

**BANGLADESH ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMICS AND POVERTY
PROGRAMME (BEEPP)**

MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT

FINAL COMPLETE DRAFT FOR DEBRIEFING SESSION

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INTRODUCTION

The Bangladesh Environment, Economics and Poverty Programme (BEEPP) was established by SIDA (Sweden) and the University of Goteborg (Sweden) in 2001. It has been based at the IUCN Bangladesh Office since the inception of its activities in September 2001.

The Agreement between the Environmental Economics Unit, Department of Economics, Goteborg University and IUCN Bangladesh specified in its Article 5 that the IUCN Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Unit would undertake a Review of the BEEPP Pilot Phase in the third quarter of 2002.

This Report presents the results of that Review, carried out in September 2002 by a Team of 3 persons unrelated to the Programme. These persons are based in countries other than Bangladesh and have expertise in the fields addressed by BEEPP: economics, poverty and environment. The Review Team consisted of:

Ø Nireka Weeratunge

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velopd IUCPolicy Institute)1:

BEEPP PERFORMANCE

1. Initial Guidance

How appropriate are the Basic BEEPP documents? What exactly is the concept of the Project? What are its innovative aspects? Do these documents provide enough guidance for implementation? Do they define expected products and delivery dates? Do they include indicators about the expected outcomes or impacts? Is it possible to identify a set of products that can be used as a ref

The review team collected information from a variety of sources in Bangladesh. No consultation was made with the University of Goteborg until the debriefing session. The main sources of information were:

1. Documents

Both the BEEPP Director and the IUCN Bangladesh Office provided these documents. They include correspondence between the partners, successive drafts of the agreement, workplans, reports, notes from seminars, etc.

2. Interviews

The review team interviewed several persons in Dhaka related to the BEEPP work. The interviewed experts and heads of organizations included some people selected by the team, those proposed by the BEEPP and some by the IUCN Country Representative.

The complete list included:

| NAME | ORGANIZATION, POSITION | PROPOSED BY |
|-------------------------|---|-------------|
| 1. Dr. Iftekhar Hossain | BEEPP, Director | Review Team |
| 2. Dr. Ainun Nishat | IUCN Bangladesh, Country Representative | Review Team |
| 3. Waled Mahmud | BEEPP, Director | Review Team |

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3. Questionnaires

Twenty Questionnaires were sent by email to people that participated in events organized by or related to BEEPP.

Thirteen of them were returned (65%) by email as requested. The list of the people that returned Questionnaires is presented below.

| NAME | ORGANIZATION |
|----------------------------|--|
| Jamil Ahmed | Local Governments Initiative / USAID |
| Tanveer Ahsan | Water & Sanitation Programme. World Bank |
| Ushit Maung | Rakhaing Development Foundation |
| Shafiul Azam Ahmed | Water & Sanitation Programme. World Bank |
| Saifur Rahman Khan | Jesh Foundation |
| Quazi Sarwar Imtiaz Hashmi | Dept.of Environment |
| Mainul Huq | Development Policy Group |
| Atiq Rahman | Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies |
| Mustafa Mujeri | Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies |
| Shaikh Ataur Rahman | Association for Socio Economic Advance of Bangladesh |
| Nurul Islam Azem | Center for Urban Studies, Dhaka University |
| Sheikh Moktar Ali | World Literature Center |
| Syer Munid Kashru | e-Gen Consultants Ltd. |

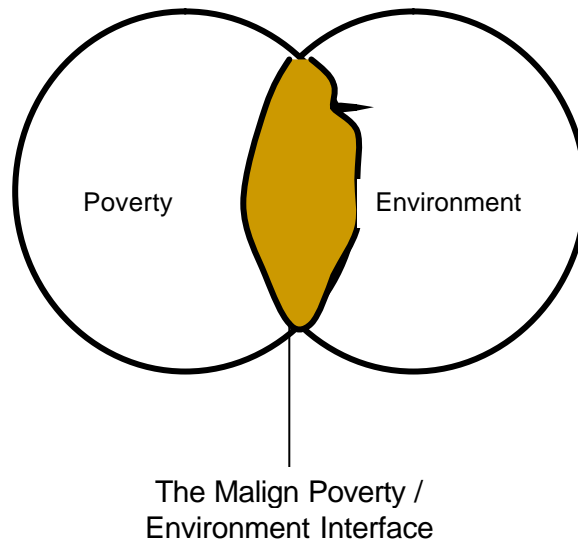
This group is mostly composed by mid and junior level staff, with two senior experts. They came from different sectors (Government, NGOs, International Projects, Consultants, etc). Many of them work in different sectors simultaneously, as common in Bangladesh.

They have different areas of expertise, but mostly on those addressed by BEEPP (environment, economics and poverty).

The results obtained from processing the information provided through the Questionnaires are presented as Annex 4.

RESULTS

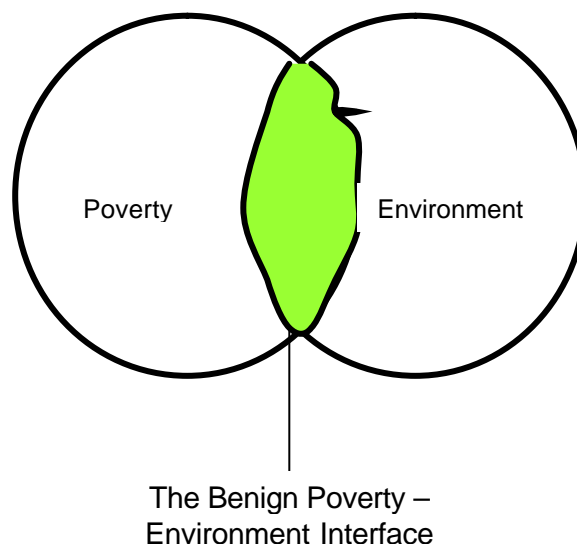
opposed to perverse -- incentives and subsidies. Ultimately, environmental economics can be seen as one among many instruments for transforming the malign nexus into a benign one. The schematic below is illustrative:



How to transform a malign into a benign nexus:

§ Research and case studies to inform the following:

