Mid-term review – PfR India

Capturing main outcomes

Review team

Who participated?

Country	India
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Main achievements

What are the main achievements of the PfR programme to date?

Implementation of PfR -India was initiated in June 2011. During 2011, the project focused on building partnerships, clarifying implementation arrangements and developing risk and vulnerability baselines for 209 villages within the Gandak-Kosi floodplains, Bihar and Mahanadi Delta, Odisha. The assessments were used to develop risk reduction plans for the villages. Subsequently, implementation of risk reduction plans was initiated in 2012 reaching out to 103 villages through a range of interventions related to ecosystem restoration, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation. The following were identified as the main achievements of PfR programme as on date:

Participatory risk assessment tool developed integrating ecosystem and climate change elements

The need to recognize the role of ecological and climate change factors in understanding the risk and vulnerability contexts within the target communities encouraged the PfR India partnership to revise the conventional vulnerability capacity assessment tools. Components related to geophysical, ecological and social contexts of risks were included within the assessment scheme. The revised Participatory Risk Assessment tool has broadened the scope of interventions for risk reduction by including explicit focus on biophysical as well as social vulnerabilities and including ecosystem restoration and landscape processes within risk reduction interventions. Internally, the tool design and field application process has built the capacity of the partnership in understanding and operationalizing ecosystem restoration and climate change adaptation within the response framework for disaster risk reduction. It has also provided scope for integrating individual risk reduction plans for villages located in similar risk contexts to enable joint action (aptly titled as cluster approach).

Risk reduction plans based on integrated assessments available within the target communities

Despite the communities within the Gandak-Kosi floodplains and Mahanadi Delta being exposed to repeated disasters, contingency planning is limited to post-event response measures and use of structural approaches. A key achievement of the PfR-India project has been development of risk reduction plans for all the 209 identified villages using the participatory risk assessment tool. These plans are important assets for the communities, and are used for a range of purposes including resource mobilization, using ecosystem based approaches for risk reduction, and increased awareness on the risk, ecosystem degradation and climate change interlinkages. Some evidences are:

- Communities at Sasan (Mahanadi Delta) opted for restoration of mangrove vegetation for controlling river bank erosion to augment coastal defence
- Communities in village Keutajanga (Mahanadi Delta) choose to decongest river mouth to manage floods rather than constructing embankments for flood protection
- Risk reduction plans integrated within developmental plans of 19 Gram Panchayats

- Badiatola village (Gandak-Kosi floodplains) was able to leverage Rs. 420 million for village infrastructure to address the risks of flood inundation identified in the risk reduction plan.

Resources from existing government schemes leveraged to support implementation of risk reduction plans
Implementation of the risk reduction plans, to a large extent, is being financed by leveraging resources from the on-going developmental projects of the government. In several circumstances, complementarity between schemes is being used to achieve risk reduction outcomes. For example, while provision of providing low cost housing for weaker sections of society is available under the housing scheme Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), there is no provision for raising plinth levels which is a necessity in areas experiencing floods and prolonged waterlogging. This gap is being met by mobilizing resources for labour costs under the rural employment act – Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA). Similarly, rural sanitation schemes do not provide for raising plinth levels, which is now being ensured by linking investments from Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) and MNREGA. In Odisha, the PfR-India partnership is enabling coverage of government schemes in remote areas, which are mostly left out by the government due to difficulty in access and limitations of human resources.

Leveraging human resources from existing government schemes has enabled PfR India to address vulnerabilities within agriculture based livelihoods. The project team, in partnership with knowledge centres as Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) has introduced seed varieties which are resistant to flood and drought conditions. Further, in collaboration with the irrigation department, the project is helping revitalize Pani Panchayats (community institutions for management of water for irrigation), so as to ensure fair and equitable distribution of water in project villages. Farmers group have been registered with ATMA and KVK for capacity building on sustainable agriculture. Self help groups have also been registered with NABARD for capacity building on existing government schemes and micro-credit. These efforts greatly assist in improving overall financial and technical efficiency of project implementation.

