MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT

"Evidence based advocacy for low-carbon, pro-poor sustainable "Eco-Village Development "(EVD) in South Asia"

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Polyhouse solar dryer installed by WAFD – Ranichouri, Uttarakhand, India.

The report summarises the findings of a mid-term review of a CISU sponsored regional advocacy project in South Asia in cooperation with national and regional partners in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. The aim of the project is to demonstrate and promote a wider dissemination of the eco-village development (EVD) concept at national, regional and international level through evidence-based advocacy.

The projects main component is advocacy activities combined with elements of building local evidence through test and demo activities, capacity building and training in the different low-cost and low-carbon technologies and advocacy.

The mid-term review looked at the project implementation period 15th January 2015 – 10th December 2016.

The key findings of the mid-term review

Progress:

- All implementing partners have more or less established an evidence base either by adding to their existing programmes and/or installing brand new technologies or programmes for test and demonstration in all 4 countries.

- All implementing partners have done basic documentation of their interventions and produced brochures, posters, reports about their projects for public dissemination.

- All implementing partners have conducted awareness and capacity building activities to promote their technologies and practices amongst their beneficiary communities.

- All implementing partners have presented their projects in national, regional and international meetings and events organised by CANSA, INSEDA and INFORSE.

Effectiveness :

- 3 out of 4 implementing partners have reported positive local impact of their interventions, measured by increased demand for some of the EVD technologies like the Anagha improved cooking stove in Sri Lanka, Green polyhouses in Nepal and bio-gas plants in India.

- So far all partners have had limited or negligible success in building an advocacy base to be able to engage effectively with people and organizations that can influence the national decision-makers and negotiators.

Relevance :

- Since the inception of the project, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goals and embarking on low carbon development in their INDCs as part of Paris Agreement, that makes this project more relevant than ever.

- There are specific opportunities like the designing of EFLG framework in Nepal, the local and national adaptation planning process in Sri Lanka and drafting of state action plan on climate change in India that can be influenced to promote key and relevant EVD technologies and practices in 2017.

<u>The key recommendations of the mid-term review</u>

1. The mid-term review process has identified an urgent need for all coordinating and implementing partners to have a face to face planning meeting at the earliest to sharpen their objectives, refresh their power analysis, develop joint strategies and implementation plan with clear milestones.

2. Develop a cohesive and coherent regional and national communication strategy with an overarching shared narrative and templates and content for

country specific communications to produce quality advocacy materials for dissemination via traditional and new media channels.

3. To improve efficiency the project team should consider developing a shared calendar of activities to allow sharing of resources, expertise and capacities across countries.

4. Prioritise collaboration and partnerships with other organisations and institutions that are promoting similar technologies and practices in each country to build a platform for a joint campaign to promote commonly endorsed technologies that have the highest acceptance, least environmental impact are locally relevant and easily replicable. To build a critical mass, the platform must have maximum outreach and potential to reach and influence key decision makers.

5. It is important at this point of the project to thoroughly evaluate the need for a fresh set of demo creation in new villages that should be preferably avoided to save time.

6. Identify a champion for EVD project in each country, either a well known influencer or a celebrity, and together with her/him proactively engage with local and national government officials, politicians and business entities to aggressively lobby them for uptake of appropriate technologies or practices on large scale.

7. CANSA as the regional advocacy partner must be allocated more responsibilities and supporting budgets to support implementing partners to carry out national and regional advocacy and lobbying efforts.

8. More budgets must be allocated for maintenance and upgrading of most viable, replicable and sustainable demonstration models for them to make an impression on users and policymakers.

9. For Bangladesh, it is advised that a separate more rigorous internal review process is instituted to understand the challenges faced by the local partner-Grameen Shakti in delivering the agreed program to date and to assess their future role in the project.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Green Poly house installed by WAFD, Ranichouri, Uttarakhand, India.

The EVD concept combines a number of low-cost technical solutions within sustainable energy, water management, agriculture, gardening and housing. The project is being implemented by national and local partner organisations in South Asia and coordinated by DIB and INFORSE.