- ü Policies (pricing, incentives)
- ü Institutional transformation (aimed at giving space to communities)
- ü Legal and regulatory changes (enforcement where viable, compliance otherwise)
- ü Program and project interventions (with community participation)



b. The Project Planning

In contrast to articulating the linkages in a clear and focused manner, the attempt to institutionalize these linkages within a single program fell far short of expectations. The program/project concept, as defined in this initial stage, was too broad and too vague. It did not provide focus or prioritize the areas, strategies and activities, enumerating instead a

long list of activities. The project planning matrix (PPM) or logical framework analysis (LFA) is a good index of the deficiencies in the program, which led to a number of disconnected activities with no measurable impact at the end. In the interest of preserving continuity of the review, a detailed dissection of the PPM/LFA is not attempted. Instead, a few key problems are highlighted illustratively:

- § In the first place, the matrix was not developed consultatively as we were informed explicitly in one of the stakeholder interviews. It is a bit of a contradiction in terms then to mention a diversity of partners in the PPM/LFA, such as, “Government agencies, local bodies, national and grassroots level NGOs, research and educational institutions and professional associations. “
- § A related and important deficiency is the poor sequencing of activities. In an innovative project of this nature, a perception of linkages is no substitute for demonstrated their existence through solid research, which forms the basis for an informed training and advocacy campaign. In actual fact, the research thrust was ill conceived and inadequate. In fact, the management implementation and dissemination of research should, arguably, have formed the main thrust of the project. Specifically, research priority (problem) areas should have been identified; proposals developed for mutually reinforcing case and policy research studies; selective studies initiated (recognizing project financial constraints); and a comprehensive literature review undertaken. The last would have permitted a relatively quick launch of an advocacy campaign, based on a synthesis of existing research which would, subsequently, be strengthened by the findings of the fresh research.
- § These are the two generic flaws discerned in the PPM/LFA. In turn, they give rise to contradictions and inconsistencies in the PPM/LFA itself. These are mentioned randomly. First, there exists an overlap between the “goal” and the second “expected result,” as demonstrated by identical objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs), which, however, are slightly different in quantitative terms. Second, there does not appear to be a clear basis for distinguishing between the research and training activities which fall respectively under the two “expected results/outputs.” The differentiation seems to have been attempted in a somewhat haphazard manner. Third, the OVIs are too vague. The targets give the impression of having been plucked out of thin air, while stakeholders have not been identified or prioritized. Fourth, the assumptions have a somewhat inverted nature. The goals, outputs and activities are premised on a favorable policy environment and stakeholder commitment when the intent of the project is to foster precisely such an environment and commitment. This should have been thought through a bit more carefully. Fifth, and last, an indicative budget should have been prepared for the various planned activities.

In short, the planned project activities fell short of spelling out a systemic program on how to identify, inform and reverse the policy-environment nexus

BEEPP Performance

BEEPP has operated for one year (Sep 2001 to Sep 2002). To analyze BEEPP performance, it is necessary to look at what transpired during that year (process) and to analyze what were the outputs (products, services, milestones) generated during that time.

Process

A summary of the events is provided in Annex 6, in a format similar to that used for the previous section. Based on these events, other documentation and information from the different interviews, the findings of the Review Team about this process are:

- There is a clear conflict of perceptions and expectations between the heads of IUCN-B and BEEPP. This conflict led to a number of controversial decisions from both sides that can be illustrated with a few examples:
 - ü Both sides did not follow IUCN regulations for staff recruitment. IUCN-B first offered a nominee rather than recruiting as per procedure. Then BEEPP came with its own candidate, again without proper process. When, finally, agreed-upon procedures were followed, the support staff was recruited successfully.
 - ü Planning and Reporting agreements were not followed by BEEPP and also not always requested by IUCN-B.
 - ü BEEPP has and still is ignoring the IUCN-B CR in terms of planning and reporting. Plans and Reports are sent to everybody, but not to the agreed-upon IUCN representative in the PMG
 - ü PMG is not working, and none of the parties, with the possible exception of UoG seems to be interested in having an active PMG
- The Advisory / Steering Committee of BEEPP remains to be invited and formed constraining the possibilities of BEEPP to get external guidance from the Bangladesh institutional context.
- The backstopping function from UoG seems very limited, and restricted to a couple of brief meetings in November, a one day meeting in June and emails. It should be highlighted that this finding is based only on the documentation made available to the Review Team in Bangladesh: no interviews were held with UoG until the debriefing session.
- c. The Project Planning Matrix (PPM), that seems to have replaced the Inception Report without major justification, was developed without consultation with IUCN or any other Bangladeshi organization (see previous section). The accepted practice of PPMs about involving all possible stakeholders seems to have been omitted in this case, again without proper justification.
- d. Financial reporting seems to have been done adequately, since no complaints have been registered.
- e. Budget implementation during the first year was weak. Against 50% of the project time period, less than one third of the budget was spent. At the same time, several requests for small funding from potential partners (see Interviews) were ignored or not followed through on grounds of insufficient funding.

Outputs

In terms of Outputs, it is possible to mention the following:

- a. Products
 - i. Project Planning Matrix (PPM). It is conceptually weak, too ambitious in scope and not focused. The indicators are heroic, to say the least and the Programme is unlikely to achieve them. There is no monitoring plan to collect information about progress towards those indicators.
 - ii. Brief Activity Plan (July-September 2002). Same as above.
 - iii. Project Report. Given the scarcity of activities and products, the Project Report cannot be expected to be very substantive. There is a lack of self-assessment and self-analysis about the lack of products, rather the

Alternative scenarios for BEEPP future

The Review Team explored in all the interviews the issues of BEEPP's niche and possible institutional arrangements.

In terms of the potential niche for BEEPP (is there a need for a Programme like BEEPP in Bangladesh?) there is a broad consensus about the need to explore the poverty / environment interface from different perspectives, including the economic one. The need to base such exploration on research was also a common issue, both raised by the different persons and collected from the answers to the Questionnaires (see Annexes 3 and 4).

