4: Communication, Dissemination and Advocacy</b>		
1. Policies may show gender-awareness but implementation would need gender training and capacity building for which there is no budget allocated, no capacity or sufficient time allocation to implement → lip-service.	1. The project period is too short for all this. After building of trust, and getting to know each other, there was no more time and the MTR restricted this.	
2. Civil society lobbying activities become more restricted due to fears for policy restrictions.	2. This is our impressions.	
3. Not all stakeholders access or can be reached via electronic means which could leave out some of the most capable and knowledgeable actors.	3. Although the access to internet is quite good, many members in remoter places do not use e-mail daily.	
4. All or some of the mentioned assumptions (8) prove not to be true (5)	4. All assumptions came true.	
<b>Component 5: Monitoring</b>		
1. EKN supported programmes are not cooperative in developing GAPs, in including gender in their baselines, and in monitoring efforts.	1. Most EKNsPs were very supportive in this sense, and also interested in the GAP, which in most cases was obligatory. They asked for our support.	
2. All or some of the mentioned assumptions (5) prove not to be true.	2. All positive assumptions came true.	
<b>Goal Risks</b>		
Regular and frequent change of official contacts on various levels necessitate duplication and repetitions of efforts	This is a problem in Government Institutions, and also in some of the EKNsPs.	
<b>Purpose Risks</b>		
1. Continuous lip service at all levels results in significant efforts made that do not contribute to the achievement of the objectives	1. This cannot be avoided, especially not if funding is limited and gender integration is compulsory.	
2. All or some of the mentioned assumptions (4) prove not to be true	2. All assumptions are correct, but also ambitious, and not to be realised in the short run.	

In retrospect we can establish that the Theory of Change, though rather lengthy and complicated, was overall realistic. Assumptions show an awareness of the problems and were mostly correct. Risks appeared to be real risks, whilst most of them we could deal with, exactly because we were aware of them. Still, some have a level and a magnitude and a timespan, all too large for this short project to tackle. Overall re-reading the ToC we can determine that GWAPB has been on the right track and has arrived at a stage in which continuation is promising.

One risk that we had not foreseen was the impact of the unplanned and unexpected Mid Term Review, the atmosphere of which shocked staff members and made them lose their motivation and look for other work. This made it impossible to do as we had promised to some of the EKNsPs and Government organisations, damaging our fame. We like to believe that since then our reputation has improved again. A second risk we had not foreseen was the omission by the EKN to inform the EKNsPs about the mandate given to GWAPB to support them, and therefore to inform the GWAPB about their progress and give access to their reports and documents. Contacts with some of the EKNsPs could have been much more productive and meaningful for them, as well as easing our work.



*In 2007 SIDR destroyed the villages and embankments in the south of Bagerhat district. Since then this strengthening was done. After the workshop Gender and Climate Change, we visit the fishe people along the river.*

## Theory of Change Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh

<b>Goal</b>	The overall goal of GWA in Bangladesh is the efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable management of water in Bangladesh leading to the empowerment of poor women and men and eventually to the diminishing of poverty.
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the GWAPB is to support EKN supported water programmes, civil society, water professionals and government organisations in Bangladesh to adopt and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy in water related policies and practices in order to achieve measurable and positive impact on the lives of poor women and men as an essential contribution to the achievement of the EKN targets related to water, food security, sanitation and poverty eradication.

**Impact:** Increased coordination, more valid knowledge, capacities built, better policies and relevant monitoring all together lead to better practices in the water sector, with a focus on areas where the EKN supported projects are working. Better in the sense that poor women, children and men as well as vulnerable groups benefit from interventions and are enabled to empower themselves. The flow of information is increased between low, implementing and high, decision-making levels. The water sector is strengthened.

<b>Outcome per component</b>	Decision making is based on participatory feedback and more relevant to poor women, children and men	Effective GM by increased understanding of the why and the how	Increased access and usage of the inventory and sources of information, leading to more relevant policies and practices	Motivated government and relevant stakeholders who have access to valid information which they use for their decisions	Increased access and usage of the monitoring methodology leads to valid information about the progress in projects and in implementation of governments policies
<b>Overall outcome</b>	Improved efficiency, effectiveness, equality and sustainability in the EKN supported projects and in the water sector				

<b>Inter-mediate Outcomes</b>	1. The exchange of information is improved at and between all levels. Decision making and development of plans is participatory by collaborating with EKN supported programmes and other stakeholders in water.	2. The increase of the understanding by stakeholders and decision-makers of the importance to mainstream gender in their work and the new skills how to apply a gender and diversity sensitive approach, is reached. Capacity is strengthened and the understanding built of EKNsP	3. Relevant facts have come to the surface, diminishing myths, and filling gaps in knowledge. Information, knowledge, documented. Inventorisation of knowledge and filling in the gaps (Gender and Water Inventory)	4. Policy makers and water professionals are provided with brief and significant information improves policies and make practices more effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable. The new knowledge is shared and applied.	5. Progress is measured SMARTly, if possible and qualitatively by applying a ladder or scorecard. The information has led to more understanding of the actual situation and mere lip-service is less. The EKNsP are increasingly benefitting poor women, are mainstreaming gender effectively and will result in empowerment of women (and men).
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**Assumptions why Output leads to the intermediate outcome:** Increased networking, adequate learning, relevant knowledge, advocacy and the following of processes when participatory and demand-driven, will enable and encourage water professionals to

<b>Components, Outputs and Activities</b>	<b>1. Collaboration, Networking, Coordination:</b> - Field visits - Planning Workshops - Steering committees - Progress meeting with EKNsP - Backstopping - Network mgmt	<b>2. Capacity Building:</b> - ToTs, TNAs - Manuals - Individual CAPs - Coaching - Training Wshs - Training of others supported - ToT Good Governance	<b>3. Knowledge Development:</b> - GWI Gender and Water Inventory - Assess earlier EKNsPs - Inquiries - Action research - Pilot projects - Develop methodologies	<b>4. Communication</b> - Translations - Website, Listserve - Brochures - Database contacts - Communication Strategy - Advocacy Group - Gender Ambass. training - Internat. Events	<b>5. Monitoring:</b> - Methodology Development - Engender EKN's water sector Result Framework - Gender indicators in EKNsP's baseline surveys - Support EKN-sPs on request
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**Assumptions why inputs lead to outputs** The financial resources are adequate for the costs of the outputs which are mainly skilled and knowledgeable human resources, costs for various workshops' venues, office and transport. The necessary skilled human resources are available.

<b>Inputs</b>	Human resources: Project Management and Implementation Team (PMIT) and STEs	Financing by EKN for 3 years	GWA relevant methodologies and material	Commitment of GWA members, teams and partners of EKN supported progr.
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<b>Causes</b>	Limited Coordination	Limited effective gender and GM. capacity	Limited knowledge regarding gender	Limited communication and sharing of knowledge	Impact of policies and programmes is not openly monitored
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**Problems** Although financial inputs in water management and infrastructure in Bangladesh are large and many, poor women, children and men are unable to empower themselves as would be expected. Water related development programmes and governmental policies include gender in planning, but less so in the budgets, which often leads to lip-service. The mainstreaming of gender in a number of the water-related EKN supported projects in Bangladesh is not as effective as is required.

**Overall global problem:** Water-related policies and practice at international and national levels do not sufficiently take into account the needs and knowledge of different categories of women and men users of water for domestic use, agriculture and the environment, resulting in inefficient, ineffective and unsustainable policies and practices.

