

Assessment of the National Policies for Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock Subsector

Study conducted by

Innovision Consulting Private Limited

For

Sustainable Livelihoods for Poor Producers in Bangladesh

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Letter of Submittal

29 March, 2009

To
Executive Director
Development Wheel
Babar Road
Mohammadpur
Dhaka.

Subject: Submission of Final Report

Dear Sir,

Innovision Consulting Private Limited is proud to present to you the final report for the Assessment on National Policies for Agriculture, Fisheries and Vegetable Subsector commissioned by you for your project on vegetable, fisheries and duck subsectors in Mymensingh and Netrokona.

We thank you for your support without which the assignment could not be accomplished so smoothly.

We hope this report will help you achieve your mission.

Regards,
Sadruddin Imran
CEO
Innovision Consulting Private Limited

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT SLIPP

Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) operates within a business environment which is shaped not only by the internal capacities of the MSMEs but also external forces like government rules and regulations which play a decisive role. This underlines the need for conducive policies to support growth and sustained competitive advantage of MSMEs. Moreover, since MSMEs develop their capacities in response to rules and regulations or policies it is important that they are aware of the policies on effect and their implications. Thus it is imperative that a micro, small and medium enterprise development project supports development of the capacity of the target enterprises to analyse, understand and determine policy needs and to launch advocacy initiatives to relevant authorities with the vision of enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to engage in advocacy in future. The project, Sustainable Livelihood of Poor Producers (SLIPP), co-funded by European Commission (EC) and Traidcraft Exchange (TX) and implemented by Development Wheel (DeW), aims to reduce poverty among poor and marginalized communities in Mymensingh and Netrokona Districts by increasing income and employment opportunities. Following rigorous scoping missions, the project selected Vegetable and Fisheries subsector in Mymensingh; Vegetable and Duck Subsectors in Netrokona for interventions. The project's strategy is to build a sustainable knowledge and information network for the targeted 1650 micro small enterprises or farmers in the selected subsectors through-

1. Creating an institutional infrastructure of business support service for pro-poor MSEs and their producers.
2. Influencing policy makers to create a trading and manufacturing environment that meets the needs of the poor.
3. Forming producer groups to enable sustainable and cost effective market access
Corresponding to its second strategy- "influence the policy makers to create a trading and manufacturing environment that meets the needs of the poor"

1.2 THE ASSIGNMENT: POLICY REVIEW FOR THE VEGETABLE, FISHERIES AND DUCK SUBSECTOR

SLIPP intends to influence policy makers to build a trading and manufacturing environment that meet the needs of the poor. This means we need to first to identify what the poor needs and then assess whether the existing policies appropriately meet the needs. If policies on paper are appropriate but are not properly implemented then we need to identify the implementation problem and design an intervention that ensures proper implementation of the policy at grassroots level. If policies are not appropriate then we need to find out the appropriate policy and then advocate or lobby at the national level. This policy audit is being conducted to identify the appropriate measures that SLIPP needs to take to achieve the project's goal of creating a better enabling environment for the poor farmers in vegetable, fisheries and duck subsectors in Mymensingh and Netrokona.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

- To assess the policy environment of the selected subsectors:

- Identify the key stakeholders, their roles and influencing capacities in the overall policy environment
 - Identify the policies relevant to the selected subsectors and assess their fit and impact on the value chain actors
 - Assess the extent to which the value chain actors understand the policies and their implications
 - Determine what policies need to be changed and amended and what would be the impact of the change or amendment
- To share and review the findings of the assessment with key stakeholders
 - To develop a policy advocacy plan for the producers association in the selected subsectors
 - Advocacy plan will consist of information on key current policy issues, what policy changes are required, which parties are to be targeted, and what sort of influencing strategies will work with these parties for SLIPP project.
 - To design interventions for capacity building of the partners and the local networks for pro-poor policy advocacy so that they understand the political environment and the sensitivity of the Government and are able to lobby with the relevant agencies through appropriate change agents

1.4 METHODOLOGIES

The assessment has been conducted in four phases.

Phase 1: Literature Review:

Step 1: Identification of policy issues: The target market/ beneficiaries of SLIPP are micro and small scale farmers. The beneficiary group comprises 425 fish farmers and 425 vegetable farmers in Mymensingh, 625 vegetable farmers and 150 duck rearers in Netrokona. We need to assess policy issues from our target beneficiaries' point of view. In other words, we need to assess those issues requiring immediate intervention for our target beneficiaries at local level. Gradually, with the impacts, we can move towards national level policy advocacy which would give us leverage on earlier successes. Therefore, we first determined issues that are frequently cited by the farmers as constraints and identified policies that are relevant to those issues. Following table summarizes our findings in vegetable, fisheries and duck subsector.

Table 1: Shortlisted Policy Issues

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Vegetable | Availability of Urea / Other Fertilizer/ Distribution Access to Agricultural Extension Services/ training on input use and cultivation method Fair Price and Market Information Storage Facilities Support following a natural disaster Coordination with government agencies Appropriate use of lands/ soil management/ soil testing compost Pest Management Proper Labelling, Packaging and Labelling of Seeds |
| Duck | Availability of micronutrients/ quality of available micronutrients Access to veterinary services and diagnostic facilities Access to vaccines and medicines Quality control for medicine, vaccines and biological products, feed, feed ingredients, chicks Access to better quality breeds Compensation in case of government intervention for disease control |
| Fisheries | Access to agricultural extension services Fair price Transportation and marketing Storage, processing and quality control Functioning of cooperatives Better quality broods Feed Cost, feed ingredients, access to quality inputs Subsidies for specific programs Access to New species |

Step 2: Review of policy documents: At this stage following documents were reviewed: National Agricultural Policy 1999 & 2007 (draft), National Agriculture Extension Policy, National Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy Synthesis of Agricultural Policies in Bangladesh 2006, Agricultural Governance in Bangladesh, National Fisheries Policy 1998, National Livestock Development Policy 2007, Seeds Acts and Rules, Fertilizer Acts and Rules

