

Relatively frequent transfer of government officials involved in the Project also caused some inefficient situations and insufficient number of the technical staff in conducting extension work at communities was negatively affecting efficiency of the Project.

(3) Contributing factors to efficiency – an effective monitoring system

An effective monitoring system was in place at different levels of activities and the system accelerated efficiency of the Project. The Project was able to take proactive measures to potential problems, make necessary modification of the plans in a timely manner, and enhance motivation and morale of the community members.

The Project makes it certain that all project team members participate in the weekly monitoring meeting. Progress Monitoring Meetings (PMMs) were also conducted every other week for CCS activity and Village Coordination Committee (VCC) were organised monthly or every other month at the community level with participation by the staff from the line government agencies. The frequency of these regular monitoring activities is deemed appropriate since the communities and the Project can modify, accommodate, and review the plans according to any changes or challenges encountered before serious problems arise. The Project's monitoring system is designed and carried out very efficiently.

4.4. Impact

Summary: Impact is moderate. The activity of small infrastructure development through the CCS has led to benefiting a cumulative total of 1,591 out of the total of 2,549 households in the target areas directly and indirectly, which should be considered significant. Most of the physical structures built during the project period have been operated and maintained generally well by the community members and villagers' "dependency mentality" has been minimised. The area of agricultural development has also seen some success stories typified by the seed programme, parachute transplanting technique, production and sales of Chinese vegetables, passion fruits, and mushrooms. There is a relatively high chance that these success cases will spread to areas outside the target communities. On the other hand, however, off-farm income generation activity conducted within the limited time frame do not seem to be producing tangible and long-term economic benefits, hence unlikely to raise people out of poverty. A number of positive effects such as involvement of a wide array of stakeholders in the activities related to Human Elephant Conflict (HEC) and the Hambantota Product Promotion Committee (HPPC) were observed during the process of project implementation. Above all, the assurance of impact and the achievement of the overall goal largely depend on how concerned authorities of Sri Lanka will be able to pave their way to further continuation as well as expansion of the outputs of the Project. The Project is now making efforts to push this issue forward but the progress is slow due to human/ financial resource constraints and unclear policy direction of

Sri Lanka.

(1) Impact of infrastructure improvement

The infrastructure improvement by CCS during the past three years has benefited as many as 1,591 out of the total of 2,549 households in the target directly and indirectly. Considering the relative small size of the scale of the infrastructure built, this figure should be considered significant in covering many people. This indicates that the infrastructure was truly needed by the community and it is most likely that the community people will continue to use it for years to come.

There is also a general feeling among those who have observed the CCS process such as local government officers that villager's "dependence mentality", i.e. a disposition to depend on external support without making efforts themselves, has been minimised because of their engagement in CCS. The Project's impact on communities outside the target areas should not be forgotten either.

The construction of a milk chilling plant building in Bogahawewa in 2009 is benefiting not only the residents of Bogahawewa but also those of other neighbouring GN Divisions because milk producers in other villages started to use the facility to store milk. A total of nearly 100 families, as a result of approximately 200,000 rupees investment by CCS, are now increasing their income from selling milk. The facility is contributing to vitalisation of dairy farming in wider areas. Hence, the impact of the CCS infrastructure development activity should be regarded high.

(2) Impact of agriculture development and income generation training

The success stories of Chinese vegetables, passion fruits, and mushrooms, still limited in number, can spread to wider areas in future if the farmers are given sufficient technical assistance by the extension workers continuously. There are also cases where farmers engaged in self seed production are not only selling extra seeds to the nearby farmers outside the target community but also teaching technical advice to them. The agricultural techniques the Project is trying to transfer to farmers seem to be spreading, though slowly, to people out of the target areas. Thus, it is reasonable to say that this area of agricultural activity has a relatively high prospect of making tangible impact in future.

The positive impact of income generation training seems rather limited since a very few people are actually generating additional income from the skills they acquired. It is unlikely that this area will see a substantial improvement three to five years from now without the presence of the Project Team. There are voices, still, from the women who participated in the training that they feel empowered by taking part of various meetings and training offered by the Project. They claim that they learned new knowledge and skills that they can apply in their daily work around the house. They also appreciated the fact that the Project had offered a forum for like-minded women in the village to get together and exchange ideas and opinions. Such unexpected positive impact, though it may not be so significantly seen, should be valued too.

