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Rural Electrification Development Program (REDP)

Quarterly Report

January – March 2010

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ABBREVIATIONS

BERC	Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission
BPDB	Bangladesh Power Development Board
BSTI	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute
CAP	Country Assistance Plan (DFID)
CFR	Cost and Freight (Incoterm)
CIF	Cost, Insurance and Freight (Incoterm)
CPT	Carriage Paid To (Incoterm)
DFID	United Kingom Department for International Development
ESW	Enhanced Scope of Work
GBP	Pound (Sterling)
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GOB PPR	Government of Bangladesh Public Procurment Regulations
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
IPP	Independent Power Producer
MAEBD	Member Awareness / Education Board Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management Information System
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MPENR	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources
MW	Megawatt (1000 kW)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRECA	National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
PBS	Palli Bidyut Samity (Rural Electricity Cooperative)
PDB	Power Development Board
PKSF	Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation
PPR	Public Procurement Regulations
REB	Rural Electrification Board
REDP	Rural Electrification Development Program
SPG	Small Power Generation
TEC	Rural Electrification Board Technical Evaluation Committee
TOR	Terms of Reference
USD	United States Dollar
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the period of January through March 2010, progress on the REDP picked up pace with the addition of local staff and the hiring of a Board Development Specialist. Key issues facing the program include; power shortage / load shedding, bid evaluations, less than adequate retail rate increase, moratorium on electrical connections and the thirst for knowledge. We have commented on these issues beginning on page #6.

In the area of staffing to meet the requirements of the Enhanced Scope of Work, we were fortunate to be able to hire Mr. Gregory Boudreaux as our international consultant to serve as the REDP Board Development Specialist. Mr. Boudreaux previously served as Manager, Curriculum Development; Director, Educational Programs; and Senior Adviser to the Chief Executive Officer, NRECA from 1984-2005. He held a series of increasingly responsible positions managing the director credentialing curriculum and educational components of regional and annual meetings and professional conferences.

The procurement monitoring and assistance provided to REB as well as the Master Plan and Construction Plan verification through field inspection are nearing completion. Regarding the monitoring of material use and construction progress we have developed a methodology for this monitoring which includes analyzing close-out documents and stock statements from selected PBSs and regular contact with REB Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers discussing progress of construction projects.

Continued progress was made on the Socio-economic evaluation as the "Brahmanbaria Micro-finance Pilot Project" and the mid-term monitoring review. Work continued on the compilation of the baseline data for the Micro-finance Component of REDP in the Brahmanbaria pilot project. We expect the draft report to be submitted by HDRC in April. On the mid-term monitoring review preparation work was completed for the survey including holding focus group discussions with general managers and others for the review.

During the quarter of January through March, 2010, thirty-nine Member Awareness workshops were presented in thirteen PBSs with 1,851 attending of which 229 were female. There were seven presentations of our strengthening the PBS Board Dialogue Program which were attended by fifteen PBSs. Board Member participation totaled 276 including 40 females (14%). There were also seven presentations of the strengthening the PBS Member Services Department Dialogue Program to fifteen PBSs. Employee participation totaled 173 including 6 females (3.5%). Member Service employees attending included AGM Member Service, Member Service Coordinator, Power Use Coordinator, Wiring Inspectors and One Point Service Providers.

In an effort to improve REB / PBS communications with their consumers, a draft concept paper titled, "Village Advisor Capacity Enhancement" was developed focused on re-establishing the use of this important "communications conduit". As part of this process we are completing a survey / assessment of the community / member motivation activity and village advisor role at the PBS.

Brad Gibson our Communications Specialists is working alongside REB and PBS professionals along with our local staff to improve communication efforts. He has submitted his initial findings which include short and long term program goals.

The formal presentation of the Gender Awareness Workshop was held at the Director and Deputy Director level with approximately twenty employees participating. Feedback from this meeting was used to revise the program in anticipation of a pilot presentation at a PBS in the next quarter.

Sakil Malik, our Human Resources Specialist (consultant) visited Bangladesh March 7 – 24. During this time we focused on gathering human resource information from the 9 PBSs of REDP which included a survey of several other PBSs which are in close proximity to the nine. The objective of our visits (survey and meeting with the staff) was to obtain information on the existing HR issues at the PBS level.

In summary the principal achievements during the reporting period were:

- Mr. Gregory Boudreaux was hired to serve as the REDP Board Development Specialist.
- A methodology for monitoring material use and construction progress was developed
- Work continued on the compilation of the baseline data for the Micro-finance Component of REDP in the Brahmanbaria pilot project.
- Mid-term monitoring review preparation work was completed for the survey including holding focus group discussions with general managers and others for the review.
- Thirty-nine Member Awareness workshops were held in thirteen PBSs with 1,851 attending of which 229 were female.
- Seven presentations of our strengthening the PBS Board Dialogue Program which were attended by fifteen PBSs. Board Member participation totaled 276 including 40 females (14%).
- Seven presentations of the strengthening the PBS Member Services Department Dialogue Program to fifteen PBSs. Employee participation totaled 173 including 6 females (3.5%).
- In an effort to improve REB / PBS communications with their consumers, a draft concept paper titled, “Village Advisor Capacity Enhancement” was developed
- Brad Gibson our Communications Specialists submitted his initial findings which include short and long term program goals.
- The formal presentation of the Gender Awareness Workshop was held at the Director and Deputy Director level with approximately twenty employees participating.
- Sakil Malik, REDP Human Resources Specialist (consultant) visited Bangladesh focused on gathering human resource information from the 9 PBSs of REDP.

SUMMARY PHYSICAL PROGRESS / DFID FUNDED PROJECTS - March 2010

TASK A – SUPERVISION AND MONITORING - PROCUREMENT

Project Name	Closing Date	Component / Work	Target	Progress	Remarks
9 PBS	Extended to June 2010	Line Construction, km	8,000	8395	
		Line Renovation, km	2,000	1,233	
		Consumer Connections	250,000	163,571	Facilities created for 407,400 consumers
10 Lac	June 2010	Consumer Connections	1,000,000	290,571	Of the 290,571 cons. connected, 21,670 are commercial & irrigation
67 PBS	Closed in June 2008	New Construction and Renovation, km	13,000	12,397	
		Consumer Connections	100,000	259,823	Facilities Created for 580,524 consumers
Master Plan & Construction Verification	December 2010	Field Inspection & Data Collection for Sample Construction Projects	9 PBS	9 PBS	Field data collected, analyzed and results provided to PBSs
Monitoring of Material Usage	December 2010	Data Collection for Sample Construction Projects and stock statements	9 PBS	4 PBS	Significant Progress Being Made

TASK B – MEMBER AWARENESS & BOARD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Sub-Task B.1 Expanded Assistance for PBS Member Education

Project Name	Closing Date	Component / Work	Target	Progress	Remarks
Member Awareness Building	December 2010	Member Awareness Workshops Implemented in 50% of PBSs	35 PBS	44 PBS and REB	134 MAE Workshops 6,866 participants, 739 female participants.
Member Awareness Building	December 2010	Workshops for PBS Member Services Dept.	35 PBS	27 PBS 306 Participants	100 percent employee participation with seven female participants
		Village Advisors – Member Education	9 PBS	Under Development	
Women's Participation	December 2010	Women Participation in AGM at 9 PBS increased 5%	Average of 130 Females (per PBS)	Working with REB Training Directorate	Pilot Workshops developed and presented to REB Training Directorate

Sub-Task B.2 Expanded Assistance for Board Development

PBS Director's Accountability	December 2010	PBS Board Member Orientation Training – 5 day workshops for 50% of new board members elected in past 2 years	149 New Board Members elected in 2007-2009	327 total participants 85 (26%) female participants	16 Five-day workshops with 68 PBSs represented
PBS Director's Strengthening	December 2010	PBS Directors Strengthening program completed in 50% of PBS	35 PBS	27 PBSs 402 total participants 17% female	98.9 percent Board Participation

TASK C – SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRAM EVALUATION

Project Name	Closing Date	Component / Work	Target	Progress Mar. 10	Remarks
Socio-Economic Program Evaluation	December 2010	Program Evaluation	9 PBS	Mid-term evaluations completed	Brahmanbaria Micro-finance draft report completed

Rural Electrification Development Program Quarterly Report

January through March 2010

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Rural Electrification Development Program (REDP)

The REDP is five year program of activities designed to support the continued development of REB program management capacity, and to support improvements of selected PBS electric distribution systems that are part of the REB rural electrification program in Bangladesh. REDP was designed to provide support for electricity network expansion and intensification within the Second Rural Electrification Master Plan (2000-2020). Support provided directly to REB through DFID funding will finance up to 1.35 million new electricity connections to households and rural businesses, directly benefiting approximately 10 million people. The original REDP/DFID program included a micro-finance component to enable poorer and female led households along with small businesses to cover the connection charge and develop new income earning opportunities. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the micro-finance portion of REDP was limited to a pilot program in Brahmanbaria PBS. [1]

In an effort to stimulate economic growth, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in rural and peri-urban Bangladesh, REDP focuses on increasing access to affordable and sustainable electric services. Outputs include: 1) Increasing the number of customers using and paying for electric service within existing distribution areas; and, 2) Increasing the number of poor people receiving electric service providing for income generating opportunities.

The overall REDP programme cost is £ 161 million with the GOB contributing £ 122 million through the Annual Development Programme (ADP). The original DFID contributions to the REDP program totalled approximately £ 50 million ($87.6 million USD). With the devaluation of the British Pound Sterling the contribution amounts have been reduced slightly. Of the total, DFID is contributing approximately $ 58.6 million to finance electric system expansion and improvement. Funding is also provided for program management, supervision and monitoring ($ 1.49 million); and education and awareness building ($ 1.49 million). NRECA International was contracted by DFID through USAID to design and manage the REDP work program with a total life of project budget of $2.99 million.

On June 24, 2009 Contract Modification #4 – Enhanced Scope of Work was signed. Based on the findings of the REDP Annual Reviews, the REDP ESW calls for the expansion of activities under Task B entitled "Member Awareness/Education and Board Development Programs". To provide additional detail, Task B has been divided into two Sub-tasks, as follows:

REDP Sub-Task B.1: Expanded Assistance for PBS Member Education

REDP Sub-Task B.2: Expanded Assistance for Board Development

Sub-Task B.1 will focus on improving PBS member awareness with respect to rights and responsibilities. Sub-Task B.2 will provide additional training and guidance to support development of PBS Boards. Both activities will promote improved governance within the Bangladesh RE Program and are supported by an additional grant of $1.95 million.

This is the 16th in a series of quarterly reports, providing a summary of activities, progress, and issues for the period January through March, 2010.

[1] The Micro-finance portion of the REDP program was discontinued December 31, 2008.