## 4. GWA Approach in Bangladesh and Sustainability

The mission of GWA is to promote women's and men's equitable access to and management of safe and adequate water, for domestic supply, sanitation, food security and environmental sustainability. GWA believes that equitable access to and control over water is a basic right for all, as well as a critical factor in promoting poverty eradication and sustainability.

The Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) works towards better decision making at all levels by knowledge development, capacity building and awareness raising, advocacy and sharing within the network, involving her many members worldwide, supporting water professionals with gender mainstreaming. Gender is applied in the broad sense, meaning relations between women and men, but also ethnicity, race, socio-economic differences, age, different abilities and caste. All these forms of diversity interact, and awareness about power relations helps water management to be more sustainable and effective. What is unique to GWA is that it is the only organisation in the world and in Bangladesh that works on gender mainstreaming in integrated water resources management (IWRM). Water programmes in most countries the world over often focus on hardware and infrastructure whilst women and gender programmes hardly ever look at technological interventions and their impact on gender relations.

In Bangladesh GWA currently has 260 members (this number was 110 at the beginning of the project) of which 95 women and 165 men. These members include professors of various academia, research scientists, water engineers, gender and water experts, management staff of NGOs, and CBOs (Community Based Organisations) – all involved in integrating gender concerns in water related projects and activities. Nearly two thirds of the GWA Bangladesh members are men, and they are important allies in mainstreaming gender in water related policies, projects (including EKNsPs), and other activities in the country.

The GWAPB trainings and workshops for capacity building and knowledge development will essentially use the IWRM approach, along with participative, actor-oriented methodologies of sociology which view empowerment of water users, and especially poor women, men, and children not only as an objective but as a pre-requisite for ensuring sustainable, equitable, and efficient water management.

Relevant guiding principles and key features of the GWA approach as applied by GWAPB are included in the following conceptual framework:

### ***IWRM Integrated Water Resource Management***

Realising the shortcomings of the IWRM approach, it nevertheless remains important to look at water management in an integrated way. Water is ever getting scarcer and many people, in fact women, in Bangladesh have a big problem finding water for their households and families, whilst too much groundwater is used for over-thirsty agricultural crops. The different water uses are interlinked and should not be looked at separately. Decision making on the use of water and its management cannot be done without taking the different stakes, needs, and interests of diverse groups of people into account. Participation of all water users, stakeholders, but also stake-losers is necessary not only to prevent conflicts over water, but also to make the best use of the available water, be it for drinking, sanitation, agriculture, other productive uses or for nature. In the Bangladesh Water Act 2013, it is clearly written



that drinking water is priority number 1. Nevertheless in Bangladesh between 80 and 96 % of fresh water is used for agriculture (numbers from different sources).

Technical and social aspects of water management are equally important.

**Gender includes women and men**

GWA does not only focus its work on women, but also on men. In most public sector water institutions and technical teams men outnumber women, so it has been important to build their understanding of gender relations in water management, and how Gender



*Fathers could enjoy taking care of the children too*

Mainstreaming (GM) can make their work more effective, cost-efficient, and sustainable. Men water professionals learn the importance of involving women in decision making, and thus adding to the sustainability of changing power relations. However, while addressing both men and women in CB activities, GWAPB has recognized that special support needs to be given to women in gaining the necessary skills to be able to effectively participate in decision making. Poor men are in a different position than poor women, but they also have responsibilities, difficult to fulfill with access to few resources. Men, as much as women, need to learn to understand about gender relations and the advantages of empowerment of their wives and themselves.

**Gender+, Gender Plus, Gender and Diversity, Gender and Inclusion**

These are all labels for gender in the broad sense to be applied for understanding power relations at all levels: relations between women and men that interact with ethnicity, race, socio-economic class, different abilities, age, etc. All this diversity, shows the richness of the differences between people, and awareness about power relations helps water management to be more sustainable and effective.

**Equity is meant to reach equality**

In case one category of people is left behind, equal treatment will not help them get on track, they will remain behind. For equality it is necessary to give the vulnerable and less privileged people extra support, until equality is reached.

**Empowerment approach with four interacting elements**

An empowerment approach has been taught and applied with four interacting elements: socio-cultural, political, economic and physical. Empowerment, especially of marginal women, but also of other categories of people, is used as an objective and a tool for analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of all our activities. This has been the core of GWAPB’s Capacity Building. Technical professionals overall find this easy, whilst in general the often promoted Gender Analysis (of Moser and Harvard) was too difficult, time-consuming and hard to make applicable to the real context.

**Women are agents of change, not just victims**

Women are not only victims, but also agents of change, actors in development. They have useful skills and knowledge because of their specific tasks in water management and sanitation. Only by their genuine participation, not just in work but also in decision-making, can efficient and sustainable water management be achieved. Those who are responsible for certain tasks, also should be involved in relevant decision-making.

***Women are also victims, especially in disasters***

Women and children are by far the majority of the victims of disasters and climate change (floods and droughts), so it is important to involve them in disaster risk management, again, not just to do the (earth-) work, but also to make the decisions.

To operationalise these concepts and the ideas behind them, we apply the following principles:

***Building on existing knowledge***

The social knowledge that technical counterparts already have, is acknowledged and built on further.

***Involve partners and GWA members and their expertise***

GWA ensures efficiency of its activities by working in partnership with other (member) organisations. In GWAPB it is clear that all work has been together with other organisations or projects. Where possible GWAPB has applied the expertise of its members.

***No space for patronising***

GWAPB’s way of working is to show technical water professionals that gender mainstreaming is in their own interest, and that, if they want, they will get our support. In this approach there is no space for patronizing. There have been open discussions in order to learn from each other, both ways. GWA needs to know about the technical work to explain the gender relations in its context and to come together to suggestions for improvement by gender mainstreaming. That was achieved in participatory and interactive capacity building workshops, in field visits and in the meetings with EKNsPs.



*During CB workshop time is made for fieldvisits. This is a visit to a Proshika Credit Group, near to Koitta*

***Individual Gender Action Plans and Active Learning***

Within its capacity building work GWAPB has applied the earlier developed methodology for active learning: water professionals are assisted and encouraged to develop an individual gender action plan (IGAP) for gender mainstreaming at their work-place, which GWAPB staff would coach when asked to. By exchanging experiences in follow-up workshops, participants learnt from each other and network amongst themselves leading to better results.

***Demand driven, participatory, tailor made activities are prioritised***

Effectiveness is achieved through the demand-driven, participatory and tailor-made approach GWA uses in all its activities. This has ensured ownership at the level where the activities are executed, and increases their sustainability as well.

***Monitoring with few indicators***

Formulation and monitoring of SMART (specific, measurable, applicable, realistic and time-bound) gender indicators is often key to the sustainability of programmes. GWAPB has contributed to quantitative and qualitative monitoring, by developing frameworks together with the EKNsPs, as well as

developing some documents for gender disaggregated data collection. The indicators should be few, to make sure monitoring serves a purpose and does not become a purpose on its own. Monitoring progress in gender mainstreaming needs to be both quantitative and qualitative (inquiries).

### ***Inquiries***

Inquiries are an open form of interviewing in which the interviewee can him or herself tell what are important positive and negative aspects of their daily life or situation. There are no questionnaires, apart from perhaps a checklist with subjects. Case studies are written with literal quotes. Such inquiries and case studies are used for qualitative monitoring, by repeating them after some time.

### ***Field visits in capacity building workshops***

If time permits, it is always educative to have a field visit as part of the training workshops.