Phase 2: Focus Group Discussions: During this stage four FGDs (2 Vegetable, 1 each for fisheries and duck subsector) were conducted in Mymensingh and Netrokona with participation from farmer groups, public and private sector entities. The list of participants is provided in Annex 1. These FGDs were conducted to assess the following:

- Awareness of the stakeholders on existing policies: To what extent the core actors and support groups understand the current policies would be determined. It is not uncommon that the core actors are not able to comply to certain policies simply because of poor understanding or unawareness of the existing policies. Such constraints need to be addressed for any pro-poor policy initiatives.
- Impacts (positive and negative) of existing policies on the core actors: This will help us understand the economic and social impacts of existing policies. The findings will give us the lead on designing pro-poor policy intervention.
- Possible reasons for negative impacts of policies. For instance, the policy might be appropriate but the producers have not been able to adapt to it due to systemic constraints within the value chain or the overall business environment. In such case, policy amendment will not be appropriate rather focus should be given to build capacity of the actors who are affected. The policy might also affect negatively if it is backdated or if it is

not of the interest of the core actors but of interest for vested groups. Finding the right rationales would determine success of advocacy initiatives.

- Identification of interest groups among the core actors for policy interventions: We need to identify change agents from the core actors who can support policy interventions at grass root level. They would play a pivotal role on creating awareness, identifying policy change requirements and supporting policy advocacy programs.

Phase 3: Dissemination workshop: The findings from literature review and subsequent FGDs were presented and shared with district level SLIPP stakeholders and Government agencies through three consecutive workshops (one each for each subsectors) in Mymensingh and Netrokona.

Phase 4: National Policy Workshop: Following up to the feedback from the district level stakeholders Innovision developed a recommendation paper which was presented to the national forum in Dhaka on March 24, 2009. Minister for Food, two local member of the parliament from Mymensingh and Netrokona, high officials from Department for Agricultural Extension, Department for Fisheries and Livestock, NGO representatives and representatives from private sector input manufacturing companies were present in the workshop.

Phase 5: Finalization of Policy Recommendations: The recommendations presented in this report are finalized after incorporation of the feedback from the participants in the national policy workshop.

2. FINDINGS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 APPROACH: We assessed the policy documents to identify policies which have direct and immediate relevance for the target market. For instance, the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) 2007 states '*District and Thana Committees already formed by the government will continue to monitor fertilizer distribution at farmers' level.*' This policy has an immediate relevance for vegetable farmers who have been complaining about availability of fertilizer.

Similarly another policy in NAP 2007 states "*The Soil Resources Development Institute (SRDI) will be strengthened and soil testing programs will be started in five-year phases based on soil and Agro-ecological Zones (AEZ). Besides, the use of existing 'Soil Health Card' will be further extended for improving soil quality.*" In the FGDs we tried to find out whether our target beneficiaries have the 'soil health cards' and relevant services from SRDI.

Policies which are more general and broad are not considered for our assessment. For instance, the "agricultural education policy" under the National Agricultural Policy defines the government's strategy in promoting agricultural education. The policies like 'Steps will be taken to strengthen the technical standards, administration and management of 13 Agricultural Training Institutes (ATI) offering diploma courses' do not have immediate impact at local level. We kept these policies out of assessment so that we get a focus. In short the objective of the literature review was to identify and assess the following:

2.2 SHORT LISTED POLICIES FOR EVALUATION:

2.2.1 FISHERIES SUBSECTOR:

Development of Pond Fishery: National Fisheries Policy, 1998 has emphasized fish culture on all ponds, dinghies and other water bodies.

- Khas ponds will be leased out on long-term lease to the poor and interested fishers and jobless youths.

Objectives of the literature review:

1. To assess the policy formulation process
2. To assess the policy implementation process
3. To identify the implementing agencies and their roles
4. To assess the policy monitoring and amendment process
5. To identify the targets for policies
6. Amendment Process

- Ponds that remain barren due to multiple ownership or other problems would be brought under aquaculture through taking appropriate legal measures.
- *Soil Maps will be developed in almost potential fisheries areas of the country and prescription will be made available regarding requirement of lime and other manure.*

Access to agricultural extension services:

- Demonstration farms will be established in contract farmers' ponds. Contract farmers will be trained on fish culture. Emphasis will be given to ensure timely input supply. *Fisheries extension officers will visit these ponds regularly and provide advice and conduct institute training. Demonstration ponds will be established in all feasible unions.*
- In extension programme, all concerned persons in the local union should be arranged together.

Transportation and marketing

- Fish marketing should not be done in open, debris filled and muddy areas.

- Fisheries quality control officers will be given adequate power to supervise and identify low graded fish and enforce law.
- Fish or shrimp transportation by open van, truck or other such vehicle will be banned. Only insulated or refrigerated fish van should be used for fish transportation.

Storage, processing and quality control

- Value Added Products of frozen fish will be strengthened for local and international markets.
- All fish processing plants and persons will be required to collect license from the Department of Fisheries and should abide by the quality control program strictly.
- Fisheries quality control officers will be given adequate power to supervise and identify low graded fish and enforce law.

Functioning of cooperatives

- Co-operative societies will be trained in fish culture and management.

Better quality broods

- Arrangements will be made to transfer the improved methods of fish culture through regular training in the government fish farms and training centers. Establishing brood banks in the government farms will produce improved quality brood fish. Improved brood fish will be distributed among the private hatcheries. *Moreover, the government hatcheries will be used to transfer technologies on fish spawning, fry production, and fish culture and management through training to the farmers and entrepreneurs.*

Training:

- *Established hatcheries, nurseries and production farms will be considered as training centers. Practical training will be provided on aquaculture, business management. Fish conservation, etc.*
- Special training courses will be developed for the newly recruited persons in the fisheries sectors of both government and private organizations.
- Officers will be trained periodically, not only in the probationary period.

National Coordination

A National Fisheries Council will be set up to execute National Fisheries Policy and to improve national fisheries resources and management.

