

## Annex 1: Terms of Reference

### 1. Background

According to several recent studies there has been remarkable growth in the rural economy of Bangladesh over the past two decades. The number of poor people dropped significantly while food security improved as agricultural output (notably in terms of rice yields) increased. Thus, productivity gains underpinned by technological progress both in terms of inputs and output markets have resulted in impressive overall agricultural sector growth.

Researchers at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) have argued that although agriculture contributes a declining share of gross national product, agricultural growth has a catalytic effect on the non-farm economy, such that a ten percent increase in farm incomes generates a six percent increase in non-farm incomes through upstream and downstream linkages.<sup>1</sup> In this context, considering the priorities for action to promote rural growth in Bangladesh, the World Bank together with the Planning Commission has argued for diversification in agriculture (with a “balanced attention to rice”), a range of policy improvements notably to ensure the “ecologically optimal use of inputs” and an enabling environment for business enterprise, particularly for rural non-farm growth.<sup>2</sup>

Support through Danish development assistance (Danida) has played a role in the transformation of the agricultural sector. There is a very long history of assistance in the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors in Bangladesh, dating back to the 1970s. In the 1990s, Danida supported efforts to improve soil fertility through balanced use of fertilizers and to deal with crop losses through the introduction of integrated pest management (IPM) in farming systems.

Following innovations in terms of agricultural research and extension that were initially encouraged by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and then in the design of agricultural sector support from the 1990s, it was decided that the so-called “farmer field school” (FFS) approach would constitute an important foundation in the sector programmes funded by Danida. The aim of the FFS method of providing advice to farmers using participatory approaches has been to improve the living conditions of poor, marginal and small farmer households – both women and men – “through enhanced, integrated and sustainable agricultural productivity increases.” Thus, agricultural extension services would operate on a demand-driven basis, seeking to promote agricultural diversification and increased awareness about production techniques, food security and nutrition at household level.

<sup>1</sup> The IFPRI analysis was published in 2017 in a report entitled: “promoting agricultural growth, technology adoption and crop diversity.”

<sup>2</sup> Using data gathered through household income and expenditure surveys (HIES), it was found that growth in farm income drove half of the reduction in poverty between 2000 and 2010, of which rural non-farm income growth contributed over 40 percent (the World Bank and Government of Bangladesh Planning Commission, “dynamics of rural growth in Bangladesh”).

In 2011, the farmer field school approach in Bangladesh was evaluated by Danida. Studies of FFS in different regions of the country were undertaken, as introduced through the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) as well as through the regional livestock and fisheries services. The evaluation found that over 500,000 rural households had benefitted from knowledge and techniques acquired through participation in these farmer field schools. Furthermore, it was found that there had been a significant impact on household nutrition and food security, notably among the poorest. Household incomes had increased in comparison with control groups (non-FFS participants) and

production had diversified. In short, the evaluation concluded that the FFS approach had been very successful in terms of improved livelihoods, not least for many women in the rural communities.

The 2011 evaluation underlined the value of the FFS approach in supporting the transformation of the rural economy for the benefit of poor, marginal and small farmers. Thus, in designing the agricultural growth and employment programme (AGEP) it was decided to continue to provide extension services through the FFS approach. But it was also recognized that improved production techniques were not the end of the story and that supporting poor, marginal and small farmers also entailed focusing on the value chains between producers and consumers, i.e. on what have become known as “market linkages.” The upshot was a programme to be funded by Danida for five years from 2013 with three components:

- □ An integrated farm management component (IFMC with DAE);
- An agricultural and food security project (AFSP, with UNDP in the Chittagong Hill Tracts);
- An agri-business development component (Katalyst, co-funded with DfID and the Swiss Development Agency).

According to the 2013 programme description the overall (development) objective of the AGEP was defined as contributing “to an increased pro-poor and inclusive growth and sustainable employment creation.” Although the programme was not intended to directly generate employment, it was anticipated that job opportunities would emerge from interventions that increased the value of farm produce. As such, the programme is consistent with the aim of the 6th Five Year Plan, to reduce poverty in Bangladesh.

Immediate objectives were defined for the three components. As far as the integrated farm management component (IFMC) is concerned, the aim is to increase and diversify agricultural production by female and male landless, marginal and small farming households. A similar aim was defined for the agriculture and food security project (AFSP) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). In both these components, the farmer field school approach forms the basis for efforts to promote production increases and diversification. The objective of the third “agri-business” component of the AGEP was defined as strengthening the competitiveness of the agricultural and agro-business sectors.