Whether BEEPP is the adequate organization for such task was not obvious because all the external interviewees said that BEEPP had not implemented enough activities and generated enough products to be able to make such an assessment. However, several interviewees considered Dr.Hossain to be a committed and competent person in his field of expertise and the persons who answered the Questionnaires also considered BEEPP as Very relevant or Relevant to the situation of Bangladesh (see Annexes 3 and 4)

In terms of possible future scenarios, the Review Team identified the following, which are presented with their respective advantages and problems.

Alternative 1. Independent organization

Advantages

- ü It is the alternative chosen by SIDA from the beginning and the primary and highest, aspiration of BEEPP.
- ü It will give BEEPP maximum freedom to set its Agenda without any kind of constraint from or compromise with any partner.
- ü There is reasonable openness and goodwill in the Bangladesh context for a new organization. In fact this is such a common occurrence in Bangladesh that it would not constitute an issue as it might in other countries.

Disadvantages

- ü Higher costs, as an independent organization it will need to have its own range of systems. That means that the BEEPP budget should have to be increased by 30 to 50% to develop the required systems (accounting, finance, HR, recruitment, cleaning, renting, communications, network maintenance, building maintenance, mobility, drivers, security, etc.)
- ü Credibility. Building image and credibility from scratch in a context of 12,000 existing civil organizations will require significant additional efforts and time than becoming associated with another organization.
- ü Isolation. Being an independent organization with a secure source of funding increases the risk of institutional isolation, as seen with many other organizations around the world.
- ü Most interviewees pointed out that BEEPP was not ready to become independent right now and the BEEPP head admitted as much, opting for an interim arrangement with an organization. In fact this is such a common occurrence in Bangladesh that it would not

Alternative 2. Association with Government

Advantages

- ü Direct contact with some part of the Governmental structure and related policy-makers
- ü Potential for expansion and replication to other Governmental sectors

Disadvantages

- ü It is not clear whether or not Government of Bangladesh wants this type of association or hosting
- ü No total independence for BEEPP as the programmatic agenda has to be negotiated and articulated with the hosting organization
- ü Lack of direction, as Government will not be able to provide long-term strategic directions, as opposed to short-term gains in political terms.
- ü Instability, as Governments and Governmental Officers change and rotate quickly
- ü Red tape and more inefficiency as a consequence of the need to follow Governmental procedures
- ü Less transparency, as Governmental concerns and activities seem always to be motivated by political or other gains
- ü Less flexibility, as Government will like to have its own agenda implemented

This

Alternative 6. Maintaining the association with IUCN Bangladesh

Advantages

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Conclusions

- It is not clear what is the basic strategy of BEEPP. This was a major weakness during the formulation process and remains not addressed. In a context such as Bangladesh with an extremely high number of registered NGOs (at least 12,000 and as much as 15,000 depending on the source and the status of the Register where organizations are added and deleted continuously), it is necessary to have a clear strategy to survive. The existing organizations cover all the imaginable spectrum of activities and almost everything is claimed as being done in the past or being under way. In this context, it seems to the Review Team and most of the persons interviewed external to BEEPP that the Programme would achieve depth and credibility only if it research driven. However, there is no indication that any type of research is being done or supported by BEEPP. This situation opens the way for hard questions about the nature and purposes of BEEPP's advocacy activities (in the words of some interviewees, advocacy without weverf th ispolicactivithouTD

Recommendations

- One of the Conclusions of the Review is that BEEPP is not ready yet to become an independent organization. Some of the steps the Review Team recommends BEEPP to take in that direction are:
 - Ø To move one step forward about the conceptual base of the Programme. At the moment, there is a good articulation of the economic aspects of it, as presented in page 6 (Development concept). Having said that, the poverty and environmental aspects are not developed to a level consistent with the economic one, probably reflecting the professional backgrounds in BEEPP. This situation highlights the need to open a wider multi-disciplinary dialogue with specialists from the other sciences in order to have an integrated inter-disciplinary approach.
 - Ø To establish its Steering/Advisory Committee with the best possible group of knowledgeable people in the BEEPP fields (environment, economics and poverty), with a good balance between research and advocacy.
 - Ø To go through a broad participatory process to redefine its Project Planning Matrix, as a tool to reflect the priorities and views of Bangladeshis rather than the personal views of the BEEPP staff.
 - Ø To define achievable indicators and to put in place an adequate monitoring system to keep track of the progress towards those indicators
 - Ø To adopt a strategy based on applied and policy-relevant research as the basic platform. Research can be undertaken either as primary research and/or as a synthesis of existing knowledge and generation of new insights and ideas. In due time, knowledge generated through research will feed the training and advocacy components.
 - Ø To carry out a literature review on environment/poverty/economics research already available in Bangladesh and hold a brain-storming session with Bangladeshi experts to identify research/advocacy gaps and to prioritize key areas
 - Ø To focus on a small number of key areas, which can demonstrate the advantages and potential of looking at the environment / poverty nexus, hopefully based on real field/empirical situations. That will require BEEPP to enter into partnerships with organizations working in the field (including IUCN-B); such partnerships and field involvement can only be advantageous for BEEPP.
 - Ø To develop a deep rationale and lay the necessary groundwork for the independence of BEEPP. Looking at the present situation, the continuous need for independence expressed by BEEPP seems premature.
- The above conclusion also implies that a temporary or permanent hosting arrangement will be required by BEEPP. The Review Team strongly recommends taking all the necessary steps to avoid the mistakes that plagued the process with IUCN Bangladesh. Every hosting organization (with the exception of those interested only in overheads) will

ANNEXES

- Ø Identification of possible alternatives for the future evolution of BEEPP, based on different experiences from South Asia. These alternatives will explore possible institutional modalities, staffing requirements, scope, etc.
- Ø Analysis of the potentials and constraints of the different scenarios, aiming to provide inputs to the BEEPP Steering Committee

5. Methodology

Data collection

The Review will be based on data collected by the Review Team using different tools. Data collection will rely basically on:

- Ø Documents, papers, publications and similar related to the different aspects and stages of BEEPP
- Ø Questionnaires to be completed and returned by key stakeholders, mostly from Bangladesh but without excluding persons and organizations from other places
- Ø Personal interviews with key people related to BEEPP and BEEPP activities in Bangladesh

Data sources

The following data sources will be consulted:

- Ø BEEPP archives
- Ø IUCN Bangladesh Country Office
- Ø IUCN Regional Environmental Economics Programme
- Ø Stockholm University
- Ø IUCN members and Commission members in Bangladesh
- Ø Key partners (actual and potential) for BEEPP, including academic organizations, research organizations, governmental organizations and NGOs and others as suggested during the review process

Data analysis

- Ø Documents information will be duly collated and organized
- Ø Questionnaires will be processed following regular statistical procedures
- Ø Information from interviews will also duly collated and organized

Presentation of results

The review team will prepare a Report presenting the information and data collected during the review process as a platform for a set of conclusions emerging from the Review and backed by data.