Through a variety of activities across the four countries and in international forums the project will demonstrate how these local technical solutions can contribute to poverty reduction with minimal greenhouse gas emissions. Within the EVD concept climate action is a driver for development and not a burden. During the first phase of the project three villages in Nepal, Bangladesh and Srilanka and six in India have been selected in each country and a combination of low-cost technical solutions have been established. These villages function as the evidence-base for the advocacy activities, which include national dialogue meetings and events, policy briefs and publications, participation in the international climate negotiations as the UNFCCC, input to national hearings, and participation in relevant forums etc.

Project objective

The intervention objective of the project is to influence national decision-makers, including climate negotiators, to be aware of and better include local climate mitigation and adaptation solutions including sustainable EVD as important elements in their climate-related policies and in their proposals for

international negotiations, including for climate negotiations. The sustainable EVD include integrated use of local solutions that together can form a low-carbon development path and show a vision for a prosperous development for villages, based on proven, local successes. Most focus will be on villages in rural areas, where the majority of the population lives in South Asia.

The success criteria for the project are -

1. Establish an evidence base of advocating for EVD and the solutions and methods it includes. This documentation shall explain how EVD and its solutions drive sustainable, local development with poverty reduction and at the same time include climate mitigation and adaptation. This will be verified with the national availability of the evidence-base in publications and in public forum and on the websites of partner organizations.

2. Make solutions, including EVD that combine climate action and fulfilling of development objectives, known among people and organizations that can influence the national decision-makers and negotiators. These include lower levels of administration (states in India, counties in other countries), national associations and NGOs, political contacts, and to influence climate negotiators also other climate negotiators NGOs active in the negotiations. This will be verified with an analysis of who influences national decision-makers, reports of presentations and dialogue with the relevant people and organizations, as well as with relevant information from them, such as publications and information about their events.

3. Make national decision-makers and climate negotiators aware of solutions, including EVD, that combine climate action and fulfilling of development objectives. This will be verified with reports of presentations and dialogue with the relevant decision-makers and negotiators.

4. Have solutions, such as EVD, that combine climate action and fulfilling of development objectives, included in national priorities for climate negotiations and in national climate actions that govern the framework for local development. This will be verified with reports from meetings with decision-makers and negotiators as well as speeches, positions etc. from them and reports from discussions on national climate actions.

Project Partners

Regional coordinators :
1- Integrated Sustainable Energy and Ecological Development Association (INSEDA) – India
2- Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) – India

National implementing partners :
1- Grameen Shakti (GS)– Bangladesh,
2- Integrated Development Association (IDEA) – Sri Lanka,
3- Centre for Rural Technology Nepal(CRTN) – Nepal

4- Women's Action for Development (WAFD) – India

International partners :
1- International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE) – Denmark
2- DIB (Danish International Human Settlement Service) – Denmark, (project coordinator).

Principal donor :
1. CISU

Mid-term review methodology

The mid-term review is based on study of project documents including project proposal, project reports, responses to a specially designed questionnaire and, interviews with key staff and beneficiaries and finally observations during field visits to selected project test and demonstrations villages in Nepal, Sri Lanka and India.

Objective of the mid-term review

1) To assess the progress, effectiveness and relevance of the project and advocacy activities conducted by the partners, and identify current gaps in the implementation.
2) To provide recommendations to the project partners to reach the objectives and how to further disseminate the EVD concept in the region in the implementation period.
3) To assess the quality of the partnership and network with and between both "Implementing" and "Coordinating" partners.

3. MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT

Kitchen garden by CRTN in Kavre, Nepal

a) Building local evidence & demonstration

In Nepal, although delayed due to earthquake, CRTN has begun implementing the project in Kavre district of Nepal. The project villages include 2 hamlets of Chyamrangbesi village, 9 hamlets of Sikrigyang village and 9 hamlets of Ladkhu-Chanaute village that are difficult to access due to bad roads and frequent landslides. EVD solutions like portable improved cooking stoves (ICS), basic pv solar panels , green poly houses for kitchen gardens and fish ponds are being promoted as an opportunity for the earthquake victims to restart their livelihoods. There is high awareness about the Eco-village concept amongst the villagers here and during a village meeting attended by the reviewer in Kavre, village elders as well as village officials expressed keen interest in the uptake of the eco-village practices. As a result of the demonstration and awareness activities conducted by CRTN over many years, participating villages are determined to get their village announced as Eco-friendly village from local authorities. 75 percent households of the EVD village have contributed approximately 75 percent in cash to obtain and install EVD solution of their choice in their homes.