2.2.2 Duck Subsector

Access to veterinary services and diagnostic facilities

- Soft loans would be provided to accelerate the development of private veterinary services
- Community-based veterinary service would be developed through special projects
- Mobile veterinary services will be provided by DLS

Access to vaccines and medicines/ Quality control for medicine, vaccines and biological products, feed, feed ingredients, chicks

- Bio safety protocol developed by the MoFL should be followed by the concern stakeholders.
- Criteria and guidelines would be established to ensure supply of quality day-old chicks;
- *All Commercial Poultry farms will be registered with DLS*
- Quality control of poultry feeds and feed ingredients would be ensured through establishment of a legal body and enforcement of regulations
- Specific guidelines would be developed and enforced for establishing environment-friendly commercial poultry farms. Small commercial farms would be converted into profit oriented large farms following cooperative system.

Training

- Poultry farms of the DLS would be utilized as breeding and multiplication farms / centres for smallholder training, technology testing and demonstration etc;

Access to better quality breeds

- Conservation and utilization program of potential indigenous breeds for subsistence farming would be developed;
- 'Breeders Association' would be established for monitoring and coordination of livestock breeding activities in the country.

Compensation in case of government intervention for disease control

- The beneficiaries in compensation schemes are the poultry owners or farmers who incur direct loss of their birds through official culling (i.e. by the official/authorized culling team). The compensation process will start with the public announcement by the Government of the confirmation of the outbreak and declaration of the infected zone.

2.2.3 Vegetable Subsector

Pest Management

- Regular training and discussion programs on IPM will be conducted among the farmers under the supervision of Union Agricultural Development Committee with a view to successful introduction and popularization of the method at the farmers' level
- Farmers will be motivated to use more pest resistant varieties of crops. Modern cultivation practices will be followed so that the incidence of pest infestation is reduced.
- Regular training and discussion programs on IPM will be conducted among the farmers under the supervision of Union Agricultural Development Committee with a view to successful introduction and popularization of the method at the farmers' level.

Availability of Urea / Other Fertilizer

- Steps already taken to popularize the use of granular urea as a means of reducing excessive use of urea fertilizers will be strengthened.
- Appropriate programs for training, field demonstration, publicity, etc. will be extended further so as to encourage farmers in using balanced fertilizers.
- The District and Thana Committees already formed by the government will continue to monitor fertilizer distribution at the farmers' level

Access to Agricultural Extension Services

- The use of public mass media i.e. radio, television, newspaper, etc. will be increased for rapid extension of agricultural technologies. In this connection Agriculture Information Service will be strengthened.
- DAE will prepare feasible and compatible programs for the proper use of cultivable land on the basis of demand for different crops and their production targets.
- DAE will regularly monitor the supply and availability of quality seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, pesticides, etc. in order to facilitate the cultivation of different crops. Besides, DAE will prepare an anticipated report on the increase/decrease of crop-wise demand for different inputs and apprise the authorities at the national level.

Fair Price and Market Information

- BADC's seed prices should reflect costs more closely and subsidies should be phased out gradually.
- To ensure fair prices of crops, measures will be taken to establish linkage among the producers, traders, exporters and processors through 'contract sale' of crops
- Market related information would be supplied to the farmers, traders and consumers through strengthening of market information service.

Support following a natural disaster

- Government will undertake contingency support programs to make up the farmers' loss due to any natural disaster. A provision of block allocation will be kept in the revenue head for the Ministry of Agriculture for this purpose.

- Supplementary irrigation will be ensured in severe and extremely severe drought affected areas

Coordination with government agencies

- Agriculture related information would be preserved and displayed publicly.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics will organize training programs on appropriate methods of data collection and preservation for the concerned agencies and provide advice in this regard.

Appropriate use of lands

- In most areas the same land is suitable for more than one crop. Therefore, farmers will be encouraged to grow more profitable crops as an alternative to only rice-rice cropping pattern.
- To ensure maximum utilization of land, bottom up planning through people's participation and its implementation will be started from the mouza or village level.
- Maximum utilization of land will be ensured through promotion of inter-cropping with the main crops.

Proper Labelling and Packaging of Seeds

- Anyone packaging seed in labelled containers must do so in accordance with requirements prescribed under the seeds rules. The labelling requirements will specify variety of crop, lot number or batch identification, net weight or count, minimum germination percentage, physical purity, name and address of the company packaging the seed and the date of packaging.

Availability of micronutrients

- The use of organic manure, bio-fertilizers and compost will be encouraged. Measures will be taken to upgrade agricultural extension, training and motivational work at the farmers' level so that the farmers can follow suitable cropping patterns to maintain the natural balance of soil nutrients.

Policy on Subsidies on cost of electricity for running irrigation equipment

- Effective from the fiscal year 2004-2005, government has allowed a rebate @20% on all electricity bills for running irrigation equipment for agricultural production.

2.3 POLICY STAKEHOLDERS

Following list of stakeholders at local level were identified as keys to implementing policy interventions.

- i. Farmer Groups
- ii. Upazila Chairman
- iii. Upazilla Nirbahi Officer
- iv. Upazila Agriculture Officer
- v. District Agriculture Officer
- vi. Agricultural Extension Officer
- vii. Upazilla Fisheries Officer
- viii. District Fisheries Officer
- ix. District Livestock Officer
- x. Upazilla Livestock Officer

xi. NGOs

xii. Development Project Professionals

2.4 ISSUES: The secondary literature review revealed some areas where the directions were not clear to us. These issues were subsequently taken up in focus group discussions organized subsequently in Mymensingh and Netrokona. These areas are listed below:

1. Who is responsible for implementation?
2. How will different agencies of the government collaborate on implementation of policies?
3. How will government agencies collaborate with NGOs and private sector organizations?
4. How do the grass root (farmers, farmer groups/ associations, government offices at union level) contribute to the policy formulation process?
5. What are the targets?
6. How are policies monitored and amended?