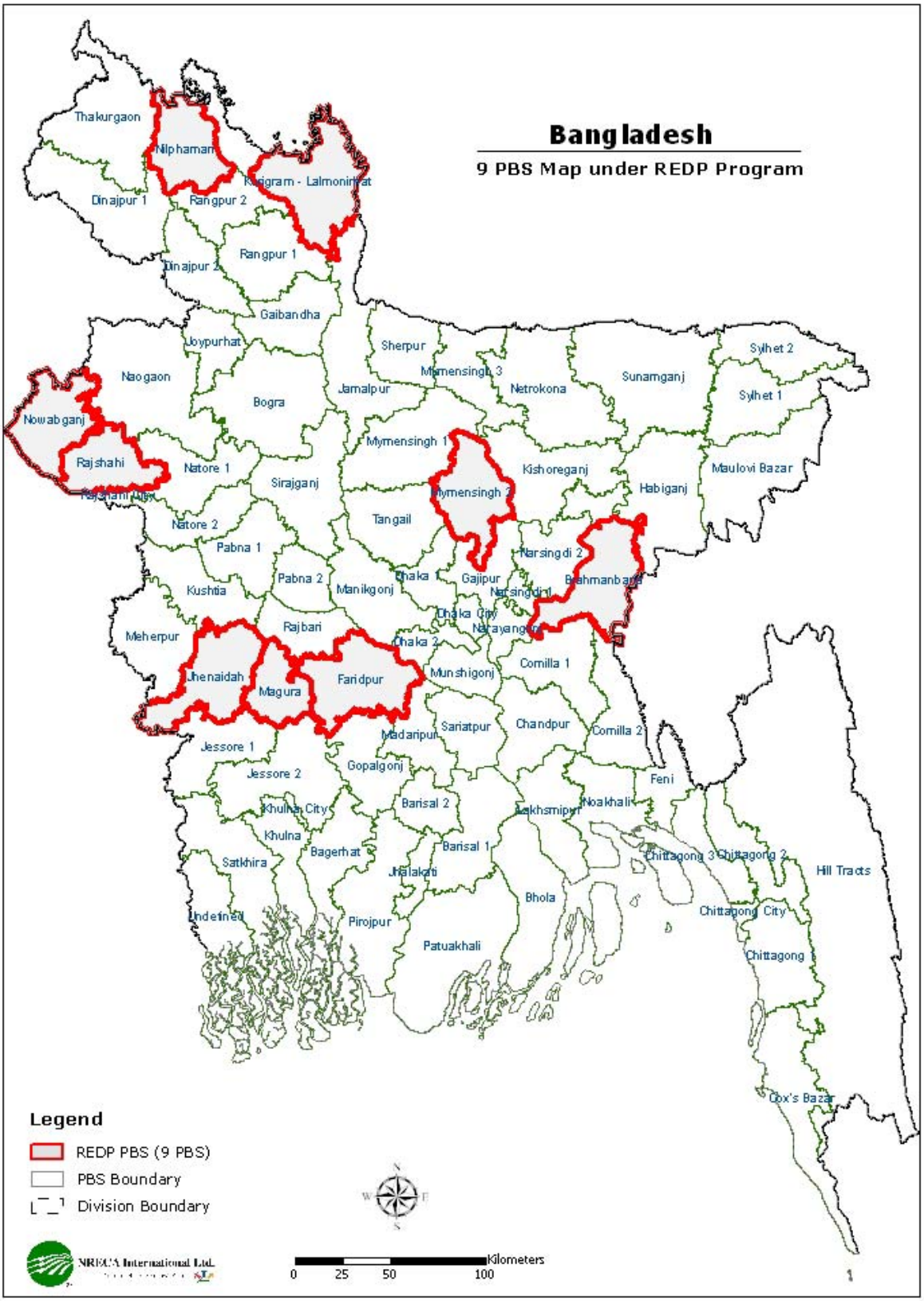
1.2 The primary objectives of REDP managed by NRECA

- To verify that material selection by REB is consistent with REDP requirements and the procurement process is in compliance with GOB Public Procurement Policy 2003.
- To review REB bid evaluation processes, providing concurrence when required/requested; to assist REB to retender and re-evaluate unacceptable bids, and, to participate in pre-delivery inspections of materials and pre-contract factory inspections, whenever necessary.
- To monitor and substantiate that materials purchased under REDP are used in accordance with REB Master Plan, REDP investment requirements and, the PBS Construction Work Plans.
- Support ongoing implementation of member education programs by enhancing the capability of the PBS personnel to establish a sustainable education training program for Board Members, Village Advisors and PBS Members.
- Work with the REB Training Directorate and PBS personnel to "institutionalize" delivery of member education programs through village meetings and direct involvement of Village Advisors.
- Design and provide program support for the training of newly elected PBS Board Members using the courses, "Orientation to RE Program" and "Understanding the Financial Reports."
- Establish baseline socio economic data for REDP areas, effect socio-economic surveys within REDP areas midway and on completion of REDP to include a full report on the socio-economic influence of REDP.
- Present quarterly progress reports and thematic reports on REDP activities and challenges

1.3 PBSs Targeted for Assistance under REDP

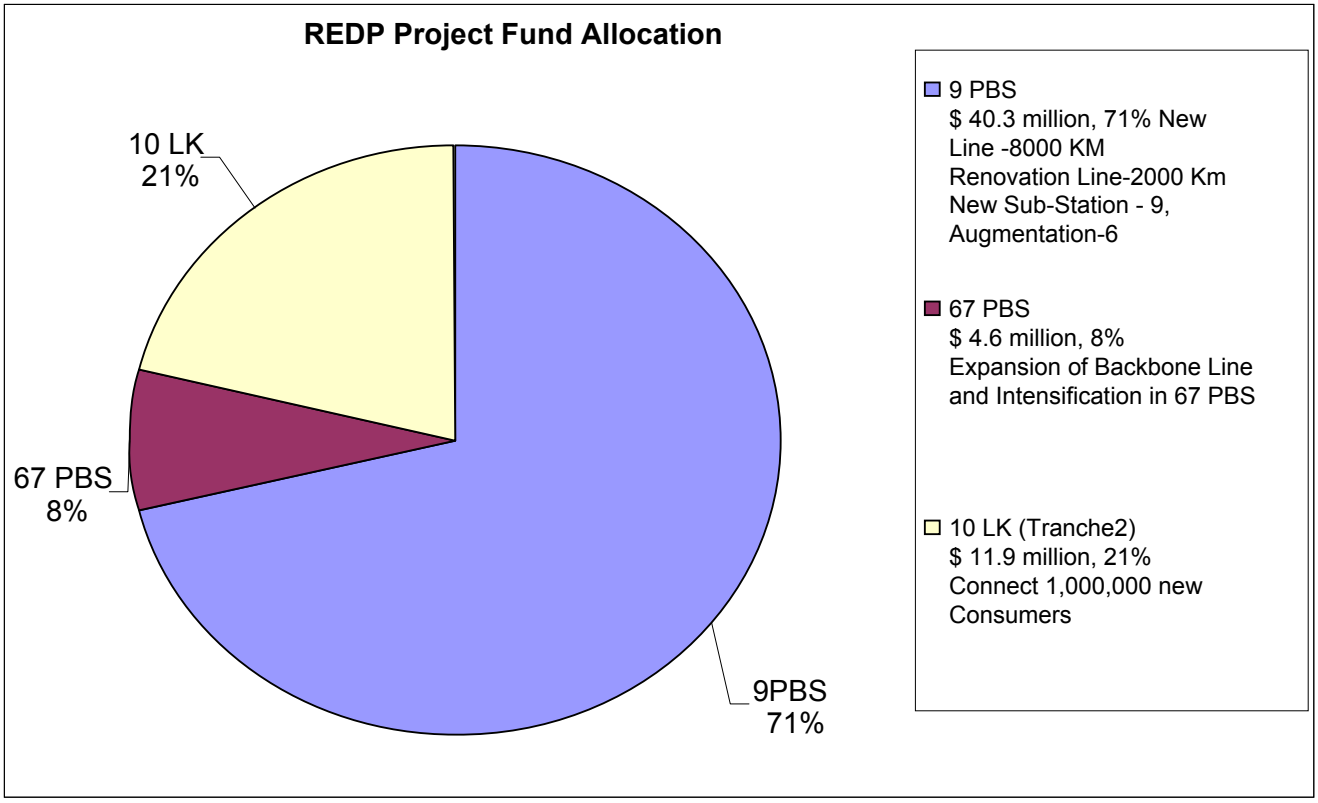
While the REDP was designed to provide support for the rural electrification countrywide, the program contained targeted support to nine PBSs. The nine PBSs were identified during the REDP design phase as PBSs providing electric service to more marginal, less affluent rural communities, with consequently lower revenue generating potential. The nine REDP PBSs are: Brahmanbaria, Faridpur, Jhenaidah, Kurigram-Lalmonirhat, Magura, Mymensingh-2, Nilphamari, Nowabganj, and Rajshahi. The map and chart on the following pages describe the 9 PBSs.

1.3.1 Map - PBSs Targeted for Assistance under REDP



Name of PBS	Name of Thana	Name of District	Area (Sq.Km.)	No. of Villages	Population	Name of PBS	Name of Thana	Name of District	Area (Sq.Km.)	No. of Villages	Population
Rajshahi	Boalia	Rajahahi	96.68	-	294,056	Nawabgonj	Bholahat	Nawabgonj	123.52	91	70,507
	Durgapur	Rajahahi	195.03	122	137,640		Gomastapur	Nawabgonj	318.13	235	191,972
	Godagari	Rajahahi	472.13	396	217,811		Nachole	Nawabgonj	283.68	190	97,119
	Mohanpur	Rajahahi	162.65	154	126,396		Nawabgonj	Nawabgonj	451.80	192	389,524
	Paba	Rajahahi	280.42	261	213,379		Shibgonj	Nawabgonj	525.43	367	422,347
	Tanore	Rajahahi	295.39	207	138,015	Mymensingh-2	Bhaluka	Mymensingh	444.05	102	264,991
Brahmanbaria	Akhaura	Brahmanbaria	99.28	125	112,982		Gafargaon	Mymensingh	401.16	218	379,803
	Banchharampur	Brahmanbaria	217.38	118	258,371		Trishal	Mymensingh	338.98	160	336,797
	Brahmanbaria	Brahmanbaria	495.85	398	659,449		Sreepur	Gazipur	465.24	186	320,530
	Kashba	Brahmanbaria	209.76	236	243,833	Magura	Magura	Magura	406.50	252	286,925
	Nabinagar	Brahmanbaria	353.66	198	378,539		Mohammadpur	Magura	234.29	182	160,340
	Nasirnagar	Brahmanbaria	311.66	129	234,090		Shalikha	Magura	228.64	118	132,291
	Sharail	Brahmanbaria	239.52	146	254,481		Sreepur	Magura	179.18	160	144,471
Jhenaidah	Harinakunda	Jhenaidah	227.19	129	162,078	Faridpur	Alfadanga	Faridpur	136.00	118	90,873
	Jhenaidah	Jhenaidah	467.75	283	333,192		Bhanga	Faridpur	216.34	227	214,702
	Kaligonj	Jhenaidah	310.16	196	219,126		Boalmari	Faridpur	272.34	255	190,159
	Kotchandpur	Jhenaidah	165.66	79	107,193		Char Bhadrasan	Faridpur	141.59	129	69,876
	Maheshpur	Jhenaidah	416.96	194	246,350		Faridpur	Faridpur	407.02	298	335,386
	Shailkupa	Jhenaidah	373.42	258	293,341		Madhukhali	Faridpur	230.20	238	165,438
Kurigram	Bhurungamari	Kurigram	236.00	124	176,822		Nagarkanda	Faridpur	379.02	335	267,193
	Chilmari	Kurigram	224.97	152	100,516		Sadarpur	Faridpur	290.21	287	172,059
	Fulbari	Kurigram	163.63	165	129,668	Nilphamari	Dimla	Nilphamari	327.00	58	160,000
	Kurigram	Kurigram	276.45	256	217,311		Domar	Nilphamari	251.00	47	152,000
	Nageshwari	Kurigram	415.30	367	279,775		Jaldhaka	Nilphamari	326.00	77	199,000
	Rajarhat	Kurigram	166.23	180	158,648		Kishoreganj	Nilphamari	265.00	130	202,000
	Ulipur	Kurigram	504.19	418	345,205		Nilphamari	Nilphamari	351.00	107	242000
	Total Area (Square km)			**15,371**			**Total Population**			**11,696,570**	