In Bangladesh Grameen Shakti is the implementing agency for solar home systems, biogas plant and improved cooking stove nationally under state-

owned organization Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL). In its report back to the interview questionnaire, Grameen Shakti claims that they have promoted solar home systems in in Khowamuri village and Shudkhira village (Bokchor) and a biogas plant in a cattle and poultry farm in Ashulia (Demran) of Manikganj district but are unclear whether these installation were done as part of the EVD project specifically. There are plans to install solar street lights and bamboo cage for biogas fertiliser but GS has not shared any plans or timelines for the same.

In Sri Lanka, IDEA works in Matala district and has carried out test installations and demonstration activities in three villages –Galahitiyagama and Dalupothagama villagesof Pallepola Divisionand Hapugasyaya village in Naula division. The main technologies and practices promoted by them include organic farming/home gardening demonstrations, organic fertilizer production, household and industrial biomass cook stoves and have carried out training and demonstrations on Biomass drying andmushroom production as a livelihood development activity. Villagers as well as the local government officials were enthusiastic while showing the benefits of the EVD test and demonstration activities carried out by IDEA, especially the 'food-tower' vegetable garden, mushroom cultivation and Anaghi cookstove.

In India, WAFD has carried out test and demonstration activities under the guidance of INSEDA in 10 villages in three states. WAFD has mainly promoted, rain roof water harvesting structures, solar poly green house, smoke-free hybrid cook stoves, solar dryers, biogas plant made from bamboo reinforced with cement concrete, organic compost making baskets, organic farming and kitchen gardens, tree plantations, and 1 hybrid wind turbine in 5 villages, Jagdhar, Ranichauri, Maun, Guriali, Savli of Uttarakhand state in the foothills of the Himalayas. There is a considerable interest amongst the villagers in the EVD technologies, the greatest demand at present is for the hybrid smoke free cook stove, and for compost baskets for organic farming. WAFD has worked in these villages for over ten years and have established presence prior to the EVD project. They report that due to increased awareness, the locals are now willing to contribute a small amount towards cost of the technology.

In Rajasthan, WAFD partnered with two local ngos and carried out demonstrations and installations of 4 green technologies including bamboo biogas, solar poly green house, rainwater tank and compost baskets for 4 beneficiaries in 4 Villages, Ban ki dhani, Basiabehran, Berda and Brahmpur in Alwar district. Unfortunately, since then, there have been issues around coordination and implementation of the project between WAFD and local ngos. Currently WAFD, INSEDA, DIB and INFORSE are jointly looking into the case and CISU has been informed.

In Bihar, WAFD collaborated with All India Women's Conference to implement EVD concepts in Tilothu Mahila Mandal. A demonstration bio-gas plant was built for testing that was found difficult to execute by local partners and the project has now been abandoned due to lack of interest and

applicability in the technologies being promoted under the EVD concept. AIWC has committed to return the unspent funds to WAFD.

b) Raising Awareness & Advocacy

In Nepal, CRTN has managed to reach out to a few local media outlets, including FM radio to promote the EVD concept. They have produced and distributed English and Nepali brochures, case studies and meeting reports to disseminate information about EVD concept, all of which is also available online on their websites and social media pages.

CRTN has also participated in local and national exhibitions and seminars by setting up demo stalls and done orientation workshops in seminars and conferences to promote the EVD concept to reach out to a mix of general public, tourism professionals, other NGOs and youth constituencies. They have participated and presented their interventions at the INFORSE and DIB organized international workshops.