### ***Avoid Development Jargon***

In GWA communication, training and documentation we avoid development-jargon: we try to speak and write in easy language to be understood also by those whose mother tongue is not English. To speak and write easy language is not easy. Jargon is much easier, but is also an obstruction in development. Jargon hides daily realities, thus creating the possibility to deny and ignore the real problems and the real people involved.

If all in the room speak Bangla, of course the language spoken in the session will be Bangla.

### ***Documentation***

Of all activities reports have been written, as well as of team meetings. It can be said that most work has been documented.

The GWA and GWAPB approach has proved to be effective and appreciated.



*Figure Cutting fodder as activity in the Dairy Groups of SaFal*

## Sustainability

The FIETS concept of sustainability of SIMAVI had been applied with some additions: Financial, Institutional, Ecological, Technical and Social including gender, with adding Economic and Political, coming to FIETSEP.

The GWAPB project has different aspects of sustainability, and some that are not yet sustainable. GWAPB has not yet managed to be financially sustainable, the project was, but the institution now that the project is over, is not. Institutionally GWAPB has been successful, with the NGO AB registration, and an increasingly wide and good reputation, but without the F (financial), the I (institutional) on its own is insufficient. Ecological and Technical sustainability has more relevance in the EKNsPs, not directly in GWAPB. Also Economic and Political are meant for the EKNsPs.

For the EKNsPs the GWAPB has added to their sustainability, and to that of their work in the districts. To reach critical thinking and learning, is a great and sustainable achievement, difficult to turn back. But many participants of capacity building activities have changed jobs, so within the EKNsPs the gender mainstreaming knowledge is not yet sustainable all over and needs more CB input. This can be considered Institutional (in-)sustainability. From the Final Monitoring Report of GWAPB (June 2016) by the external STE we quote:

“It is evident that GWAPB’s capacity-building activities over the three year period have had a significant impact in improving knowledge of gender and water issues among Bangladeshi professionals working in the water sector. Although many of them have left the EKNsPs with which they were employed, they have brought their newly-acquired knowledge to their new positions, thus creating a trickle-down or indirect impact of the GWAPB project.”

The FIETSEP indicators are all important for the beneficiaries of the EKNsPs. The development that they are experiencing in the projects will give them more income, and in case the projects work from a gender perspective, the chance that the source of income is sustainable is larger. Also the environmental and political aspects (their own organizations) are more sustainable when women and men have equal opportunities in the project. The Technical indicator is very interesting: in some of the projects there has been attention for women-friendly technologies for agriculture, for water supply and sanitation, for aquaculture, etc. Once such technologies have been developed, they are there to stay. Other organisations will see them and be inspired to copy, adapt and apply them.



*Fieldvisit to fishermen and fisher boys in Dublar Char*



*Fisher boys in Dublar Char*

## 5. Components and Achievements of GWAPB

In the table with highlights you see some of the activities GWA has implemented together with partners and in the framework of the GWAPB project. In the narrative reports that were written per project-year, there are many details, and of each activity a separate report has been written. This current report is more of an overview and reflection of GWAPB, and details are repeated here, only if necessary for understanding the project and the process. In this chapter we follow the five main components with activities, and two further components for logistics, management and personnel.

Some Highlights of GWAPB work, 2014-2016	
Number of training workshops	34
Number of participants of training workshops	421 women and 695 men
Number of result dissemination sessions nationally and internationally	20 sessions with 2154 participants
Number of reports produced	112
Number of sector studies	11
Number of Stakeholders and members’ meetings (whole day)	4
Number of Individual Gender Action Plans (IGAPs) developed	81 (by 66 men and 15 women)
Number of field visits to EKNsPs, including exchange visits	29

### Component 1: Collaboration, Networking and Coordination

Expected outcome:

*Increased and effective collaboration, networking and coordination for mutual learning and insight in the need for gender mainstreaming in the water sector.*

*Decision-making is based on participatory feedback and more relevant to poor women, children and men.*

Over the project period there have been many different forms of contact between the GWAPB team and the many water-sector-stakeholders. Especially the EKNsPs have been visited regularly and often, both in their offices as well as in the field. Even though formal Gender Action Plans (GAPs) were not part of the GWAPB Proposal, on demand together with 5 of the EKNsPs their GAPs were developed. In some cases it took a workshop of a few days to formulate and plan the gender work for the future. The GWA approach, not to force but to encourage and convince, has been successful, because all GAPs (and IGAPs) were based on what the project staff, after capacity building on gender mainstreaming, found important, realistic and doable themselves. Other EKNsPs, who had to be dropped after the MTR, expressed their need and interest also to want our support with developing a GAP with their team, which regretfully could not be realized in GWAPB-I.

A quote from the Monitoring Final Report (June 2016):

“A third area of impact was the technical support on gender provided to individual EKNPs by GWAPB programme officers. Initially each EKNP was assigned a programme officer but some cases support was scaled back after the MTR. Not all EKNPs made significant use of GWAPB but for several, the technical backstopping provided by GWAPB team was of crucial importance. For example, BDP had no in-house gender expertise and the analysis and written commentary on the Delta Plan and on Bangladesh’s 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan was extremely important and has the potential to have a long lasting and wide impact. In other cases, as with very technical projects like DWASA WOP or UDDP, GWAPB was able to introduce some gender considerations into their work even if the projects did not become totally gender mainstreamed.”

Also other stakeholders in the water sector have benefitted of the work of GWAPB: academia, government officers, including departments’ gender focal points and climate focal points, NGOs, some of them members of GWA. They took part in training, but also some capacity building workshops were organized for them specially, on request. Together with them we have organized seminars and lectures too.

All members could participate in annual Stakeholders and Members’ Meetings, but only about 50 of the 250 members could take part in training workshops and other activities. The membership of GWA in Bangladesh increased from 110 (40 women, 70 men) in 2012 to 250 (94 women and 156 men) at the end of 2016, which is more than in any other country, and clearly a result of the interest in taking part in the work of GWA. The members not only benefitted, they also contributed from their massive experience at the grassroots level.

With the exception of activities that were planned but cancelled on suggestion of the MTR-Team and EKN, all planned outputs in this component were reached and completed, some more than planned. In general stakeholders in the water sector have been satisfied with the work of GWAPB, with very few exceptions, mostly based on unrealistic expectations.



*GWA Bangladesh Members' Meeting*

## Component 2: Capacity Building, Training and Coaching

### Expected outcome:

*Increased capacities of local, regional and national stakeholders and institutions to facilitate gender mainstreaming in water resources development and management.*

This is the core of the work of GWAPB, supporting the building of capacity of stakeholders, the staff of EKNsPs, other water sector officials and NGOs, GWA member organisations, and our own team. There is no end to the request for Capacity Building workshops and other CB activities, such as exchange visits. Most projects have a high turnover of staff, and many organisations have a lot to learn. Some projects have gender specialists, but they especially seem to leave soon after they joined. The approach of GWA, with the four interacting elements of empowerment, which is so much easier to learn and apply than other methods that are in use, has received a warm welcome in Bangladesh, and is getting a wider use.

In GWAPB the team has learnt to listen to the participants, to think how in their particular work gender will best be mainstreamed, not two people have the same work to do. For gender experts it is important to have some knowledge about and interest in the technical parts of development, and to be able to consider the different impact of such technology on the categories of people, different by gender, age, background, education, ability, ethnicity, religion, economic class, etc. To learn to think multidisciplinary as well as critically, is for participants and for the team quite new and inspiring.