The Following Pie Chart Illustrates the DFID Funding Contribution for Material Procurement Identified by Projects - 9PBS, 67 PBS & 10 Lac (1 million consumers) - $ 56.8 million



1.4 Project Team

The NRECA project team assigned to support REDP includes the following team members, by position:

Person	REDP Duties	Tenure
Robert O. Ellinger	Chief of Party	Full Time
James VanCoevering	Engineering Director	Part Time
Judith A. Burnett	Co-op Institutional Advisor	Full Time
Md. Hasibur Rahman	Project Engineering	Full Time
Maruf Hasan Bhuiyan	Project Engineering	Full Time
Md. Shafiquzzaman	Project Engineering	Part Time
ATM Selim	GIS Team	Part Time
Narayan Chandra Saha	Education and Training Specialist	Full Time
ABM Ali Hossain Syed Nurul Islam	Board and Institutional Development Specialists	Full Time
Brig. M.A. Malek (Rtd.)	PBS Board / Member Development Consultant	Part Time
Ruh Afza Ruhi Shahana Jannat	Gender Specialists	Full Time
Reza Khasru Shajedul Karim	2-Program Support	Full time
Mohammad Y Malik Sakil Bradley Gibson Gregory Boudreaux	HR Specialist Communications Specialist Board Dev. Specialist	Contracted Part Time
Shital Krishna Das	Socio Economic Consultant	Contracted Part Time

SECTION 2: KEY ISSUES

2.1 Power Shortage

As has been the case for the past several years, the shortage of power dominates the operation of all PBSs and continues to exacerbate public discontent with REB and the PBSs. Due to the importance of this issue with respect to PBS viability and service quality, because of its overall importance and relevance to the REDP we will continue this discussion in this Quarterly Report.

PBSs continued to experience power supply curtailments during the reporting period. The shortage of power, particularly at peak demand periods, and resulting load shedding affected all PBSs in the REB program. Maintenance issues at aging PBD power stations contribute significantly to the frequency of outages. Load shedding is most problematic during peak hours throughout Bangladesh, but also occurs during off-peak hours in selected PBSs. Until the necessary steps are taken to increase available capacity, load shedding will continue to negatively impact the RE Program and consequently deleteriously affect productivity of REDP interventions.

Power generation needs are a high priority of the new government. However, the lead time from project inception to completion is well over thirty six months for large, central station power plants, with estimated capacity deficits estimated in the range of 1,500MW – 2,000MW. Additional capacity is needed to serve load growth, with the balance required to replace aging plants the efficiencies of which continue to deteriorate with the resulting output being well below the installed capacity.

The inability of Petrobangla (nationally owned gas transmission and distribution company) to provide an adequate supply of gas to fuel the gas-fired plants is also seriously contributing to the power shortage. Declining production in some existing gas fields and “non-existent” pipeline regulation has reduced the availability of gas supply to the power plants, thus requiring plants to reduce power production. Exploration and development of new gas fields has not kept pace with the demand for gas supply. The limited capacity of the gas transmission/distribution system has also contributed to the power crisis. Gas rationing has been and continues to be employed to maintain existing reserves and to help make gas available for power at the newer power plants that are more efficient. In a positive development, Chevron was one of two companies recently awarded an exploration contract for several off-shore natural gas fields to determine capacity and reserves. Chevron is also working with Petrobangla to install compressor station(s) at key distribution system locations across the country.

In addition to scheduled load shedding during hours of peak demand, off-peak load shedding also occurs when system outages are triggered due to low system frequency in PBS areas. Frequent power outages and power quality issues are the cause of recurring difficulties for industrial and commercial operations, particularly export manufacturing processes that require continuous production and are subject to prolonged restart schedules after a power curtailment.

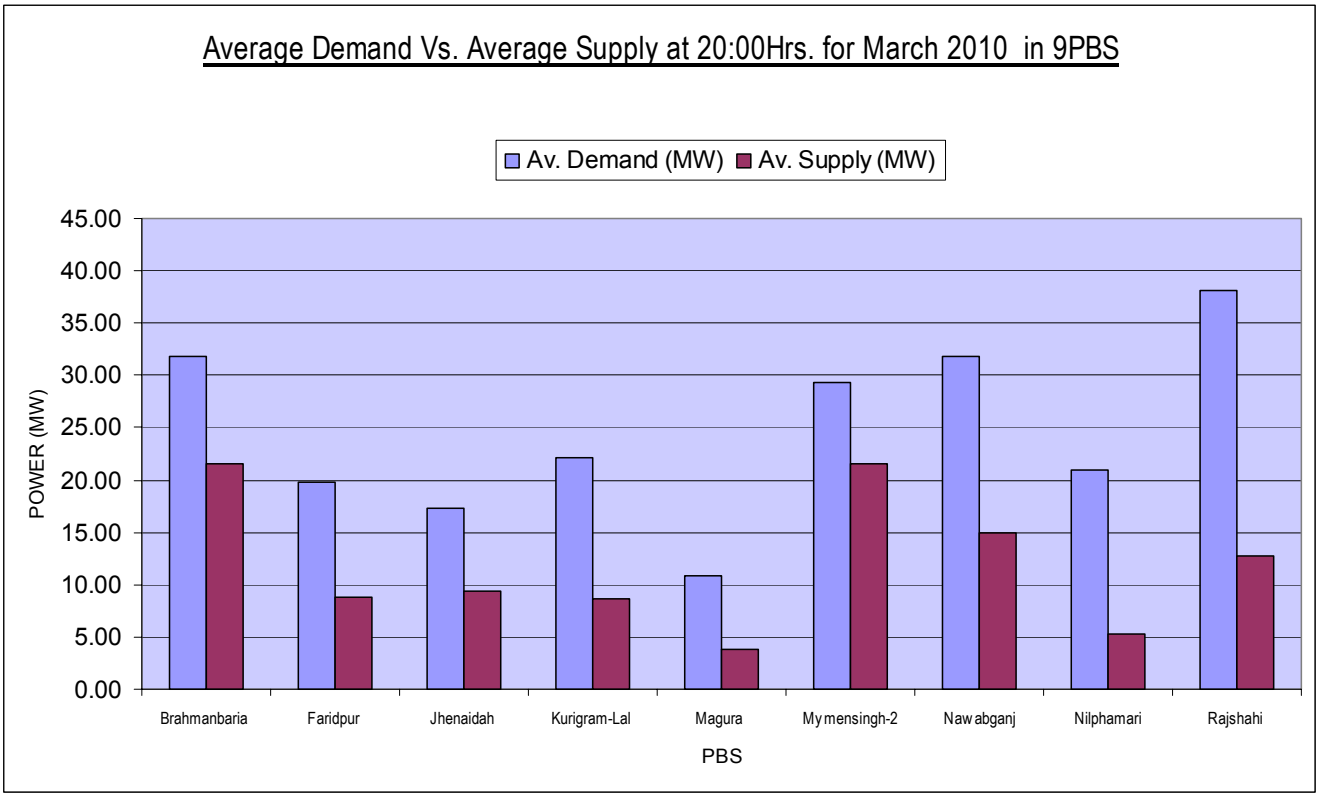
Taken as a whole, scheduled outages during system peaks, and unscheduled outages have introduced substantial and increasing frustration on the part of PBS members, and financial hardship for both PBS consumers, and for the PBSs themselves. PBS revenue is derived primarily through the sale of electricity, so as power availability is reduced, revenue decreases in nearly a direct proportion. Moreover, the less reliable the power supply, the more difficult it becomes for PBS staff to collect revenues from PBS membership.

Most PBSs sell over 85% of the commercialized electricity to low income, residential ("domestic") customers. These PBSs have been extremely challenged to meet operating costs, resulting in delayed repayments to REB. In those PBSs that have relatively higher sales to industrial and commercial customers, the financial hardships are not as acute, but even the largest PBSs and those that have been historically most healthy, it has become significantly more challenging to balance costs with sufficient revenue. Serving to complicate this issue is the BERC's decision to allow increases in the wholesale power rates being charged but limiting the amount of this wholesale power rate increase that is being allowed to be passed along to the consumers through an approved retail rate increase.