A set of review team recommendations will also be included, separating clearly conclusions backed by data from recommendations emerging from the mentioned conclusions and the views of the review team

6. Review Team

It is proposed that the Review Team may be integrated by:

Alejandro Imbach (Team Leader). IUCN Asia Programme Coordinator, former IUCN Senior Monitoring and Evaluation specialist.

Shaheen Rafi Khan. An economist from the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan, will provide a focus on economics and sustainable development, and the experience of an independent research center that evolved from a joint Project between IUCN and NORAD.

Nireka Weeratunge. An Anthropologist from the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) in Colombo, Sri Lanka, will provide a poverty focus, as well as the experience from a independent center that evolved from a Project.

7. Required time and dates

The review will take 4 weeks, one for preparation, one field week in Bangla Desh and two weeks for data processing and report drafting.

It is proposed to start at the beginning of September in order to have the field week from September 9 to 13.

ANNEX 1

BEEPP REVIEW MATRIX

| ASPECT | QUESTIONS |
|-------------------------------|--|
| BEEPP PERFORMANCE | |
| 1. Initial Guidance | <p>How appropriate are the Basic BEEPP documents ? What is exactly the concept of the Project ? What are the innovative aspects of it ? Do these documents provide enough guidance for implementation? Do they define expected products and delivery dates ? Do they include indicators about the expected outcomes or impacts ? Is it possible to identify a set of products that can be used as a reference for this Review ?</p> <p>If the some of the answers to the previous questions is negative, what BEEPP did or should do in the near future to address them properly ?</p> |
| 2. Present situation | <p>What is the progress on the definition of BEEPP scope, goals, outputs, outcomes and impacts in relation to the initial guides ? What is the organizational structure of BEEPP and how its key processes (decision making, strategic guidance, fund raising, etc) are managed ?</p> |
| 3. Institutional arrangements | <p>How well has worked the relation between BEEPP and the hosting organization (IUCN-B) ? What were the advantages, synergies, constraints and problems that emerged in the first year of the relationship ?</p> |
| 4. Activities and products | <p>What is the list of activities done by BEEPP staff up to now ? What are the products and services delivered ? How do they compare against the reference ? What is the impact (actual or expected) of the Programme in the different fields ? What are the strengths and weaknesses of BEEPP activities and products ?</p> |
| 5. Partners and alliances | <p>What people and organizations related with the BEEPP fields are in touch with the Programme ? What do they know about BEEPP ? What is their opinion or assessment about BEEPP goals, methods and practice ? How much relevant are these people and/or organizations in the country context? How much engaged or involved are they ? Are there any specific and explicit partnerships or alliances forged ?</p> |

| BEEPP FUTURE | |
|--|---|
| 1. Niche and strategic focus | <p>What are the perceptions of the different key stakeholders (Bangladeshi experts and organizations, BEEPP Staff, IUCN-B, Goteborg U., REEP, other about:</p> <p>d) the niche of BEEPP? What BEEPP should be doing (research/knowledge; public awareness; lobbying / policy-makers influencing; improvement of civil servants skills and/or civil society organizations; other) ? What are the potential strengths and weaknesses for BEEPP about these different roles ?</p> <p>e) what should be the focus areas or themes of BEEPP within the larger fields of economics, environment and policy ? What are the potential strengths and weaknesses for BEEPP regarding these areas ?</p> <p>f) is BEEPP duplicating the role of other organizations ? If so, what is the rationale for that ?</p> |
| 2. Long-term institutional arrangement | <p>Same as above about:</p> <p>What seems to be today the potential and constraints of the following long term institutional arrangement for BEEPP ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø a joint Programme between GU and IUCN; Ø an independent policy or research center; Ø an independent NGO; Ø a Center within some Bangladeshi University or Research Center structure; Ø other that may emerge during the review process |
| 3. Intermediate stages | <p>Is it necessary to think about intermediate stages between the present institutional status of BEEPP and the different long term arrangements analyzed before ?</p> |
| 4. Recommendations | <p>What are the Review Team recommendations for short and medium term actions for BEEPP in relation with all the analyzed issues ?</p> |

ANNEX 2 – QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Economics Unit of the Goteborg University (Sweden) and the Bangladesh Office of IUCN (The World Conservation Union) established the BEEPP (Bangladesh Environment, Economics and Poverty Programme) in 2001.

This Programme is now being reviewed by the partners and, as the Review Team, we are asking for your collaboration as an expert in Bangladesh on a field related by BEEPP. We will be very thankful if you can take 5 minutes to answer the following questions and email this Questionnaire to the following email address: imbach@racsac.co.cr, cc to iucnaimb@ait.ac.th

SOME BRIEF QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

Please, when pertinent, underline or highlight your chosen answer

Your name:

Your organizations:

Your main field of expertise (please underline): Economics Poverty Environment Other

Main type of work you do (please underline): Research Teaching Policymaking Field work

You work for (underline): Government University NGO Private sector Independently

ABOUT BEEPP

Please, when pertinent, underline or highlight your chosen answer

1. Do you know about BEEPP ? Yes No
2. Have you participated in any BEEPP activity this year ? Yes No
3. Have you received any BEEPP product this year ? Yes No

If you have answered “No” to all the above questions. Please stop, save the Questionnaire and attach it to an email addressed to the above mentioned directions. Thank you for your help.

