

**DFID PROJECT
PROGRESS REPORT**

Monitoring ID :

Type of Report: Output to Purpose Review

PART A.

Country:	Bangladesh	Project:	Poverty Elimination Through Rice Research Assistance (PETRRA)
Project Officer		Start Date:	<i>September 1999</i>
Date of Visit:	29/11/03 – 15/12/03	End Date:	<i>August 2004</i>
Date of Report:	22/12/03	MIS Code:	<i>139.500-027</i>
		Risk Category:	<i>Low</i>

Goal Statement	OVis (revised logical framework, as of 21 August 2003)
Rice production and incomes increased ntonally	<p>G1: <i>Annual growth rate of rice production is above that of growth rates of the population in 2008/2009 compared to 1999-2000.</i></p> <p>G.2 <i>Income of resource-poor rice farmers (including small and marginal farmers) increased at least 25% in real terms between 1999/2000 and 2008/09.</i></p> <p>G.3 <i>Employment opportunities for landless labourers, in rural areas as a whole, increased in 2000-2009 at a rate above that for the period 1990-2000.</i></p>
Purpose Statement	OVis
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Productivity of rice based farming systems for resource poor farmers (RPFs) sustainably increased. 2. Government, and non-government extension services have made use of research findings from PETRRA sub-projects 3. Other agricultural research funding bodies in Bangladesh have adopted key elements of a pro-poor demand led competitive rice research system as used by PETRRA 	<p>P1.1 The majority of participants in more than 50% of sub-projects achieve increased rice productivity, at a rate which is greater than population growth rate by EoP (see Goal)</p> <p>P1.2 At least 50% sub-projects' participating RPRFs (Male/Female) increased rice provisioning ability of at least one month by the end of the project.</p> <p>P2.1 At least 3 government organisations (DAE, BARD & RDA) and 8 NGOs used PETRRA research findings during the project period.</p> <p>P2.2 At least 7 PETRRA sub-projects findings utilized by the government and non-government organisations by the EOP</p> <p>P3.1 At least two funding bodies adopted key elements of a pro-poor demand led competitive rice research system of PETRRA by the EOP.</p>

Outputs	OVIs	Progress Score and Comments
<p>Output 1: PETRRA's management practices and research findings effectively communicated to relevant organisations and persons involved in agricultural research and extension, and to policy maker</p>	<p>1.1 All the enlisted stakeholders received PETRRA Bangla and English News Letters and PETRRA reports made available in its website during the project period.</p> <p>1.2 All identified improved technologists and dissemination methods packed and communicated among the relevant stakeholders and accessible on the knowledge bank website by the end of the project.</p> <p>1.3 One special issues of "Krishi Katha" and other special issues of NGO partners published during the project period.</p> <p>1.4 Most important stakeholders have clear understanding of PETRRA management practices and research findings by the end of the project.</p> <p>1.5 Increased information request and number of person's access to website</p>	<p>PETRRA has engaged in communication with a range of stakeholders and actors in GO, NGO and private sectors at macro-, meso- and grass roots policy levels. Examples are holding two Communication Fairs (Sept 2002 and Sept 2003); development and wide distribution of Newsletters in English and Bangla, use of existing media outlets and networks for news releases and as channels for feeding relevant information to a near-grass roots level. Importantly, communication activities have occurred with men and women farmers in a local context through SPs commissioned for Outputs 2 and 5 and nationally through policy dialogues (SPs commissioned for Output 4). Regional near grass-roots and meso-level communication is achieved through meetings of Focal Area Committees (FACs) in the NW and NE regions.</p> <p>A PETRRA web site was launched in September 2003 and, working towards project closure, plans are in hand to build upon the IRRRI Knowledge Base (IKB) to produce the BRKB. In addition to what the IKB can provide, the BRKB aims to be a comprehensive information reservoir for PETRRA's research products, communication materials and the guiding principles and operational modalities of the VBR-CGS.</p> <p>It is planned that the BRKB will be widely distributed (on CD) in Bangladesh and PETRRA plans to find a national home for it so that it will be available after project exit. Some NGOs have already expressed interest in providing this service.</p> <p>OVI 1-3 are activities but the Evaluation Plan will go further than what is specified in these OVIs to determine what the various stakeholders gained from the communication materials that are specified in the OVIs. These findings will contribute to the evaluation of OVI-4</p> <p>The Evaluation Plan that will be implemented in Q1 2004 will determine the extent of attainment of OVI 4 with stakeholders in Bangladesh..</p> <p>For OVI 5, the web log should be able to provide information on trends in national and international use of the website.</p> <p>SCORE = 2</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS directed on this OUTPUT: 4, 9</p>