3. FINDINGS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

3.1 APPROACH: Four focus group discussions were arranged in Mymensingh and Netrokona with participation of relevant stakeholders. Two FGDs were conducted on vegetables in Mymensingh and Netrokona, one FGD was on fisheries in Mymensingh and the other FGD was on duck rearing in Netrokona. Stakeholders include farmers (vegetable / fish / duck rearer), relevant government officials, input sellers, NGOs involved in the sector, Union Parishad representative and SLIPP officials. Number of participants was 28 in vegetable FGD in Mymensingh, 31 in vegetable FGD in Netrokona, 23 in duck rearing FGD in Netrokona and 26 in fisheries FGD in Mymensingh. The discussion was based on the policy issues identified from the literature review. The participants gave comments based on their experience, prevailing situation and also suggested recommendations from their own perspective. Following findings narrate only those policy issues which came up as significant, needing immediate measures.

3.2 Findings

3.2.1 Fisheries:

Degree of Policy awareness: The fish farmers are quite aware about the restrictive / conservation policies of the government like the ban on using current net, ban on fishing in the open water for a specific period of time in the year. It seems that government agencies were successful in the previous years to make these policies known to the concerned people. But the fish farmers, especially who does farming in the ponds know little about policies relevant to them. Government policy to reward the poor people who live beside the khas water bodies, preference in getting lease of the water bodies, is also not known by the relevant people

Soil Map: The work of developing aqua-culture zone is not yet done by the relevant departments. Most of the government officials are unaware about this. Naturally the farmers also don't know about it at all. Aqua-culture map can help farmers determine the required amount of inputs like lime, geolite, organic and inorganic fertilizers during pond preparation and cultivation. At present only a general suggestion is given to the farmers.

Union-based demonstration: As per the National Fisheries Policy, the Department of Fishery is supposed to organize demonstration at the union level to popularize new and profitable technology to the farmers. As DoF has shortage of manpower, this is not taking place regularly. If there is a specific project, demonstrations are done, otherwise this happens very infrequently. A lot of farmers are still unaware about the appropriate processes of cultivation for this reason.

Training: Fish farmers are supposed to get training at the Upazila and Union level. But a very insignificant number of training programs are arranged by DoF. The main reason behind this is resource (money and manpower) shortage. Besides, the government officials responsible for the training do not get refresher training (ToT) that would make them capable to catch up with the advancements in the fisheries sector.

Input sellers are primary contact point for the fish farmers. But the input sellers have very little academic / theoretical knowledge about fish farming. They give suggestions to the farmers from their experience. Sometimes this works, but sometimes this fails as well.

SLIPP should also initiate talks with the central DoF to start training for the fisheries officials of advanced areas including Mymensingh on new technologies to keep pace with the farmers' advancement.

Input sellers should be brought under the umbrella of DoF and they need to be trained so that they can provide information to the farmers accurately. SLIPP can initiate this for its group members.

Quality control: Quality control policies are implemented in case of export. But in local case, the emphasis on quality control is absent. For example, Locally, Fish or shrimp are transported by open van, truck though this sort of open vehicle is clearly mentioned as banned in the National Fisheries Policy. Only, in case of Dhaka and export, insulated or refrigerated fish van is used for fish transportation.

License: Currently, Input sellers and hatcheries need not collect license from Department of Fisheries. They can start and continue business with a general trade license. DoF also has no statistics on the number and nature of business of the input sellers and hatcheries.

Brood Bank: Brood fish is an essential input for fish farming, especially for the hatcheries. Quality of brood determines the quality of fingerlings and finally the quality of table fish to a great extent. Government has some brood banks but the quantity they produce is not sufficient for the hatcheries. DoF already started encouraging private hatcheries to establish brood bank on their own.

Hatcheries: Established hatcheries are supposed to be used as training centers. Moreover, the government hatcheries are meant to be used to transfer technologies on fish culture and management through training for the farmers and entrepreneurs. But there is no implementation direction given from the Government to use Private hatcheries as training center as well.

3.2.2 Vegetables:

DAE programs: Department of Agricultural Extension has some regular programs and periodically they implement some projects. During implementation of certain project, DAE officials do specific tasks, but after completion of the project, these are not incorporated in the regular programs. Lack of resources (money and manpower) is also a reason for not continuing programs for the benefit of the farmers. Although the New Agricultural Extension Policy emphasizes the need of coordination among government bodies, NGOs and private sectors, it is not happening yet.

Cropping pattern: Farmers are supposed to be encouraged to grow more profitable crops as an alternative to only rice-rice cropping pattern according to the policy. Insignificant measures are taken to upgrade agricultural extension, training and motivational work at the farmers' level so that the farmers can follow suitable cropping patterns to maintain the natural balance of soil nutrients. Cropping pattern related policies are not getting implemented.

Training: DAE, NGOs and private sector organizes training programs for the farmers, but the frequency is very limited. Again the problems of the farmers do not go to the head office of DAE quickly. So the trainings that the farmers get are often not around the problems they face. In most of the cases, the follow up of the training is not done.

Soil test: Agriculture policy states the necessity of conservation of soil quality. Farmers know about the soil test in a large scale. But the facilities for soil testing are insufficient. DAE has soil testing kits that can suggest only the macro-nutrient requirements. SRDI facility can suggest more details, but number of facility is very low. Again, farmers are not bringing the soil sample to DAE or SRDI in great number as it is not convenient for them in terms of the time requirement to get a sample soil testing done. There is also lack of knowledge about the sample collection process.

Marketing: National Seed Policy and National Agriculture Policy state the importance of price related information for all related stakeholders. Department of Agricultural Marketing does not play this role properly at present. But the farmers and other stakeholders does not feel big deprivation regarding price. Use of mobile phone makes it relatively easy for the farmers to get information about price and receive fair price for their produce.

Agriculture policy also states the need to set up a contract production system involving farmers, traders, processors and exporters. There is no existence of this type of contract production system and there is no initiative of government agencies to do that.

