

**Summary Report on Status Assessment
of 16 RMOs, MACH project (1st report)**

(Assessment Period 10 May to June 6, 2004)

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1. Background:

The MACH project activities have been implemented to establish ecologically sound management of floodplain resources for the sustainable supply of food to the poor of Bangladesh through management of wetland resource base. In the 2nd phase of the project, major focus has been given on development of a sustainable community based resource management institutions and ensuring that the project activities will be continued even MACH project is phase out

It is expected that the communities will continue to derive sustainable benefit and at the same time improving and restoring the natural resource base environment. To achieve these objectives during the 1st phase a number of RMOs have been formed. These are now at formative stage and getting momentum towards institutional building their skill enhancement

Under the umbrella of MACH project a total 19nos. of Resource Management Organizations (RMO) and Jhara/Chara management committees have been formed during the period of phase 1. MACH phase II has focused to strengthen and capacity building of RMOs/Committees. To achieve this objective it was felt very essential to assess the existing status of RMOs/Committees and identify needs for providing support services to them.

2. Status Assessment Approach:

A 3-members assessment team formed consisting of two members from MACH head quarters and the concerned Site Coordinators. The team visited each RMO and make SWOT analysis with the participation of EC/GB members of RMO. The assessment Team used a simple checklist and note books to collect data and keep observation notes, reviewed available books of records of RMOs. In SWOT analysis of each RMO, the members present from EC/GB actively participated.

All 16 RMOs assessed during the period from 10 May to 6 June, 2004. 15-17 RMO members participated in the assessment of each RMO and SWOT analysis in KM and HH sites. In TB site only 6-10 RMO members participated. Low participation in TB site was mainly due to harvesting time of Boro rice. In all cases the concerned FOs were present while status assessment was done. In 2-3 cases, Site Coordinators of KM and HH site were not present as they were busy with other important project jobs.

Based on the field visits findings and review the official documents the team prepared the individual RMO profile of their present status along with a six monthly action plan for each RMO (July to December 2004) in Bangla. The team feels that this plan will guide both the RMO as well as the Field Offer concern to strengthen and build capacity of RMOs for their sustainability. The team also prepared a general report in English incorporating summary observation and recommendation for the management to undertake further necessary steps.

It is to be mentioned that the team provided guidance to the field staff during the assessment period and field visits to over come the shortfalls of each RMO.

This six monthly action plan of each RMO will be implemented by the respective RMO and the field staff with all necessary technical guidance and assistance from MACH - HQ personnel through time to time make field visits, review the progress of individual RMO activities. In addition to that, another internal study needs to be conducted by the team with in mid December 2004 to assess the progress of the said six- monthly action plan of RMOs and to prepare the plan for the next year.