Outputs	OVIs	Progress Score and Comments
<p>Output 2: Improved rice production technologies appropriate to RPRFs identified or developed, and tested in collaboration with the same by PETRRA's sub-project partners and Project Management Unit</p>	<p>2.1 At least 7 key constraints identified by RPRFs that limit improved rice production of the regions of Bangladesh by 2001.</p> <p>2.2 Both resource poor men and women farmers are involved in identification or development and testing and assessment of technologies during the project period.</p> <p>2.3 All technologies tested and promoted during the project period are environmentally friendly, as judged against the PETRRA Environment Strategy</p> <p>2.4 Developed technologies demonstrate improved cost-effectiveness in terms of labour and other inputs by EOP.</p> <p>2.5 In the majority of sub-projects there are more than 50% of participating RPRFs (and a similar number of neighbour farmers) who have tested the improved technology by EOP and who plan to repeat its use thereafter</p>	<p>The portfolio of Output 2 comprises 22 SPs including the non-competitively awarded sub-project, the Seed Health Improvement sub-Project, SHIP. SHIP was commissioned in 1999. The rest of the portfolio was commissioned through competitive calls of which 3 SPs were contract effective in 2000, 7 in 2001 and 11 in 2002. All SPs are scheduled to end in June 2004. BRRI is the lead organisation for the majority of Output 2 SPs but all SPs work in partnership with other organisations (NGOs and in some cases the private sector).</p> <p>Indications are that several of the sub-projects are performing well resulting in livelihood benefits for participating farmers. The Evaluation work will provide details.</p> <p>OVI 1 was accomplished through stakeholder consultation in 3 regions – NW, NE and the southern coastal regions.</p> <p>OVI 2 does not quantify 'farmers'. However, in terms of the OVIs as worded, the field visits of the OPR-4 team to a limited number of sub-projects as well as meetings with PIs, indicated that OVI 2 is being achieved.</p> <p>The OPR-4 team examined the PETRRA Environment Strategy. The portfolio of Output 2 appears to be environmentally friendly such that the OVI 3 will be achieved.</p> <p>As worded, OVI 4 requires that all technologies of Output 2 sub-projects should satisfy the specifications of the OVI. The Evaluation Plan aims to make a comprehensive assessment of SP performance on this OVI and OPR-4 has recommended that cost benefit analysis must be carried for 3 or 4 of the longer duration SPs. Evidence from the field indicates that SHIP will have high gross and net margins and a satisfactory IRR.</p> <p>OVI 5 will definitely be achieved for longer duration projects but achieving it for 'the majority' of sub-projects may be problematic. Nevertheless, indications are that the achievements in the longer duration sub-projects will more than meet the OVI's specifications.</p> <p>One gap in the research for this Output, is that of capturing social learning around the process of technology transfer. Filling this gap is recommended in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Add depth to the understanding of the ways in which the SPs of Outputs 2 have made an impact on the livelihoods of poor men and women and households. This understanding (positive and negative effects) will enhance the quality of information for OVI P1.2. (which, as a proxy for livelihoods impact, is restricted to an improvement in rice provisioning ability). ii) Linked with (i), determine ways and opportunities for improving rural services for the poor (i.e., to understand what pro-poor services should look like and how the inputs from extension agencies (GO, NGO and private sector) and research could have sustainable reach to, and be accessible by, the poor. <p>SCORE = 2</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS directed on this OUTPUT: 1, 2, 3</p>

Outputs	OVIs	Progress Score and Comments
<p>Output 3: Capacity of research partners to undertake value-based demand led research sustainably enhanced.</p>	<p>3.1 At least 25% PETRRA partners adopt key elements of a research management system (i.e., PETRRA Output 6) which promotes demand led research with a focus on RPRF households by PY5</p> <p>3.2 Key partners are proactive in creating and maintaining linkages with relevant organisations committed to work with RPRFs by PY5</p> <p>3.3 >70% of management and key staff of agencies participating in, and trained through, the PETRRA project, demonstrate positive impact on their knowledge, attitudes and work practices by PY5</p>	<p>PETRRA has built up a cadre of LPs, at a range of levels, which have an understanding, in their own institutional context, of the advantages of VBR and an improved capacity to undertake it.</p> <p>The extent to which the GO and NGO PIs of SPs articulated their experiences of VBR was impressive. Much of this was positive, indicating engagement with the elements of VBR and the rationale for them. Areas of concern were not expressed as aspects that were rejected but rather as areas where they saw the need for further advisory support. Importantly they had engaged not only with VBR's key elements (demand-led, participation, gender etc) but also with the management tools for the accountability of SP performance (e.g., compilation and use of a logframe; the need for M&E).</p> <p>The strategic decision to work in three regions well out of the Dhaka environs has helped some LPs, especially BRRI scientists, to break away from research work norms. The physical distance to test sites combined with the dialogue and networking facilitated through the regional fora (Focal Area Committees in the NW and NE) have helped to strengthen new alliances and reduce slippage back into more well entrenched working relationships.</p> <p>The coalition that has developed in the NW region – 'NWR Focal Agencies Forum' – indicates that partners have recognised the value of a structured arrangement for information exchange and planning. The NW forum includes GOs, NGOs, the private sector and the local Farmer Federations under the umbrella of the NGO, RDRS. Such a coalition should sustain PETRRA's VBR concept and working model beyond the project's life.</p> <p>The PETRRA concept is seen as valuable at a senior level in NARES (e.g., BRRI and BARC). A KAP survey will be undertaken as part of the Evaluation work but OPR-4 indications are that the OVIs have been achieved as specified.</p> <p>SCORE = 2</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS directed on this OUTPUT: 3 (VBR aspects)</p>