If you have answered “Yes” to one or more of the above questions, please answer the following questions:

1. How do you assess the BEEPP activity you participated or BEEPP product you received ?

Very useful Useful Somewhat useful Useless Not applicable

2. What is your overall perception of BEEPP in relation to the Bangladesh context ?

Very relevant Relevant Little relevant Irrelevant Don't know

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1. The interviews will be aimed to obtain ideas and opinions about the Questions listed in the Review Matrix.
2. The interviews will be conducted in an unstructured way, that is as an open conversation. The interviewers should keep their questions in mind in order to guide

ANNEX 2

AGENDA OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

August 2002

- Ø Development and agreement on Terms of Reference
- Ø Preparation of methodological guidelines and tools
- Ø Identification and agreement on consultants
- Ø Contacting and hiring consultants
- Ø Logistic arrangements (visas, travel, accommodations, lists of candidates, etc)

September 2002

Sep.9 & 10. Arrival of the Review Team

Sep.10 Review Team Meeting
BEEPP presentation and interview to Dr. Iftekhar Hossain (BEEPP)

Sep.11 Interview to Dr. Ainun Nishat (IUCN Bangladesh)
Interview to Dr. Mustafa Mujeri (BIDS)
Interview to Dr. Atiq Rahman (BCAS)
Interview to M.Walisuzzaman (IUCN B)
Interview to Shuvashish P. Barua (IUCN B) ArrivamSBu-0.1266 Tc -0.7EPP presto M.Wali

ANNEX 3

SUMMARY OF THE EXTERNAL INTERVIEWS

This Annex presents a Summary of the points raised by the interviewed persons who were neither IUCN nor BEEPP staff.

A first section presents the points common to all or most of the interviewed persons. This section is followed by a summary of each individual interview.

Common points

- All interviewees were familiar with the BEEPP programme, with one exception who had just a vague recollection
- All perceived that the concept of the programme - to link environment, economics and poverty – was novel in the Bangladeshi institutional landscape and vital.
- All found sound research to be the basis of a good advocacy programme and said that BEEPP had not undertaken this activity. Some said that they had submitted research proposals to BEEPP and were told that there were no sufficient funds for research.
- The majority of interviewees found advocacy at the policy level to be important while some found grassroots advocacy and capacity-building/training among professionals to be as or more important.
- Several interviewees pointed out that the visible BEEPP activities had been done in collaboration with other organizations – e.g. training course on environmental economics, which SANDEE had already planned.
- Several interviewees pointed that the programme needs to “clarify the poverty-environment issues” and be more “focused” in terms of its objectives and activities.
- All interviewees, except one, felt that BEEPP was not ready to be an independent organisation. The reasons varied – one mentioned the three prerequisites of an “idea that shatters people”, personality of founder, and networks; another referred to the “3 C’s” – concern, commitment, competence; and a third pointed out the importance of family background, a good staff and experience.
- Several interviewees were ready to open their doors to hosting BEEPP on the condition that it developed a more focused approach, fitted with their own programmes and followed their administrative procedures. On the NGO/research institute side, BCAS and CDRB were willing and on the academic side, Independent University (IU) was willing. The North-South University had been open to hosting BEEPP even earlier but it was pointed out that the institution would work (institution would work) in the

INTERVIEW A

Familiarity/relationship with BEEPP

Unlike big programmes like BEMP and SEMP, BEEPP is designed in a way that it could be a good programme to work on the poverty-environment nexus. The team has made good connections with policy-makers and politicians but so far they have not used their potential. They have the potential to build up this network. There is a policy lacuna in this area and one can do something if one intends to. He thought that PD, BEEPP did not have the full authority to do what he intended to do. He felt there were internal organisational reasons for obstructing the PD's work. The reference to the "sluggish start" in the Progress Report gave the sense of a difficult situation. As an outsider, he cannot say what exactly the problem was. He had also participated in the symposia organised by BEEPP. There was a lot of discussion at the symposia, including issues such as the PRSP, which some participants called the "Poverty Reproduction Strategy Paper". BEEPP also organised a training course with SANDEE. So they have carried out an advocacy programme -symposia, meeting with the mayor, meetings with policy-makers.

BEEPP's potential niche

He strongly felt that they should continue to do advocacy on the poverty-environment nexus. Some of the issues suggested were urban workers and their environment, common property resources, trees in embankments, and forestry. Local NGOs could be involved as partners in riverine and coastal areas, as well as tribal areas. In the symposia, several people, including him, have raised the issue that the poverty-environment nexus was a grey area and practical work needs to be done to make the poverty-environmental linkages visible. People cannot understand the nexus unless they can visualise the situation on the ground. BEEPP has not undertaken much research or pilot initiatives. The impact of advocacy on policy-making in terms of the government is difficult to see. It can take years. The right people have to be approached in the right way. Then you could change things fairly fast. But you cannot change policies overnight. However, with large NGOs, like BRAC, which have a wide outreach you can do miracles overnight. It is much easier to impact their policies and it can lead to long-term improvement.

INTERVIEW B

Familiarity/relationship with BEEPP

He got to know PD, BEEPP through third persons. He had helped him with guidance on “an honorary basis” for some time. In the last few weeks he had seen him more often. BEEPP relates poverty alleviation with environmental conservation. He had been in one of the symposia – the one where John Dixon was the presenter. The Minister of Environment and the Swedish Ambassador were present. The structure of the symposium permitted a lot of participation – two-way traffic and lively discussion, which is not often the case with such events. Although he was unable to attend it, he had heard that the first seminar was also a success. BEEPP has been networking and despite initial reversal, not reversal but slow start, it was now doing things. Grameen Bank and BRAC have made a lot of progress in poverty alleviation. If somebody tries to put the two streams together – poverty alleviation and environmentally sustainable development – this will have an impact. They had kept in touch and invited each other for their seminars and workshops.

BEEPP's potential niche

It is important for the organisation to network with government and policy-makers, not just the politicians of the day but the more continuous technocratic part of the government. This is a weak link in most NGOs. They try to avoid the government – their attitude is “may God keep the Czar away from us”. BEEPP also should not neglect the main activity, which is grassroots advocacy.