Internationally CRTN has presented its project at international events organised by INFORSE including the SB42 - UNFCCC Side Event in Bonn in June 2015, SB 44 UNFCCC Side event in June 2016 and COP 21 Side Event: "Eco-village Developments: Extending Successful Local Energy Solutions" *in* Paris, France in December 2016. Presentation on EVD in Side Event, Asia Pacific Adaptation Forum, Colombo, October 2016

In Bangladesh, Grameen Shakti, has not done or received any media coverage for the EVD project but more general articles about Grameen Shakti's solar mission have been published in a few national dailies. GS has also produced a brochure about EVD project. Moreover, Grameen Shakti has their own publications for Solar Home System, Biogas, Improved Cooking Stove that are used to promote their systems. Information about the project is available on Grameen Shakti website. Grameen Shakti has no official social media site or separate EVD social media sites.

The EVD project has been presented in the several meetings including the National Environment Fair 2016, July 2016; National Working Group meeting for the third National Communication to UNFCCC, June 2016 and in the stakeholder meeting of National Consultation on Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) of Bangladesh, August, 2015.

Internationally GS has presented its project at international events organised by INFORSE including the SB42 - UNFCCC Side Event in Bonn in June 2015, SB 44 UNFCCC Side event in June 2016 and COP 21 Side Event: "Eco-village Developments: Extending Successful Local Energy Solutions" *in* Paris, France

In Sri Lanka, there has been no active media publicity by IDEA or media coverage about the EVD project. They have published 3 one pagers and 3

posters to promote the EVD concepts for use as publicity material at all levels- national to grassroots and have made all material available on their website and have an active Facebook page.

IDEA co-organised the National dialogue meeting the 12th of November 2015 and participated in the1st Provincial Sustainable Development Engagement Platform- Organized by the Ministry of Sustainability and Wildlife of Sri Lanka – 27/06/2016

Internationally IDEA participated in the Side Event at COP21 Paris Conference on 3rd December 2015, organized by INFORSE, AIWC (India), negaWatt (France), Nordic Fork centre for Renewable energy. IDEA also participated in UNFCCC SB44 Bonn Sessions and Side Event – 20/05/2016 with a presentation on Linking Eco Village Development (EVD) to INDCs and National Agendas of Sri Lanka. Presentation on EVD in Side Event, Asia Pacific Adaptation Forum, Colombo, October 2016

In India, WAFD too has had minimal media coverage, with a few stories published in local Hindi newspapers. WAFD has produced a number of advocacy publications including booklet for women users on EVD besides a brochure and a few reports that they use to disseminate information about their interventions. WAFD does not have an active social media (FB, Twitter etc) or online presence (webpage).

WAFD organized a National Planning Workshop, September 2015, New Delhi for all the project partners where 5 NGOs were given orientation on the EVD concept, and included a training on local advocacy methods by CANSA to help the partners draw out strategies for local level advocacy activities. WAFD also organised National Dialogue Meeting (June 2016) in Dehradun, India that served as a multi-stakeholder forum to share the Eco Village Development concept Another National Workshop For Local Policymakers (October 2016 was held in Chamba, Uttarakhand for 18 elected representatives of Village Panchayats representing 25 villages.

International EVD advocacy events attended by WAFD include COP21, Paris, November 2015-Presentation on EVD and energy access in Side Event; CANSA regional conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, April 2016--Presentation on EVD technologies and mitigation potential; Waterloo Global Science Initiative Open Access Energy Summit, Waterloo, Canada- April 2016--Presentation on Grassroots Energy Access and EVD; UN Climate Conference, Bonn, May 2016--Presentation on EVD in Side Event, Asia Pacific Adaptation Forum, Colombo, October 2016

c) Relevance& Impact

In Nepal, there are multiple opportunities to promote the EVD concept mainly due to promulgation of Environment Friendly Local Governance Framework (EFLG) 2013 by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local

Development. This framework has various indicators that a village has to attain in order to be established as eco-villages. It is possible to achieve most of the indicators mentioned in EFLG framework via implementation of EVD concept. Also, after earthquake, Nepal is still working to develop shelter design and provide subsidy amount to rehabilitate the victims. Integration of various EVD solutions during shelter development process that is to be done under the supervision of government can assist in speedy rehabilitation of the victims. Most importantly Nepal's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) advocates for low-carbon development path while promoting climate adaptation and resilience. The current plans and policies of the government make a strong case for integrating EVD Concept with national development endeavours.