Two of the planned activities that were cancelled by the MTR and EKN are: the capacity building in i) Gender, Water, Good Governance and Integrity, and ii) in Gender, Water and Advocacy. Further planned work is all done and the outcome and impact is seen as beyond all expectation. Comparing the documents of the EKNsPs before the start of GWAPB, with the current awareness and application of gender in these projects, is amazing. This includes the impact of the gender mainstreaming in the field with the actual beneficiaries at the grassroots' level. This change happened, notwithstanding the turnover in staff.



*Powerwalk during ToT: at the start, all are equal.*

The training workshops for staff of EKNsPs in Gender and IWRM, in which the participants develop individual gender action plans (IGAPs), of which the implementation is coached during one year, after

which in a follow-up workshop the same participants get together to present their work, have been exceptionally successful and popular. The response mostly is that such gender workshops are totally unknown in Bangladesh, and to have a follow-up workshop is also new. From the Final Monitoring Report we quote:

“GWAPB’s IGAP approach was particularly useful in helping workshop participants to develop a sense of ownership and personal commitment to using the gender tools and skills that they had acquired. GWAPB staff provided ongoing mentoring to help trainees to establish realistic plans with achievable goals and many workshop participants were able to present their IGAPS at later training events, receiving feedback both from GWAPB and from other workshop participants on their progress towards achieving gender objectives and goals. Many workshop participants mentioned the IGAP as a significant learning tool, for example:

*I have attended a refresher training on IGAP and workshop which was very much useful for me in gender monitoring.*

*The approach of the training workshops was interactive and participatory. The trainees spoke out in the session, presentation because of the encouragement by the facilitators which was really were amazing. Facilitation of developing the individual Gender Action Plan (iGAP) for the coming year was excellent.”*

This IGAP methodology is recommended for copying and wider use. The various forms of workshops are described in the annual reports, and most workshop reports are available in the GWA website, or still coming one by one, after editing and screening for publicity.

The Training Manual for GWAPB has been developed in three modules of total 128 pages:

- Module 1: Gender and Empowerment
- Module 2: Gender and Water: IWRM, WASH, Agriculture and Food Security, Environment and Climate Change
- Module 3: Gender, Water and SDGs
- Module 4: Gender Mainstreaming

In total this component has been implemented successfully, with reliable evidence of substantial impact. For the team one problem was the writing and then editing of the many reports, which consumed much time that was not planned and budgeted. In the future reporting of capacity building workshops has to be limited to a semi-fixed format.



*Monitoring Workshop: checking the project's monitoring framework and gender indicators*



### Component 3: Knowledge Development

*Expected outcome:*

*Increased accessibility to and use of existing and newly developed knowledge and expertise on gender mainstreaming in the water and sanitation sectors.*

During the meetings with EKNsPs staff and during the field work various gender questions arose about which nobody agreed or knew a realistic reply, nor was literature to be found. About such subjects research plans were developed and mostly not implemented by the team of GWAPB, but by STEs (Short Term Experts) or GWA member organisations. After the reports were received, still a lot of work of the team was needed. The studies in this component 3, have yielded very important information. Subjects about which were not yet known in detail, such as gender and salinity, gender and drought, gender in wet units in garment factories, women in vocational training and technical employment, gender and aquaculture, agricultural technologies for women in a context of climate change, and various open inquiries in the framework of the EKNsPs work.

The new knowledge and information is directly used by GWAPB in the CB workshops and for giving feedback to the decision-making bodies in Dhaka, such as government departments and WARPO (Water Resources Planning Organisation) the coordinating IWRM government organization. GWAPB developed the Gender and Water Inventory, which is on the website, and open for use by anyone who needs to read a lot of material, to find comments from a gender perspective.

Interesting methodologies were developed about Empowerment, Inquiries, Individual Gender Action Plans (IGAPs) and Gender-disaggregated Data (GDD).

A planned activity was blocked by the MTR: a study into the gender-related learnings from the Dutch funded water projects over the years. These projects have been the first in Bangladesh to take social issues of poor farmers and rural women into account, and a lot can be learnt from their successes and failures, from what used to be positive, but was perhaps not sustainable, etc. Like other activities which were cancelled, this also still could be done in future. Part of it can be what GWAPB has done in the past three years with such projects, and why the success was substantial in some, and much less in others. This asks for a comparative analysis.

Allover GWAPB is quite proud of what was achieved in this component over the three years, considering the limited time, and the time that is needed to build trust to be allowed to know details of projects, including the challenges they face. The GWAPB



*The wives, mothers and sisters in Rampal of the fisherboys we met in Dublar Char*

team has proved to be skilled, enthusiastic, and open to contradict myths and stereotypes, when doing research in the field.

In the Monitoring Report (June 2016) is written:

“In a country like Bangladesh, which is very conservative but at the same time needs to make optimal use of its labour force in order to accelerate its economic development, the studies produced by GWAPB may help to convince policymakers of the need to provide opportunities for both men and women and to ensure that all workers have equal wages and safe environments.”

#### **Component 4: Communication: Dissemination, Sharing, and Advocacy**

##### Expected outcome:

*Gender and water knowledge, information and data, are disseminated and shared, by networking and various means of communication.*

The development of material to be disseminated takes time. For example during field visits a subject or research is identified. Then the research plan has to be developed, the project has to be convinced of the use of it, and that it is not a threat. When the study and fieldwork is complete the analysis and the writing of the report is cumbersome work, which has to be commented upon by various parties. So in the end for material to be ready for dissemination, the three years are about over. Some material needed translation into Bangla, which again takes a lot of time. It sounds easy, but to find the right gender wordings in Bangla is not so obvious, and there is a lot of disagreement about sensitive texts. This is the sequence of developing material, for which there is no shortcut.

The website of GWA has one section for Bangladesh (<https://genderandwater.org/en/bangladesh>), where ever more interesting material is available. A small survey amongst Bangladesh GWA members showed

that those members who responded use the material and download materia from the website.



Towards the end of the project, the Traveling Exhibit in Bangla and English, with 13 panels all especially about Bangladesh with a focus at the coastal belt, is ready. Paper posters are also printed and handed out. The cartoon booklets by Ziraldo

*Sorting out material for the folders for the workshop participants*

the famous Brazilian cartoonist, have been translated in Bangla and printed, very beautiful. Many brochures, notebooks, policy briefs and leaflets have been handed out, few were ready in Year 1, some in Year 2, and many more in Year 3. At the end of the project packages with posters and brochures and with the Bangla Tutorial for Water Managers: Why Gender Matters, all have been sent to the EKNsPs, and to GWA members, all over the country.

Many sessions (20) were organised to disseminate the knowledge of GWAPB, both internationally and within Bangladesh. Some sessions were entirely organised by GWAPB, and in some sessions, seminars or conferences, we were invited to speak. Our own final seminar which we organised for August 2016, with the speakers already invited, could not happen because of the terrorist attack on foreigners, which resulted in most foreigners forbidden to leave their offices. The presence of one foreigner in an event could risk the safety of all participants.

Internationally GWAPBs work was presented in USA, Germany, Morocco, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Kenya, Thailand, India, South Africa and Nepal. Most of the occasions we were invited, and costs were not born by the GWAPB project.

For this component it can also be stated that GWAPB has been successful, but the time to yield the not so low hanging fruits comes after the three years, and would be an opportunity for which the inputs are already prepared.



