

4. Evaluation results

4.1. Relevance

Summary: Relevance is high. All the Project activities are well aligned with the Government's development policies as well as Japan's cooperation plans for Sri Lanka. The target groups are also appropriately identified and the Project is meeting the pressing needs of the target groups, particularly the community members, by offering practical skills enhancement opportunities for rural infrastructure development and livelihood improvement. The needs of the frontline government officials leave room for re-examination because the central government's priority, rather than their felt needs, usually take precedence. The Japan's knowledge, skills and experiences, particularly in the area of overall management skills regarding CAP and rural infrastructure, are effectively utilised.

(1) Conformity to development policies of Sri Lanka

The Project's main area of activities centres on community-based initiatives for livelihood improvement in the poverty-stricken areas of Sri Lanka. As clearly manifested in *Mahinda Chintana*, the Government's ten year development framework (2006-2016)⁷, such strategic initiatives to encourage the poor in the participation of economic growth process have been one of the key policy measures for poverty alleviation in Sri Lanka. Other policy documents including *New Development Strategy* (2005) also declare the Government's determination of putting forward the practice of participatory development with an emphasis on pro-poor growth. An array of development programmes in line with this policy framework, such as Gama Neugma (literary means "village upliftment"), the Samurddhi Programme and so forth, are currently undertaken by the Government.

The Project activities based on the aspiration of materialising community-led livelihood improvement are exactly the translation of these national pro-poor policies into action. Therefore, there is no doubt that the Project is highly aligned with Sri Lanka's development policies.

(2) Conformity to aid policies of Japan

In *Country Assistance Program for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka* (2004), the government of Japan considers poverty alleviation as one of the three priority areas of assistance for Sri Lanka. Japan also emphasises on participation of local governments and communities in the planning and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. More specifically, as demonstrated in *Japan's ODA: Rolling Plan for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka* (2009), Japan attempts to help the Sri Lankan government improve its policy and service delivery systems of rural community development, including areas of rural infrastructure improvement, efficient agriculture,

⁷ Department of National Planning, Ministry of Finance and Planning (2005) *Mahinda Chintana: Vision for a New Sri Lanka, a Ten Year Horizon Development Framework 2006-2016* Discussion Paper

and capacity development of rural communities as the main actor of development.

The Project is considered to be directly addressing the issue of rural community development through facilitating rural infrastructure development, efficient agricultural and livestock management, and livelihood improvement activities. This will in turn lead to poverty alleviation of the area in the long run. Therefore, it is fair to say that the Project is highly consistent with Japan's aid policies to Sri Lanka.

(3) Responsiveness to the needs

The Project targets at two different groups in relation to community development. These two groups, i.e. community members and frontline government officials, are validated as the key players of the community development initiatives in that their commitment to the community-wide activities is one of the most important determining factors for the success.

The Project has been appropriately addressing the pressing needs of the community members by providing them with ample opportunities to skills and knowledge development in agriculture, livestock and other income generation activities. The Project also underlines the importance of community's own initiative to prioritise its development needs, formulate projects, implement them and monitor the processes by means of introducing CAP and CCS approaches. This process enables the community to make community-wide decisions based on its members' needs.

As for the responsiveness to the needs of the frontline government officials, it is not as clear as the case with the community members. Whereas the CAP approach genuinely seeks to realize community's own initiative and participatory decision-making process, at this moment such a thorough participatory development approach may not necessarily be prioritized by the government offices at the DS and GN Division levels. More importantly, the central government's policy priority usually takes precedence over the frontline officials' needs. Therefore, without strong commitment of the central government to the introduction of the CAP approach, the frontline officials are not in a position to put forward this approach in the field. Thus, the real needs of the frontline officials leave room for re-examination.

(4) Advantage of Japanese technology and know-how

The CAP/CCS methods for community development are not something exogenous to Sri Lanka. Rather, they originated and are advocated in Sri Lanka. The Japanese expert team, therefore, does not try to 'transplant' something foreign to the target areas. Instead, it aims at promoting the CAP/CCS approaches with its professional facilitation/ management skills and practical knowledge in specific technical areas such as rural infrastructure and agriculture. The beneficiaries of the Project expressed their appreciation to the Japanese experts and the Project Team for their demonstrated professionalism, work ethics and values of discipline in project management,

institution building and the production of deliverables. The rigorous management skills of the Japanese experts in infrastructure development were particularly appreciated because it ensured timely delivery and high quality of the construction works the community people were engaged in.