Different modalities have characterized the three components of the AGEP. As noted above, the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the IFMC. The component aims to empower over 850,000 female and male farmers through farmer field schools in six regions of the country as well as to empower service providers and market actors through the establishment of over 800 farmer’s organisations (with “market linkages”). By the beginning of 2018 over 17,000 farmer field schools have been run through a major scaling up effort. Meanwhile, given the post-conflict conditions prevailing in the CHT, the FFS approach in this region is being promoted through the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), which aims to support pro-poor and inclusive development in the three districts where a 1997 peace accord envisaged the devolution of agricultural services to Hill Councils. Thus, a total of 1800 FFS have been rolled out since 2014 with a view to increasing the incomes of the target group (over 40,000 farmers) as well as ensuring better nutrition and less food shortages. It is worth emphasizing that the empowerment of women is considered to be at the core of these interventions.

The agri-business component of the AGEP (called “Katalyst”) did not include FFS approaches but was rather intended as an advocacy scheme for the development of the business and trade environment, the

introduction of information technologies and innovation in public-private partnerships, as well as export diversification. It will not be included in the AGEF evaluation.<sup>1</sup>

Following the launch of a new Bangladesh Country Programme in 2016, Danish development assistance has been re-structured for a five-year period. Consequently, arrangements have been made to continue a second phase of the IFMC for a three-year period (2019-21) and similarly an additional grant will be provided to the UNDP for further support to farmer field schools in the CHT over the same period (AFSP II). These are defined and will be carried out as two of the “development engagements” in the country programme.

According to output data gathered by the monitoring and evaluation units of the DAE and the UNDP, the FFS approach and the promotion of market linkages appear to have been successful in both the IFMC and AFSP, with large numbers of farmer facilitators trained, women’s groups formed for marketing purposes, etc. (as noted above). However, as the number of FFS supported through the IFMC in particular increased significantly, questions began to emerge about the quality of the training and the capacities of the key facilitators. Furthermore, as noted in the mid-term review of the AGEF in 2017, an “externally validated evaluation” of the outcomes and impact has not been undertaken.

At the same time there have been difficulties in managing the data pertaining to the results and not least the impact of the FFS. The DAE has conducted an “internal assessment” of the IFMC, which suffered from data deficiencies and is incomplete. The UNDP is preparing an “end- evaluation” of the FFS impact, which may provide some valuable insights in the particular context of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

On this basis, and given the preliminary steps being taken towards the design of further support for rural development within a new Danida country programme (from 2021), it has been considered opportune to conduct a thorough assessment of the AGEF. The main issue to be explored in the evaluation is male and female farmers’ use and application of the knowledge gained through participation in FFS training. In other words, an in-depth evaluation will examine the extent to which incomes have increased and nutrition improved as a result of the adoption of techniques acquired through the farmer field schools and through the establishment of farmer’s organisations for crop marketing.

## **2. Objectives of the evaluation**

The objectives of the evaluation are threefold:

- To document the achievements of the AGEF since 2013;
- To analyse the outcomes and impact of the IFMC and AFSP (components) in terms of results, based on the original theories of change, logical frameworks and results frameworks and with a particular emphasis on the adoption of the farming techniques and practices as well as marketing knowledge promoted through the components;
- On the basis of the lessons learned through the AGEF, to prepare recommendations for the future as inputs for the design of a new country programme for Danida in Bangladesh (for five years from 2021-26).

## **3. Scope of work and evaluation questions**

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<sup>1</sup> The Katalyst project has ended and a final report is available.

Overall the evaluation will be undertaken in accordance with the Danida evaluation policy (October 2015) and the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluations analysing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence of the interventions through AGEP. However, these criteria are intended as overall guidance for the evaluation, not as a blueprint. As noted above, the application and use of knowledge gained through farmer field schools and in farmer's organisations are the critical issues to be examined in the evaluation. It is also intended to shed light on the management of large quantities of data, in order to determine how to effectively measure the outcomes and impact of farmer field schools in Bangladesh.

A specification of the main evaluation questions (EQs) is as follows: With respect to results and achievements

EQ1 what have been the main achievements of the AGEP?

EQ2 what are the results in terms of participation in farmer field schools and the development of market linkages (both in IFMC and AFSP)?

EQ3 what are the costs of providing agricultural extension and training using FFS approaches? With respect to outcomes and impact

EQ4 are the skills and techniques acquired by the farmers considered relevant and do the farmers adopt and use what is learnt in the farmer field schools and in the market linkages training?

EQ5 what are the critical factors determining the quality of farmer field schools and training in market linkages and are the FFS and marketing development processes adequately organised and managed by the extension services (DAE, together with the livestock and fisheries services)?

EQ6 how has women's empowerment been enhanced through the AGEP?