3. Summary Observations on RMO's present status

Items	Observations
Organizational Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 RMOs out of 16 already registered from the Social Welfare Department • RMOs constitutions read out and discussed once in their GB meetings, but after that, this was not shared in any meeting or forum and thus most of the members are not much aware about it. Resulting responsibilities of the Office bearers and the general members are not clear as expected level. • In some of the RMOs like Turag, Balla, Mokash and Aloa the meetings at different level like EC/ GB/ village/ kum/daha committees are irregular .But remaining RMOs are holding their meetings regularly. • It is praiseworthy that most of the RMOs organizing their EC/GB meetings by their own imitative and invite the MACH staff to present at those meetings. • Meeting minutes keeping are not maintained properly. More or less it was found in all RMOs • Members present in the meetings (EC and EB) were on an average 50 - 70%. But some cases it was 100%. • Most of the RMOs had a five years plan developed in the year 2003 but this was not shared in the EC/GB meetings. Resulting activities so far been done not in planned way. • The number of female members in the RMOs is on an average in KM site less than 10%. in TB site about 20% and in HH site about 13%.
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no concrete policy guide line for fund raising of RMOs. However, it is remarkable that 12 RMOs started collection of member's subscription. It is also observed that the meetings expenditures are beard by them selves at KM site and partially at HH site. • Goalia, and Mokesh RMOs not yet started collection of member's subscription. • Books of accounts are not maintained properly. The new treasurers are not provided any training • Out of 16, only two RMOs (Agari and Kazura) accounts have already audited by the registration authority. • To meet their operating costs, some of the RMOs started <i>tole</i> collection with different arrangements like sub-lease and gear based <i>tole</i> from the fishermen, as because in this regard there is no policy guide line. In future it may create misunderstanding and mistrust within the community regarding access to the water bodies.
Resources management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is very significant that through MACH approach is accepted by each RMO. 1 to 9 nos. of sanctuaries in the water bodies under their improved management have been established. • The local people recognize that due MACH intervention particularly establishment of sanctuaries and improvement of habitats fish production and biodiversity increased. • Except two (Ramedia and Goalia) other RMOs have developed fishing norms • In most of the cases, use of current <i>jal</i> reduced up to only 30% to 80%. The use of Katha <i>jal</i> reduced about 80%-90% • In Hail Haor except Ramedia all RMOs got possession of water bodies • Except Ramedia and Goalia all other 14 RMOs have planted trees. The number of trees of each RMO varied form 300 to around 15,000
Inclusion of resource users (fishers and poor) in the RMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In each RMO there are 50% to 61% RUG members • In some of the cases like, Aloa, Mokash, Balla and Kewta the relationship between RUG and non-RUG was not found healthy. It was observed that where the relationship between RUG and non RUG members is healthy and cooperative those RMOs are functioning comparatively better • The number of fishermen in the RMOs at Hail Haor site needs to be increased. Considering the number of resource users as well as size of the water bodies.
Institutional linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only in Sherpur Sadar Upazila the UNO has issued a letter to the Chairman, Pakuria union to invite one representative from Kewta RMO in UP meetings. • Similar latter is needed for remaining all RMOs from the respective UNOs. • Except Goalia RMO all RMO has got membership in regional wetnet. • Every RMO has linkage to the respective LGCs. But still it is not institutionalize as such.
Benefit distribution and sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the members of some of the RMOs do not know about their organizational share of planted trees. • In Hail Haor site agreement not yet been made of planted trees in Kagaura <i>kandil</i> And similar situation in some of other RMOs.
Accountable and transference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMOs activities are not discussed in detailed in GB and EC meetings • More awareness program and sharing of RMO's activities at community level are

	required
Sustainability of RMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of training imparted for capacity building of RMOs. They need more training on sustainable NRM. The team strongly feels that it should get more emphasis. • From the beginning the emphasis were given on the MACH project component wise support activities but the issue of sustainability of the RMOs remains unattended and got less priority.

As per our observation during the status assessment of individual RMOs can broadly be categorized as per following grade; however, it needs thorough study.

Grades of RMOs	Name of RMO
A	Takimary Darabashia, Bailsha, Jethua and Baragangina
B	Dhali Bailla, Agari, Sanada, Dumuria, Ramedia, Kazura, Aloa, Goalia (new)
C	Kewta, Balla, Turag river and Mokesh Kalidaha

To improve the situation of the B & C category RMOs the following steps should be under taken:

- I. Their main problems should be raised in UP and LGCs meetings regularly for getting LG and administrative support.
- II. Special drive should be given from the respective site office level
- III. More strong motivation and awareness program need to be conducted specially the court yard meetings/patha natak/Baoul song/miking etc.

