

Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund Project (SLGDFP) Quarterly Progress Report of 1st Quarter, 2007

1. Introduction:

Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund Project has been implementing since July 2000 with the goal to achieve **participatory local governance for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation in rural Bangladesh**. The key intended outputs of the project are to make the Union Parishads efficient in service delivery to the community, peoples participation in the decision making process of local development, transparency and accountability of the union parishads to establish better governance at local level and the lessons dissemination for policy change. The project was supposed to be completed by end of 2005 while it was extended up to December/2006 for one year period with a view to linking the project to upcoming Learning & Innovation Component (LIC) of Local Governance Support Project (LGSP). As the LIC document could not be signed within December/2006 so, there was a request from government to extend the SLGDFP for further six months up to June/2007. The SLGDFP project has been marked as pioneer project in the area of fiscal decentralization as well as local governance. The achievement of the project as mentioned in different reports by ADP, UNDP, UNCDF, WB is very good. The project has introduced different innovative approaches at local level, specially to the Union Parishads which have been appreciated by all stakeholders. Some of the innovations already been up taken by government and different key development partners.

The project ables to draw remarkable attention to the donors, civil society, local government actors and the government. In 2006, Local Governance Support Project (LGSP) has been formulated based on the learning of SLGDFP Project. The LGSP is funded by WB, UNDP, UNCDF, SDC, EU & DANIDA. Including the Government of Bangladesh. The project will be implemented allover the country. The Government has recognized the achievement of the project and enhanced its effort to decentralize the block grant towards union parishad and performance assessment of the LGIs. LGD has taken initiative to coordinate all potential donors to assist union parishads in line with the experience gained from SLGDFP.

The project also has gained international recognition. World Bank Institute has identified the SLGDFP as one among the 15 best practices in Social Accountability Exercises in South Asia region. The project also been identified as one of the key project in Bangladesh for rural development and CIRDAP has taken an initiative to fit the learning of SLGDFP in other rural development initiatives.

This Report has outlined the activities accomplished in the 1st quarter under AWP 2007 of the project

2. Key Achievements:

2.1 Different training/workshops

Workshops on the learning of SLGDF project, workshops on LGSP-LIC, Annual General Meeting of Upazila Women Development Forum, Meeting of UP Chairman forum have been organized in the reported quarter. Also support was provided to NILG to organize the Workshop on strengthening local government. Though, it was planned that there would be district & upazila level workshops in the LIC districts to disseminate different information regarding LIC, but it could not be organized as the LIC document yet to be signed. Detail information has provided in the Annex.

2.2 Audit & Performance Assessment of Union Parishads

According to the fund accessibility criteria of LGSP, the preselected UPs should have passed the financial audit. The audit firms have been contracted by government. As per list of the pre-selected unions prepared by LGD, there were only 20 unions to be audited by private audit firms but the rest 62 unions of Sirajganj district would not be audited. However, as a result of the discussion with LGD, the rest 62 unions have been brought under audit activities and 03 audit firms have been awarded contract to perform the audit in these 62 unions. As of March/2007, 29 unions of Sirajganj have been audited. According to the plan, the Performance Assessment (PA) would have been done in 154 LIC unions by end of March but it has been delayed due to delay of clearance of the PA tools by LGD. However, the PA will be completed by end of 2nd quarter.

2.3 Scheme implementation and supervision

In 2006, 1551 schemes have been funded by the project and all these schemes were prioritized by the community and approved by the union parishads. As of 31st December almost 1136 schemes and by end of March another 406 schemes have been completed. Only 09 schemes are now under implementation and hopefully, these will be completed by end of April. According to the opinion of the community, the quality of the implemented schemes were very high. Scheme implementation is a major task of the project as these services are needed by the community. Community supervision through SSCs has been ensured and all these schemes are the priority problem of the locality. It has found that excluding SLGDF funded schemes, community has very rare access to the decision making process of other services available from government and non-government agencies. Based on the learning of the SLGDFP, provision has kept in the

Government/WB funded LGSP to ensure community participation in local level planning process and implementation of the schemes.

2.4 Strengthening the fiscal decentralization process

In 2006, the SLGDF project has contributed enormously to develop a new project funded by government, World Bank, UNDP, UNCDF, European Commission, DANIDA & SDC. The LGSP is going to be implemented all over the country. Expanded block grant will be provided directly to the union parishads through this project. The key activities of the project has been taken up from the SLGDF project. The world bank project formulation team closely worked with UNDP and different strategies of SLGDF project has been incorporated in the LGSP. Under the expanded block grant system, each participating union will get at least Tk. 7.0 lacs every year while the accessibility criteria to the expanded block grant will be as like as SLGDF. There will be provision for incentives to the better performing unions. Local level transparency and accountability framework will also be in place. It is expected that the learning from LIC (Funded by UNDP/UNCDF, EC, DANIDA) will fit into the broader LGSP and within next five years all the UPs will practice the same methods as practiced in Sirajganj district.

