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# 20 Way forward

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The story of Participatory Water Management in BGP – but also in Bangladesh as a whole – is one of two steps forward and one step back. Critics could easily argue that the experiment, initiated by the 1999 National Water Policy, failed; while champions for community empowerment could and would

quote a long list of success stories. Truth is that there is no alternative to a greater public participation in water management decisions and that, despite promising experiences, Bangladesh has not established a viable modus operandi for participatory water management as yet. With ample experience gained and being gained through several projects, it is time for the implementing agencies and the sector stakeholders to go back to the drawing board.

### Briefing Materials



The following materials illustrate concepts, interventions, outcomes and lessons learnt, including through stories from community members.

#### Slide decks

- [WMOs: building sustainable partnerships for participatory water management](#)

#### Thematic brochures

- [In-polder water management: maximising returns from agriculture and aquaculture](#)
- [Lessons learnt for scaling out: how participatory water management contributes to inclusive development](#)
- [WMOs: building sustainable partnerships for participatory water management](#)

#### Videos

- [What water management means to me \(Bangla with English subtitles\)](#)
- [PWM: an integrated approach - animation \(Bangla with English subtitles\)](#)
- [Water Management Organisations \(Bangla with English subtitles\)](#)

The 1999 NWPo and the policy and regulatory framework for participatory water management that it helped establish, were a bold step forward towards enhanced public participation in water management. The experiences of BGP – and those gained in other similar projects – now show that it is high time to assess the progress made and to move forwards for taking a next stride.

For BGP, the need for modifications and amplifications in the enabling environment were clear as early as 2016. When articulating the project's Theory of Change<sup>[1]</sup> and when devising its exit strategy<sup>[2]</sup>; there was a clear and explicit realisation that the sustainability of the project outcomes critically depended on externalities with respect to the performance of WMOs. The question was, however, how the project – being by nature a focussed and clearly contained activity – could contribute to a review of something as wide as the enabling environment.

From 2019 onwards, BGP started pursuing a review of the enabling framework for participatory water management. Points of departure were (i) the modest role that a regional project has in something that is in essence a national debate; and (ii) the inherent national character of such a review, in which there should be little to no role for international consultancy. The way forward comprised the following:

- BGP could use its accumulated experience, network and resources to initiate discussions

around participatory water management with stakeholders, policy makers and high-level stakeholder representatives. The resources for organising its completion conference, are therefore dedicated to initiating debate, rather than to the mere reporting of achievements.

- The policy review is organised under the umbrella of the Bangladesh's Delta Plan and as such undertaken under the aegis of the General Economics Department of the Planning Commission, with the organisation vested in its 'Support to the Implementation of the Bangladesh Delta Plan' (SIBDP) project, and with Blue Gold supporting those preparations.
- Involvement of reputed senior national experts, with support teams, to prepare policy notes on three aspects of PWM: its institutional setting, its financing and its overall approach. These senior experts are to act as pathway leaders for the sector and - although engaged through the TA team of BGP - have a free hand as to what expert advice they would provide.

By mid-2020 the pathway leaders have drafted their policy notes, which will undergo a series of review events with stakeholder representatives ahead of the [National PWM Conference](#), held in November 2021.

## References[[edit](#) | [edit source](#)]

1. [↑ \*Theory of Change - version 2, Working Paper 5\*](#) (PDF). Euroconsult Mott MacDonald & Associates. May 2016.
2. [↑ \*Sustainability from The Start - Exit Strategy \(draft final\), Working Paper 2A\*](#) (PDF). Euroconsult Mott MacDonald & Associates. February 2016.

## See also[[edit](#) | [edit source](#)]

Previous chapter:  
[Chapter 19: Operationalisation of the PWM concept](#)

[Blue Gold Lessons Learnt Wiki](#)  
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<p>1. <a href="#">Polder Development Plan</a> 2. <a href="#">WMO Action Plans</a></p>	<p>1. <a href="#">From individual to group capacity</a> 2. <a href="#">From transferring knowledge to promoting behaviour change</a> 3. <a href="#">From dependence to self-reliance</a> 4. <a href="#">From autonomous WMOs to networked organisations</a></p>	<p>1. <a href="#">Background</a> 2. <a href="#">Blue Gold approach</a> 3. <a href="#">Why is water management important for women?</a> 4. <a href="#">Why are women important for water management?</a> 5. <a href="#">Results</a> 6. <a href="#">Enabling factors and challenges</a></p>
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## Executive summary: A Call for Action

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A process by which the local stakeholders are directly and actively involved in identification, planning, design, implementation, operation & maintenance and evaluation of a water management project.

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empowerment is a process, enabling people to make choices and convert these into desired actions and results. In doing so, people take control of their own lives, improve their own position, set their own agenda, gain skills, develop self-confidence, solve problems, and develop self-sufficiency. Empowerment leads to genuine participation of all actors as it is a process of gaining self-confidence for individual development as well as to contribute towards development of others.

A process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.

A process by which the local stakeholders are directly and actively involved in identification, planning, design, implementation, operation & maintenance and evaluation of a water management project.

A defined set of temporary activities through which facilitators seek to effect change

## National Water Policy

human intervention in the capture, conveyance, utilisation and drainage of surface and/or ground water in a certain area: a process of social interaction between stakeholders around the issue of water control.

an environment of policies, regulations, norms, institutions, and overall economic governance which allows market systems to function and perform well

Water Management Organizations - The common name of organizations of the local stakeholders of a water resource project/sub-project/scheme. The concept WMO typically refers to WMGs and WMAs (and/or WMFs) together

A process by which the local stakeholders are directly and actively involved in identification, planning, design, implementation, operation & maintenance and evaluation of a water management project.

## Technical Assistance

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## Blue Gold Program Wiki

The wiki version of the Lessons Learnt Report of the Blue Gold program, documents the experiences of a technical assistance (TA) team working in a development project implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) over an eight+ year period from March 2013 to December 2021. The wiki lessons learnt report (LLR) is intended to complement the BWDB and DAE project completion reports (PCRs), with the aim of recording lessons learnt for use in the design and implementation of future interventions in the coastal zone.

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