Outputs	OVIs	Progress Score and Comments
<p>Output 4: Key policy constraints to improved rice-dependent livelihoods identified and recommendations presented in key policy fora, by PETRRA's policy research partners</p>	<p>4.1 Each completed policy paper/study document meets quality criteria established by PMU</p> <p>4.2 At least 6 policy briefs produced on seed, research-extension, non-farm, WTO, biotechnology, poverty and agricultural, mechanisation, gender, and ecosystem-based technology developed by EOP.</p> <p>4.3 PETRRA policy findings on poverty and agriculture reflected in PRSP during the project period.</p> <p>4.4 Policy research findings presented to appropriate policy making fora by PY4, key recommendations assessed as relevant and practical by fora participants.</p>	<p>OVI 1. Six policy studies were implemented for this Output, of which two (SP 11 00 – Flood prone village study revisit and SP 24 01 – Dynamics of livelihood systems in rural Bangladesh) formed part of the DoLSys (Dynamics of Livelihood Systems in Rural Bangladesh) study. Three studies are already completed of which two have been reviewed by independent reviewers using assessment criteria that PETRRA provided.</p> <p>The OPR-4 team were not satisfied with the review criteria for the Output 4 studies and recommends that the review criteria for the policy study reports are revised so that reviewers have to consider the studies' contributions to central elements of PETRRA's research – poverty reduction, livelihood building and gender issues.</p> <p>The livelihoods-related studies for Output 4 (SP 24 01 and SP 26 02) are not yet completed. These studies should critically examine the policy implications of their findings in respect of circumstances that enable and/or impair livelihood improvement of the poor including gender dimensions.</p> <p>OVI 2 and 4. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), has taken the lead in organising four policy dialogues, three of which formed part of DoLSys while one was part of CPD's programme activities. DoLSys arranged two additional dialogues. The CPD managed dialogues resulted in dialogue reports and policy briefs. CPD has records of all participants and a system for tracking feedback over time.</p> <p>CPD also has hosted and provided secretarial support to the PETRRA policy cell (comprising eleven recognised professionals in policy research and advocacy).</p> <p>OVI 3. Some of the findings of PETRRA policy papers and study documents were used by the PRSP Team.</p> <p>Overall, the work for Output 4 indicates a considerable amount of awareness raising at a level that could be a resource for policy-relevant inputs to national policy processes, if called upon.</p> <p>While all these are good achievements, the creation of a favourable environment for the sustainability of the project achievements, within and beyond the project life, depends, among others, on the optimal use of the policy findings at different levels. In this context, there would be a need for more proactive and intensive dialogue and interactions with the policy makers to have in practice 'improved policies for rice production'. However, the OPR-4 team recognises the difficulties and lead times involved in policy changes.</p> <p>SCORE = 3</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS directed on this OUTPUT: 6, 7</p>