Built capacity within the PfR network being engaged by governments and external agencies
The built capacity within the PfR network is being used by external agencies to support ecosystem based DRR. As an example, Caritas-India has been invited by Government of Bihar to facilitate preparation of risk reduction plans with integrated DRR/EMR/CCA approaches. The organisation is also a part of Inter Agency Group for formulation of District Disaster Management Plan in Bihar.

Lessons learnt

What are the key lessons learnt so far?

Understanding and appreciating organizational domains critical to partnership building
The PfR India partnership is based on the realization that the organizations have defined mandates and strategies which on their own are not sufficient to design and deliver integrated approaches. This necessitates that the partnering organizations devote time to understand operating spaces, and jointly define opportunities as well as limitations. Providing ample time and resources towards understanding and appreciating organizational domains has favoured organizing the current partnership in India, which comprises a mix, historically working in the domains of environmental management and disaster risk reduction individually, but have been able to work on strengths and fill capacity gaps.

Need to match community approaches with knowledgebase and policy interventions for building community resilience
While community level risk reduction plans form the cornerstone of resilience building, they also have inherent limitations in addressing several spatial and temporal developments which operate at different scales. It is therefore important to augment community level efforts with interventions related to knowledgebase development and policy and advocacy to generate wider awareness on these processes and create positive outcomes for community livelihoods.

Including institutional capability as a target community selection criterion to improve project outcomes
Villages with stronger local governments have been able to make better use of the risk reduction plans, including generating resources for implementation. In contrast, where local government institutions have been weak and relatively with low effectiveness, the use of risk reduction plans has been very limited. Given the limited resource availability of PfR, and intent to demonstrate application of integrated approaches, it would have been prudent to include local institutional capability as a criterion for selecting target villages. However, there is also an inherent counter argument that villages with weak institutional arrangements would be biased against.

Addressing transmission losses in capacity building
The capacity building interventions followed within PfR followed a tiered approach –the NGO leads were trained directly by the project team, who in turn trained their facilitators. The facilitators were entrusted with conducting risk mapping in the

field. A review of the approach indicated that it was much more effective to increase resource allocation to train the field level facilitators to ensure minimum transmission loss.

Challenges and how to deal with them

What will be the main challenges related to integrated approach and partnership, and how will the partners deal with these?

The integrated approach has been translated into a resilience vision built around eight principles. Challenges have therefore been identified in the context of application of these principles and are summarized along with strengths and proposed measures below.

Principles	Application in PfR – India programme	Challenges	Measures to deal with challenges
Working on different timescales	The risk assessment process has included emphasis on analysis of trends related to resource availability, livelihoods, and hazards to be able to characterize temporal dynamics related to livelihood vulnerability.	On an overall, integration of climate science in the project needs improvement, particularly enabling communication of climate trends at the community level, and helping transform early warning to an early action.	The project will work on improving climate awareness at the community level, and develop mechanisms for making climate related data and information available to the communities to enable action.
Recognize geographical scales	The cluster approach to development of risk reduction plans is built on recognition of geographical scales. The partnership is also engaging with institutions which have been mandated and have on-going programmes for working at reducing risks at landscape levels (for example, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project, Odisha).	A major emphasis of the project till date has been on developing village level interventions for building livelihood resilience. Achieving landscape scale interventions to reduce risk need further investment in knowledgebase, partnerships and building capacity of the network. The challenge for PfR India is to set realistic landscape level change outcomes by mapping gaps and opportunities, and a strategy to achieve the same while ensuring that investments made for building livelihood resilience at community and household level are effective and sustainable in the long run.	PfR India would focus on communicating knowledgebase on landscape processes in the two project sites to the stakeholders. Additionally, it will seek to strengthen its partnerships with ICZMP and other initiatives to seek action on landscape drivers of risk. At national level, the project could also strengthen work on policy aspects which relate to increased emphasis on landscape scale management.
Strengthen institutional resilience	PfR India is making efforts for linking risk reduction plans to the village governance as a means to ensure that holistic approaches for risk reduction are adopted. So far, 19 Gram Panchayats have adopted the risk reduction plans and integrated these with the village level development plans. Efforts are underway for rest of the villages.	Adoption of risk reduction plans has been differential in the target villages, with limited uptake in villages wherein the basic governance mechanisms are contested, and there is limited community participation in village developmental affairs.	Project implementation will enhance focus on building capacity at PRIs and local functionaries on implementation of holistic risk reduction plans as a means to achieve community resilience.