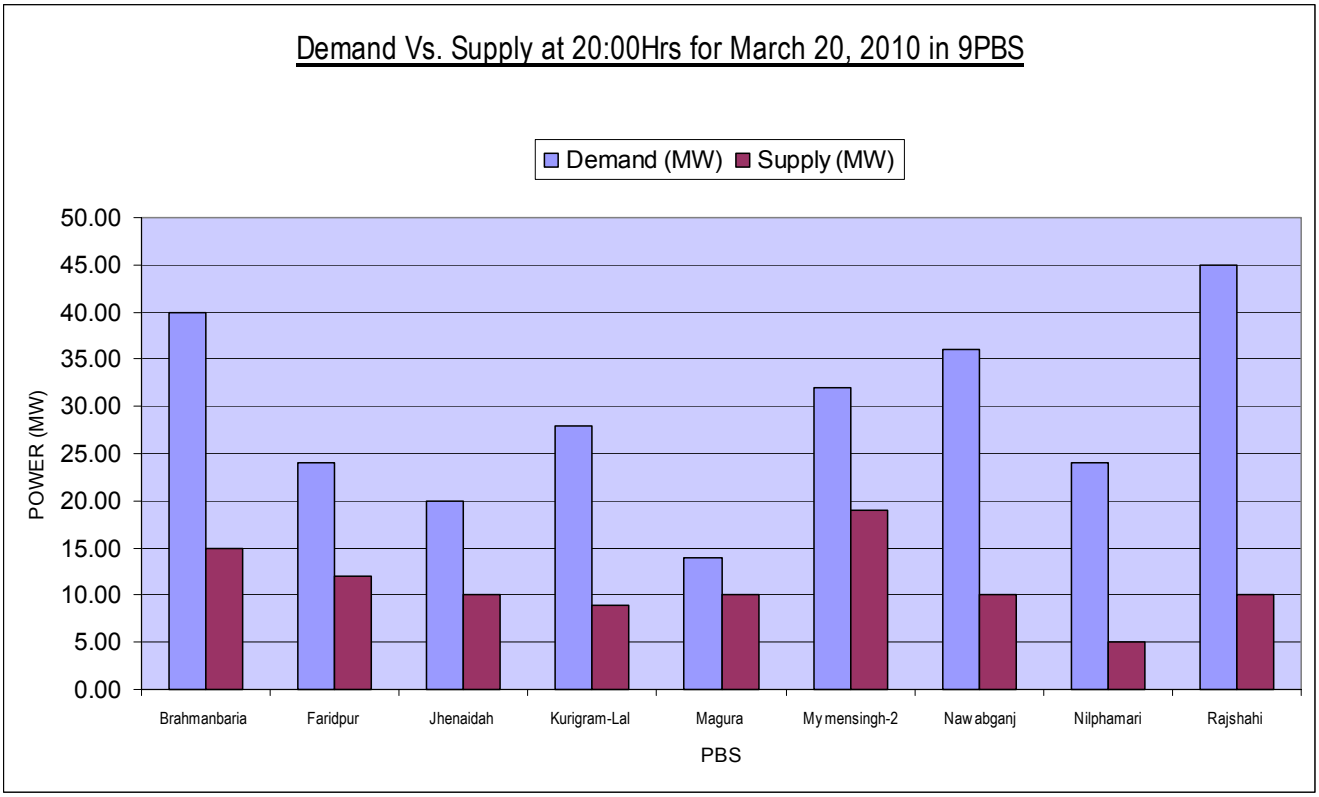
In the 9 PBSs participating in REDP, REB data reveals that the demand has increased at Faridpur, Magura, Nawabganj, Nilphamari and Rajshahi PBSs, while holding steady at Jhenaidah and Mymensingh-2 PBSs, and decreasing at Brahmanbaria and Kurigram PBS when compared with March 2009 (Graph 2.1.3). There is a major concern that there was an increase of incidents of load shedding in all PBSs except Brahmanbaria, Jhenaidah and Mymensingh PBS-2 (Graph 2.1.4). As can be seen from the graph 2.1.1, Nilphamari PBS experienced the highest average load shedding of 75% of their demand during evening peak hours during March. Average load shedding for the other PBSs varied from 26% (at Mymensingh PBS-2) to 67% (at Rajshahi). Overall daily load shedding was noted to be extremely high on March 20 (illustration 2.1.2). During this day Nilphamari and Rajshahi PBSs experienced load shedding as high as of 78% followed by Nawabganj (72%), Kurigram (68%), Brahmanbaria (63%). Faridpur and Jhenaidah PBSs experienced 50% load shedding which is close to their monthly average. Magura, however, had a load shedding of only 29% which is less than its monthly average of 65%.

The following graphs illustrate the load shedding situation in the 9 PBSs of REDP.

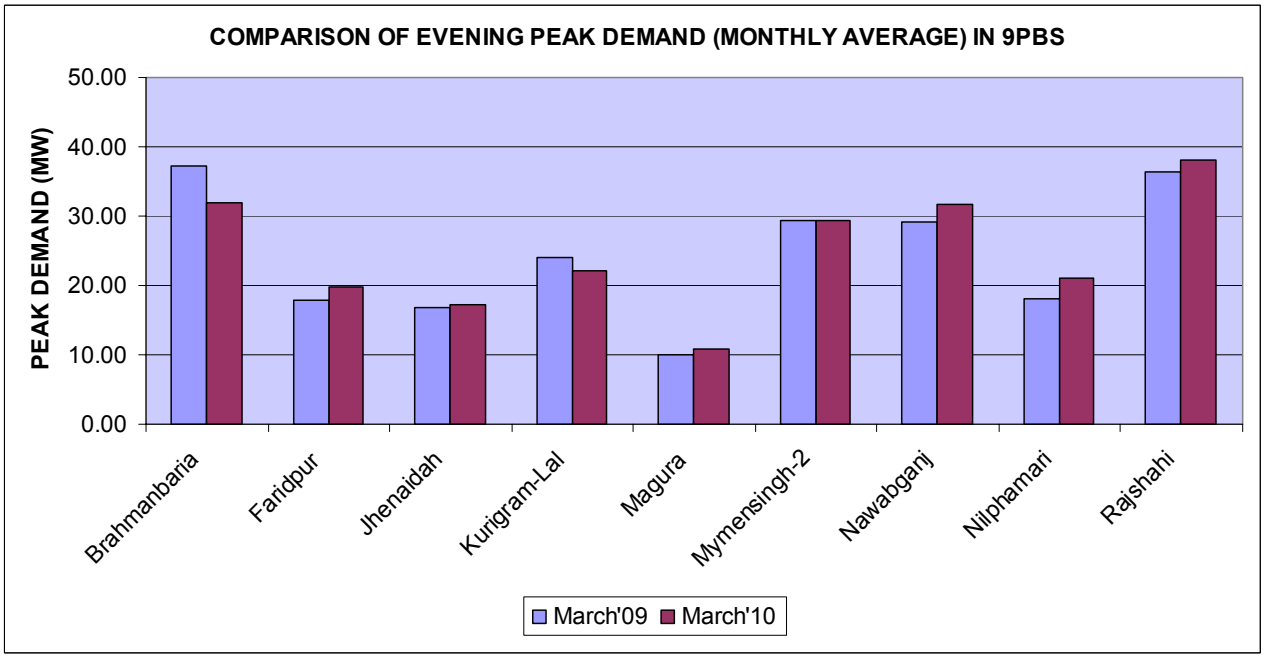
Graph 2.1.1: Average Demand and Supply at 20:00 Hrs in March 2010



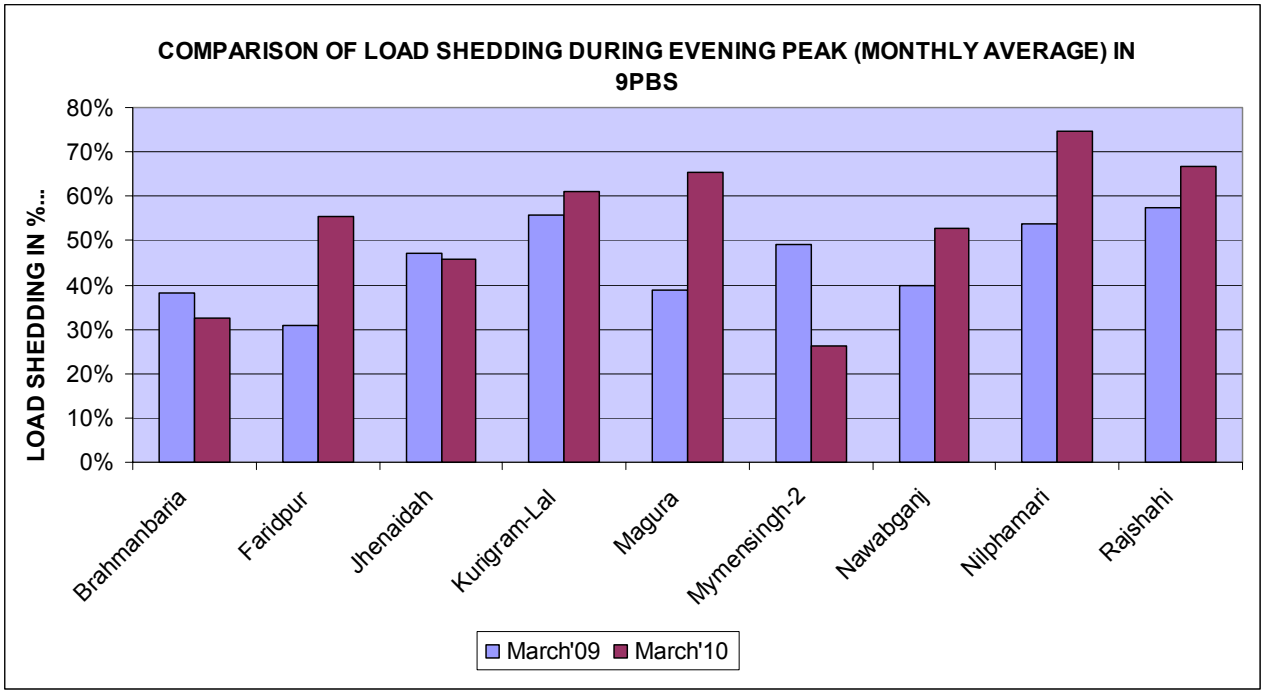
Graph 2.1.2: Peak Demand and Supply at 20:00 Hrs 9 PBS on March 20, 2010



Graph 2.1.3: Shows variation of evening peak demand with last year in 9PBS



Graph 2.1.4: Variation of Load Shedding during evening peak with last year in 9PBS



2.2 Bid Evaluations

During the review period REDP continued to focus significant effort to expedite the evaluation and selection process of bid packages, while fully complying with GOB procurement regulations. Although the review and approval process was not explicitly defined in the DFID/GOB agreement, REB has consistently sought NRECA approval of the tender process, seeking “no objection” or “concurrence” to the bid selection/award process.

It is worth noting that, final indication of “no objection” for bid packages has been granted only after clarification has been received and processed for proposals that have been deemed questionable in content. Once clarifications are presented and consultations with REB resolve pending issues, approval via notification of “no objection” has been forwarded by the REDP/NRECA review team.

The due diligence process has resulted in some delays in the bid evaluation process. However, the results of this process have illustrated to REB the importance of systematic and thorough due diligence of bid specifications.

2.3 Retail Power Rate Increase

It was announced that the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) moved to approve a retail rate increases for the PBSs averaging 6.5%. The new rates became effective December 1, 2009. For the residential consumer class the rate adjustments will range from less than 3% for minimum usage accounts to 13% for accounts using more than 500 kWh. Commercial and Industrial customers will see an average rate increase of 9.5%. The retail rate increase will provide some rate relief to REB and the PBSs who have endured a tremendous financial hardship in trying to cover the

expense associated with an increase in the wholesale power rate tariff since October 2008. Unfortunately for many of the PBSs the approved rate is not enough to fully cover their wholesale power costs and they will continue to experience a serious cash flow deficit.