Outputs	OVIs	Progress Score and Comments
<p>Output 5: Improved methods for effective uptake of technologies identified, pilot-tested and recommendations for improved uptake pathways made by PETRRA's sub-project partners and Project Management Unit.</p>	<p>5.1 More than 50% of uptake sub-projects are able to show increased adoption rates by RPRFs (Male & Female) both participating and neighbouring when using new uptake methods, when compared to existing uptake methods.</p> <p>5.2 More than 50% of Uptake sub-project partners are applying, uptake pathway recommendations by PY5</p> <p>5.3 Validated and documented recommendations presented to a National and Regional Uptake Seminar by end of PY5, and assessed by majority of seminar participants as being relevant, practical, efficient and cost-effective.</p> <p>5.4 Updated version of Knowledge Bank incorporating PETRRA learning by the end of the project.</p> <p>5.5 Two focal area network and uptake forum piloted and critiqued by its members and their respective institutions by PY5</p>	<p>The portfolio for Output 5 comprises 19 SPs and three SPs placed in the Output 2 portfolio also contribute.</p> <p>The establishment of FACs in the NW and NE, and linkage with the National Agriculture Extension Programme (NAEP) in the south west form part of this Output. FACs were piloted as decentralised bodies that could improve information flow between GOs, NGOs, private agencies and farmers organisations and assist scaling up of technologies and effective uptake pathways.</p> <p>In addition, an Uptake Forum was established in early 2000. The rationale was that SPs for Output 5 were treating their various assignments mainly as extension (i.e., uptake promotion) while attention to the research dimension, that could deliver new insights on uptake promotion, was weak. The Forum has sought to enable sharing of experiences on uptake promotion amongst relevant SPs as a means for improving SP performance and building linkages and partnerships that should sustain after PETRRA's exit.</p> <p>OVI 1. The Evaluation Plan will determine the level of attainment of OVI 1. Field visits and PI meetings indicate good progress.</p> <p>OVI 2. There is progress towards achieving this OVI. However, the OPR-4 team has recommended that the communication plan for Output 5 should be reconsidered. The concern is to ensure that the Output 5 partners and other potential stakeholders in the Output 5 findings, have communication materials that are readily accessible for them and hence support their use of the Output 5 findings.</p> <p>OVI 3. Plans are made for holding the National Seminar. The recommendation regarding OVI 2 is also relevant to the planned communication activities of the Seminar.</p> <p>OVI 4. Work on the BRKB is planned for the remaining project period. It is an important product and must be given priority.</p> <p>OVI 5 is already achieved for the NW region in the sense that the FAC has already taken steps to sustain as the 'NWR Focal Agencies Forum'. In the NE, There are indications from contact with some NE FAC members that this FAC may not sustain but this finding does not detract from the highly creditable institutional progress that has occurred in the NW focal area.</p> <p>SCORE = 3</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS directed on this OUTPUT: 8, 10</p>

Outputs	OVIs	Progress Score and Comments
<p>Output 6: A pilot model of an effective pro-poor competitive rice research management scheme has been established and effectively managed by the PMU</p>	<p>6.1 The following processes are designed, implemented, improved and documented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Establishment of Project Steering Committee and Technical Committee, (b) Stakeholder analysis and research issues identification, (c) Research selection process, (d) Monitoring and evaluation of research implementation and findings, (e) Capacity building for value-based approach (f) Network and partnership development, (g) External communications of research findings and model (h) Poverty, participation, gender and Environmental impact relating to all above approaches. <p>6.2 The above processes produce Outputs 2 to 5 as scheduled with 95% fund allocation of the project research budget within PY4.</p> <p>6.3 The strengths and weaknesses for effectiveness in the project identification, funding, and management procedures are documented for lessons learned for future research fund models. These are compared with other research funding mechanisms (e.g., World Fish, HARP, IRRI Country Programs) already existing within Bangladesh or in nearby countries. Effective in terms of transparency, complexity, timeliness, cost, partnerships etc.</p>	<p>Essentially OVI-1 and OVI-2 of Output 6 are activities (rather than measures of change) and they are already achieved/completed.</p> <p>Even at this stage of the project's term, for OVI-1, point (h) (concerning the key elements of VBR) the management responsibilities will continue to be revisited and further improved. This continuing improvement of VBR is entirely to be expected in the sense that achieving the desired quality in commissioned research needs constant attention, and how this is done continually feeds back into the management system.</p> <p>The PMU plans to include the major procedural documentation of the CGS in the BRKB. This is an important activity for the final project period. PETRRA's VBR-CGS documentation should be valuable to any subsequent CGSs in Bangladesh (and also elsewhere)</p> <p>Given the present levels of documentation of the management procedures of the PMU, and the combined experience of the PMU team, OVI-3 is attainable. However, meeting the indicator's specifications imposes an analysis and reporting burden on the PMU's already very full schedule of work. The value of achieving this OVI, as compared with the importance of completing other end of project work, is questioned. It should not be high priority relative to other work in the final period of the project.</p> <p>Output 6 is a research management function that underpins the attainment of Outputs 1-5 which then links into the attainment of the purpose-level OVIs. Whilst it was useful to specify the need for the PMU in the early years of PETRRA, arguably it now would be preferable to position the functioning of the PMU as one measure of capacity building for undertaking VBR (Output 3). Documentation aspects of the VBR-CGS, as developed and managed by the PMU, can be included in the communication output, Output 1.</p> <p>SCORE = 2 RECOMMENDATIONS directed on this OUTPUT: 5, 11, 12, 13</p>