	Similarly, at the partnership level, the focus on risk reduction and resilience building is being enhanced. The regional strategy of WISA for 2011-2020 includes ecosystem based disaster risk reduction as an objective. Restructuring within Cordaid has been carried out for better focus on the role of ecosystems in CMDRR within Asia region, including India. PfR has also enabled developing shared vision on resilience for NETCOAST and CARITAS.		
Integrate disciplines	PfR India project team has made efforts to structure the project on a shared understanding of ecosystem management, disaster risk reduction and climate change linkages. The partnership is aware of the cross sectoral approaches and is able to apply the learning in the field (eg. being aware of the ecological impacts of disaster risk reduction measures, and proactively seeking alternative interventions and approaches) as well as in policy dialogues (eg. role of ecosystem management in DDMP)	Organizations engaged in PfR implementation have had historical disciplinary orientations, and therefore the extent of integration is variable across the network. Further, capacities to address climate aspects within the partnership need strengthening.	Advanced training programmes on CCA and resilience building will be organized for the partnership, with follow up support through WISA, Cordaid and RCCC.
Promote community self-management	The process of development of risk reduction plans has been community led, with PfR India playing an enabling role. Village level Disaster Resilience Committees and Disaster Management Committees have been set up and their roles and responsibilities clarified in the context of risk reduction plans.	The desired level of gender balance in decision making with respect to implementation of risk reduction plans has not been achieved.	PfR would proactively seek gender balance in decision making with respect to implementation of risk reduction plans.
Stimulate learning	The risk reduction planning process has also been an opportunity for the participating communities to understand the landscape and temporal dynamics of risk construction. Simultaneously, the partnership has invested significant efforts for cross domain exchange on ecosystem management, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.	Knowledge and learning gaps exist on climate change. Further, mechanisms for capturing process steps and learning related to implementation of risk reduction plans need to be strengthened.	Reporting modules at local level would be further improved to provide scope for documenting process related experiences and lessons learnt. This will also be made the subject of annual partners' meeting.

Focus on livelihood	Livelihood capital enhancement and diversification options have been identified during risk reduction planning processes. Implementation has focused on strengthening existing agricultural practices, which is the major livelihood system in the project area.	Uptake of risk transfer mechanisms is very limited. Not all forms of livelihoods have been covered.	Focus on risk transfer mechanism would be strengthened, and as may be required, additional capacities with the partnership will be brought in.
Form partnerships	Internally, the team meets frequently and has evolved a process for collective decision making. Cross domain learning has also enabled developing a shared vision of resilience. At local levels, engagement with government functionaries implementing village level developmental programmes has enabled raising funding for risk reduction plans. An evidence of use of existing networks for resilience building in the World Bank support for wetland management in Bihar. Degradation of wetlands was identified as a contributing factor to increasing risk within Gandak-Kosi floodplains. Engagement with policy making bodies has resulted in World Bank committing funds for integrated wetland management.	Engagement with private sector is yet to take place. More knowledge partners need to be brought in considering the focus on landscape and temporal dynamics.	Project implementation strategy for 2013 would be reviewed for private sector engagement opportunities. Engagement with XIMB would also be enhanced for supporting objectives related to dissemination of knowledgebase on landscape processes in Mahanadi Delta.

Priorities for the remaining period

What will be emphasised for the remaining period of the PfR programme?

In the context of enabling the resilience vision within the overall PfR-India programme and particularly in the intervention villages, the following priorities have been identified for the remaining period:

Strengthening implementation of risk reduction plans

Risk reduction plans are the key instruments for building livelihood resilience. PfR will seek to strengthen implementation of risk reduction plans by ensuring resource availability, building capacities and partnerships. Existing linkages with knowledge institutions would be broadened to support disaster preparedness and livelihood diversification. Implementation of interventions related to risk transfer would also be emphasized. Capacities of PRIs and CBOs will be strengthened to ensure community ownership of the interventions, and effective use of existing resources. The project will also proactively seek balanced gender representation in village level committees for decision making with respect to implementation of risk reduction plans. The findings of internal monitoring and evaluation by ASK would be taken into account for reviewing and fine tuning the implementation arrangements.