If BEEPP develops a design – not spectacular activities but small focused ones, they could help BEEPP. They had a lot of experience in running seminars/workshops and they could help BEEPP to get people together. For example, BEEPP has been thinking of making a contribution to the PRSP. They could advice whom to invite, whom to talk about the PRSP and get people together.

BEEPP's strength was that it was breaking new ground with the poverty-environment linkage. “The poor could be a power-house for environmentally sustainable development”. The poor needed to be supported with alternatives if they are told not to cut branches from a forest. If they can show how poverty is built in with environment and how to apply this kind of knowledge, they would be doing pioneering work.

In looking at BEEPP's future, if one thinks in terms of sustainability a trust would do that. But BEEPP is not ready to be independent. It is best that it works in partnership and co-operation with another institution or a group of institutions until such time it has been built up. If it were aligned with an environment-oriented organisation the poverty alleviation aspect might be neglected and vice versa.

They could host BEEPP – they were open, depending on what the project decided to do. Of course, this would be under very clear guidelines on what BEEPP wanted to do and what their organization wanted to do, on equipment and so on. He heard that IUCN had moved. He understood that BEEPP was paying rent to IUCN. But right now he was not clear who was housing whom. He was not aware of the activities of the IUCN in Bangladesh. He knew the CR who was held in very high esteem in the water development sector. He was willing to have a formal or informal contract with BEEPP and he was prepared to serve on the Advisory board if requested.

INTERVIEW D

Familiarity/relationship with BEEPP

The only active programme he experienced by BEEPP was the joint training workshop with SANDEE. His involvement with BEEPP so far has not been very high. In terms of the poverty-environment relationship, they had focused on the environment part but it was not often linked to poverty, which was very important. Many environment projects could not show clearly how these were linked with poverty issues - this was the case with a recent review mission, which had turned down an environment project and he had been asked to redesign it by incorporating poverty and socio-economic issues.

BEEPP's potential niche

An important area of activity for BEEPP would be poverty-linked environmental research, leading to policy outcomes. For example in the Sundarbans, economic incentives to preserve the forest could be assessed. Or eco-tourism could be looked at as a transfer of resources for preservation. So there is a lot of potential for new research. Training is not a good idea because this would be duplication out of SIDA funds. SIDA is a major donor for SANDEE as well, and SANDEE has long-term goals in training people on research methodology - the output is expected five years down the line. However, the main focus of SANDEE is environmental economics; the poverty issue is weak there. Several proposals have been made to SANDEE on the socio-economic aspects of arsenic but the poverty impact of arsenic would be a new area. All environmental projects, not just BEEPP, have a weak research base.

Advocacy is just propaganda. Research is a must for different types of advocacy, as he learnt from being an advisor to many projects. Awareness raising at the grassroots can be supplemented by a journal/publication. There is not sufficient material on this topic in Bangladesh but if it were linked up with the region, there would be sufficient material. Priority research areas identified were water and sanitation (a lot of data collection by NGOs but insufficient analysis), arsenic, renewable energy sources and air/water pollution.

BEEPP should not definitely be housed in government. It is better to change government through focussed training material aimed at capacity building via a small training institution to deliver to target groups in the public sector, rather than stay within the government.

There are enough people working on poverty or environment but very few researchers bridging poverty and environmental issues.

It is not a good idea for BEEPP to become independent at this stage. In economics, BIDS was the most prestigious institution. Now all the researchers have left and formed their own NGOs. The capacity to provide policy advice is no longer there, when each person has his NGO. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPA) initiates a lot of dialogue but most of this is not based on research. Whatever government is being told, 90% of this is not based on sound research but short-term consultancy work.

INTERVIEW E

Familiarity/relationship with BEEPP

The connection with BEEPP came through the work he has done on environment and poverty issues in Bangladesh for a long time. He had proposed to PD, BEEPP that he looked at the issues within the Bangladeshi context and developed his programme. Also he had pointed out that three things were important to work on something: one had to be comfortable, have a good programme and commitment to implement it. He understood BEEPP to be a donor-driven programme where the PD had some problems reconciling his ideas with what SIDA wanted.

Bangladesh needed such a programme because “the whole of Bangladesh is about poverty and the environment”. The PD wanted to do some advocacy and research. Advocacy is not new here. People have been doing it. He asked the PD, BEEPP to sort out his ideas so that he could find a niche. He said that the PD had told him about the problems he had with IUCN. He pointed out that if he were not comfortable, there were other options. However, he should be open and transparent about the problems and seek a solution through a proper decision-making process.

Poverty- Environment issues

Poverty and environment issues are integrated into all their programmes but they did not have a fund for advocacy. So BEEPP could make a contribution. He welcomed anybody who was working on changing government policy. Attaching poverty at the end of economic growth does not solve anything. There has to be pro-poor planning from the beginning. The appendix approach works if poverty is less than 30% as in a country like Brazil. But in Bangladesh 55-68% of the population is poor so the same model cannot be followed. The drag on the rich by the poor is too much. The rich have to eliminate poverty for their own sake, rather than the sake of the poor. Poverty eradication here is necessary for economic growth to take place. Bangladesh has been rated the most corrupt country in the world. People have been talking about it for years instead of doing something about it. Poverty is the central issue here. The land-man ratio is very low. It is necessary to activate donors and government on the poverty-environment links.

BEEPP's potential niche

Anything that “clarifies poverty-environment issues better” would be relevant. Some research and advocacy, obviously meeting the Swedish requirements, could be developed. BEEPP has had no impact so far but that is difficult. Does the programme have a vision? How many people know about it? These are important questions. Initial research, quality research would be important. A gimmick is good but that is like a book cover. In the end there has to be substance behind it. To be independent organisation one has to have an “idea that shatters”, personality or a network. BEEPP might be able to use the latter route since it was building up a network.