2.4 Moratorium on Electrical Connections

During REDP we have seen two moratoriums on rural electrical connections imposed by the GoB. The first moratorium, while initially expected to last only three months was extended to one year (2007-08) ending in June 2008. The second moratorium is currently in effect. During these moratoriums the Ministry's position was to simply instruct REB to stop the PBSs from making new connections as a means of controlling the increase of demand for electricity. In effect the PBSs were bearing the brunt of the poor performance of BPDB and Ministry officials who had very limited success in being able to improve the power generation situation and thus the PBSs were not allowed to expand their customer base and enhance reviews. It should be noted that once the moratoriums are lifted the PBSs face the conundrum that adding new consumers to the system will exasperate the power deficit being experienced by all. The addition of new consumers could result in negative impacts on the financial condition of most all PBSs, and potentially jeopardize their long-term financial viability.

2.5 Additional Training

We have found that the thirst for knowledge among the groups we are visiting cannot be quenched with the amount of information, resources and time available. Most of our programs attempt to call the audience's attention to their rights, duties and responsibilities as board members, members and PBS employees. Invariably we get asked; why can't you spend more time with us? Please tell us more!! Can you provide us with the instructions and by-laws in Bangla? (We are prioritizing these documents for translation.)

The need among the people is tremendous and REB recognizes this need but they do not have the resources to address the issue. While much of the training material (trainer and trainee manuals) is available (developed by NRECA) the manpower resources and institutional knowledge at REB are lacking. The development (and funding) of a complete training and education program for REB staff and PBS members through the REB Training Directorate and presented at the REB training academy and regional sites around the country is an area in which program partners can make a positive impact to the long term sustainability of the organizations.

SECTION 3: MATERIALS PROCUREMENT

3.1 Materials Procurement

3.1.1 REDP Bid Evaluation Procedures

As presented in previous reports, REDP team members continue to participate in bid preparation and evaluation process for materials procured with funds provided through DFID/REDP. It should be noted that the majority of REDP materials have been ordered and delivered. Six sub-packages were processed during the January through March reporting period and all steps in the procurement process were diligently followed.

In compliance with its internal policies and procedures, and as planned under the REDP, REB was the sole responsible party to manage the bid evaluation process. The tender process was managed in compliance with GOB PPR 2003 requirements.

To comply with its role under REDP, the NRECA evaluation team performs a parallel bid evaluation process, without REB participation. The parallel bid evaluation facilitates an independent verification of results. The parallel bid evaluation processes conducted by REB and NRECA follow similar methodologies. Evaluations undertaken focus on the following steps:

- Determination of commercial responsiveness.
- Determination of financial responsiveness.
- Determination of technical responsiveness.
- Financial adjustments to bid evaluation prices where applicable for late delivery, capitalized cost of transformer losses and qualifying local preference.
- Detailed evaluation of pre-selected bids.
- Other adjustments as appropriate.
- Preparation of bid evaluation report for Tender Evaluation Committee and recommendations for contract award.

GOB PPR 2003 requires an evaluation committee to be established to review results of each respective procurement action. For purposes of the REDP-financed procurement packages, the REB Tender Evaluation Committee is responsible for reviewing the tender documents, documenting the results of the evaluation process, and submitting recommendations to the REB Board. The results are thereafter submitted to the Ministry of Energy prior to finalizing selected contracts. Contracts with values of up to Taka 120 million, (approximately USD 1.71 million) are evaluated and approved internally by the REB Board of Directors. The Ministry of Energy approval is required for contracts with values exceeding the REB financial authorization limits.

As was done throughout this process, NRECA representatives continued to attend the REB Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC) meetings as observers. While NRECA/REDP specialists participated in evaluations in the capacity of observers; decision making authority for all tenders rests with the REB TEC, with no NRECA/REDP direct participation. In compliance with REDP design, the NRECA/REDP team simply monitors the procurement processes.

In those cases wherein the REB TEC recommendation agrees with the NRECA independent evaluation, NRECA issues a formal “no objection” in response to the results of the TEC presented to the NRECA team. In most cases, TEC evaluation conclusions have agreed with NRECA independent

evaluation results; the lowest price commercially acceptable bid was selected by REB for award of the contract. In those cases wherein the two results have not been in agreement, "no objection" statements have been withheld by the NRECA team. In these instances, NRECA presented detailed explanations to provide REB with guidance to resolve the differences that were noted in the two evaluations. While most of these cases have been resolved, some are still under review by REB. The status of the relevant sub-packages is presented in tables presented in Section 3.1.2.

3.1.2 REDP Bid Tendering and Evaluation Results

3.1.2.1 Project 9PBS (1st Tranche)

One bid sub-package worth $ 0.9 million for the supply of submarine cable was subsequently included in the revised procurement plan by REB and was ordered with NRECA concurrence. This consignment is ready for shipment from China. Execution of this order will conclude the first tranche of procurement under 9PBS project.

3.1.2.2 Project 9PBS (2nd Tranche)

One bid sub-package worth $2.98 million for the supply of wooden poles was ordered with NRECA concurrence. Pre-delivery inspection has been carried out by REB for second and final consignment of the goods. Execution of this order will conclude the second tranche of procurement under 9PBS project.

3.1.2.3 Project 10Lac

REB awarded orders for the following six bid sub-packages worth $ 6.62 million during this quarter. The Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) of REB recommended awarding the contracts to the respective lowest evaluated bidders to which the Board of REB agreed. However, three of the sub-package amounts are beyond the financial approval capacity of the Board thus they needed formal approval of the Energy Ministry. NRECA has extended its concurrence for the procurement.

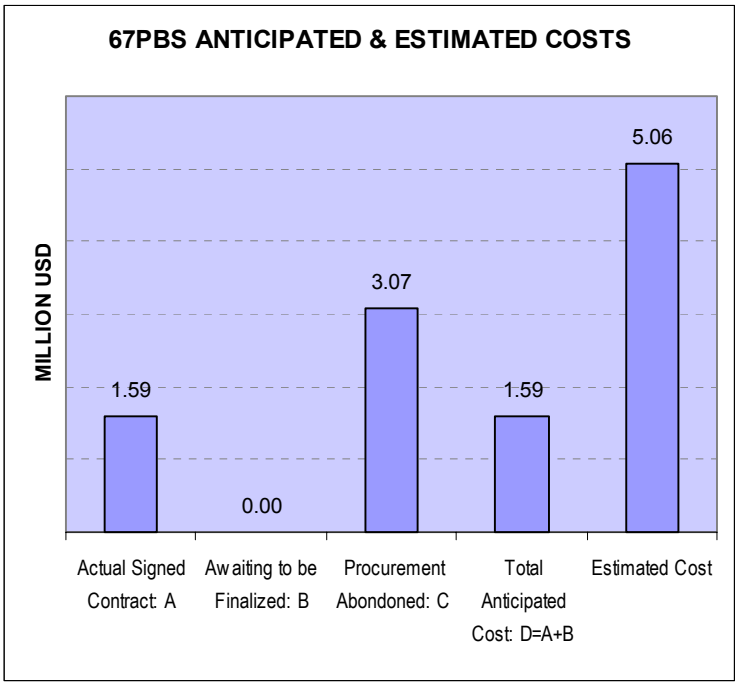
Sub-Package No.	Item	Bidder	Order Value
DFID (10Lac)-09-060	Conductor, 6 Duplex	M/s. SBS Cables Ltd.	EXW USD 2,369,187.00
DFID (10Lac)-09-061	Conductor, 6 Duplex	M/s. TPT Cables Ltd.	EXW USD 2,103,443.80
DFID (10Lac)-09-062	Conductor, 3 Duplex	M/s. TPT Cables Ltd.	EXW USD 1,750,968.30
DFID (10Lac)-09-063	Conductor & Guy Accessories	M/s. Trade East West Corporation Ltd.	CFR USD 260,100.
DFID (10Lac)-09-064	Fuse Cut-out & Lightning Arrester	M/s. Zhejiang People High Voltage Electrical Ceramics Co. Ltd.	CFR USD 82,950.
DFID (10Lac)-09-065	Twist Tite Meter Seal	M/s. Shenyang Shining Fortune Container Seal Co. Ltd.	CFR USD 58,000.

Table 3.1.2.2: Summary of Commodity Procurement Status against REDP through March 2010

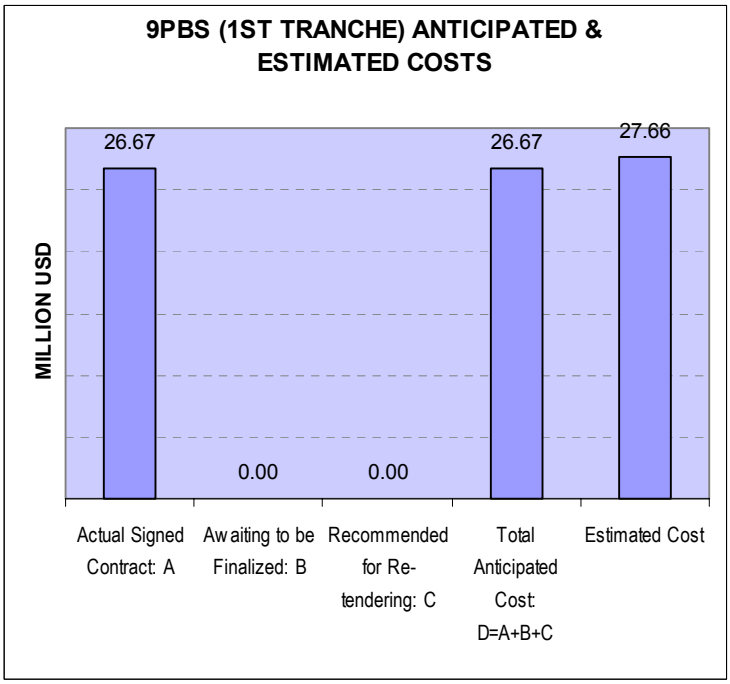
Item	Projects				
	67PBS	9PBS (1st Tranche)	9PBS (2nd Tranche)	9PBS (3rd Tranche)	10Lac
Available sub-package:					
Number	7	29	7	5	17
Estimated amount (Million USD)	5.064	27.664	14.291	5.109	12.55
Sub-package tendered:					
Number	7	29	7	5	17
Estimated amount (Million USD)	5.064	27.664	14.291	5.109	12.55
In % of total estimate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Tendered sub-package under evaluation:					
Number	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated amount (Million USD)	0	0	0	0	0
In % of total estimate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Tendered sub-package awarded:					
Number	4	18	5	5	14
Order amount (Million USD)	1.591	13.438	9.993	5.415	11.512
In % of total estimate	31%	49%	70%	106%	92%
Sub-package decided to be re-tendered:					
Number	3	11	2	0	3
Estimated amount (Million USD)	3.072	12.445	4.103	0	0.177
In % of total estimate	61%	45%	29%	0%	1%
Re-tendering of sub-package under process:					
Number	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated amount (Million USD)	0	0	0	0	0
In % of total estimate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Re-tendered sub-package under evaluation:					
Number	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated amount (Million USD)	0	0	0	0	0
In % of total estimate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Re-tendered sub-package awarded:					
Number	0	10	2	0	2
Order amount (Million USD)	0	13.234	4.830	0	0.197
In % of total estimate	0%	48%	34%	0%	2%
Sub-package abandoned:					
Number	3	0	0	0	0
Order amount (Million USD)	3.072	0	0	0	0
In % of total estimate	61%	0%	0%	0%	0%
PAYMENT SITUATION					
Amount ordered (Million USD):	1.591	26.672	14.823	5.415	11.709
Amount disbursed (Million USD):	1.560	25.592	11.728	5.235	4.312

The following graphs present information highlighting the US dollar amounts of the material purchases for the 67 PBS, 9PBS and 10 Lac procurements. The graphs show the dollar amounts of the contracts awarded, bids to be finalized and awarded, retendering amounts (loss of funds due to project closure prior to award – 67PBS) and the final projected costs compared to the initial project estimates.