4. Recommendations:

- I. Immediately a realistic six monthly (for the period from July to December 2004) action plan for each RMO should be developed and its proper execution and follow up to be ensured.
- II. After six months this action plan should be reviewed by a team by December 15th, 2004.
- III. For strengthening organizational capacity the meetings at the different level of organization like (court yard/village/daha/kum/kur/EC/GB meetings) should be conducted regularly with a planned way including awareness and motivational programs
- IV. Accounts and record keeping system need to be improved through intensive follow up and facilitation by the respective FOs and Sr. FOs and Site Accountants
- V. Each RMO in their scheduled EC meetings agenda wise discussion on Natural Resource Management should be ensured by the respective FOs and Sr. FOs. The purpose of this is to enhance their knowledge and capacity in NRM. The concerned Site Coordinators should monitor and ensure the matter. CNRS can organize a training course on NRM for the staff those who don't have received such training earlier.
- VI. Each RMO should take necessary steps for amendment of their existing constitution and get approval form the registration authority. In addition to that, this revised constitution need to be discussed at the court yard/village/Kum/Kur/Daha committee's meetings to make ensure the clear understanding among the members of the RMOs.
- VII. Subscription of members must have to be regularized immediately.
- VIII. Each RMO should assess their yearly minimum expenditure (operating cost) and based on that, they need to be developed a fund raising policy. Information should be collected how the fishers are paying their *toll*. For this MACH team should develop a code of conduct in this respect.
- IX. As per constitution all RMO should have their own office premises. This regard they should arrange at least 5 decimal of land through donation/lease/purchase basis.
- X. The relationship between RUG and RMO must have to be improved as soon as possible where the situation is still prevailing as unhealthy.
- XI. Necessary steps need to be taken to increase female members up to 20% where the percentage is less.
- XII. In case of Hail Haor number of users (mainly fishers) should be increased in the RMOs through motivating the general members. The first preference will get the RUG fishermen.
- XIII. For the new staff communication and facilitation training need to be provided.
- XIV. RMOs need to review their previous five years plan with budgetary provision and update realistically.

- XV. A separate comprehensive long term plan of action need to be developed by the Baragangina RMO through a brain storming session for the sustainable management of the permanent sanctuaries (Jaduria and Chapra Magura Beels)

5. Six Monthly (July to December 2004) Action Plan (sample) towards strengthening and Capacity Building of RMOs and Respective FOs.

Sl. No.	Activities	Targets & strategy	Period	Source of Fund	Responsibilities
1.	Regularize the RMO's meetings with corum at different level and maintained - Courtyard /village/kum/daha/kur EC/GB meetings	Nos. of meetings given in Bangla for each RMO	July to Dec. '04	RMO	RMO and FO
2	-Regularize member's subscription through follow up the activities of the collectors -Up date and maintained books of accounts through supervising the activities of the treasurer after the end of the meetings	As per decision of each RMO TK 2/5/10 per member/month (Detains in Bangla)	Regularize by Aug. & to be con....	ROM	RMO and FO
3.	- Conduct site wise training course on accounts keeping and NRM	Selected EC Members.	Aug./Sep.	MACH	SC & Sr.FO
4.	-Complete the yearly audit of the respective RMO by the concerned authority.	By conducting Reg. Authority.	Aug.	RMO	RMO & FO
5.	-Amendments of the constitution and get approval from the concerned authority -One copy to be distributed among the general members -Discussion to be ensured at the village committee meetings on RMO constitution	Draft Finalization Distribution	Aug. Sep. Oct.	RMO MACH	SC,SFO,FO,RMO
6.	-Make arrangement to send one or two representative from the RMO to attend at the UP meetings	Collection of letter from UNO	August	RMO	SC & Sr. FO
7.	Ensured wetland resource management. Through forming sub- committees and ensure their progress report at the EC meetings on the following issues; - Miking for building awareness -Drama, Baul song - Planted trees (Plantation, Guarding &, raring) - Sanctuary management - Court cases where applicable - Resolution of social conflicts, if any	2 times 2 times Report to EC meeting	July to Dec.	MACH & RMO	RMO, FO SC, Sr.FO
8.	- Managing 5 decimal of land of establishing RMOs office	Lease/Donation/ Purchase	Aug.	RMO	RMO
9.	- Increase female members where necessary	At least 20% in the GB	Sept/Oct.	RMO	RMO FO
10.	- Checking/internal audit the books of accounts of RMOs by site accountants	2 times	July-Dec.	MACH	SC. Site accountant