A measurable impact of the EVD demonstration and awareness is that the villagers have learnt the value of collecting rain water. In Chalal village the villagers have decided to harvest rainwater and integrate rain water harvesting with micro-irrigation system for use during dry periods. Most of the villagers have constructed gutters in the temporary shelters that they received from various relief organizations on their own to harvest rain water. Similarly, poly-house tunnel farming practices has been widely adopted in EVD project villages. They have produced off seasonal vegetables (Tomatoes) for commercial as well as for their domestic consumption purpose. Some of the beneficiary households have started plantation of high value and ornamental plants.

Another important impact is that villagers who were used to "free of cost mentality" especially in the aftermath of earthquake have actually contributed about 75 percent in cash to purchase EVD solution. This approach has been appreciated by local government representatives.

In Bangladesh, the government is committed to low carbon development and is a perfect target for promoting EVD concepts. Grameen Shakti's past interventions and social business models to promote renewable energy technologies have raised awareness on importance of replacing fossil fuel especially kerosene thus benefiting in terms of money as well as better environment, facilitating better environment for children to study and communicating and replacing solid wood by biogas plant thus providing better cooking environment, on village level.

In Sri Lanka the government has formulated its National Adaptation Plan that aims to achieve Sri Lanka's objectives of sustainable development through appropriate, timely measures of adaptation. Now the Sri Lankan government moves into the next state of making preparatory elements, that includes identifying, reviewing and appraising adaptation options. The EVD project is of great relevance to this national process.

As a result of the EVD interventions there is enthusiasm within communities to mobilize through programs of the Village Development Societies (VDS) to sustain such activities in the villages. Which shows some evidence of united

action to work towards village development. Already following Organic farming/Home Gardening awareness and training workshops, many households involved in these workshops have been carrying out Home gardens, using their own funds at some instances.

In Sri Lanka the government have launched the "Sri Lanka NEXT Bluegreen Era" initiative in January 2016 as a commitment to the Paris Agreement. This initiative acknowledges national development through low carbon strategies. Under this initiative, 10,000 eco-friendly Haritha Suhuru villages (Smart villages) are to be developed by 2020. To implement this programme within the period 2016-2020, Sri Lankan government is in ties to collaborate with community organizations. This gives a good basis for scaling up the eco-village concept in this new project, as this NEXT initiative will form an important part of implementation of the Paris outcome in Sri Lanka.

In India as well, the government is promoting low-carbon technologies and lifestyle through various programs as indicated in its INDC which confirms the relevance of the EVD project. WAFD's interventions in Uttarakhand include small, low cost, low carbon green technologies aimed at the individual women/families in the village who can manage and use these optimally. It can be easily replicated as the technologies are simple, contextually adaptable, and local master masons and technicians can be trained to implement these easily. These are cost effective solutions and can be implemented according to need.

d) Hurdles and hindrances

In Nepal, the massive earthquakes that happened on 25-April & 12-May, 2015 caused multiple delays in starting the project. Frequent landslides, transport strikes and limited budget allocations for field-work has restricted the project team's access to the project villages.

In Bangladesh, natural calamities and political disturbances have resulted in delays as well. There are number of other institutional issues within Grameen Shakti that need to be addressed on urgent basis as there is no clarity on their approach to the EVD project, as it is neither integrated in its ongoing installation business or given the required support for it to be run as an independent project. Grameen Shakti is also struggling with its advocacy efforts due to lack of collaboration with other NGOs and networks due to lack of adequate human resources.

e) Role of regional coordinators

CANSA

CANSA's role is to strengthen partnership of its national members with INFORSE members in the project countries, as well as jointly coordinate (as Co-Regional Coordinator of the project) with INSEDA (as the Regional Coordinator of the project) activities related to advocacy and campaigning at the South Asia regional level.