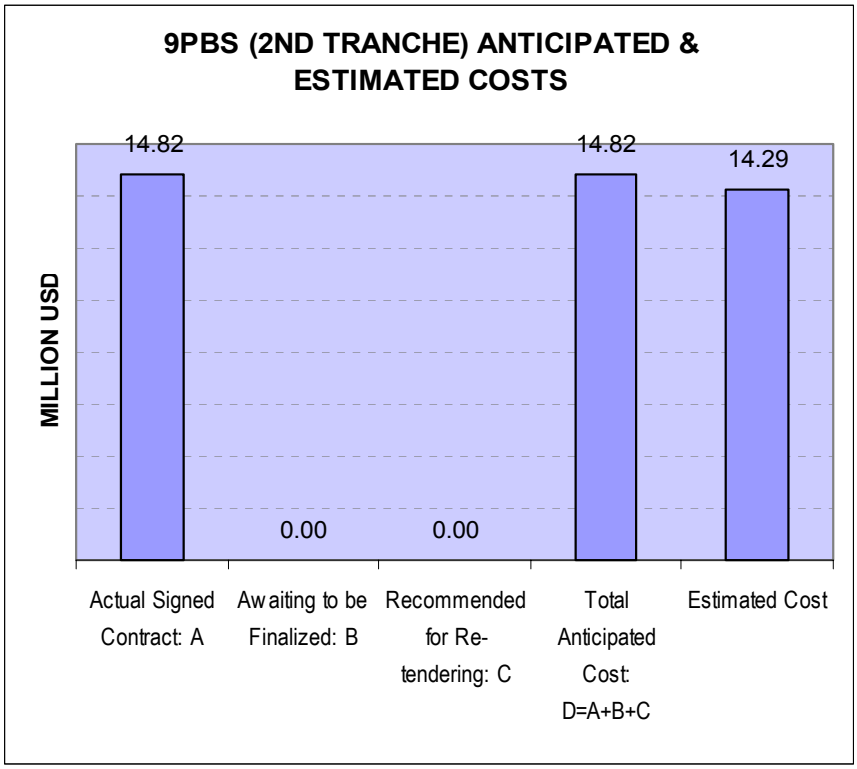
Graph 3.1.2.3: 67 PBS Materials Composition and Anticipated Contract Costs



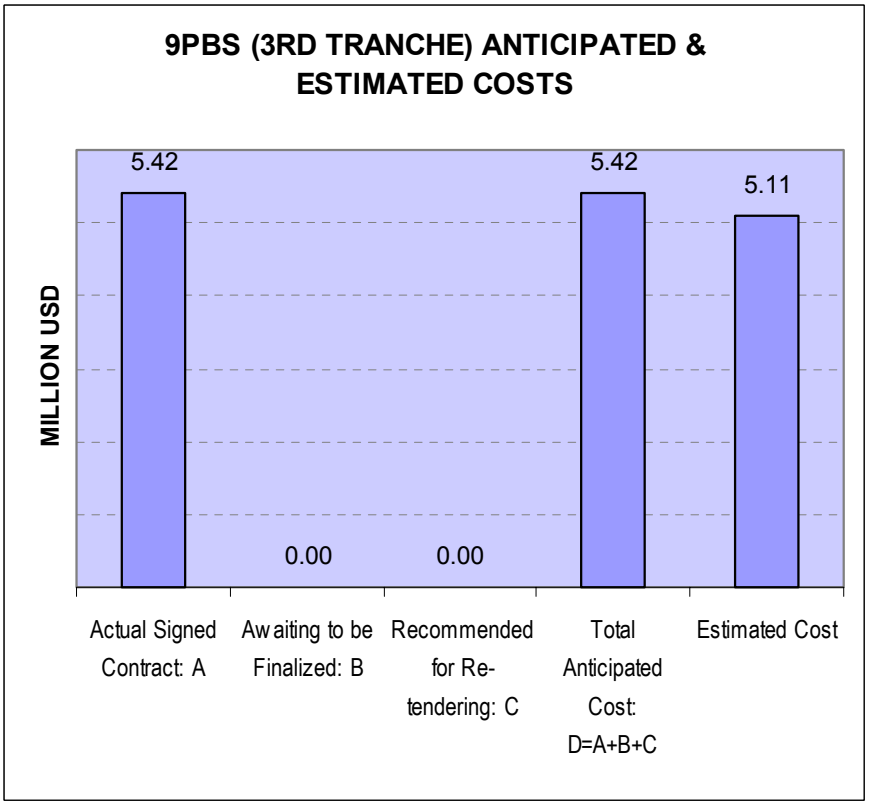
Graph 3.1.2.4: 9 PBS (1st Tranche) Materials Composition and Anticipated Contract Costs



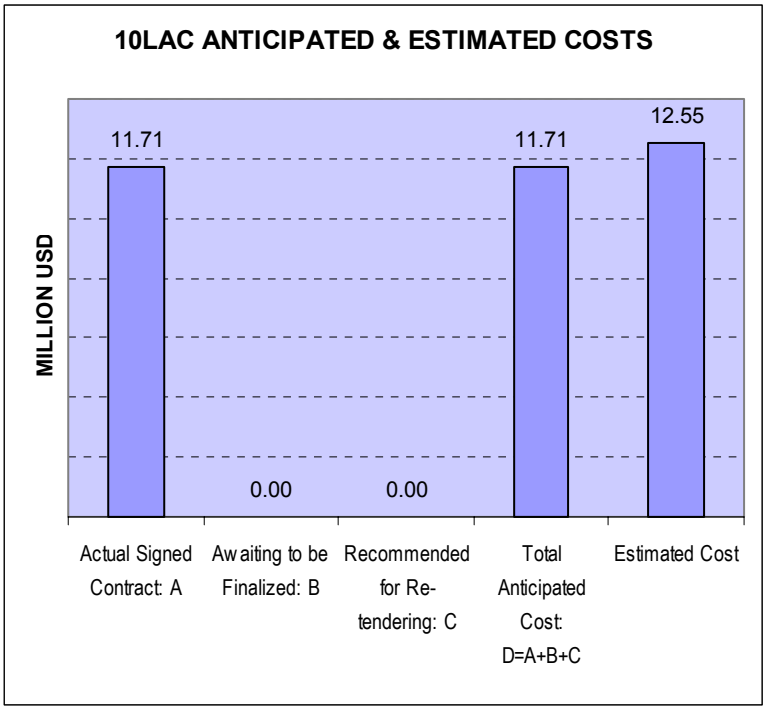
Graph 3.1.2.5: 9 PBS (2nd Tranche) Materials Composition and Anticipated Contract Costs



Graph 3.1.2.6: 9 PBS (3rd Tranche) Materials Composition and Anticipated Contract Costs



Graph 3.1.2.7: 10Lac Materials Composition and Anticipated Contract Costs



3.2 Materials Procurement – Second and Third Tranches

The second tranche of materials procurement process began in June, 2007. This second tranche is has provided an opportunity to provide positive feedback to REB derived from the first tranche procurement, while also attempting to diminish remaining poorly defined bid conditions, while focusing on increasing bidder competition. The third tranche procurement commenced in July, 2008 and clearly shows improvement in the process as procurement decisions are made faster and effectively.

Core procurement monitoring topics were selected with REB during the first tranche of commodity procurement. During the last reporting period, the core requirements were consolidated for the second tranche of material procurement. As noted in previous quarterly reports, REB has agreed to NRECA recommendations to enhance competitive bidding into the procurement documentation.

REB evaluation results concurred with independent NRECA evaluation results. In those cases wherein NRECA provided recommendations to REB, the recommendations were accepted and integrated into evaluation reports. REB completed revisions to the bid documentation for second tranche materials; NRECA drafted letters confirming no objection for bid evaluation reports.

3.2.1 Bid Conditions and Compliance with Core Monitoring Requirements-Second Tranche

In general, material procurement conditions complied with GOB PPR, and bids were submitted in accordance with good international practice. For the most part, core monitoring topics were addressed by REB. These core monitoring topics related to:

- Bid Package Size
- Fair Conditions for Bidders
- Advertising

Conditions in the REB bid documentation reflected the monitoring requirements, while REB procurement personnel complied with and respected monitoring conditions. In particular, core monitoring conditions were observed by REB in the following manner:

Bid Package Value

The principal requirement is for the bid package financial value to be sufficiently high to attract international bidders. However, the limit of REB financial authority now is $ 3.5 million (previously it was US$ 1.7 million); bid sub packages of values that exceed this value require Ministry of Energy approval. There is however no such bid package of value exceeding $ 3.5 million pending for disposal. Given the desire to expedite REDP materials procurement, NRECA recommended that bid package values be allowed to drop below $1.7 million.

Fair Conditions for Bidders

Bid documents were formulated to include all information necessary for potential international bidders to equitably compete with domestic bidders.

Advertising

The procurement exercise was advertised in four national newspapers and on the GOB Technical Procurement Unit website. As a further aid to disseminating the procurement information to potential international bidders, NRECA requested that copies of the newspaper advertisement be concurrently distributed to embassies and high commissions in Dhaka.

3.2.2 Procurement Program

Following NRECA concurrence, procurement advertising is conducted in accordance with GOB PPR with circulation of notices to an appropriate number of newspapers. During the reporting period there was however no procurement advertisement made by REB.

In addition to newspaper advertisements, the procurement notices are also sent by REB to GOB Central Procurement Technical Unit website. Concurrent with the newspaper and website advertising, information about the procurement was also sent to the trade sections of diplomatic missions in Bangladesh.