Pest Management Policy: National Integrated Pest Management Policy emphasizes on regular training and discussion programs on IPM among the farmers. There is project running on IPM under the supervision of Bangladesh Agriculture University. Some farmers received training and implementing IPM policies but a large number do not even know about the processes of IPM. IPM does not make the retailer's redundant or reduce their business scope. Proper orientation on IPM will help the retailers secure more business as they would be able to diversify their business scope from chemical based products to organic and natural products.

Agriculture Extension Services: Farmers are supposed to get required agricultural extension services from the government agencies. Limited resources of the government agencies do not allow making it happen in reality. Although private sector players are supposed to be involved in the process according to the Agricultural Policy, there is little initiative from the government so far to do that. Again as the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers (previously Block Supervisor) do not have any station, farmers cannot go to some specific place and take suggestions from them.

Fertilizer: There is a gap between the fertilizer demand assessment by Government and the actual fertilizer demand. This gap has to be shrunk. According to the policy, Appropriate programs for training, field demonstration, publicity, etc. are supposed to be extended further so as to encourage farmers in using balanced fertilizers. Trainings take place but no follow up is taken and the number of demonstration is insufficient.

There is a policy where it is written that the use of organic manure, bio-fertilizers and compost will be encouraged. But the implementation should be speeded up.

Fertilizer distribution system is also a problem for the farmers to get their required fertilizers easily on a timely manner. SAAOs become so occupied in the fertilizer distribution process that they can hardly get any time to provide cultivation and post harvest related information to the farmers.

Duck Rearing:

Quality duckling and eggs: Duck rearers and small hatcheries need good quality ducklings and eggs. They get insufficient amount of supplies from the government sources. Small scale hatcheries need to be trained on the process of hatching properly as it seems that they are the largest source of duckling for the farmers.

SLIPP can take initiative to make linkage with the government officials and small hatcheries.

Quality feed: Availability of quality feed is a big issue for duck rearing. Duck usually consumes a lot more feed and feed conversion ratio is low compared to chicken. Hence it is difficult to make duck rearing financially sustainable with ready feed. So farmers need to be trained how they can continue duck rearing with a mix of ready feed and natural feed.

Registration: All duck rearers and small hatcheries are mandated to get registration from Department of Livestock. This is a simple process and ensures the rights for them. SLIPP can take initiative for its group members of Netrokona so that they can get registration from the Department of Livestock.

Medicine and Vaccine Availability: All the duck rearers are not aware about the availability of medicines and vaccines in the government offices. If they can have a stronger linkage with the government office, they can get required medicine and vaccine easily.

Loan facility: Farmers, especially the small duck hatcheries want loan to develop parent stock. If they get themselves registered with the Department of Livestock, they can become eligible to get government loan facility. SLIPP can take initiative to make it happen.

4. FINDINGS OF VALIDATION WORKSHOPS

4.1 APPROACH: With the findings from Focus Group Discussions (FGD)s three consecutive validation workshops (one each for each subsector) were organized in Mymensingh and Netrokona. To ensure proper validation participants comprised of cross section of stakeholders- farmers, value chain intermediaries (hatcheries, nurseries, input retailers), private sector (input manufacturing and marketing companies), government agencies (SRDI, Upazilla and District Fisheries Office, Upazilla and District Agricultural Office, Upazilla and District Livestock Office) and NGOs. The detailed list of participants for each of the validation workshops is provided in ANNEX 2. Subsequently the findings were presented in nation policy workshop.

4.2 POLICY CONSTRAINTS: The policy constraints that we found can be grouped into two categories (i) generic and (ii) specific to subsectors.

4.2.1 Generic Policy Constraints:

- i. **Farmers are largely unaware of policies, their implementation processes and targets:** Lack of awareness about the benefits and rationales of policies create widespread fear and negative feeling about policies. This hinders implementation of policies and pushes the farmers and implementing agencies to a conflict situation. To the farmers, policy means restriction. For instance, while asked to recall a policy that they know of the fish farmers talked about policy banning catch of fish fries, cultivation of piranha or use of current nets. The vegetable producers recalled the fertilizer distribution policy. The duck farmers recalled culling of birds during the bird flu incidence. However, these farmers are hardly aware of policies related to extension services, training facilities and programs, loans and subsidies. For instance, the duck rearers do not know that they need to get registered under the Department of Livestock to be eligible to receive support from the DLS. The vegetable producers do not know about the rationales that prompted the government to introduce the fertilizer distribution policy. Henceforth, the implementing agencies struggle to successfully implement the policies as the farmers are reluctant to cooperate due to the fear that they have about policies in general. In the national policy workshop it was argued that the farmers do not need to be aware of the policies as they will not understand the context and content. Also it would not be possible to create such awareness given the limited resources (financial and human) of the implementing agencies. Given this it is recommended that a cost effective and efficient approach involving private-public partnership will help create positive awareness on policies.

Case 1: Conflict between the vegetable farmers and the DAE in regard to fertilizer distribution as per the new fertilizer distribution policy

Farmers tend to depend heavily on Urea fertilizer which jeopardizes soil health. Moreover, this creates pressure on the government as the national production and supply of urea is lower than the demand. To reduce this burden the government introduced the new fertilizer distribution policy which requires the agricultural office to predict demand of each union based on a given dose of fertilizer. This amount is based on the assumption that the farmer would complement urea with other soil nutrients like TSP and MP. The complexity arises as the farmers firstly are not aware of the fact that they use excessive urea, secondly they are not aware of the use of TSP and MP and finally the farmers are not aware of soil testing, soil maps and soil health cards which are required to determine the amount of urea required. Last but not the least, the SRDI and DAE do not have the human, technological and financial capacity to extend their services. This case, illustrates the complexity of policy implementation and also points out the need for a coordinated effort