The Japanese experts were also in possession of the knowledge of CAP experiences in Trincomalee, through "Agricultural and Rural Development for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Through Community Approach in Trincomalee (TrinCAP)". Hence, the application of CAP experiences in Sri Lanka to the Project was made possible without much difficulty.

Furthermore, the training courses in Japan, China and Indonesia offered to the CP, particularly the One Village One Product (OVOP) training programmes, were effective in helping the stakeholders to take action on the ground. OVOP training contributed to the establishment of HPPC, for instance. In this sense, together with the former points put forth about the Japanese experts, the Project has demonstrated high appropriateness of Japanese technical cooperation to Sri Lanka.

4.2. Effectiveness

Summary: Effectiveness is high. The Project is on the right track to achieve the project purpose to a large extent by the end of the project period. The cycle of community-based project management based on the CAP approach has been established in the eight target GN Divisions through conducting COS and facilitating other livelihood development initiatives on the ground. A considerable number of concerned government officials as well as CBOs have recognised the efficacy of the CAP/CCS, particularly in small-scale infrastructure construction and agricultural development. However, problems remain in areas of maintaining Divisional coordination bodies for CAP implantation and off-farm income generation activities conducted by the community members. The capacity of frontline government officials in facilitating the CAP process is also posing challenges.

(1) Effectiveness of CAP

The Project succeeded in adopting the CAP approach at GN Division level by involving various stakeholders in community development and facilitating consensus building among them. The CAP process was appreciated by the community members, as well as by the government officials, because of its facility to enhance a sense of community ownership through openness and transparency of the decision making process. The Project allocated sufficient time to the planning stage. In other words, the Project spent a lot of time for the community members to build consensus among themselves without rushing to conclusion. This 'slow' progress at the initial stage sometimes raised frustration among villagers, but in the end, they appreciated the process once the decision was made because things went smoothly from then on. Some neighbouring communities, after seeing the success of CAP in the project communities, became interested in formulating development plans and started to

explore the possibility of mobilising locally available human resources to actualise their plans. CAP's emphasis on consensus building and meticulous planning seems to be bearing fruit in this regard.

There is, however, also a negative element about CAP. Since CAP requires frequent meetings by villagers as mentioned above, some segments of the population, usually the most impoverished, tend to be alienated in the process. Their opportunity cost is too high for them to attend frequent meetings. There is a danger that the decisions are made without their presence and the consensus built by the villagers does not necessarily represent the voices of the poorest. Egalitarian leadership, if there is any in the community, and a facilitator's (such as an extension worker's and other service provider's) tactic skills can avoid this situation by getting the voices of the poorest heard in decision making.

Still, CAP's comparative advantages over other similar development planning were evident particularly in areas including high community participation, addressing the pressing needs of the community, and sustainable maintenance of the infrastructure built by the community members. Those officials who were involved in CAP recognise the efficacy of CAP/ CCS and are willing to extend the method to wider areas, if the future policy condition allows.

(2) Effectiveness of Divisional coordination bodies (PIC)

Effectiveness of PIC, a Division coordination body, poses many problems which are mainly stemming from lack of ownership of the CP organisations as well as from the existence of numerous similar fora for discussing development issues. Various other committees at the Divisional level have their own agendas, intentions and purposes and the participants of the meetings also vary greatly. Thus, it is not appropriate just to choose one from those committees and get PIC to be absorbed in it without careful examination. The functions of various Divisional level fora need to be re-examined and identified and an optimal arrangement for PIC needs to be sought.

Most of the PIC members ascertain the need to have such a forum for information sharing, opinion exchange and problem solving regarding issues of the CAP/CCS/ SouthCAP activities. However, PIC does not seem to be regarded by many as a comprehensive Divisional coordination body which should encompass all matters on community development, not just the Project's activities. This situation may be partly due to the fact that top-down, large-scale development projects tend to be carried out rather suddenly without much prior notice or consultation with local governments, as the cases of the problem with the road and canal in Weliwewa aptly showed. Given this political reality, it is extremely difficult for a Divisional level body to function well as a coordinator of various development plans.