In defence of BEEPP, it has to be said that working in Bangladesh is very difficult. The government is more corrupt than one can imagine. The donors are total cynics. There are many bright people doing something. Everything has been tried before. Positive results are difficult to get. If you have principles it is difficult to survive here. It is quite certain that the PD has not come back to Bangladesh to rob it. People want to know why and what a Bangladeshi has come back for. They think usually that one must be having a big grant and has something to give. To penetrate the NGO network one must have credibility, personality and a thesis. The utility of BEEPP has to be created. The strengths of the programme are the PD's dedication/commitment and the fact that he has funds in his hands. He has to move away from the community of returnees to build a new network. Finding a niche is not easy but he has chosen an area where research output is not of good quality so there is potential to develop a programme that has a comparative advantage. He said he would come back with a joint programme but has not done that so far. Training of policy-makers is of no use. Nobody wants to be trained, especially policy-makers most of whom come from farming backgrounds and know the issues. To do successful advocacy there needs to be a message. This message can only be distilled through sound research. So he could do secondary research. He would have to offer to pay some overheads but just providing an office and pure monetary flirtation is not sufficient. He has to come up with a good programme with clear activities and outputs within a year. He has to excite people with his idea. It has to fit with the needs of their programme. The diversification of productive systems by the poor, strengthening the poor through access to resources and new things for the poor to do would be areas to be looked at through the poverty, environment, economics approach.

INTERVIEW F

Familiarity/relationship with BEEPP

Concern, commitment and competence were necessary for an independent organisation. Commitment and competence are there in BEEPP. However, there is a problem of concern because too many actors are involved – the vision and the ownership of the programme is at stake. “Collectivism does not work here”. Networking is difficult, except in terms of e-mails.

INTERVIEW G

Familiarity/relationship with BEEPP

BEEPP came into being last year and the PD had kept him posted about his activities. He attended a few workshops. He understood that the PD at the beginning had problems with the local IUCN authorities and what he had wanted to do and what they wanted him to do did not match. So far no major breakthrough has been achieved by BEEPP. The activities done so far were with other organizations. It needed concrete effort to keep people interested in environmental economics.

Academics, policy-makers, students and NGO people attended the symposia organised by BEEPP. The quality was good. However, as environmental economics is a specialised subject, many people in the audience did not understand the presentations. This was apparent from the questions they asked. However, it was a good beginning. It is difficult to get people together in Bangladesh. One has to beg people to come. “This is a country of seminars and workshops”. Everyday, five or six are held but there are no lasting results. SEMP had a lot of seminars, the money was badly distributed – nothing was given to research based on environmental economics.

The training workshop with SANDEE lacked practical application of environmental economics to issues. The trainees were taught how to write PhD proposals. If they had done Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and how to do case studies so that the environment-poverty linkages could be explained, it would have been more useful.

He understood that some research proposals had been submitted to BEEPP but the answer had been that no funds were available for research. He also knew about a training proposal submitted to BEEPP to which there had been no response.

BEEPP’s potential niche

“Advocacy is a bogus thing.” Things could be changed only if politicians were really interested. It was better to train people who could really disseminate what they have learnt. “Advocacy dissipates like smoke”. Studies needed to be done on issues like valuation, green accounting. After the research, advocacy could be done by targeting planning ministry officials, inter-ministerial committees, and so on.

The monopoly on advocacy now is with the Centre for Policy Dialogue. It has become a routine exercise. There are 5-6 seminars before the budget and after the budget – there are minor changes made but the basic parts remain unchanged. Nobody has time or interest to do more. It is difficult to change the mindset. If one is critical, one is not invited the next time. The objective of the seminar was in any case to approve the already prepared consultancy report. BEEPP should not follow that current.

Only BEEPP has an environmental economics agenda. It is difficult for the programme to work without academic support. It could affiliate itself with an academic institution – a quasi-independent affiliation. However, there is always too much meddling into other people’s issues in the academic spheres. There is lots of money coming in. People have the idea that “aid is for plundering”. BEEPP should affiliate with a conducive partner. If there are too many contradictions, it discourages people.

It would be difficult for BEEPP to become an independent organisation right now. This is a donor-driven country. There are 14,000 NGOs of which 12,000 are registered. Nobody gives time since they have their own interests. Who will think of others? Independent organisations are created by retired Secretaries or retired professors. Government-level consultancies are monopolised by BIDS. Ministries give consultancies to their own people. ADB has its own team.

To be independent one needs a family background, experience and a good staff. In-depth research is a lot of work. What programmes like SEMP are doing is dubious. They stopped the project for a year because there were a lot of questions about where the funds were going. There was very little work done on natural resource management. BEEPP needs to be given the chance to explore the avenues. New people need to be given a chance.

ANNEX 4

QUESTIONNAIRES

The following section summarizes the answers to the Questionnaires. The section is organized by questions.

QUESTION 1. Do you know about BEEPP?

Yes: 100 % No: 0 %

QUESTION 2. Have you participated in any BEEPP activity this year?

Yes: 77% No: 23%

QUESTION 3. Have you received any BEEPP product this year?

Yes: 68% No: 32%

QUESTION 4. How do you assess the usefulness of such activity and/or product?

Very useful: 44% Useful: 40 Somewhat useful: 16 Useless: 0%

QUESTION 5. What is your perception about BEEPP in relation to Bangladesh context?

Very relevant: 55% Relevant: 45 % Little relevant: 0% Irrelevant: 0%

QUESTION 6. In your opinion, BEEPP should dedicate its future efforts to:

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Research: | 28 % |
| Advocacy: | 24 % |
| Public awareness: | 21 % |
| Training: | 15 % |
| Workshops organization: | 3 % |
| Networking | 3 % |
| Support national NGOs | 3 % |
| Implement Pilot Projects | 3 % |

NOTE: Participants gave more than one answer to this question. Percentages were calculated over the total number of answers.

QUESTION 7. In your opinion the main thematic areas to be addressed by BEEPP should be:

- Ø Linkages poverty / economics / environment
- Ø Effects of lack of conservation on poverty
- Ø Municipal waste management
- Ø Computerization of Municipal activities
- Ø Air pollution
- Ø Industrial pollution
- Ø

ANNEX 5**SUMMARY OF EXCHANGES AMONG THE PARTNERS DURING THE FORMULATION OF BEEPP - Sep 2000 to Sep 2001**

Based on the existing documentation (emails, proposals, draft agreements, comments to the draft agreements, etc) and the interviews to BEEPP and IUCNN staff, the Review Team prepared the following summary of that period.