- ii. Lack of direction on policies on the implementation process:** The policy documents usually narrate broad policy strategies stating the government's intents for a sector. The implementation guideline for the policies is not available. It is also not clear who or which government organization is responsible for implementation of policies. For instance, the National Agricultural Policy 1999(Clause 10.2.3) states that "The use of public mass media i.e radio, television, newspaper, etc. will be increased for rapid extension of agricultural technologies. In this connection Agricultural Information Service (AIS) will be strengthened." However, the direction as to who will form the AIS, who would monitor its activities etc. are not available. It has been argued that an implementation guideline is developed subsequently after a policy is gazetted. However, there was confusion amongst government officials in regard to who is responsible for developing the implementation guideline and how this would be disseminated. It thus necessitates to clarify the process and also to make the guideline available to public.
- iii. Lack of direction on coordination amongst different government agencies for implementation of policies:** As has been illustrated in case 1, to implement the fertilizer distribution policy the DAE and SRDI clearly need to cooperate and collaborate. The implication of Agro Ecological Zones (AEZ) in this policy is also certain. However, such coordination is not smooth and policies need to be established clearly stating which policies are complementary to each other and how different agencies should cooperate to implement such policy.
- iv. Lack of bottom-up planning:** Policies are usually designed through a top-down approach involving experts at national level. Lack of involvement of the farmers, private sector representatives and the personnel of the implementing agencies in the grassroots weakens the policies. The National Agricultural Policy 1999 (Clause 12.2.2) states "To ensure maximum utilization of land, bottom-up planning through people's participation and its implementation will be started from the mouza or village level". People's participation is required in setting any policy. Our investigation suggests that feedback is not solicited from district or union level offices, NGOs and other agencies having similar mandates. The grass-root level problems on implementing policies are not therefore accounted for.
- v. Policy documents are difficult to collect:** Farmers, farmer groups, NGOs and to some extent the implementing agencies do not have access to the policy documents. Policy documents are difficult to trace. Though most of the policy documents are available on the net these are not available beyond the relevant secretariat. Moreover, when an amendment is made a new policy document is published whilst the old document is also used for reference to other policies. This creates confusion amongst the implementers.
- vi. Intermediaries like input retailers are not considered for training by the public agencies:** There are policies stating how the DAE, DLS and DoF should increase accessibility to extension services for the farmers. But we did not find a policy that states extension services for the intermediaries like input retailers (seeds, medicine, vaccine and insecticide sellers), farias, patilwalas, arotdars etc. It is now established that these intermediaries on the backward and forward linkage of a value chain play a pervasive role on disseminating information related to production, production technologies, pricing, inputs, input quality, input usage and such. The private sector has already recognized the importance of these intermediaries and has been rigorously conducting activities targeting them. NGOs and private sector development projects have also been extensively supporting such initiatives. However, the government is yet to formulate any policy on introducing extension services targeting the intermediaries.

- vii. **Lack of direction on public-private partnership:** There is no clear guideline as to how the private sector and public sector should and can collaborate on issues like agricultural extension services. The efforts of private sector, NGOs and the government agencies are not properly synchronized. Due to lack of synergy the impacts are concentrated on pocket areas. But this synergy could solve the government's resource problem. Public private partnership can be key to sustaining extension services like demonstration, training, and promotion of soil testing services. Public private partnership can also prove to be vital for agricultural information services.
- viii. **Lack of clarity on local government's role in policy implementation:** Farmers do not know about local government's roles and responsibilities in policy implementation. The committees under the local government become functional on distribution related issues, for example, fertilizer distribution. National IPM Policy 2002 states "Regular training and discussion programs on IPM will be conducted among the farmers under the supervision of Union Agricultural Development Committee with a view to successful introduction and popularization of the method at farmers' level." However, the farmers are largely unaware of the existence of such committee. The Union Agricultural Development Committee is headed by the chairman and there are supposed to be members from farmer groups and NGOs on the committee. It has been reported that the District and Thana Level Committees become functional only on distribution related issues which include fertilizer distribution.
- ix. **Unavailability of refresher training courses and programs:** Officers are trained only during the probationary period. Refresher training courses are not organized regularly. Bangladesh National Fisheries Policy 1998 (Clause 10.6) states "Special training courses will be developed for the newly recruited persons in the fisheries sectors of both government and private organizations." It also states "Officers will be trained periodically, not only in the probationary period." Though this is an extremely important policy direction, the policy is not being implemented.
- x. **Irregular dialogue between the Extension Offices and the farmers limits scope of promotion of new technologies, market opportunities:** During the FGD with stakeholders in the duck subsector the duck rearers came to know about meat producing species like Beijing and Maskovi from the District Livestock Officer. This was instantly received with high interest by the duck rearers and they were enquiring about the source of supply for these species. The duck hatcheries were highly eager to buy the low cost technology developed by TMSS. During the FGD with the stakeholders in the vegetable subsector farmers appreciated the District Agricultural Officer as he shared with them the scope of producing coriander in the locality. In fisheries the farmers became interested about pH paper as a substitute to pH meter. It was obvious in all three of the FGDs that we conducted that such dialogue between the government agencies, the farmers and the NGOs can open up opportunities for everyone.

4.2.2 Constraints Specific to Subsectors:

Vegetable:

- i. **Mobility of the SAAO:** The SAAOs (Sub Assistant Agricultural Officer) do not have any specific duty station. Though this is done to facilitate mobility the farmers fail to reach him as the SAAO is continuously moving from one place to the other.
- ii. **Awareness and Availability of Soil Testing Services:** Agro ecological zones, zone based soil mapping, soil testing services provided by SRDI these all are facilitated through

specific policies. However, the efforts have been concentrated. Farmers are largely unaware of such services or the benefits and requirements of such services.

- iii. **Subsidies on electricity do not accrue to the vegetable farmers:** The National Agricultural Policy states "Effective from the fiscal year 2004-2005, government has allowed a rebate at the rate of 20% on all electricity bills for running irrigation equipment for agricultural production." But this did not lower cost for the farmers as those who rent the equipments do not reduce the rental fee.

Fisheries:

- i. **Registration of Input Retailers:** Input retailers are required to take registration from drug administration. Due to this the DoF cannot conduct quality check with the input retailers.
- ii. **Promotion of low cost technologies:** Technologies like pH meter are necessary for good production. There are substitutes to such technologies like pH paper which are not available and of which farmers not much aware. Policies do not state anything about promotion of such low cost technologies. Rural youth can be a potential service provider for promotion, rental and sale of such technologies.
- iii. **Resource of DoF:** Unlike DAE the DoF do not have a position similar to that of Sub Assistant Agricultural Officers. This restricts the DoF's ability to implement policies like establishing demonstration ponds .