(3) Effectiveness of CCS in community-based rural infrastructure development

CCS as a bottom-up participatory development approach has a great potential in bringing about

community's sense of unity and tangible effects of infrastructure development which truly addresses the needs of the community. The Project has effectively shown that the infrastructure developed by CCS is generally of high quality, invites high participation from community members, and is managed by the beneficiaries themselves in a sustainable manner.

One of the limits to the CCS in terms of enhancing the community ownership is that if the infrastructure built is/ becomes highly public, i.e. people outside the CBO or community use the infrastructure frequently, the community loses a sense of ownership and O&M becomes very difficult as manifested in the situation of the Karamatiya Road in Weliwewa GN Division.

Another problem concerning CCS is that the community members, who are predominantly farmers, usually do not have experience of construction work. Thus, sufficient degree of technical assistance as well as frequent monitoring with expert advice is necessary for the community to complete the work successfully with the given time frame. The Project was in a good position, in terms of human resources, to provide such assistance and frequent monitoring to the community along with various tests such as compression tests for assessing quality. However, after the withdrawal of the Project, insufficient technical assistance by the existing government offices to the community will be likely to become a problem.

There is also a problem of securing sufficient participation from the community members, particularly from those who are economically marginalised, in construction work. Their opportunity cost is so high that they cannot afford to work on construction without pay. It is often observed that when a husband has to work on construction, the wife goes to a day labour to make up for the loss. Participation in community infrastructure development can be a serious burden on those severely impoverished households. The Project often came across the problem of not enough villagers engaged in the construction work. The situation mentioned above can be one of the reasons for low participation.

(4) Effectiveness of livelihood improvement activity

As already explained in 3.3.4, livelihood improvement activity based on the needs identified by the community should be evaluated in two-fold. One is technical assistance in agriculture and this area has experienced some success cases typified by self seed production, Chinese vegetables, passion fruits, and mushrooms. These were made possible mainly by the development of irrigation infrastructure undertaken by the Project. Both of the Department of Agriculture and Provincial Director of Agriculture, recognising the effectiveness of the agricultural techniques promoted, are in favour of continuing the project activities after the Project terminates.

The other strand of training, i.e. off-farm income generation training, is facing many challenges as explained earlier in 3.3.4. Income generation efforts, if taken seriously, probably prevent poverty by supplementing income, and may also help to improve the living standards of households that are able

to enter into high-return occupations – but not just any income generation. There is also a risk that the benefits a woman receives outweigh the costs of time, effort and materials. Obviously, income generation activity per se cannot guarantee a positive bottom line. Thus, in order to bring people out of poverty, it is imperative that the poor capture high-return business opportunities by overcoming the current situations where they lack capitals, market networks and bargaining power necessary for effective marketisation of their products.

4.3. Efficiency

Summary: Efficiency is moderate. Inputs from both Sri Lankan and Japanese sides are basically provided as agreed in the Record of Discussion (R/D), which has led to the yield of expected outcomes. Frequent and rigorous monitoring of the community activities is identified as one of the strongest contributing factors for smooth project operation. However, problems including very limited time allocated to the Project by the APMs and SPC staff, frequent transfer of government officials involved in the Project, and insufficient number of the technical staff in conducting extension work at communities are negatively affecting efficiency of the Project.

(1) Provision of inputs by Japan

The inputs from Japan, such as the dispatch of experts, budgetary support for local activity expenses and purchasing equipment, and accepting trainees in Japan and the third countries, have been provided as planned. It is felt that longer assignment periods for experts in infrastructure and agriculture may have been helpful. The inputs by Japan are converted into production of various outputs such as various training/ workshops offered, technical advice given to the Sri Lankan CP, and implementation of CAP in the target communities, without major obstacles. Frequent and rigorous monitoring of the community activities, which was identified as one of the strongest contributing factors for smooth project operation, was only made possible by generous human and financial resource inputs made by Japan. Therefore, the inputs from Japan should be considered adequate to meet the Project's purpose.

(2) Provision of inputs by Sri Lanka

The inputs from Sri Lanka have also been provided as agreed in R/D. Assignment of the CP and provision of facilities and utilities have been sufficiently made by SPC and other related organisations. SPC also provided financial support for the daily operation of the Project.

However, considering the workload of the Project, time being allocated to the Project by the main CP, notably APMs and SPC staff, seems to be too short to fully accomplish the assigned work and to learn necessary techniques and skills for CAP implementation.