General progress assessment - Project Outputs	Score: 2
Justification	
<p>PETRRRA is performing well on Outputs 1, 2, 3 and 6. OPR-4 has some reservations about Outputs 4 and 5.</p> <p>Output 4 is largely achieved as planned but two important studies on livelihoods are not yet completed and it will be important that these achieve a high standard well focused on the objectives of Output 4 and the key livelihoods foci of PETRRRA – poverty reduction, livelihoods building, gender equity.</p> <p>Communication plans need to be re-assessed to ensure that they are meeting the national communication context as a top priority.</p> <p>The final phase of work on Output 5 is well planned but one underlying assumption – that a book is the best (and therefore priority) communication product for this area of work – is questioned. The book makes sense in terms of achieving a good compilation of the research undertaken for Output 5, but it should not take priority over producing communication materials that are accessible and useful to the various (multi-sectoral) service providers who have engaged in the Output 5 research and who are the most likely stakeholders for scaling up of the findings in the near to medium term.</p> <p>Regarding PETRRRA's good performance on Output 1, the development of the Bangladesh Rice Knowledge Base is key to the sustained national access to PETRRRA's findings and the possibility for national scaling up (and wider impact). Should there be evidence that PETRRRA is encountering problems in completing, it would be in DFID's best interests to ensure that this is completed.</p>	

PART B.

Purpose OVIs	Progress	Comments
<p>P1.1 The majority of participants in more than 50% of sub-projects achieve increased rice productivity, at a rate which is greater than population growth rate by EoP (see Goal)</p> <p>P1.2 At least 50% sub-projects' participating RPRFs (Male/Female) increased rice provisioning ability of at least one month by the end of the project.</p> <p>P2.1 At least 3 government organisations (DAE, BARD & RDA) and 8 NGOs used PETRRA research findings during the project period.</p> <p>P2.2 At least 7 PETRRA sub-projects findings utilized by the government and non-government organisations by the EOP</p> <p>P3.1 At least two funding bodies adopted key elements of a pro-poor demand led competitive rice research system of PETRRA by the EOP.</p>	<p>Re P1.1 and P1.2: Evidence from field visits indicates that sub-projects of the portfolios of outputs 2 and 5 are already having impact on these OVIs.</p> <p>Re P2.1 and P2.2: During the course of the review, it was evident that the use of findings by relevant organisations has taken place. For example, the Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bogra not only recognises the relevance of the technical messages of the seed health sub-project (SHIP) but also favours the manner of community entry that SHIP used and is promoting these principles in its Union and Upazila level management training. At a decentralised level, the DAE has taken up messages from PETRRA's SPs e.g., the technical, input supply and credit aspects of mobile pumps (SP 38 02).</p> <p>Re P3.1: PETRRA has convinced certain organisations (e.g., BRRI, RDRS, RDA) of the advantages of the research management system exemplified by its VBR-CGS. However, achieving official adoption by the end of the remaining term of the project may be problematic simply because organisational revisions take time even when the good sense of a change in institutional procedures is well understood.</p> <p>PETRRA definitely should be able to show good progress towards attainment of Purpose 3, but may not attain it exactly as specified.</p>	<p>The Evaluation Plan, to be implemented in Q1 2004, will provide quantitative data for P1.1 and P1.2 from SP sites and for P2.1, P2.2 and P3.1 through interviews with PETRRA's stakeholder organisations.</p> <p>The second OVI of Purpose 1 (ref P1.2) provides the proxy for measuring livelihoods impact through the extent of change in rice provisioning ability defined as 'at least 50% of SPs participating RPRFs (male/female) (have) increased rice provisioning ability of at least one month by the end of the project'.</p> <p>With this OVI in mind, during field visits, the OPR-4 team framed discussions with men and women farmers in ways that would provide information relevant to this OVI.</p> <p>The findings for men and women's responses to questions relating to OVI P1.2 are provided in Annex 6 of the OPR-4 report. Although these are only a small sample, the findings illustrate that improvements in RPA and other favourable livelihood changes for men and women have occurred in the target sites of the SPs that were visited.</p>

General progress assessment - Project Purpose	Score: 2
Justification	
<p>The portfolio of sub-projects that form Outputs 2 and 5 are performing well and already these are impacting on Purpose 1. The indications are that Purpose 1 will be achieved.</p> <p>The attention that sub-projects have given to the development of communication materials has exposed target institutions in a very tangible way to PETRRA's research products. The networks associated with sub-projects and cluster of sub-projects, especially the regional fora, have provided an institutional mechanism</p>	

for promoting PETRRA's research products. As a result, there is good progress towards the attainment of Purpose 2.