Duck

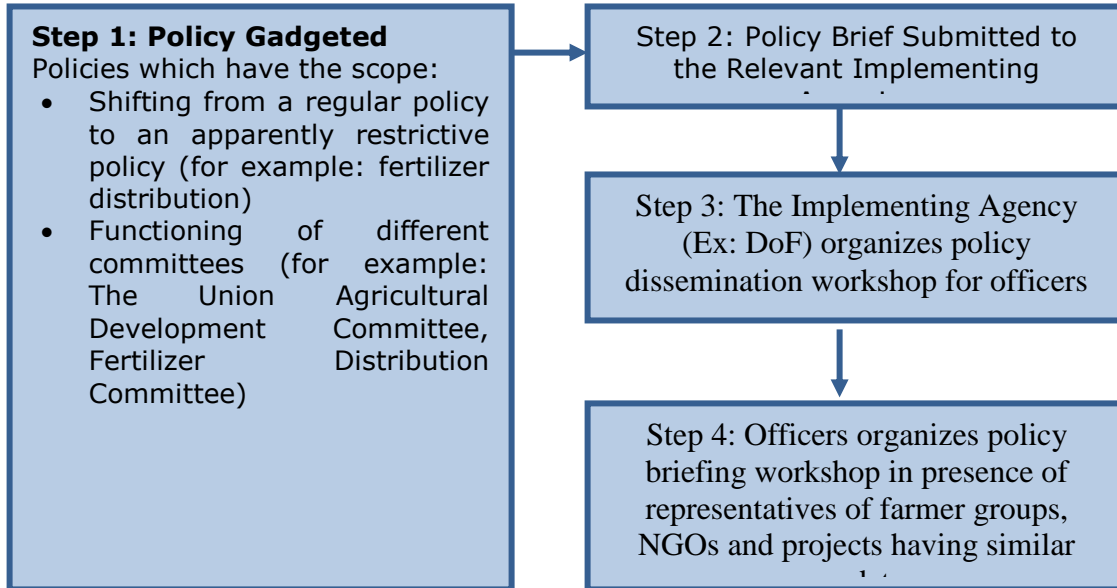
- i. **Lack of policy direction for grandparent stocks for duck:** The duck rearers do not get quality chics. This is due to the fact that the hatcheries produce chics of parent stocks which have already suffered from inbreeding. There is no policy that provides incentives specially for establishing grandparent stock for duck.
- ii. **Lack of awareness on registration:** Duck farmers are not aware of the benefits and process of registration required to access to extension services. This also hinders the government's actions on events like bird flu.
- iii. **Decreasing natural habitat for duck rearing:** Natural habitat for duck rearing is quickly decreasing as the duck rearers are not allowed to access the water bodies leased by the government to fish farmers/ farmer groups or other entities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Generic Policy Recommendations:

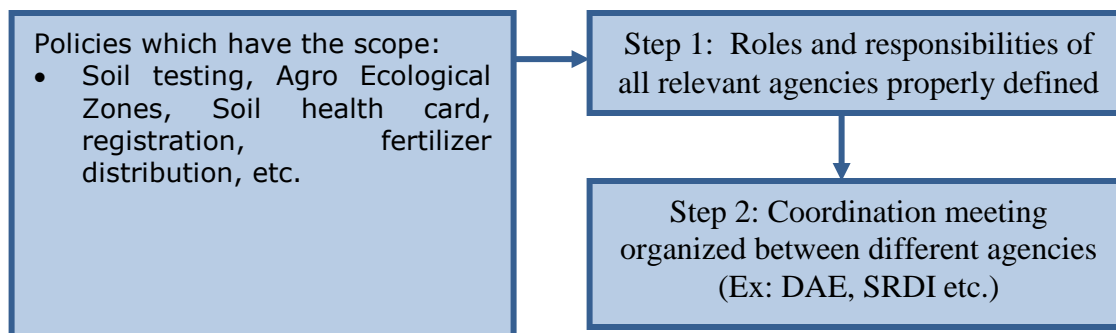
- i. **Create awareness about benefits and rationales of policies amongst the farmers and all relevant stakeholders:** Whenever a policy is gadgeted and being implemented the government should communicate the benefits and rationales of the policies. This should be targeted not only for the farmers but also for all stakeholders within the specific value chain. If the farmers know why the policy exists and what actions are called for through the policy they would began to cooperate with the enforcing agencies.

Exhibit 1: Creating Awareness on Policies



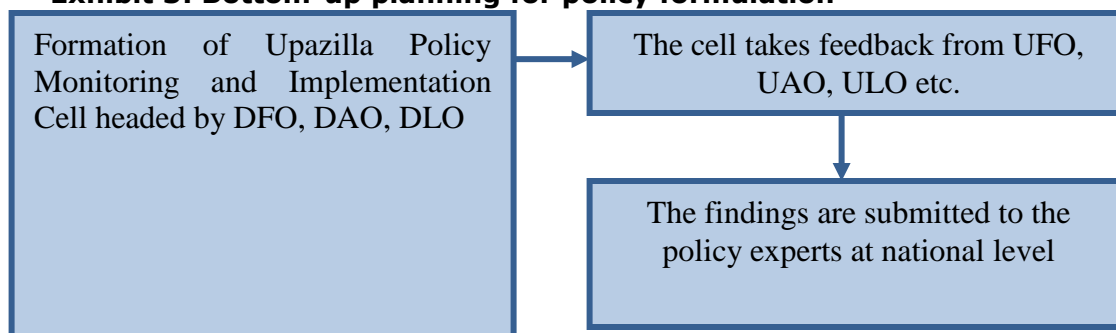
- ii. **Communicate the roles and responsibilities of different agencies on enforcing a policy:** As we have noted on our findings, it is not clear as to which agency is related to implementation of a policy and how. The roles and responsibilities of different agencies on implementing a policy should be made clearer and should be communicated with all relevant stakeholders. Moreover, different agencies need to coordinate with each other on implementation of a policy. This has been proved in the case on fertilizer distribution where we have shown how the SRDI, DAE and NGOs need to collaborate with each other. The DAE would be involved in promoting use of MP, TSP and micronutrients as substitute to UREA. The DAE would also be involved in collecting field data for demand estimation. The SRDI will be involved in promoting and providing soil testing services, issuing soil health cards and such so that farmers can determine the optimum requirement of fertilizer.