CANSA has conducted one training for project partners in India on advocacy strategy, facilitated one national dialogue conference in India and organised 2 regional events in Sri Lanka – in April 2016 and October 2016 that offered a platform to the project partners to present the EVD concept to regional audiences.

CANSA has helped develop national level advocacy plans with WAFD and INSEDA and has acted as a resource persons for the regional partners on their proposed national advocacy plans, but only on Skype/emails.

CANSA has created space for promotion and lobbying for EVD project partners at national and regional platforms and conferences, including the APAN forum on Adaptation.

CANSA has showcased all the EVD case studies on its website and regularly promotes them via social media.

INFORSE

INFORSE has organised up to 6 side events at the UNFCCC meetings in Bonn, Paris and Marrakech that offered a platform to project partners to present the EVD concept to international audiences. They are also responsible for all the SEN newsletters and publications that are also available on INFORSE's websites.

INSEDA

INSEDA worked on capacity building, gave technical assistance in design and implementation of EVD interventions to WAFD in India and helped support INFORSE national focal points. It also coordinated with the focal points along with DIB, and assisted in the regional and international events, meetings and conferences..

4. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Poly house for kitchen garden by CRTN in Kawre, Nepal

All national implementing partners have considerable past experience and have built evidence of low cost technical solutions on the ground over many years of work.

The investments from the first phase of the EVD project has mainly supported the national implementing partner's ongoing capacity building, training and awareness work and added a few new working models on the ground. It is important at this point of the project to thoroughly evaluate the need for a fresh set of demo creation in new villages that should be preferably avoided to save time.

There are number of other groups and networks simultaneously promoting the same EVD practices and technologies in the same villages and districts under different titles, in different programs to different audiences. It is important that all implementing partners connect with other NGOs, institutions and networks and in their matrix to coordinate their efforts and build a movement .

EVD solutions need to be shown as fit for purpose and win-win for all stakeholders including policymakers across political parties & district level officials.

There is an identified need to build a dossier of current national programs under different departments and ministries, best practices and practitioners, funders and banking supports, entrepreneurs and businesses for scaling up to attract public-private investments and to be used for advocacy with policymakers who need examples of EVD solutions delivering results at scale.

The popularity of vegetable polyhouses and fishponds in Nepal, food towers and mushroom production in Sri Lanka and polyhouses and food drying units in India indicates people's interest in safe food and is an opportunity for implementing partners to collaborate with food, agriculture and forest departments and ministries for promotion of the concept.

On the other hand it was interesting to note that most women interviewed look at improved cooking stove as a bridging or backup arrangement, while some of them already have LPG connections, others are hoping to get one as soon as possible.

Many of the demonstration models, including the new ones will require constant maintenance and upgrading for it to be used as a showcase for its sustainability and lifespan.

As none of the implementing partners have in-house expertise or human resources for developing and executing a national communication strategy, the project proponents can contract external professionals to help develop a cohesive and coherent regional and national communication strategy with an overarching shared narrative and templates and content for country specific communications to produce quality advocacy materials for dissemination via traditional and new media channels.

Amongst all project partners CANSA has the necessary expertise and membership base to assist the efforts of implementing partners to reach out to national policy makers and influential people, but are restricted due to lack of financial resources and clearly defined role and responsibility.

Events and conferences organised by INFORSE at international forums are important opportunities to engage with policy makers that are otherwise difficult to access back home. It is important to ensure that target audiences and decision makers participate in national dialogues and international side events rather than speaking to each other and to those who are already converted as is the norm in such events.

(ENDS)

5. LIST OF KEY PEOPLE INTERVIEWED FOR INPUTS

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11. Anoop Poonia, Program Manager, CANSA
12. Sanjay Vashist, Director, CANSA
13. Raymond Myles, Director, INSEDA
14. Usha Nair, Board member, AIWC
15. Zareen Myles, Director, WAFD
16. Kavita Myles, INSEDA
17. Santosh Patnaik, CANSA
18. Villagers of Kawre in Nepal, Matale in Sri Lanka and Ranichouri in India.