Risk knowledgebase compilation and dissemination

Over the last two years, the project has compiled an extensive knowledgebase on the risk context within the Mahanadi Delta and Gandak –Kosi floodplains. These will be compiled and communicated to key stakeholders for considering landscape approach in developmental planning and decision making. Cluster level risk reduction plans would also be systematically compiled and made available at the village levels to support resource development and advocacy.

Build capacity within network on climate change adaptation in the context of resilience building

With support of RCCC, PfR will work on building capacities of the partnership on application of climate knowledge at local levels for enabling early action. Mechanisms for making existing knowledge on climate trends available within project villages will be developed. Linkages will be established with knowledge partners on enabling response actions for changes in livelihood systems linked with climate.

Increase policy engagement at national and state levels

PfR will intensify its engagement with the National Ministry of Environment and Forests and Ministry of Home Affairs for increased attention to the linkages between ecosystem degradation, climate change and increasing disaster risk. At state levels, engagement with agencies capable of building on village level interventions and investing into landscape processes (for example, the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project in Odisha and Bihar Environment Capacity Building Technical Assistance of the World Bank) would be strengthened. Support to revision of District Disaster Management Plans to include elements of ecosystem restoration and climate change adaptation for model districts would be accorded high priority.

Private sector engagement

During 2013, the task force will identify specific opportunities for corporate sector engagement and follow up with specific programmes.

Needs, support, resources needed for the remaining period

What are specific needs, and which specific support and resources are needed to meet them during the remaining period of the PfR programme?

Successful implementation of PfR programme during the remaining period requires the following support:

- An advanced training on managing climate uncertainty specifically addressing aspects of anticipation and response, using climate science for shorter time scales, and bringing climate information within communities and local stakeholder to enable early action
- Revised reporting module to capture process steps and lessons learnt
- Application of minimum standards for integration of ecosystems in resilience practice (ecosystem criterion)
- Continued accompaniment support to strengthen local level partnerships and overall implementation arrangements

Looking beyond the PfR programme time frame

What are the opportunities for follow-up? How can results be institutionalised?

The lead implementing partners, WISA and Cordaid have included resilience building integrating ecosystem based approaches within their strategic intent, and thereby are committed to working on the PfR theme for a longer term. Similar changes have been enabled in Netcoast and Caritas.

The impact of institutionalization of integrated approaches can be best delivered through initiatives on the ground as well as continued policy engagement at the state and national levels. WISA and Cordaid are committed to engagement with national ministries of environment, water resources and home affairs to work towards increased adoption of integrated approaches in programmes and policies. WISA has also identified Mahanadi Delta and Gandak-Kosi floodplains as intervention areas wherein upscaling of current interventions is planned. Similarly, Cordaid will continue working in Bihar and Odisha as a part of its regional strategy.

Directions / recommendations for identified challenges and needs

What are the key recommendations based on the identified challenges and needs?

Programme set up

- Risk reduction in communities to be based more firmly on longer term trends (seasonal and longer term projections) and wider spatial scales (landscape approach)
- Ensure that measures undertaken under DRR/EMR/CCA do not contribute to future risk
- Address all forms of livelihood capitals
- Annual review and refinement of risk reduction plans based on internal monitoring and evaluation

Collaboration with stakeholders

- The findings of risk assessment to be packaged and shared with key stakeholders for adoption in their planning and programme development
- Develop a platform to share lessons learned and best practices and facilitate learning amongst stakeholders
- Intensify collaboration with ICZMP for sustainability of the programme in coastal areas
- Share experiences and information within the global PfR network
- Find suitable opportunities for engagement with private sector

Longer-term vision

- Work on a sustainability framework during the remaining period to sustain impacts of PfR beyond programme time frame
- Lessons learned, best practices and model demonstrations communicated to key stakeholders for replication and scaling up

Accompaniment support

- Capacity building of network organisations on CCA and resilience vision
- Reorientation of new CENDERET staff on PfR
- Capacity building and follow up support to field level facilitators and VLDRC and DMC members for implementation of risk reduction plans