(3) Impact of overall CAP processes

During the process of project implementation, a number of positive effects such as involvement of a wide array of stakeholders in the activities related to Human Elephant Conflict (HEC) and the Hambantota Product Promotion Committee (HPPC) were observed. It is due to the Project's effort to maximise the effects of the Project by involving as many stakeholders as possible. Such collaborative relationships may lead to a long-term impact even after the termination of the Project.

There are also witnessed cases where competition and conflicts over water/ land as well as trouble about crop damage by livestock were considerably reduced due to, presumably, community's raised sense of solidarity through the CAP activity. On the other side of the coin is an allegation that CBOs can be managed harmoniously as long as they do not have money. But once they obtain a good sum of money, just like they do through CCS, trouble about money may arise and their sense of unity may erode over time. The policy implementers of CAP need to be aware of this double-edged sword of CCS and find an optimal mitigation measures to tackle the negative issues.

Nevertheless, overall, the effectiveness of CAP/CCS method applied and adopted in the field by the Project is being widely recognised in and around Hambantota and many people are becoming interested in this method. The handbooks, guidelines, booklets compiling lessons learned from the experience are being prepared and disseminated to the related stakeholders and relevant organisations. There is a chance that the Project's experience will be applied to other areas and impact of the Project will spread there, if there is a political will to do so in those areas.

The Project's effort to integrate CAP with VDP and to establish Jana Sabha as a comprehensive village-level coordination body is a first, and crucial, step to ensure continuation of the CAP approach after the project period. Though such effort should be highly valued, it is making very slow progress at the moment due to many constraints such as lack of human and financial resources and unclear situations surrounding rural development policy.

(4) Prospect of achievement of the overall goal

As explained in 3.5, The Project is facing formidable uncertainty in achieving the overall goal particularly in the area of future policy framework regarding decentralisation mechanism and GN level development initiatives. It is not easy to forecast future direction of CAP in Hambantota at this point in time especially because the new rural development statute, "Jana Sabha Act", will be introduced soon. Undoubtedly, in order to continue producing outputs achieved by the Project, securing human/ financial resources and providing policy framework to support the CAP approach are the imperative preconditions.

4.5. Sustainability

Summary: Sustainability is moderate at present. The gap between the communities and the frontline government officials in delivering public services has been considerably filled by the Project. However, due to current uncertainty of future institutional and financial outlook, some of the outputs such as CAP/CCS process, Divisional coordination function, and services for income generation produced during the Project period may face a risk of discontinuation in future. Institutional and financial arrangements for the implementation of CAP/ CCS in wider areas of the Hambantota District need to be sought and the division of responsibilities needs to be clearly defined among related institutions. As for technical sustainability, some CPs, particularly in agriculture and irrigation sectors, have already acquired a certain level of necessary skills and knowledge to facilitate the CCS and agricultural extension work. However, in the areas of overall CAP facilitation and income generation, appropriate CP organisations for technical transfer are hard to be found. Thus, the technical knowledge in these fields still remains within the Project Team despite the fact that all the necessary operation manuals as well as booklets which document the Project's experiences are to be produced by the end of the project period. The Project has a potential to achieve a certain level of sustainability if future direction of the national policies, such as those influenced by the forthcoming Jana Sabha Act, can bring about appropriate institutional and financial arrangements.

(1) Policy and institutional sustainability

At the field level, the link between communities and frontline government officials, particularly in the agriculture and irrigation sectors, has been substantially strengthened owing to the Project's continuous effort in bridging the gap between them. The frontline officials are now much more confident to carry out their extension work which matches the needs of the communities in a manner that the villagers are willing to accept, with their improved facilitation skills. Although it may be difficult to implement some components of extension work such as frequent monitoring at the level the Project is now conducting due to human resource and equipment constraints (especially lack of transportation), more active engagement of related government institutions in public service delivery is highly foreseeable after the project terminates.

The main problem lies in institutional involvement, rather than individual commitment, of relevant government organisations in continuing the project activities. The government organisations in Hambantota, i.e. the institutions at provincial, district, division, and GN levels, are highly subject to policy priorities and future policy directions of the central government. There seems to be very little room for them to exercise their own discretion in setting local policy priorities and institutional set-up for the implementation of CAP/CCS.