SECTION 4: MONITORING OF MATERIALS USAGE

4.1 Monitoring Methodology

The following are the basic considerations for monitoring the usage of DFID funded materials:

Sub-Task 1: Storing DFID funded materials at Khulna Warehouse

- Assist Khulna warehouse personnel to improve storage conditions and methods for DFID-financed materials.
- Where practical, DFID materials will be segregated from existing REB materials.

Sub-Task 2: DFID funded Material at PBS

- Randomly monitor assignment of materials to construction contractors; evaluate if quantities disbursed are correct.

Sub-Task 3: Monitoring of Construction Work in 9 PBS.

- Comparison of detailed construction plans with master plans.
- Inspections of construction projects in each PBS.
- Compare material quantities issued with work completed.
- Monitor construction quality and compare with REB standards.
- Monitor category of customer connections with reference to DFID criteria.

Sub-Task 4: Monitoring of materials usage in 67 PBS and 10 lac customers.

- Monitor progress of construction works and compare with disbursement of DFID-financed materials.
- Check meter issues and compare with new customer connections.
- Randomly monitor issue and installation of DFID-financed meters.

4.2 Progress

Monitoring of material usage by construction contractors: The methodology for this monitoring has been developed. Data taken from selected close-out documents has been analyzed for four PBSs, namely, Rajshahi, Nawabganj, Brahmanbaria and Mymensingh PBS-2.

Monitoring material movement by PBS warehouse: The methodology for this monitoring has been developed. Stock statements collected from Rajshahi, Nawabganj, Brahmanbaria and Mymensingh PBS-2 PBSs have been analyzed.

Monitoring construction progress: Construction progress is regularly followed-up with the concerned Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers of the Project Divisions for all the 9PBSs so that targets can be fulfilled within project period.

SECTION 5: SOCIO ECONOMIC STUDY

5.1 Background

It has been documented in numerous studies that access to affordable and reliable electricity is a key requirement for both economic development and poverty reduction. The Government of Bangladesh's (GoB) Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of October 2005 emphasizes the importance of rural electricity for creating employment. Improved electricity coverage, particularly in rural areas of Bangladesh, will help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The overall objective of the Socio Economic Study is to examine the social and economic impact of the REDP with emphasis on electric connections to poor and women led households.

As indicated in the Key Issues Section of this report, a number of significant actions, including power supply shortages, impinge significantly on the anticipated benefits of the REDP and the REB program in general. Field evaluations show clearly that households will go to great lengths to gain access to electric service, but small and medium-scale enterprises will be reluctant to make investments until and unless power supply improves in rural Bangladesh. The socio-economic survey is designed to quantify the impact of the REB program in general, and REDP in particular against the backdrop of challenges with power supply in rural Bangladesh.

5.2 Progress

Micro-finance Component of REDP in the Brahmanbaria Pilot Project - Work continued on the compilation of the baseline data for the Micro-finance Component of REDP in the Brahmanbaria pilot project. We expect the draft report to be submitted by HDRC in April.

Mid-Term Monitoring Review - Preparation work was completed for the survey monitoring review which will be conducted in the February – April timeframe. NRECA staff will take the lead in this efforts assisted by HDRC personnel.

- Data collection and Focus Group discussions with general managers and others for the Monitoring Review have been completed at Mymensingh PBS 2, Kurigram PBS and Joypurhat PBS and Brahmanbaria PBS.
- HDRC is preparing data entry design using Access.
- Our local consultant Shital Das is preparing the draft report including the analysis tables with the support of the HDRC study team.

5.3 Micro-Finance Credit Program for the Poor

5.3.1 Background

The primary objective of the Micro-Finance Component of the REDP was to address the needs of disadvantaged households in rural Bangladesh by creating increased access to financing, thereby enabling households and small business to finance connection charges for PBS electric service. The rural poor were the main beneficiaries of this program. In addition, efforts were made to provide assistance to the extreme poor, such as single parent households or those with severely disabled family members. Traditionally, a rural household applies for an electrical connection only when they have the money to pay for the connection fee, as well as the cost of internal house wiring. In many cases, rural poor find PBS service connection and internal house wiring prohibitively expensive. This purpose of this task under REDP was to enhance the impact of the Rural Electrification Master Plan (2000-2020) on rural poor.

During annual and mid-term reviews of the REDP in October 2007 and 2008, a lack of coordination between the micro-finance program participants was identified. This lack of coordination severely limited the progress of the pilot project implementation led by Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and its partner Padakhep. It was determined that improving coordination specifically between

Padakhep, Brahmanbaria PBS and REB was essential if this component was to make progress towards achieving the established project goals.

Following discussions with all stakeholders and at the request of DFID (and with the acknowledgment of USAID) NRECA was asked to take an active role in coordinating the work of the parties in an effort to ensure that the project stayed on track to meet or exceed program expectations. NRECA agreed to take a leadership role with notable progress being made.

5.3.2 Progress

The Microfinance component of the REDP was reviewed following the completion of the pilot project in Brahmanbaria. Representatives from DFID, the Pali Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), Padakhep, the non-government organization (NGO) tasked with the marketing and servicing the micro-credit loans and NRECA reviewed the program projections and current status of the program. While all parties agreed that there have been many achievements made in terms of the provision of microcredit to a number of beneficiaries, the small number of actual electrical connections made under the pilot project (2,100) strongly suggested that the program will not meet original program projections. Following these evaluation sessions it was decided to support PKSF's decision to discontinue its involvement in the microfinance provision of REDP linked to providing loans to fund the electric connections for the extreme poor and female led households of rural Bangladesh. The loan program was discontinued in December 2008 and all accounts receiving financial assistance have been connected.

SECTION 6: PBS MEMBER AWARENESS EDUCATION AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

6.1 Background

The primary objective of the PBS Member Awareness Education and Board Development (MAEBD) Program Task is to promote member/consumer participation levels throughout participating PBSs. The intended result is to empower membership to take responsibility for actions and decisions, as well to promote capacity building for PBS board members.

The focus of this task was to review previous member awareness programs undertaken in collaboration with REB and PBS by NRECA. From the outset of RE program in Bangladesh, NRECA has assisted REB to develop training programs to build capacity and to raise the awareness of member–consumers, as well as to build capacity of PBS Board members. The USAID-funded RPPR-II Program completed in September 2007 included a specific task to provide training assistance for both REB and PBS personnel including the development of effective curriculum materials for these programs.

The MAEBD Task involves working with the REB Training Directorate, as well as the REB Management Operations Directorates to ensure that the content and approach for these newly developed member education programs address specific PBS needs. At the PBS level, the PBS Member Services Departments are intended to involve themselves with implementation of member education programs. This component of REDP is focused on assisting REB and the PBSs to explore effective approaches to successful member and board orientation training, and assuring improved engagement of PBS Village Advisors. For PBS Board education programs, the REB Training Directorate and REB officers will be directly involved in the delivery of the programs while NRECA will assist with the development of effective curriculum materials.

After the development of the programs and initial implementation through the REB and PBSs, ongoing oversight and monitoring of this initiative will be incorporated into the overall Supervision and Monitoring Task.

6.2 Progress

6.2.1 Staffing

Continuous progress was made in the hiring of local staff and international consultants.

- On February 24, Greg Boudreaux received USAID approval to serve as our Board Development Specialist. Mr. Boudreaux served as Manager, Curriculum Development; Director, Educational Programs; and Senior Adviser to the Chief Executive Officer, NRECA from 1984-2005. He held a series of increasingly responsible positions managing the director credentialing curriculum and educational components of regional and annual meetings and professional conferences. Prior to joining NRECA Mr. Boudreaux served as Assistant Dean, Graduate School, at the University of Maryland - University College and was responsible for curriculum design and evaluation and faculty selection for graduate programs in management and technology. Most recently he served as President, Boudreaux and Associates providing consulting and educational services to electric cooperatives, American Indian-owned utilities, and public power associations. Mr. Boudreaux holds a B.A. from Louisiana State University in New Orleans; a M.A. in Sociology, also from LSU and obtained his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

  We are very excited with the opportunity to work alongside an individual with such a long and distinguished career in board development activity.

Hiring of Financial Services Coordinator

- Mr. Md Faridul Islam joined our accounting section as a Financial Services Coordinator. He will provide backup coverage for our accounting process and will work to introduce automated accounting features that are available with the Peachtree Software package (e.g. automated check preparation, payroll, etc.) that will help streamline the work that is required and make the processing easier to everyone involved. “Farid” has worked in office administration and accounting at a number of different organizations included Ericsson. He was most recently employed by Swisscontact (Swiss Foundation for Technical Development). He has an MBA in Finance and Banking from Rajshahi University and a BBS in Finance and Banking also from Rajshahi University.

  We look forward to working with Farid in all aspects of management as we know that his knowledge and work experience will certainly be an asset to REDP and NRECA.

We are very excited about the high quality of people we have attracted to the REDP team of employees.

6.2.2 Annual Meeting Attendance

We have attempted to attend the annual general meetings (AGM) of our nine REDP PBS when at all possible. We believe that attendance at the meeting helps us develop a bond with the PBS employees and members opening the lines of communication to better serve one another.

- In the quarter January – March 2010, we attended six annual meetings, four of which were REDP PBSs. They include: Chapai Nowabgonj, Sirajgonj, Brahmanbaria, Faridpur, Mymensingh PBS-2, and Bhola.

6.2.3 Member Awareness

Due to the importance of the information and the need of the information in all PBSs, the decision was made by the Chief of Party that the Member Awareness Education workshops would be held in all 70 PBS by the end of the project in February 2011. The original target was only half or 35 PBS would have the training.

During the quarter of January through March, 2010, thirty-nine Member Awareness workshops in thirteen PBSs were presented with 1,851 attending of which 229 were female.

The NRECA team facilitated the workshops. The participants were Board of Directors, consumers of different types (such as teachers of colleges, schools and madrasas, imams of different mosques, Chairmen and Members of local government entities, NGO-personnel, businessmen, local "Elites", Village Advisors, Village Electricians, and PBS - Staff.