Group work during ToT

## Component 5: Monitoring

### Expected outcome:

*The various EKN supported water related programmes monitored and reviewed for gender impact.*

GWAPB is a complicated project to monitor. There are two parts of monitoring that are interacting, but also separate. On the one hand there is the monitoring of the EKNsPs of the way they have mainstreamed gender, and how this impacts their results at grassroots level. On the other hand there is

the monitoring of the work of GWAPB itself, which includes the results of the EKNsPs, but is wider by also being directed at the water sector as a whole.

To manage this difficult cascading monitoring, an experienced and senior international expert (Eva Rathgeber) was involved, who developed frameworks for the EKNsPs, with indicators based on their own project documents, had a number of meetings with each of the directors of the EKNsPs, wrote various reports in which response to surveys were processed, and the GWAPB work was analysed. These reports are included as annex in previous annual reports.

A quote from the Final Monitoring Report of GWAPB by Eva Rathgeber, STE:

“A second<sup>3</sup> important area of success was in the identification of gender indicators. GWAPB staff worked one-on-one with the EKNsPs to ensure that each had a manageable, highly targeted set of gender indicators that they could use to measure the success of their project towards achieving its gender goals and objectives. By ensuring that the EKNsPs had gender indicators that could be measured on a regular basis, it became possible for the project to make adjustments if they found, through regular monitoring, that women (or men) were not benefitting sufficiently. In all cases, the gender indicators were based on documentation provided by the EKNsP (e.g. inception reports, project proposals, etc.) and narrowed down after one-on-one meetings with staff in each EKNsP. As already discussed some EKNsPs made changes during their projects in response to gender monitoring feedback.”

Towards the end of the GWAPB project a two-day workshop was organised about monitoring gender in the EKNsPs, for management and M&E-specialists of the projects, which became a success, considering the enthusiasm about the prospect to learn not to spend too much time in monitoring, and limit oneself to a few indicators, to understand that monitoring should not become a purpose on its own, but it should serve the process of the project in making sure that poor women and men benefit from the inputs. It was a satisfactory experience to hear and see the participators present the gender monitoring in their projects, all developed over the past 3 years.

Even though at the beginning of the project the EKN was worried about the quality of our monitoring, from Year 2 onwards it became clear what was needed, and all the projects cooperated in it, especially after individual coaching. The quality of the GWAPB monitoring reports is very high, and they make interesting reading.



*Training of Trainers, plenary*

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<sup>3</sup> The first one in the mentioned report was about the IGAP and Training approach of GWAPB.

## Component 6: Logistics, Evaluation and Audits

GWA has a fully functioning office in Dhaka, which has been very useful and necessary for the team to do its work. From the budget of this component the computers, rent, utilities, services, internet, stationary, etc, are paid. The office has a view at the Banani Lake and the slums of Korail. In Bangladesh very few taxis are available, so own transport is needed, for which we rent one car. With all the traffic jams, our staff, like everybody in Dhaka, has wasted huge time when visiting the EKNsPs and other offices, often two hours to go and two hours back, or more.



*Runia, Facilitator for Gender, Water and Agriculture*

The auditors are budgeted in this component. GWA could till now not get a bank account in Bangladesh, hence larger expenditure is transferred from the bank in the Netherlands, and small amounts are paid in cash. The expenditure in the Netherlands (90%) is audited there, annually together with the financial report of GWA. The cash (10%) is audited in Bangladesh every 6 months. At the end of the project one large audit for the whole project period of GWAPB (39 months) was carried out by the Dutch auditor, including the cash bookkeeping of Dhaka.

The registration of GWA as International NGO in the NGO Affairs Bureau was managed by ourselves without consultant, and within the nine months that are said to be needed. To have many copies of 19 documents verified, notarised and certified, by ministries, courts, local courts, notaries, etc., is a huge and costly effort already in the Netherlands and Canada. Then the work still begins in Bangladesh with the many agencies that have to check all the papers, the people, staff, their pasts, project plans, expected finances, etc. In October 2014 we received our registration.

At the end of the project, in September 2016, the final Evaluation was organised, a few months later than originally planned. We managed to find a Danish consultant who we had never heard of and for her GWA was also new. This to avoid conflict of interest. The Conclusions are briefly described in section 2: the

Overview. To understand GWAPB from an external perspective, it is recommended reading.



*GWAPB Facilitators in Koitta Training Centre*

## Component 7: Personnel

The team as planned originally would have been ideal for the work of GWAPB. To match the job requirements, it was not possible to find exactly the right people. Nevertheless, overall, the staff has been qualified and eager to learn

new approaches. Recruitment itself took more time than expected, and the Bangladesh ways of writing CVs, applying for any job, qualified or not, giving interviews, and changing from one job to the next, had to be learnt by the recruitment committee, and all along the project period when vacancies had to be filled.

As mentioned above, after the MTR we lost some key staff, whilst newcomers first have to learn the GWA approach and be familiarised with the details of the project and of the EKNsPs. Notwithstanding all such obstacles, by working hard the team managed to do most of the work themselves, without involving many STEs, as was originally planned. The Programme Coordinator had expected to be less needed in Bangladesh as time would go by, but her presence was required till the end. She did spend 40% of her days in Bangladesh, and spent more than the approved 160 hours per month on the project. More than one year there was no Team Leader, which also made her presence more needed.

For the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist position we never found a suitable candidate. Many quantitative candidates applied, and a selection appeared, but none with understanding or practice with qualitative monitoring, which is more important for GWAPB. Towards the end of the project two young gender specialists, who recently left university (Department of Women and Gender Studies, University of Dhaka (DU)) joined, taking the places of more experienced staff who moved on to new opportunities.

## 6. Stakeholders and partners

Gender work is always done in cooperation with other organisations and by mainstreaming social aspects into more technical activities. In GWAPB the prioritised partners are the EKNsPs related to water and food security. Other organisations in the water sector were also involved as much as possible. These include university and government departments and institutes. A third group are NGOs, some large international NGOs, some smaller, and the GWA members, who can be found in each of the mentioned groups, whilst the majority are smaller district level NGOs.

The collaboration has challenging aspects, but afterwards it always has been worthwhile, satisfying, meaningful and educative. To see technical people learn to understand the different impact of their work on different categories of people is most rewarding.

EKNsPs: water and food security related projects (co-)funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To read about the opinions of the EKNsPs on their own gender mainstreaming work, please read the Monitoring Report of GWAPB, by Eva Rathgeber, with the title: GWAPB M&E final Report incl EKNsPs.docx.

Also information about the many activities GWAPB did with the EKNsPs cannot be described here, but can be found in the Inception Report and the 3 Annual Reports of GWAPB.

A third source of information with an objective point of view is the Final Evaluation Report, by Vibeke Munk Petersen and Kazi Rozana Akhter.

In the beginning of the GWAPB we were informed about the following EKNsPs:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Blue Gold                       |   |
| 2. BRAC WASH II                    |   |
| 3. IFC-PaCT                        | International Finance Corporation - Partnership for Cleaner Textile   |
| 4. SaFaL                           | Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Linkages   |
| 5. CDSP IV                         | Char Development and Settlement Project   |
| 6. MAX WASH,                       | Max Foundation Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programme  |
| 7. UDDP                            | Urban Dredging Demonstration Project  |
| 8. WOP-DWASA-VEI                   | Water Operators Partnership, Dhaka Water, Sanitation and Sewerage Authority and Vitens Evidence International |
| 9. ADB River Management            | Asian Development Bank  |
| 10. WFP Rice Fortification project | World Food Programme, UN  |
| 11. Bangladesh Delta-Plan BDP2100  |   |
| 12. Ecosystems for Life IUCN       | International Union for Conservation of Nature  |
| 13. FAO Food Safety                | Food and Agriculture Organisation   |
| 14. FAO Water Resource management  |   |
| 15. UNICEF WASH                    | UN Children Fund Water and Sanitation Programme   |

In Year 1, the EKN told us not to involve the last four projects, who were about to finish. Of the other 11 projects staff members have regularly participated in our Gender and IWRM workshops, as well as in other activities. The GWAPB team visited the projects teams, first all of them, and later on request or if otherwise needed. Field visits were made to the projects 1 - 8. Of each of these 8 projects various staff members have developed and successfully implemented IGAPs. In the Annual Reports the work done with and for the EKNsPs is listed and described, here only follow a few reflections.