EQ7 what have been the impacts of the FFS approach as promoted by the DAE and by UNDP in the CHT in terms of agricultural diversification, household income, nutrition and employment?

With respect to lessons learned

EQ8 what obstacles have arisen in the implementation of the AGEP and how have these been overcome?

EQ9 what are the prospects for increased employment arising from improved production techniques and better agricultural marketing, notably in terms of opportunities for young people?

EQ10 what are the key recommendations for the future country programme?

These evaluation questions are expected to be further developed and refined during the inception phase of the evaluation. As noted above, the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation are expected to feed into the preparation of a new Danida Country Programme in Bangladesh beginning in 2021.

#### **4. Methodological considerations**

The evaluation will be carried out by:

- A team leader, agro-economist with extensive evaluation experience
- An agriculturalist with experience of training & extension and farmer's organisations
- A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist

The evaluation will make extensive use of both qualitative data and the quantitative data gathered in the monitoring and evaluation units of the AGEF component agencies. Other data sources may also be useful, e.g. household surveys, research studies by IFPRI, etc. The Danish embassy in Dhaka together with the M&E units at the DAE and UNDP will assist in the identification of relevant data and documentation.

The evaluation will be undertaken in several phases outlined in the following:

During the inception phase the evaluation team will thoroughly analyse available documents and reports pertaining to the AGEF, farmer field schools, farmer organisations as well as the main development issues in the agricultural sector (including livestock and fisheries) in Bangladesh. A particular focus will be on the quality of the baseline studies of the IFMC and the AFSP (undertaken in 2013-14) and on the quality of data gathered and registered by the monitoring and evaluation units.

The inception phase will include the design and launch of impact assessment surveys covering agreed samples of FFS and non-FFS (control) households in a maximum of four selected regions where the IFMC has operated. It is anticipated that results of the end evaluation of the AFSP will inform the design of these surveys. A small survey team will be established with an appropriate partner organisation and a simple household survey questionnaire will be designed and completed covering the agreed samples.

The main study will include consultations and field work in the selected regions as well as interviews with key informants and representatives of the partner organisations. The results of the survey will be processed and analysed by the evaluation team. Case studies may also be prepared to illustrate the dynamics of the FFS approach and the strengthening of market linkages.

Initial findings will be discussed with the evaluation reference group (ERG) prior to the preparation of a draft final report. A workshop will be arranged in Dhaka with key stakeholders to consider the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

## **5. Outputs and timetable**

The outputs of the evaluation will include:

- An inception report with survey design. The report will provide an overview of the AGEF from 2013-18 and include an evaluation matrix dealing with the evaluation questions as well as a thorough outline of the methodology to be used in particular for the household survey.
- An initial findings paper (not for publication)
- A draft final report
- A final report not exceeding 40 pages.

The evaluation will proceed through the following main steps, noting that all dates are tentative and to be confirmed:

Task	Date/period	Responsible/involved
Initiation of evaluation	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2018	EVAL & ET (evaluation team)
Inception, including survey design	December 2018	ET & partners in Bangladesh
Draft inception report submitted	10 January 2019	ET
Discussion of inception report	Mid-January 2019	EVAL, ERG & ET
Main study	End Jan-March 2019	ET & partners in Bangladesh
Preliminary findings paper	End March 2019	ET
Discussion of findings	April 2019	EVAL, ERG & ET
Draft report submitted	End April 2019	ET
Workshop in Dhaka	May 2019	ET & partners in Bangladesh
Final report	June 2019	ET

## 6. Evaluation management

The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the Danida evaluation policy on development cooperation (October 2015), the Danida evaluation guidelines (2018) and the OECD-DAC standard criteria for evaluations including quality standards (2010).<sup>2</sup>

The basic DAC evaluation principles of independence of those responsible for the design and implementation of the development intervention, and of utilisation of evaluators external to the development partner and implementing organisations will be applied.

Responsibility for the content and presentation of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation rests with the evaluation team. The views and opinions expressed in the report will not necessarily correspond to the views of the Danish Government, the Government of Bangladesh or the implementing organisations. The final evaluation report will be available to all relevant stakeholders, published on the internet, and submitted to the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation.

There are three sets of roles in the process: a) the Evaluation Management; b) the Evaluation Team (Consultant); and, c) the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).