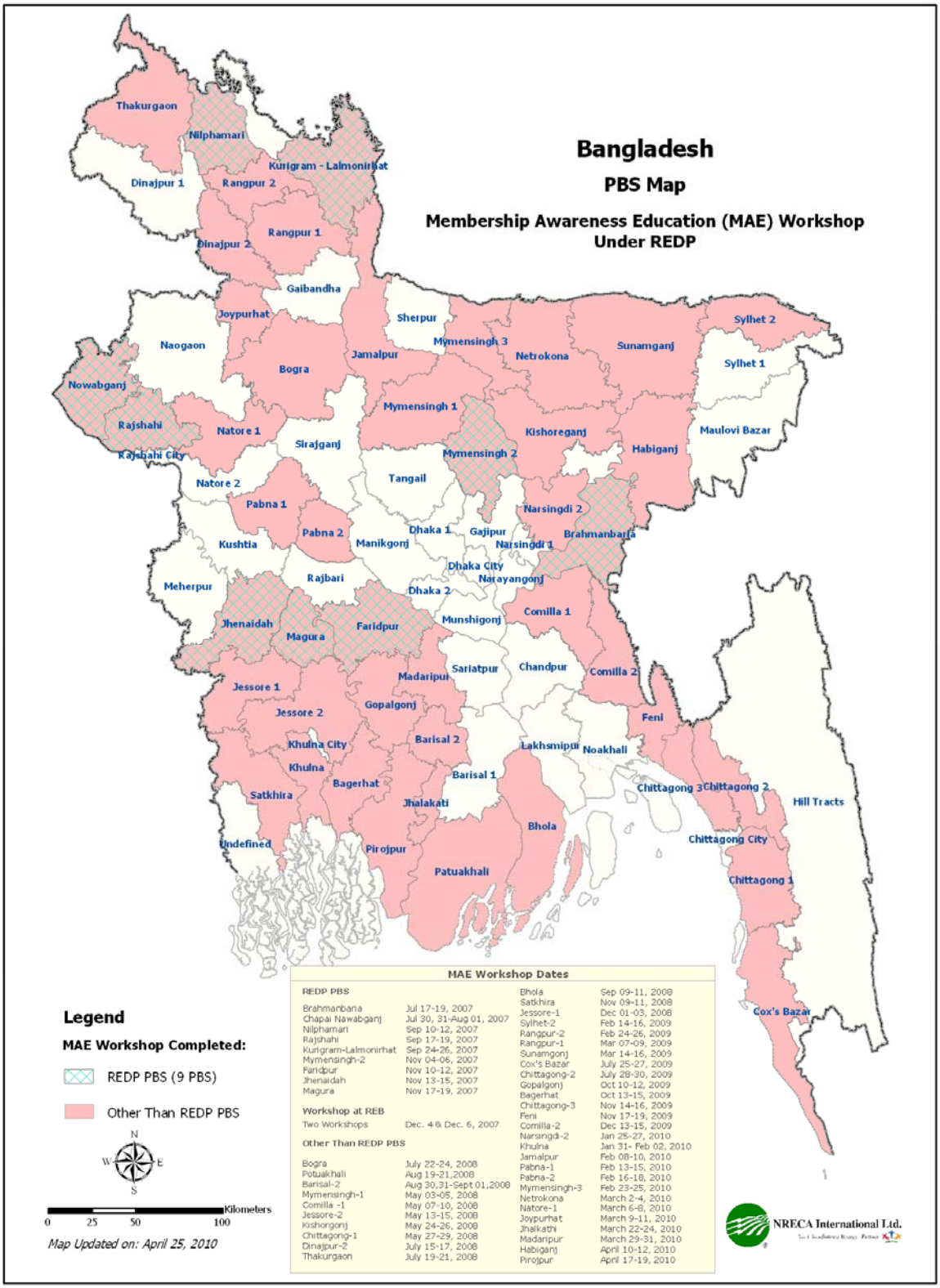
Representatives from REB are always asked / encouraged to attend these meetings and encouraged to work with the PBSs to continue the presentation of the information on a regularly schedule basis. The information presented at the workshops help the PBS employees as well as the consumers remain current on REB instructions and PBS activities. REB participation provides for an improved and more effective MAE workshop.

Details related to the various workshops conducted during the January through March reporting period are listed in the following table

Table 6.2.1: Member Awareness Education Board Orientation Workshop Status
January through March 2010

PBSs	Date	Number of Participants		
		Male	Female	Total
Narsinghdi PBS-2	Jan. 25-27	133	24	157
Khulna	Jan. 31–Feb. 2	136	26	162
Jamalpur	Feb. 8-10	178	08	186
Pabna PBS-1	Feb. 13-15	158	24	182
Pabna PBS-2	Feb. 16-18	134	27	161
Mymensingh PBS-3	Feb. 23-25	142	25	167
Netrakona	Mar. 2-4	136	29	165
Natore	Mar. 6-8	174	18	192
Joypurhut	Mar. 9-11	140	17	157
Jhalokati	Mar 22-24	131	06	137
Madaripur	Mar. 29-31	127	25	152
Habiganj	April 10-12	121	15	136
Pirojpur	April 17-19	141	16	157
Grand Total: 5 PBS	**15-Days**	**1,851**	**260**	**2,111**

Map 6.2.2: Member Awareness and Education Workshops Completed



6.2.4 Board Development

Strengthening the PBS Board Dialogue Program was presented seven times to a total of fifteen PBSs. Board Member participation totaled 276 including 40 females (14%). We are finding that this board development program is being received very well by the local board members, in fact one "Lady Director", a college lecturer, rode three busses on a cold, foggy morning to attend the program.

The program at Jessore PBS-2 was the first program presented for a PBS that was identified as a pilot PBS for the Improved Capacity for Energy Access (ICEA) "Graduation Project". All of the assistant general managers (AGM) from Jessore PBS-2 attended both the Board and Member Service presentation to obtain a better understanding of the instructions they will find beneficial as they move forward toward a more independent organization.

Following the pilot program presentations to the PBS Boards our team spent the month of February revising the program to meet the needs and address the suggestions of the participants. Changes were also made to the handout and PowerPoint presentation. Following the inclusion of these revisions, the team returned to the field in March.

6.2.5 Member Services Department Development

Strengthening the PBS Member Services Department Dialogue Program was presented seven times to a total of fifteen PBSs. Employee participation totaled 173 including 6 females (3.5%). Member Service employees attending included AGM Member Service, Member Service Coordinator, Power Use Coordinator, Wiring Inspectors and One Point Service Providers. Additionally the programs have been attended by AGMs of different departments as well as Junior Engineers from the Construction, Operations and Maintenance department. Consistently, 100 % of the Member Service Department employees have participated in the program. We heard suggestions from the program participants that the Member Services training should be provided for all the management staff including AGMs and supervisors.

The Member Service Departments Strengthening Dialogue team spent the month of February revising the program to meet the needs and suggestions of the participants and the program. The team also made changes, additions and corrections to the hand note and presentation. The team returned to the field in March.

Table 6.2.2: Strengthening the PBS Board – A Dialogue – January through March 2010

PBSs	Date	Number of Participants				
		Male	Female	Total	Total Possible Participants	Percentage Attending
Sylhet PBS-1 w/ Sylhet PBS-2 & Surnamganj	Jan. 11	21	06	27	28	96%
Rangpur PBS-1 w/ Rangpur PBS-2	Jan. 18	20	06	26	26	100%
Jessore PBS-2 w/ Jessore PBS-1 & Satkhira	Jan. 26	32	08	40	40	100%
Sirajgonj PBS w/ Pabna PBS-2	Mar. 13	25	06	31	31	100%
Manikgonj	Mar. 16	09	03	12	12	100%
Natore PBS-2 w/ Natore PBS-1 & Pabna PBS-1	Mar. 23	29	06	35	36	97%
Takurgaon	Mar. 30	11	03	14	**14**	100%
Grand Total: 15 PBS	**7-Days**	**147**	**38**	**185**	**187**	**99%**

Table 6.2.3: Strengthening the Member Services Department – A Dialogue – January through March 2010

PBSs	Date	Number of Participants		
		Male	Female	Total
Sylhet PBS-1 w/ Sylhet PBS-2 & Surnamganj	Jan. 12	30	0	30
Rangpur PBS-1 w/ Rangpur PBS-2	Jan. 19	23	01	27
Jessore PBS-2 w/ Jessore PBS-1 & Satkhira	Jan. 27	36	01	37
Sirajgonj PBS w/ Pabna PBS-2	Mar. 14	22	0	22
Manikgonj	Mar. 16	14	0	14
Natore PBS-2 w/ Natore PBS-1 & Pabna PBS-1	Mar. 24	27	0	27
Takurgaon	Mar. 30	15	04	19
Grand Total: 15 PBS	**7-Days**	**167**	**6**	**173**

6.2.6 Board of Directors Orientation Program

During these training sessions NRECA participates by working alongside the REB Training Directorate during a five-day orientation program for the PBS Board of Directors. Our team provides the course materials and program support helping to facilitate the presentation when called upon to do so. There were no orientation programs held during the months of January through March 2010.

6.2.7 REB / PBS Communications

A draft concept paper titled, "Village Advisor Capacity Enhancement" was been developed. Most recently REB and the PBSs have put less emphasis on training for the group of village advisors assigned to the electrified villages in their service territory. The REB/PBS training plan, January to June 2010, targets only twelve percent of this valuable communications resource. We will be working with REB and the PBSs to encourage an increased emphasis on developing this "information conduit". The emphasis will be on information dissemination and "consumer motivation" activity through increased involvement of the village advisors. The concept paper proposes placing a higher emphasis on village advisor training activity for increasing the quantitative coverage of village advisors along with improving the quality of the training. Proposals will be developed for presentation to REB and work plans will be developed to include pilot programs. Initial focus will be on the nine REDP PBSs. Development of information fliers for distribution and training material for PBS employees is beginning.

As part of this process we are completing a survey / assessment of the community / member motivation activity and village advisor role at the PBS. Information was gathered from three PBSs (Faridpur, Magura and Jhenaidah).

We recently completed the design and printing if a REDP and program specific banners for general information, project implementation and project promotion.

Brad Gibson our Communications Specialists is working alongside REB and PBS professionals along with our local staff to improve communication efforts. His initial thoughts on improvement efforts include the following;

- Short-term efforts will need to focus on a few critical areas to improve communication to member owners and there are a variety of channels that can be used to deliver an effective communications plan including; print, digital media and logo modernization.
- Communication between REB, the PBS, and the community can all be advanced through an improved online presence.
- An important long-term goal will be to establish strategic changes within the organizations effectively developing an overall communications strategy, branding, and editorial calendars. As this happens we can work on creating a bidirectional channel of communicating between the PBS's and REB.

6.2.8 Gender Awareness

The formal presentation of the Gender Awareness Workshop was held at REB on March 24 in the Training Directorate Conference room. The program was held at the Director and Deputy Director level with approximately twenty employees participating. Ms. Mahmuda Begum, Controller of the REB inaugurated the program on behalf of REB. As part of the program our Gender Team presented the information and handout (in Bangla) as it will be presented at the PBS level. Feedback from this meeting was used to revise the program in anticipation of a pilot presentation at a PBS in the next quarter.

In preparation for this meeting a draft manual, handout, and Power Point presentation were developed and a "test run" was held for NRECA REDP staff to receive comments and suggestions on the documents and presentation.

6.2.9 PBS Human Resources

Sakil Malik, our Human Resources Specialist (consultant) visited Bangladesh March 7 – 24. During this time we focused on gathering human resource information from the 9 PBSs of REDP. We also included in our survey several other PBSs which are in close proximity to the nine. The objective of our visits (survey and meeting with the staff) was to obtain information on the existing HR issues at the PBS level.