**Blue Gold** is a large project to establish community water organisations to manage water productively. The team leader has been visited from the beginning. To the capacity building workshops Gender and IWRM, Blue Gold usually delegated their gender specialists and officers of BWDB (Bangladesh Water Development Board) and other government departments. In the final Monitoring Workshop 5 persons (3 women and 2 men) of Blue Gold Government Agencies were participating. An external senior gender expert visits Blue Gold once or twice annually, which is a strong gender resource for the project. There is need for support from GWAPB too, but the mandate to be expressed by EKN was not



Handing out certificate to BWDB Executive Engineer and Gender Focal Point for Blue Gold Nasrin Akhter Khan in Monitoring Workshop



*One form of Rain Water Harvesting (BRAC)*

clear, which is given as a reason for being cautious in sharing reports. When asked about the need for support by GWAPB, Blue Gold has told the MTR team that if only few EKNsPs can have it, they suggest to give priority to other projects, who don't have own gender expertise, and therefore need it more.

**BRAC WASH II**, a large scale WASH project to add to reaching the MDG (Millennium Development Goals), finished during the beginning of GWAPB, and we were asked to contribute to their Final Narrative report. For that purpose GWAPB has been to some field locations of the project, to see what actually the gender impact was, and screened the report, giving comments from a gender perspective in two rounds. This was appreciated. Every workshop was attended by a few of the BRAC staff, mostly young project officers. They all have been very enthusiastic and motivated participants, who did take their learning with them in their work and also in their lives. BRAC has a large Gender and Justice sector, but somehow the WASH sector does not seem to benefit from it sufficiently.

**IFC-PaCT**, (Partnership for Cleaner Textile, a project of the International Finance Corporation) a project to support clean textile by purifying waste water of the factories, did not delegate staff to our Gender and IWRM workshops, but instead required GWAPB to come to their office for training, thus missing out the mutual learning aspects of the shared workshops. Right from the beginning, in our meeting in 2013, it was agreed to do a study in the gender aspects of the Wet Units in garment factories (WDF, Washing, Dyeing and Finishing). The findings were interesting, and it could be concluded that when work is economically profitable (higher wages, and better conditions), reasons always can be found explaining why women cannot do such work. We found that complicated HR rules made it



*Washing operator works comfortably in the wet unit, but is unwilling to have his female family members work here*



impossible for women workers to get into the WDF work, which was paid much better. The work GWAPB did for PaCT included training of their consultants who implement the project. In the monitoring efforts PaCT did not want to participate, but in the end it was good to hear that the project has appointed their own gender specialist, to keep their confidential information in house. This is in some way also related to the unclear mandate of GWAPB as it was not sufficiently expressed by the EKN. It also is a success of GWAPB, to raise the awareness for the need of gender expertise in the project.

**SaFaL** (Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Linkages) is a project to enhance food security of small farmers and landless workers through promoting sustainable agricultural and market chain development. SaFaL



*Women farmers in SaFaL project working with new thresher*

was an interesting and interested partner all along. The staff and the project has benefitted a lot from the GWAPB work, and the difference in understanding of gender and diversity in agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture, animal husbandry was clearly visible to us, when visiting field sites, in the beginning and after three years. Especially the subject of women’s work in aquaculture has been interesting, beginning as if it was logical that women cannot do such work, and after some studies it was clear that all over the region the drudgery work in the saline water is done by women. To be a member of the SaFaL Aquaculture groups is very profitable, much more than in horticulture or dairy. This was the



*Woman now has her own shop cum tea-stall*

background for finding various reasons why women cannot do such work. Once the invalidity of such reasons became clear, many more women have been encouraged to join the aquaculture groups. SaFaL staff and those of the two partner NGOs have attended most of the GWA workshops, and separate workshops were developed for SaFaL too. Like that SaFaL has benefitted a lot of GWAPB. A pilot project for climate resilient agricultural technology for women farmers, is still pending.

**CDSP IV** (Char Development and Settlement Project) has been a very pleasant partner, with which the relation can best be denoted as mutual learning. The experience of CDSP IV goes back to the early days of the technical cooperation in water management, and over the years a lot of knowledge is developed, related to the social and gender aspects of the work. Women farmers, proudly showing the title deed of their new land, shared with their husband, is a miracle in Bangladesh, and has taken a lot of project time and energy. Nevertheless, there are many detailed gender issues at grass roots’ level, which need capacity building of staff, including the gender staff, to be tackled. In the tricky context of new land (*chars*), wanted by all, cyclones, lack of protection by embankments, climate change, salinity and violent power relations, the project is an enormous challenge. GWAPB has contributed to capacity building in all its forms, and CDSP has made use of all that was offered. Unlike some other projects CDSP IV has sent high level staff to take part in the workshops, which has been a fruitful strategy, because being in decision-making positions, their learnings can directly be applied.



*CDSP beneficiaries of earlier CDSPs relate about the sustainability of the projects' work*

**Max WASH**, aiming at the reduction of child-mortality, and directed at women mainly, needed a lot of capacity building to learn that gender and power relations are different from addressing women as mothers. From the beginning GWAPB has supported the project, which also asked for facilitation of their own workshops by GWAPB, next to the staff that attended the workshops for Gender and IWRM. Because of change of NGO partners, some ToTs had to be repeated. The collaboration with the project staff has been very open and fruitful, which has been useful in coming to a shared conclusion about what the project needs from GWAPB. The progress in mainstreaming gender in the project has been substantial.



*Courtyard Meeting*

**UDDP**, the Urban Dredging Demonstration Project, to support DWASA improve the drainage system in Dhaka, by opening up drains, was a partner project from the beginning. A study was initiated together to find out why it is difficult for women to get technical jobs, especially those that pay well. Dredging is not directly related to women’s work, but we visited technical vocational institutes and schools to ask pupils (m/f), teachers (m/f) and others about technical education and chances for work. In this case D-WASA (Dhaka- Water Supply and Sewerage Authority) has only a few women in administration, and a



*Group work in UDDP DWASA Gender workshop*

recruitment stop, so to appoint a woman dredger for the modern and easy to operate dredging boat, was no option. The results of the study are not surprising, but nevertheless interesting. UDDP had appointed an NGO for the community work in the neighbourhoods around

the canals, for which GWAPB added gender to the ToR. One DWASA Engineer was assigned the task of Gender Focal Point, and took part in various training workshops. Also other staff participated, and two workshops to develop a GAP were facilitated. Being a project with a technical focus, for the limited time span, all was done as far as possible to mainstream gender and build capacity of technical staff.