3. Organization & Management:

The SLGDF project has a small project team. Presently a Project Monitoring Adviser located at MIE wing of LGD, 06 (out of 09) Upazila Project Coordinators (located at upazilas of Sirajganj), 02 Accounts assistant, 02 Computer operators and 04 Drivers are working for the project. From government, National Project Director (NPD) and two Deputy Project Directors (DPDs) (one at HQ and another in field) have been assigned to the project. The Director General of Local Government Division (LGD) is the NPD while Deputy Chief of planning cell of LGD is the DPD(HQ) and the DDLG of Sirajganj is the DPD(Field). The government officials assigned in the project has been performing their responsibilities in addition to their normal government duties. The project has provision for one District Coordinator, One financial Adviser and one Gender Adviser but presently these positions are vacant. However, the project is being implemented at the field level through different committees those are District Project Advisory Coordination Committee (DPACC), Upazila Development Coordination Committee (UDCC), Union Development Committee (UDC), Ward Development Committee (WDC) and Scheme Supervision Committee (SSC). The organization-structure is given in the annexure: -1

3.1 Budget delivery By Out Put

Output	Budget for 2007 (US\$)	Expenditure in 1st quarter/2007 (US\$)	Comments
1. UPs supported to improve their performances & accountability	49,000	12,994	Some pending bills has been provided while some expenditure yet to be accounted
2. Participatory Planning Process at local (Ward) level supported	3,000	2,000	The amount is approximate because the exact figure could not be known due to unavailability of CDR.
3. Formulation, selection and implementation of LDF schemes supported	4,000	1,500	The amount is approximate because the exact figure could not be known due to unavailability of CDR.
4. Lessons learned analyzed and disseminated to key actors	5,000	2,693	The amount is approximate because the exact figure could not be known due to unavailability of CDR.
5. Project Management & Administration	93,300	25,583	The amount is approximate because the exact figure could not be known due to unavailability of CDR.
Total	154,300	44,770	

4. Partnership

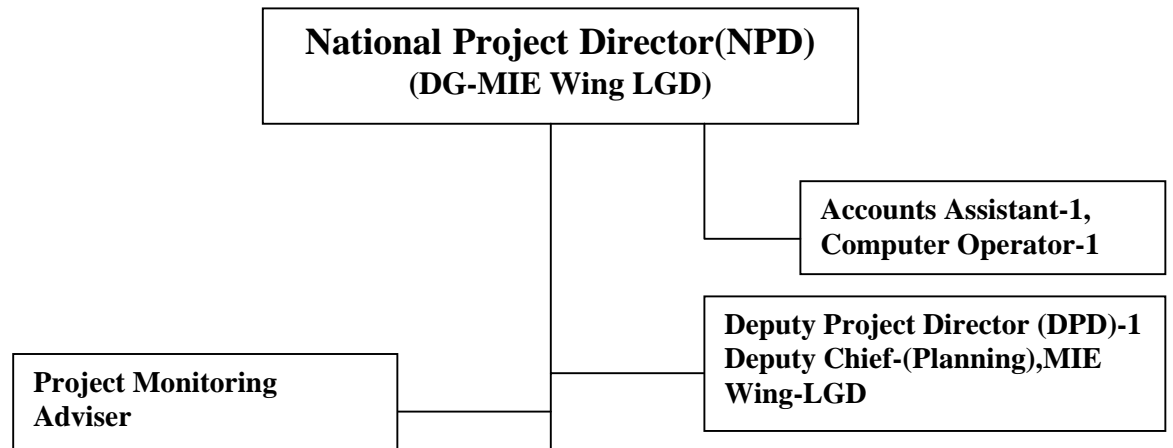
The project has established a strong partnership between UNDP, Central Government (LGD) and the Local government Bodies (Union Prishad). Efficient support from government are being ensured to implement the

project. The government line agencies at local level like LGED, DPHE and overall, the local administration have contributed to the project by their efforts. Through different committees like DPACC, Upazila Monitoring Team, the partnership at local level has been strengthened. The SLGDF project also has contributed enormously to build a strong partnership between Government, World Bank, European Commission, DANIDA & SDCas a result all of them have been involved in LGSP. and it is worth to mention that the LGSP is based on the learning of SLGDFP. The partnership between WB and UNDP in LGSP is unique and is appreciated by both the parties.

5. Lessons Learnt and Plan for Future

The SLGDF project is the eye opener for policy thinkers, local government actors and the community. SLGDF project proves that Local government bodies has inherent capacity which need to be explored through proper nursing. The project also shows how the community can be empowered and make the UPs accountable. The project revealed that transparency and access to information can curb the corruption and protect misuse of the resources. The project has also revealed that community participation in planning, implementation, monitoring is must for local development. To disseminate the learning of SLGDF project, learning sharing workshop has planned for 2007 both at district and national level. Also LGSP-LIC will be implemented in six different districts under six divisions to replicate the learning of the SLGDFP.

National Level



District Level