There is no doubt that having experienced PETRRA, certain organisations (e.g., BRR, RDRS, RDA) are convinced of the advantages of the research management system exemplified by its VBR-CGS. However, official adoption (with funding revisions) may be problematic simply because organisational revisions take time even when the institutional advantages of the changes are understood. Thus, PETRRA should be able to show good progress towards attainment of Purpose 3, but may not attain it exactly as specified.

Attribution

A well designed Evaluation Plan is in place for implementation during the course of the final project period. This will enable PETRRA to make a robust internal assessment of its performance in terms of the purpose level OIVs.

Purpose to Goal

PETRRA's Goal is ambitious but it is possible for PETRRA to make a contribution to the achievement of these targets provided it meets its planned delivery targets in the final project period. Key priorities are:

- (1) To develop the information reservoir (BRKB) and ensure its national availability.
- (2) To undertake and document the studies of the wider context of livelihood changes associated with technology transfer. These studies could contribute findings that are highly relevant to scaling up and the potential for PETRRA to contribute to the goal.

DOES LOGFRAME REQUIRE REVISION?

A revision to Output 6 is recommended and a revised logframe demonstrating what is recommended is provided in Annex 8 of the OPR-4 report.

Lessons learned

Poverty focus: Based on limited field visits and discussions with PIs, there is evidence of SPs achieving livelihood impact for the target group (tomorrow's poor) and this is a considerable achievement. Several of the rice technologies that have been transferred are pro-poor in the sense that they largely appear not to be of interest to the rich except through employing poor people that have acquired skills that the rich may like to make use of through hired labour – but with the labour empowered through their skill.

The PMU has made only limited efforts to increase awareness of key stakeholders (particularly PIs and their partners) on the importance of placing technology within a wider context. It is extremely important, in the project's remaining months, that the rich learning (currently held in people's minds) should be captured. This can be used to learn important lessons about the (positive, negative or neutral) impact that PETRRA has had in the livelihoods of their target RPRFs and on those living in their community.

Participation: BRR scientists, NGOs and other agencies involved in SPs have taken a quantum leap forward in understanding and realising the need for adopting participatory approaches in development and promotion of rice technologies for RPRFs. The scientific community has come close to the farming community in the SP sites, which has remarkably enhanced the process of information exchange and has built up functional linkages with stakeholders at different levels. This is a new and significant development. However, a lot still needs to be improved at the skill learning level in order to further strengthen the concept of farmer participatory research into reality and action. In most cases SPs at different locations transferred technologies. However through farmers' uptake, modified technologies based on strong location specificity, diversity in livelihood circumstances and gender specificity, have emerged. This local adaptation of technologies has not been documented.

Lessons learned

Gender: Men and women are mentioned in the PETRRA logframe at both Purpose (OVI 1.2) and Output (OVIs 2.2 and 5.1) levels, but the concept of gender is not clearly addressed. The PMU has interpreted it in terms of gender equity, or more specifically in terms of equal number of men and women participating in the project. Changes in the monitoring reporting system reflect this understanding and consist of additional questions/indicators to measure changes in the participation of women.

The PMU's commitment towards increasing the number of participating women has translated into significant progress. The project has been able to stimulate stakeholders to consider women's issues (by involving women in participatory activities at different levels) and to see technology as a part of a wider picture where both men and women play important roles. However, the lack of gender related OVIs and MoVs in the PETRRA logframe has limited the opportunity to mainstream gender in the project.

Overall findings are positive indicating that PETRRA's research, and the management system used for undertaking it (i.e., the VBR-CGS) have:

- i) Changed the way in which some organisations in NARES and the private sector, including the lead national institute for rice research, have conducted adaptive research;
- ii) Created a cadre of local professionals that recognise the advantages and values of this mode of working;
- iii) Reached the poor both in and around sub-project sites and had a favourable impact on their livelihoods;
- iv) Sensitised some policy-relevant organisations and senior local professionals on policy issues around rice that are relevant to Bangladesh's rural and national economy; and
- v) Communicated and publicised aspects of the points above at various levels and across several sectors. This includes effective communication at grass roots level.

Quality of VBR. Whilst SPs have made a start with adherence to and application of the key elements of VBR, there is still considerable scope for further improvement (e.g., reaching poorer groups, improving the quality of participation, mainstreaming gender). But this finding should not detract from what has been achieved. The combination of specifying key requirements (in the research call), providing training and advisory support on VBR during SP implementation, and monitoring SP progress with indicators included for assessing the quality of performance with respect to VBR, has resulted in research that demonstrably is pro-poor and has achieved local impact.