*Handing out cups instead of certificate, UDDP DWASA Gender workshop*

**WOP-DWASA-VEI**, the Water Operations Partnership to support DWASA to provide WASH services to the urban poor, had some gender work done in combination with UDDP. Even though there was a social component in the project, it was time-consuming to come to the point where collaborative work would be welcomed, especially for MODS Zone 5 (Metering, Operations, Development and Sewerage). WOP did send various staff members, some of DWASA and some of the project team, to the GWAPB workshops, and interesting information was shared, IGAPs were developed and implemented, but the GAP in the end of the project, was not complete and approved. The Team Leader expressed strong interest to have it done, but then both projects were closed.

**Bangladesh Delta-Plan BDP2100**, a project aiming to provide the foundation for permanent delta governance in Bangladesh through the outlining of a Delta Framework, did receive quite a lot of input from GWAPB. The project team did not attend the workshops and no GAP was made, but GWAPB wrote texts for 14 of the Baseline Papers, and later also for the water section of the 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. Because of the unclear mandate by the EKN, the project team did not want to send any documents by e-mail, and the GWAPB senior gender specialist had to do the work in the office of Delta Plan. The document produced by GWAPB on the gender aspects of the 14 themes, in short, is very useful also for other purposes.

Some projects which are directly funded by the Netherlands Government (DGIS), and not managed by the EKN were also collaborated with, be it less so. An example is the WASH-Alliance project, of which some partner's staff were invited to join the CB workshops for Gender and IWRM.

## Universities, Institutes, Governmental organisations at different levels and NGOs

GWAPB collaborated with various other organisations, who are key in the water sector.

Examples are:

- BUET – IWFM (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology – Institute of Water and Flood Management)
- DU – DWGS (University of Dhaka – Department of Women and Gender Studies)
- NAPD (National Academy for Planning in Development (under Ministry of Planning))
- ULAB - CSD (University of Liberal Arts – Centre for Social Development)

Together with universities and departments, seminars and sessions in conferences were organised (DU and ULAB), lectures for students and staff arranged (BUET and DU), gender integrated in technical curricula (University of Dhaka via a NICHE project (Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education)), and shared studies carried out (ULAB). The contacts have been very satisfactory and many more ideas have come up for working together. By NAPD we were asked to be involved in a number of courses for the training of their officers in the districts, and also for capacity building of Gender Focal Points and Climate Focal Points of 7 Departments. Visits to BCAS (Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies), BIDS (Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies, GoB), BBS (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics) and other institutes were also made, and plans to work together, but by lack of time (and options after mid 2015) no actual work was shared, apart from visiting each other's seminars, etc. Contacts with universities and institutes from outside Bangladesh are reported about in the GWA global report.

GWAPB has had various professional contacts with Government Departments and officers of GOs at different levels. Many were participants in our training workshops, by which good understanding and trust was built. With BWDB and some of their team leaders of various projects, initial steps were put to rewrite their Gender Equity Plan and Strategy. In the EKNsPs, whilst developing GAPs together, officials of the implementing Departments were present to participate in the discussions leading to the plans. The training with NAPD was particularly useful to get to know the key persons in the departments, for gender and climate. Further, the team members of GWAPB each have their connections with government officials, something which cannot be utilised in the Netherlands, but is crucial in Bangladesh.

The NGOs working in the water sector, many are members of GWA, have become well-known to GWAPB and vice versa. Some, as implementing partners of the EKNsPs, and some as partners in the GWG (Gender Working Group), in many events, and because of shared attempt to solve problems, especially at the grassroots' level. GWA's members are from a variety of backgrounds, but the majority are the leaders of smaller NGOs, each active in one or two districts. This has become a huge source of information and of people to be able to trust on and rely on their collaboration for whatever is asked. In fact, as globally, also in Bangladesh the membership is our most important asset.



## 7. Programme Management and Finances

### Office and team

See Components 6 and 7 in Chapter 5 of this report.

At the end of the project period, the team has reduced to a total of 8 members, still capable to fulfil the remaining work.

### Transparency and Accountability

Norms and values for good governance and functional management are not the same as in the office in the Netherlands where somewhere valid rules for all labour conditions can be found, and referred to, when needed. In Bangladesh such labour laws don't seem to exist, so every little detail for any sort of occasion have to be included in the contracts. And even then surprises occur. Often the argument is that this is the way we do it in Bangladesh, which is not necessarily convincing or acceptable.

For employee contracts we adapted an example of a large organisation to our situation, as far as anything can be foreseen. Human Resources Management (HRM) also means not to stick to rules indiscriminately and in all times, so in a context where health insurances are an exception rather than the rule, and health care is mostly commercial, the project management can face surprises, which have to be solved with creativity and humanity.

Also about accountability the obstacles are different than in GWA's Secretariat in the Netherlands. The basic rule "the same treatment for all", that does not always work, because "all" are not the same to begin with. As gender specialists we know the meaning of the need for equity to reach equality, whilst equity can mean very different treatment and positive discrimination. What has worked well in the team of GWAPB is the two standpoints arguing together to reach a compromise, acceptable to all: on the one hand the administrator, keeping strict to all rules that are written in Bangladesh, and otherwise what is common practice, opposite to the coordinator who tries to express the rights and duties of employees, as developed in regulations in the Netherlands over many years, whilst including the personal aspects of the problem in the Bangladesh context. During the GWAPB period together, by open discussion, all such problems could be solved.

For financial accountability a system was developed with various forms and rules for signing the forms. This was checked and rechecked by the auditors, both in Bangladesh and in the Netherlands. Rules of auditors are based on: "everybody is a fraudster, till he or she has proven in hard evidence to be honest". However, in an office this would not work, rather the opposite: "we trust all till fraud is proven by hard evidence". During and after the project period, we have not found any evidence of fraud, dishonesty and even very few mistakes.

### Finances

Under component 6 in Chapter 5, the bank situation of GWAPB is described. Larger amounts have been paid from the bank in the Netherlands in Euros. When the money arrives in Bangladesh on the account of the receiver, the amount is in Bangladesh takas. The exchange rate has fluctuated enormously over the years, but also within months it changes. So to transfer an amount in taka can never be exact, and the

balance is paid to the receiver in Dhaka in cash. This system has mostly been acceptable and without big problems. Tax for most activities is paid separately in the Tax office in Gulshan. Employees arrange their own tax payments. Because of the system in Bangladesh, that all money entering the country from abroad first goes to the Central Bank of Bangladesh to be registered and controlled, payments and salaries do already get a part deducted.

The following table shows income and expenditure over the project period.

Expenditure and income in the years of the project		
Year	From to	Amount
Year 1	1 July 2013 - 30 June 2014	€ 306,378
Year 2	1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015	€ 464,671
Year 3	1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016	€ 703,377
Closing Phase	1 July – 30 Sep 2016	€ 133,690
<b>Total</b>		<b>€ 1,608,116</b>
<b>Income</b>		<b>€ 1,557,394</b>
Still to be received		€ 50,722

That the years of the project did not coincide with the calendar years has been time- and money-consuming in administrative adapting and audits. The value of the Euro went down by one third which was also a great loss of funding, which became a problem towards the end of the project. It meant that we had to deduct budgets for activities and reduce activities.

The original amount for this project was € 3,300,000 from the EKN gender fund, not the water fund. During proposal development, € 500,000 was deducted so in the Commitment Letter the amount was € 2,800,000. After the MTR another € 1,000,000 got reduced and GWAPB had to rewrite the plan for the remaining year, trying to still do as many useful and required activities as possible within the smaller amount, already smaller because of the exchange drop.

Annual Audits were done in the Netherlands within the framework of the whole GWA, following the rules for Dutch NGOs, and one final Audit for the complete three years and 3 months of GWAPB-I. In Bangladesh for the cash expenditure six-monthly audits were conducted. All reports have been made available to the EKN, and are still available on request. After all about GWAPB is approved these documents will be published on the GWA website.