Exhibit 2: Coordination among different agencies (public)



- iii. **Bottom-up planning for policy formulation- Formation of District Policy Monitoring and Implementation Cell:** Whenever a specific policy constraint is identified the government should involve experts who would take feedback from the grassroots (farmers, NGOs and the implementing agencies). Subsequently, once a policy is formulated, this should be validated with the implementing agencies and also with representatives (farmers, NGOs etc.). We suggest formation of District Policy Monitoring and Implementation cell for each agency which include Department of Agricultural Extension, Department of Fisheries, Department of Livestock and such. The cell will be headed by District Fisheries Officer, District Agricultural Officer or Livestock Officer for each committee. The committee will organize policy workshop with representation from cross section of stakeholders which include- UFO, UAO, ULO, farmer groups, NGOs. The feedback will be then shared with the national coordination cell who will formulate the policy and submit for review.

Exhibit 3: Bottom-up planning for policy formulation



- iv.
- v. **Create awareness amongst the farmers and value chain intermediaries (for example input retailers) on the roles and responsibilities of Union Agricultural Development Committee:** The farmers can work as a pressure group for functioning of the Union Agricultural Development Committee. But for that to happen the farmers need to know about the roles and responsibilities of the Union Agricultural Development Committee. Moreover, farmers' participation in the committees also needs to be ensured.
- vi. **Publish policy implementation guideline and make those available to the public:** The government should develop policy implementation guideline providing specific details as to which agency is responsible for implementation and how. This document along with the Policy should be made available to public. Copies should be made available to Union level offices and also with the farmer groups. The NGOs can work as agent for distribution of this document.
- vii. **Incorporate policies stating extension services for value chain intermediaries like input retailers:** This should be dealt with urgently and the government should develop and implement extension services targeting the value chain intermediaries like input

retailers. Trainings should focus on use of insecticide pesticide, quality seeds, improving production and productivity, promotion of hybrid and high yielding varieties.

- viii. **Public private partnership for policy implementation:** This would enable the government to ensure implementation of policies by creating a synergy between the efforts put down by the private sector and public sector. Policy should state, wherever applicable, how the private enterprises, NGOs and government agencies should collaborate with each other for implementation of certain policies. Policies related to extension services- demonstration, training, promotion of new technologies etc. have high degree of relevance and importance of public- private partnership.
- ix. **Training for officers at regular interval:** Though policy states that officers should be trained not only during probationary period but also continuously at regular intervals such trainings are not organized. This should be considered as a priority intervention by the government.
- x. **Provision for regular dialogue between farmers and extension offices:** It has been found that farmers benefit immensely when they come together as a group and meet the extension officers at district level. Such exercise can be institutionalized through policy whereby the District level officers can travel to each union at a given time and meet with representatives from farmer groups. This would help the farmers as they would learn about new technologies, ideas, concepts and the extension offices would learn about field level opportunities or problems.

5.2 Sector Specific Policy Recommendations:

Vegetable:

- i. **Provide an Office and communication technologies to the SAAO:** The government should consider providing a specific office for the SAAO at Union complex or a school or any educational institution where the SAAO will sit on a specific time for 2 days in a week. This would help the farmers to reach the SAAO in need. Moreover, the SAAO can be provided a mobile phone through which he can be connected by the farmers. This mobile phone can be sponsored by any of the mobile phone operators in Bangladesh.
- ii. **Awareness and Availability of Soil Testing Services:** Through public private partnership the government should expand its capacity to create mass awareness on soil testing and soil testing related services.
- iii. **Subsidies on electricity do not accrue to the vegetable farmers:** The government can issue prepaid cards so that farmers can use agricultural equipments affordably.

Fisheries:

- i. **Registration of Input Retailers:** The issuing authority can be kept with the drug administration but the registration should be done through the fisheries office so that the input retailers are listed with them. This will help the DoF to provide extension services to the input retailers and also to ensure quality.
- ii. **Promotion of low cost technologies:** The government should identify priority technologies like pH meters, water testing kit which can be made available at low cost through rural youth. The government can consider providing these equipments to unemployed youth who can become rental service providers. This will also help the government to create provision of private sector extension services and tackle its resource problem.

Duck

- i. **Public private partnership for registration of duck rearers:** The government needs to ensure that all the duck rearers are registered under the DLS. It has been found in our

assessment that this can be ensured through public private partnership by engaging the NGOs active in poultry subsector to increase awareness amongst the duck rearers for registration. The NGOs can also support by helping the duck rearers with the forms and by filling in the forms.

- ii. **Decreasing natural habitat for duck rearing:** Natural habitat for duck rearing is quickly decreasing as the duck rearers are not allowed to access the water bodies leased by the government to fish farmers/ farmer groups or other entities. The government should consider incorporate specific policy under the livestock policy to provide access to natural habitat for the duck rearers. As the duck do not harm the eco system there should be no objection for duck rearing in leased water bodies.
- iii. **Promotion of low cost technologies:** The government should promote low cost hatcheries like that developed by TMSS. A policy can be formulated whereby such indigenous technologies can have equity funds from the government through which the inventors can produce and market their technologies.
- iv. **Incentives for grandparent stock:** The government can provide incentives on capital machineries and equipments and also for sourcing grandparent stock which would improve quality of ducklings and ensure increased production.
- v. **Promotion of meat producing varieties:** The government can incorporate promotion of meat producing varieties as a component of extension services.