This situation was corroborated by the unsatisfactory outcome of the Project's attempt to introduce CAP outside the target area. Following the recommendation made by the Mid-term Review Team, 20

-30 facilitators serving non-target GN Divisions were trained for CAP in 2009. However, no further activities, including holding a CAP workshop, were materialised because budget allocation was not secured due to institutional limitations.

Still, sustainability in terms of institutional arrangement at the Divisional level may be enhanced to some extent, if not all, if an advisory/ decision-making body for coordinating community development matters is firmly established after the Project. The common information sharing forum, such as the one the current PIC meeting is providing, needs to be continuously secured. In addition, the division of responsibilities in coordinating various development initiatives should be clearly defined among related institutions and each institution should be more involved in, and committed to, putting forward CAP/GCS implementation in wider areas of the Hambantota District.

The Project has a potential to achieve a certain level of sustainability if future direction of the national policies can bring about appropriate institutional and financial arrangements. Such policy direction may be largely influenced by the forthcoming Jana Sabha Act, which attempts to reform the current system of local governance in order to realise more community-oriented decision making system.

(2) Technical sustainability

The technical sustainability varies depending on the area of activity. In the agriculture and infrastructure sectors, the frontline officials of the CP organisations have already acquired a certain level of necessary skills and knowledge to facilitate the CCS and agricultural extension work.

The area of off-farm income generation (e.g. sewing, handcrafting, brick-making, entrepreneurship development, etc.) is facing a challenge of finding appropriate government personnel to whom the Project can transfer technology. Due to multifaceted nature of the activity, there is no single government institution which is responsible for delivering public services regarding off-farm income generation. In Sri Lanka, such services are often delivered directly to the community members by NGOs without involvement of government institutions. The Project also had to resort to working directly with the communities without being able to find CP organisations for technical transfer. Thus, technical sustainability in this field cannot be regarded high.

Technical transfer of facilitation skills for putting the CAP method in practice poses another problem. Similar to the situation with the area of income generation, it is not clear which organisation is best suited to taking responsibility for management of overall CAP processes. This issue is very closely related to the forthcoming restructuring of rural development system, the details of which will be specified in Jana Sabha Act. Without clear definition of responsibilities of institutions in rural governance, where responsibility of CAP implementation lies will remain blurred. The Project is currently having a hard time finding appropriate institutions for technical transfer. Though attempts to disseminate knowledge is made via producing handbooks, booklets and guidelines, most of the

knowledge and skills pertinent to CAP facilitation are still encapsulated within the Project Team.

(3) Financial sustainability

It may not be realistic for the CP organisations to continue the project activities at the same magnitude as the Project is currently engaging in because of resource limitations. Some specific services, particularly agriculture-related services, are likely to be delivered with relatively sufficient funds available at existing government institutions even after the Project. Other services, however, such as CAP formulation and reviewing, CCS implementation, and off-farm income generation activity may encounter serious budget shortfall.

Financial sustainability goes hand in hand with the issue of institutional sustainability explained earlier. Unless CAP/CCS is prioritised and advocated in national and local policies, and its concept and procedures are formalised, there will be a very slim chance for CAP to obtain sufficient funds for implementation.

5. Conclusions

A wide range of activities implemented continuously at the GN Division level for the past three and a half years have brought about the situation where the main stakeholders of the target areas confirm and appreciate the efficacy of the CAP/CCS approach. The approach is characterised by its valued facility to ensure community ownership, openness and transparency of decision making, and thus, genuine community-led development initiatives are materialised as a consequence. It is fair to say that the Project has accomplished proving the effectiveness and viability of the CAP/CCS interventions in the target areas. While positive impact of the Project is also recognisable, the Project's sustainability seems to be difficult to ensure. Institutional and financial sustainability, in particular, is facing a great deal of uncertainty particularly because it is very much subject to the future policy directions at the national level.

6. Recommendations

It has become clear that the Project has already achieved a substantial level of expected targets. It is reasonable to conclude that the Project should be terminated by March 2011 as scheduled originally. As pointed out in the analysis section, there are some areas the Project should address before the Project ends so as to raise the chance of sustainability. The Sri Lankan government is also advised to take measures as listed below to create an environment which enables the continuation of project activities in future.

Recommendations for the Project