## 8. The future of GWAPB

Remembering the first request by EKN, in September 2012, to GWA is we could develop a gender programme for the water sector in Bangladesh, the happenings since then, our work and the problems to solve, which were not in our power, the obstructions as well as the wide enthusiasm, all these would better fit in 10 years than in four. The MTR may have been right in deciding that our work was too much and needed to be limited, but suggesting a no-cost-extension would have been a more obvious solution and less destructive.

This project has been a great opportunity for Bangladesh: for the water sector, but also for the overall objective of development cooperation: poverty reduction. Poor women, children and men benefit more from the various projects because of the inputs by GWAPB: the large amounts for infrastructure development are many times more effective in reaching the people who need it. This is why we are grateful to the EKN and the Dutch taxpayer, who have made this work possible by financing.

### **Strong points of GWAPB, GWA-B and for GWAPB-II**

A few points are mentioned here, not to go into much detail.

#### ***Experience:***

Much has been learnt over the project period, which, as the Evaluation Report mentions, would be capital destruction if not continued to be used.

#### ***Local presence:***

Also the local presence with a full-fledged office and team in Dhaka, makes it much easier to know and be known amongst the stakeholders in the water sector, than when an INGO only has an office far away. Various donors express this point of view.

#### ***Continuation:***

Since the end of GWAPB in September 2016, the GWA-B team has continued its work without the EKN funding, so directed at those who pay for our time, and not necessarily to those who need it most. But also activities are done without any payments, if found important. This includes work with WARPO and some Gender and IWRM workshops.

#### ***Motivated team:***

The remaining team shows motivation to make the organisation in Bangladesh continue to work for the cause of giving water users a voice.

#### ***Reputation:***

GWA-B and GWAPB are now known to many more people and organisations than when we started in 2013, which will make collaboration easier and quicker to agree about.

#### ***Good connections and contacts:***

Our team members have their connections, but also built many new and good connections over the project period, all ready to be used, when needed.

#### ***Gender-and-water material available:***

Only towards the end of the project most material got completed, because the source material had to come from our studies and field visits, etc. This is now available, and can be utilised right from the start of a next phase of GWAPB. This is material for capacity building at all levels, from posters and booklets for children to training modules to policy briefs for decision-makers. Even though all hard copies are handed

out to EKNsPs and GWA members, and soft copies are mostly available on the GWA website, guidance is needed for most technical professionals to use the materials and tools.

**And most of all: The need and demand for the work of GWAPB:**

Even though in the framework of GWAPB during 3 years and 3 months, a lot of work was done, more than could realistically have been expected under the circumstances, there remains a massive need for our work, which is the most important reason to follow up GWAPB-I with GWAPB-II.

1. The Dutch Government foreign policy is in favour of increased expenditure for development cooperation, with some financial advantages, positive results of the national elections and a much improved economic situation, leaving the crisis-years behind us.  
Also the policy evaluation of the water sector in development cooperation was outspoken about the need for continuous and more attention for gender in the sector, worldwide.
2. To reach the SDGs by 2030, GWA-B has taken responsibility for monitoring a geographical part of some of the indicators of SDG 5 (Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment), SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation for all), and SDG 13 (Action to combat Climate Change), by involving member CSOs who already have been active in collecting the relevant and needed gender-disaggregated data. Because all SDGs have gender aspects, and the professionals working in each of the themes rarely have sufficient and relevant gender expertise, many more activities to strengthen capacity are needed to reach the goals by 2030. 2030 is close by.
3. Whilst in western countries (the Global North) mitigation is a major problem, and massive money is spent on high tech solutions to stop emissions of greenhouse gasses, in developing countries (the Global South), and especially in Bangladesh, the adaptation to climate change of which the speed is beyond its power, is the only suitable action. The impact of climate change in Bangladesh is already making many victims annually, and gender aspects are many, whilst not understood by decision-makers in this subject. GWAPB has gained a lot of experience and is in a position to share relevant knowledge to those who need this.
4. There are certain activities, which originally were planned and later deleted from the plan, which remain to be important and useful, such as the CB workshop for Gender, Water and Advocacy, and the one for Gender, Water and Good Governance. It also was planned to analyse the reports of earlier Dutch-funded projects, to find lessons learnt and good or promising practices for mainstreaming gender and diversity. One more activity that needed to be cancelled because of political insecurity: our final seminar or conference that would disseminate much of the new knowledge, involving most of the EKNsPs.
5. Most of the EKNsPs have expressed their interest in and need for support by the GWAPB team. With the experience so far gained, we are in a position to develop focused plans for and with each of the EKNsPs, including those for Food Security and even SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights) and the UN projects.
6. Another issue is the opinion of the gender specialists of the EKNsPs, who have expressed their need for special training by GWAPB for them instead of together with the technical staff, discussing and solving their problems together.
7. It has become clear that work focused at GWA members, is directly impacting poor women at grassroots level. The members are 260, of them about 160 local NGOs, are very keen to learn and can apply their knowledge immediately. Their feedback from the ground can be channelled effectively to decision-making powers in Dhaka. In GWAPB-I they received the crumbs falling from the table, but most of them deserve serious input and support from GWA-B.



## Problems that will remain to be dealt with

### **Recruitment:**

To find Gender experts with technical background will remain difficult. The training in and of the team is crucial for a project like GWAPB. This fact linked to the brief span of a project, which makes all staff look at bdjobs.com regularly, is a continuous threat. Unemployed people do not receive allowances from the government, their expenditure for expensive schools and healthcare for children and other family members continue, so they will always search for a job with the furthest endpoint in time. Somehow in all the projects, at least in the EKNsPs the gender specialists have a rapid turnover.

### **Political and security-related uncertainties:**

For all development organisations and others, working and living in Bangladesh, most of all the Bangladeshi themselves, the future is uncertain, and risks are everywhere. The type of terrorism but also the risk for cyclones and floods are threats nobody can prevent or reckon with. The work cannot be stopped because of such threats, but sometimes it has to be paused, delayed or adapted.

### **Fundraising Capacity of GWA-B**

Even though GWA is registered with the NGO Affairs' Bureau locally, GWA-B is often not eligible for available funding for projects. Such funds are often small and all Bangladeshi NGOs apply, which makes it difficult for donors to respond to the applications in time, and the chance to be selected very small. The quality of the proposal is not the only criterion. Cases are known that all NGOs have applied, and nobody was selected. The time spent on fundraising is not effective. Since the closing of GWAPB the team has been active in five projects, all with interesting work, like in GWAPB, but for low payments. This is not a sustainable way of continuity for an organisation.

## Reports

To know more details of the many activities over the whole project period the following reports are available and recommended. Some are available on the website, and all on request.

- GWAPB Proposal Januari 2013
- Progress Report GWAPB 2013
- GWAPB Inception Report and Project Document, including ToC, and Year 1
- GWAPB Progress Report July 2014 – June 2015 (Year 2)
- GWAPB Financial Report 2013-2014
- GWAPB Progress Report Year 3 July 2015-September 2016
- GWAPB Mid-Term Monitoring Report (Eva Rathgeber)
- **GWAPB Monitoring M&E Final Report incl EKNsPs (Eva Rathgeber)**
- GWAPB Audited Financial Report 2013-2016
- **Final Report Evaluation GWAPB (Vibeke Munk-Petersen and Kazi Rozana Akhter)**
- And various others.