Livelihoods analysis. At the moment for PETRRA this area of understanding is a gap in terms of documentation but PIs, through their field work, are aware of the types of livelihood changes that are occurring for poor men and women. Documenting the dynamics of livelihood changes in Output 2 and 5 SPs, or at least in a sub-set of these SPs, would complement the findings of the Output 4 livelihood studies (see point 3d above) and may add dimensions on livelihood building that the policy-related studies have not captured.

Capacity building. For the majority of local professionals, the VBR-CGS was an entirely new way of working. Its acceptance, and the standards achieved in its field application in only 4.5 years are highly creditable. They represent a considerable step in human capacity building that is relevant to tackling rural poverty in Bangladesh. Importantly, the progress thus far in VBR has also made evident the steps that could be taken to address weak areas e.g., improve gender definitions in the project logframe (OVIs and MoVs); add social science capability to teams so that social analysis is undertaken in tandem with technology transfer; and improve community entry and use of participation in order to reach poorer target groups.

Evaluation and Impact:

Arrangements for project and sub-project evaluation: A well organised and thorough Evaluation Plan has been prepared, structured to the PETRRA logframe and its component SPs. Output 2 PIs are already briefed on what is required from them in respect of reporting on their SP and collecting information relating to the OVIs of Purpose 1 and Output 2 of the PETRRA logframe. PMU responsibilities and the tasks for five external consultants have been defined. Additional support at the field level might be required and this could be linked with strengthening women's participation in the SP evaluation work.

Lessons learned

Progress towards impact: Purpose 1 (livelihoods impact) – Findings from a small sample of interviews in the field illustrated that improvements in RPA and other favourable livelihood changes for men and women have occurred in the target sites of the SPs. *Purpose 2 (institutional uptake of SP findings)* – Use of findings by relevant organisations has taken place and should continue. *Purpose 3 (institutional adoption of key elements of VBR-CGS)* – Experience of PETRRA's VBR-CGS (through both implementation of SPs and senior level membership of PETRRA's Technical Committee [TEC]) has convinced certain organisations (e.g., BRR, RDRS, RDA) of the advantages of the research management system exemplified by its VBR-CGS.

The *scope and schedule for PETRRA's exit strategy* has five main thrusts:

- a) Management of SP closure (financial, technical support, etc).
- b) Implementation of the Evaluation Plan including reporting of findings for individual SPs and PETRRA as a whole (see Section 5).
- c) Preparation of planned publications (e.g., those for Outputs 4 and 5).
- d) Documentation of the VBR-CGS including, to the extent possible, analytical studies of lessons learnt in respect of poverty focus, participation and gender.
- e) Information Reservoir for the totality of PETRRA – Development of the Bangladesh Rice Knowledge Bank (BRKB).

Although plans are in place for handling items (c) to (e), each represents a considerable work load. The OPR-4 team cannot readily see how the workload for the final project term can be cut down as all items are important. It can only be stressed that all persons (national and international) with tasks in this period must clearly understand the assignments that they have and must commit to delivering to time.

Item (e) – *the BRKB* – is vital for sustaining the use of PETRRA's research findings (of the SP portfolio) and for ensuring that the various dimensions of the management system of the VBR-CGS are available for future use in other similar schemes, if required.

A *major gap* concerns capturing social learning around the process of technology transfer. This must be addressed in order to:

- i) To add depth to the understanding of the ways in which the project, in particular the SPs in the portfolios of Outputs 2 and 5, made an impact on the livelihoods of poor men and women and households. This understanding (positive and negative effects) will enhance the quality of information for OVI P1.2. (which, as a proxy for livelihoods impact, is restricted to an improvement in rice provisioning ability [RPA]).
- ii) Linked with (i), through the understanding of how poor people who have received information and training for a particular technology, have internalised this in their livelihood strategies, to determine ways and opportunities for improving rural services for the poor.

Scoring system:

1 = likely to be completely achieved

2 = likely to be largely achieved

3 = likely to be partially achieved

4 = only likely to be achieved to a very limited extent

5 = unlikely to be realised

x = too early to judge extent of achievement

Part C

Recommendations	Responsibility	Date for completion – by month end
<p><u>Output 1 (one recommendation):</u></p> <p><i>Recommendation 1: For the purpose of sustainability, key areas for attention the BRKB are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a national home for the BRKB for durable longer term supply of the CD and e-file storage back up. • Ensure that there is a budget provision for production of BRKB CD's in quantities that provide for longer term supplies after project exit. • Consider sub-sets of the BRKB dedicated to certain highly pro-poor products and communication materials that have a strong national context. 	PMU	June 2004
<p><u>Outputs 2 and 5 (three recommendations):</u></p> <p><i>Recommendation 2: Revisions to Sub-project Evaluation Guidelines. Add one section to Chapter 6 of the SP Evaluation Report Guidelines. This would be Sub-Section 6.3 – Effects of the uptake of the information and training that the SP provided on farmers' livelihood activities. A guideline note should be added to prompt PIs also to report on what failed and their understanding of the reasons for this. For the guidelines as a whole, the words 'men and women' should be added wherever resource poor farmers (RPRFs) are mentioned.</i></p>	PMU	Jan 2004
<p><i>Recommendation 3: Role of female staff in evaluation work (see point 6a). Use a female staff to coordinate the collection of information from women. All the participatory meetings at SP sites for collecting information related to evaluation should be assisted, or even led, by women (e.g., female PIs or more outspoken, articulate women farmers).</i></p>	PMU	Feb 2004
<p><i>Recommendation 4: PETRRA should use its links with the private sector and regional fora for frank discussion of the marketing problem encountered in SP 28 02 (Fine Aromatic Glutinous Rice). The final report for the SP concerned (FAG – SP 28 02) should report on this marketing problem and the actions taken to try to overcome it.</i></p>	PMU and PI of SP 28 02	June 2004

Recommendations	Responsibility	Date for completion – by month end
<p>Outputs 2 & 5 and 3 & 6 (one recommendation):</p> <p><i>Recommendation 5: Undertake economic analysis and in-depth social studies of a few SPs. Use the findings to support impact evaluation (PETRRA Purpose 1) and to provide insights on the modalities of making VBR operational in the field. The PMU team should decide upon a suite of 3 or 4 SPs, of which one is SHIP (SP 00 99), for in-depth studies (but tailored for completion during the remaining project term). Existing plans for poverty studies and a gender review should be assessed relative to this recommendation and adjusted as required. PMU should then use these studies to refine the definition of best practice for operationalising and managing a VBR-CGS including mechanisms for improving poverty focus, main streaming attention to gender and improving the use of participatory methods.</i></p>	PMU and external consultant for M&E	August 2004
<p>Outputs 3 and 6 (three recommendations):</p> <p><i>Recommendation 6: PETRRA should document a small suite of 'good practice' process recommendations. Importantly these process recommendations would document how pro-poor research can be linked into pro-poor services and planning processes.</i></p>	PMU	August 2004
<p><i>Recommendation 7: PETRRA's documentation of its VBR-CGS, should include communication as one of the key elements that must be included in research design and monitored during the course of project and sub-project implementation.</i></p>	PMU	August 2004
<p><i>Recommendation 8: PETRRA's M&E documentation (as part of the VBR-CGS) must emphasise and explain how robust 'quality, quantity and time' dimensions in the definition of logframe OVIs (at project and sub-project levels) are a key component for achieving effective M&E.</i></p>	PMU and external consultant for M&E	August 2004
<p>Output 4 (two recommendations):</p> <p><i>Recommendation 9: Ensure that livelihoods-related SPs for Output 4 (SP 24 01 and SP 26 02) have a policy focus and, linked with this, reconsider the communication stakeholders for this work and determine what communication materials they require.</i></p>	PMU and PIs of SP 2401 and 26 02	March 2004
<p><i>Recommendation 10: Revise the criteria for the evaluation of policy studies. The review criteria for the policy study reports should be revised so that the reviewers have to consider the studies' contributions to poverty reduction, livelihood building and gender issues.</i></p>	PMU	January 2004
<p>Output 5 (one recommendation):</p> <p><i>Recommendation 11: For Output 5, assess local communication stakeholders and their needs for communication materials to ensure that findings and key messages are accessible to local stakeholders in forms that could be used for wider local replication/application.</i></p>	PMU and external consultant for Output 5	February 2004
<p>Output 6 (one recommendation):</p> <p><i>Recommendation 12: PETRRA should consider adopting the logframe revisions concerning Output 6. A key point regarding this revision is that it explicitly shows the purpose of the pilot VBR-CGS (i.e., to</i></p>	PMU	January 2004

Recommendations	Responsibility	Date for completion – by month end
provide a tried and tested model for VBR-CGS that could support the NARES capacity to undertake, including manage, such a scheme).		
<p><u>PETRRRA as a whole (two recommendations):</u></p> <p><i>Recommendation 13: PETRRRA should consider holding a TEC meeting in August 2004 that could perhaps be linked with the final external OPR (OPR-5).</i></p>	PMU	July 2004
<p><i>Recommendation 14: The Chairperson of the PSC should be requested to consider signing off on an Aide Memoire that briefly reports to the Ministry of Agriculture on the favourable aspects of competitive grant schemes, based on experience of PETRRRA's VBR-CGS.</i></p>	PMU	July 2004
Review team:	Zahurul Alam; Kamal Kar; Benedetta Musillo; Margaret Quin (external consultants)	