Role of the Evaluation Management (the Client)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.netpublikationer.dk/UM/evaluation\\_guidelines\\_january\\_2018/Index.html](http://www.netpublikationer.dk/UM/evaluation_guidelines_january_2018/Index.html)

The evaluation will be supervised and managed by the Evaluation Department (EVAL) in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The Evaluation Management will:

- Participate in the selection of Evaluation Team based on received tenders and assisted by an independent tender consultant.
- Coordinate with all relevant evaluation stakeholders.
- Ensure that quality control is carried out throughout the evaluation process. In so doing, EVAL may make use of external peer reviewers.
- Provide feedback to the Evaluation Team. Comment on draft versions of the inception report, the work plan, annual field visit reports and the summative evaluation report.
- Approve final reports.
- Organise and chair meetings of the Evaluation Reference Group.
- Facilitate and participate in evaluation workshops, including possibly an open dissemination workshop towards the end of the evaluation.
- Organise presentation of evaluation results and follow-up on the evaluation for the internal Danida Programme Committee and the Minister for Foreign Affairs (the responsible department or Embassy drafts the management response).
- Advise relevant stakeholders on matters related to the evaluation.

#### Role of the Evaluation Team (the Consultant)

The DAC evaluation principles of independence of the Evaluation Team will be applied. The Evaluation Team will carry out the evaluation based on a contract with the MoFA and will:

- Prepare and carry out the evaluation according to the ToR, the approved Inception Report, the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards and the Danida Evaluation Guidelines.
- Be responsible to the Evaluation Management for the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.
- Ensure that quality assurance is carried out and documented throughout the evaluation process according to the Consultant's own Quality Assurance Plan as described in the proposal.
- Report to the Evaluation Management regularly about progress of the evaluation.
- Organise and coordinate meetings and field visits, and other key events, including debriefing session and/or validation workshops in the field visit countries.

The Team Leader is responsible for the team's reporting, proper quality assurance and for the organisation of the work. The Team Leader will participate in the ERG meetings and other meetings as required and upon request. It is envisaged that the Team Leader will participate in approximately three meetings in Copenhagen during the whole process.

#### Role of the Evaluation Reference Group

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established and chaired by EVAL. Other members of the ERG will include the Danish Embassy in Dhaka and other stakeholders. The mandate of the ERG is to provide advisory support and inputs to the evaluation, e.g. through comments to draft reports. The reference group will work with direct meetings, e-mail communication and video-conferencing. The tasks of the ERG are to:

- Comment on the field mission preparation notes, draft inception report, draft annual field visit reports and draft evaluation report with a view to ensure that the evaluation is based on factual knowledge about the engagement and how it has been implemented.
- Support the implementation of the evaluation and promote the dissemination of the evaluation conclusions and recommendations.
- Other key stakeholders may be consulted at strategic points in time of the evaluation either through mail correspondence or through participation in stakeholder meetings/workshops.

## **7. Eligibility**

The OECD-DAC evaluation principles of independence of the evaluation team will be applied. In situations where conflict of interest occurs, candidates may be excluded from participation, if their participation may question the independence and impartiality of the evaluation. Any firm or individual consultant that has participated in the preparation or implementation of the evaluated Danida programmes will be excluded from participation in the tender.

Tenderers are obliged to carefully consider issues of eligibility for individual consultants and inform the Client of any potential issues relating to a possible conflict of interest.<sup>3</sup>

## **8. Financial proposal and working days**

### **Budget**

The maximum budget for the consultancy services under this assignment is DKK 1,900,000 (excl. VAT). This includes all fees and project related expenses required for the implementation of the contract, including field trips.

EVAL will cover the expenditures incurred in preparing the final evaluation report for publication and any additional dissemination activities as and if agreed upon.

### **Working days**

In addition to Article XII of the agreement, it is specified that a “working day” amounts to 8 hours. The daily fee rates for Key Staff, cf. Appendix 3, shall, thus, cover 8 hours of work.

Weekends and holidays can be considered working days when work is undertaken on mission in Bangladesh or in relation to travels to and from missions.

## **9. Requirements of home office support**

The Consultant’s office shall provide the following, to be covered by the Consultants fees:

- General home office administration and professional back-up. The back-up activities shall be specified.
- Quality assurance (QA) of the consultancy services in accordance with the quality management and quality assurance system described in the Tender. Special emphasis should be given to

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<sup>3</sup> See: Danida Evaluation Guidelines (2018), Annex 1.



quality assurance of draft reports prior to the submission of such reports. EVAL may request documentation for the QA undertaken in the process.

All QA activities should be properly documented and reported to EVAL.

## **10. Background documents**

Selected background documents include the following:

- Danida/MoFA (2011): Evaluation of the farmer field school approach in the Agricultural sector Programme Support (ASPS), phase II.
- IFPRI (2017): Promoting agricultural growth, technology adoption and crop diversity.
- World Bank (2016): The dynamics of rural growth in Bangladesh.

Further documentation will be available at the start of the evaluation assignment.