This Annex is organized in 2 parts: a General Summary of the process and a Narrative Sequence of events and issues

1. GENERAL SUMMARY

The project was based on personal networking (as many projects are) and included personal reasons to be located in Bangladesh. This may have created problems in the way it was perceived by IUCN-

The negotiation process was fraught with difficulties. On the SIDA/EEU side, maximum

Conceptual issues in the Programme Document

The first draft had very general objectives, activities and outputs. There was no clear focus on what exactly the project would be working on. The conceptual framework, i.e. how environment, economics and poverty were linked, was in a generalized manner and what was innovative about the proposed programme was not substantively spelled out. These issues were pointed out in the comments from IUCN-Asia and Pakistan; i.e. “lack of overarching theme to connect main components”. However, SIDA/EEU and the PD (designate), BEEPP maintained that they would like the proposal to be “general” in order to be “flexible” and work on a “rolling plan”. However, the lack of focus in the concept and activities seem to have hindered the programme performance and might have contributed substantially to the late delivery of outputs.

Synergy between the two partners

The initial correspondence referred vaguely to synergies between the two organizations but what exactly these synergies were and how these could be strengthened, was not clarified or specified in the agreement. Thus, there was no basis later for mutual understandings of reciprocity.

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- key partners to be identified and roles specified

January 2001

- EEU response to new draft agreement: comments on “stringency” of the latest draft; need for clear roles between 3 actors: BEEPP responsible for content, EEU for backstopping. IUCN-B for hosting and administrative responsibility; M&E who pays for it? What format? Quarterly reports adequate for SIDA; if IUCN wants other M&E, why are they not paying for it? Review of project necessary only before decision on continuation; Project Mgmt Group (PMG) responsible for this; indemnity issue: should be personal responsibility not institutional (i.e. BEEPP’s)

Feb/March/April 2001

- Correspondence/negotiation process continues; involvement of Peter Rezel in process

May 2001

- Final version of draft agreement sent by CR,IUCN-B to EEU
- Recruitment of Programme Director (PD), BEEPP process starts

June 2001

- EEU rejects final draft, asks for modification as “substantial changes have been made to the document”, rather than “cosmetic retouching” by the legal and finance bureaus (as per e-mail of CR, IUCN-B); BEEPP is not primarily a “support” to IUCN, IUCN has agreed to be host to BEEPP; no reason to doubt that “you will be the perfect host”; not possible to push the time table forward because of the delays (SIDA insists)
- **Agreement signed on 14 June 2001**
- EEU informs CR, IUCN-B that PD, BEEPP can only take up post in September, as he is finishing up an assignment with the Swedish Foreign Ministry

July 2001

- PD Designate, BEEPP queries employment contract on 2 points: relocation allowance (to be paid by SIDA or IUCN); annual performance evaluation should be by SIDA not IUCN

September 2001

- **Programme Director, BEEPP takes up post**

- **Activity Plan for 3rd Quarter (July-Sep 2002) developed and sent** by PD-BEEPP to EEU and REEP- Head. REEP forwards to CR-IUCN-B
- CR-IUCN-B replies e-mail that he has not been sent Activity Plan by PD-BEEPP, just as much as the Progress Report

August 2002

- **Meeting, Goteborg, Sweden** (PD-BEEPP; Head-REEP; GK-EEU). As CR-IUCNB did not participate, and he was not replaced by other IUCN person, this meeting is questioned as PMG meeting
- Minutes sent by GK-EEU (main points)
 - BEEPP independent from receiving funds via government
 - Could bring environmental concerns into policy
 - Slow start but improvement since recruitment of staff
 - BEEPP should be different – low budget, flexible activities, work with small organizations, innovative ideas
 - Accomplishments – good contact with political/intellectual elite/legislature; good rapport with mass media; increased delivery of activities; support of Swedish Embassy; prospects of good relations with host, IUCN; Advisory Committee of high caliber, high integrity academics
 - Review should look at modalities for implementation, activities and priorities, planning and reporting
 - Plan for rest of year: **develop strategy** (prioritize env-poverty issues; commission related studies to discover best practice and develop policy advice; target activities for policy makers), **choice of activities** (environment in PRSP, greening of fiscal process, environment and health awareness, solid waste in Dhaka); **focus on one theme** (policy paper, workshop, multi-stakeholder consultation, training workshop)
 - Modalities for planning, reporting, meeting until Feb 2003
 - Operational aspects – Head, REEP to facilitate practical aspects of BEEPP's "smooth running" at IUCN-B.
 - Consolidation of strategy for coming months and checklist of actions
- Report of Head-REEP to IUCN- Asia and B (main points)
 - Proposed workplan – no-cost extension until Sep 2003 requested by PD, BEEPP – refused by both EEU and IUCN-REEP- money would go to new phase project; major concern on lack of outputs; proposed workplan not clear, needs focus on issues and activities; one key theme as focus (environment in PRSP or mainstreaming env. into budget); background policy paper, high level policy dialogue workshop, training programme and broader roundtable dialogue with key env/pov/econ players in Bangladesh around focal theme; selected issue to strengthen current networks established and involvement of Advisory Group and IUCN in process
 - Review absolutely critical
 - BEEPP status – sole IUCN role is "physical accommodation and logistical

- October meeting in Bangkok – inputs by all parties concerned, including review mission
- What EEU wants (main points)
 - BEEPP as catalyst for policy reform related to poverty and environment under guidance of PAG
 - Extension for another year (September 2003)
 - Unchanged organizational set up (BEEPP hosted by IUCN)
 - BEEPP integrated better with IUCN – “IUCN has been good host, but has BEEPP been a good guest”; “what is in it for IUCN” (expectation for greater integration with IUCN regional programme by IUCN)? Integration in “small” (logos, etc) and “big” (BEEPP experience/models to be useful for IUCN) ways
- Correspondence by Head-REEP to EEU; agrees with EEU points; wants to develop better working relationship among BEEPP, EEU and REEP-IUCN
- Correspondence with IUCN Regional Office re: BEEPP Review

September 2002

- BEEPP External Review