

Training Programme on Strategic Environment Planning in Public Sector and Outcome of the National Training Workshop

** Mir Obaidur Rahman*

The objectives of this paper are two-fold. Part A attempts to integrate the environmental consequences of development in the public sector training programme to create awareness among the civil officials. Part B presents the activities and outcome of the training workshop on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Economic Planning held at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre in collaboration with ESCAP during 26-30 October, 1997.

Part - A

Training Programme on Strategic Environment Planning

Environmental consideration in economic development is a new phenomena. In the context of developing countries where poverty is endemic, high growth is considered the only tool for poverty alleviation. This perception may endanger the development process. Development consumes many inputs. Consumption of these inputs at a scale in excess of the regeneration capacity may limit the pace of development. Even in the use process, certain inputs lose productivity and therefore, the process must accommodate measures to restore productivity. Development thus focuses on two scenario, one high profile growth scenario which may not address the environmental degradation, the other moderate growth which attempts-at preservation of resources. Thus there is trade-off between growth and environment in development

* *Mir Obaidur Rahman, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre*

Identification of Probable Training Inputs

We all understand that development as a process needs to be sustained for future generations. Economic growth affects the quality of environmental resources such as air, land and water. The problems arise mainly due to externalities and absence of appropriate property rights over environmental resources. An understanding of environmental policies both command control and incentive based, their suitability and limitation for specific situations is therefore a must for public servants.

Environmental consequences on development warrants redesigning national income accounting. The conventional techniques of national accounts may be substituted for more elaborate accounting system for environmental accounting to assess the impact on natural resources. Environmental accounting in physical terms is natural resource accounting. National resources accounting deals with stocks and stocks change of natural assets. Both physical and monetary units are used to obtain a comprehensive picture in natural assets. However, valuation of natural resources may be difficult owing to conceptual difficulties, measurement problem in valuing public goods such as clear air, clean water, forests and wild life and unavailability of data. Such accounting can alter perceptions of what kind of development is desirable and in turn policy choices. The United Nations Statistical Office provides a framework for calculating Eco-Domestic product (EDP), a green measure of national income.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is another avenue where policy makers need to understand the environmental consequences of project selection and subsequent implementation. It is now a common practice to include EIA in project appraisal but techniques are not known to many users. An EIA includes the anticipated environmental impacts and mitigation measures, possible alternatives, cost benefit analysis, the institutional requirements and the extent of public investment. Major stakeholders perception of the project in terms of both benefit and cost are also considered while preparing EIA.

These are the areas where civil officials must orientate themselves for an understanding of the different trades of development specially the environmental consequences of development. Like other developing countries, Bangladesh puts emphasis on environmental consideration in development. Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) started functioning in 1989. The government has developed a National Environment Policy in 1992 and participated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and signed the Rio Declaration; Agenda 21, UN Framework Convention on Climate Changes and Convention on Bio-diversity. National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) provides a Comprehensive agenda of action in different sectors of economy. The plan outlines a cooperative endeavour in managing resources with active support of NGOs, researchers, journalists and the private sector. Environmental Conservation Act, 1995 provides the legal framework for sustainable environmental management.

For a wider dissemination of the various theoretical threads and for ensuring application of this knowledge in policy planning, Bangladesh Government considers training as an important tool. Since these environmental related concepts are surfaced, different training institutions incorporated module on environmental management in their regular training programme as well as in the specialized training programme. Bangladesh Public Administration Centre (BPATC), Academy for Planning and Development (APD) and Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) are pioneers in this field.

BPATC conducts three core courses; Foundation Training for entry level officials, Advanced Course on Administration and Development for mid level and Senior Staff Course for Joint Secretary or Director General level officials. The Centre has introduced an exclusive module on environmental consideration in all of these courses.

The module in Foundation Course and Advanced Course on Administration and Development addresses the national and international issues of environment and development and techniques of Environmental

Impact Assessment in development projects. The participants are expected to link environmental consequences in development process and assess environmental impact more precisely in implementing development projects.

Topics include are :

- * Sustainable Development : Concept and Issues
- * Environment and Development : Global Perspective
- * Environmental Management: Bangladesh Context
- * Workshop on Environmental Impact Assessment.

The participants of the Senior Staff Course study a more extensive module on environment and development. Topics include,

- * Environment and Development : International Perspective and Problem for Developing Countries.
- * Environmental Degradation and Global Warming : Effects on Bangladesh
- * Bangladesh's Strategy for Sustainable Development and Obligations Towards Related International Agreements
- * Water Resource Management
- * EIA : Concepts, Evaluation, Methodology and Exercise.

The Centre conducts a two weeks diploma course on Environmental Management in two major policy areas, Environment and Development and Environmental Management in Water and Agriculture. In the recent past, the centre conducted three workshops on capacity building in Environmental Economics. One workshop was designed for the Foundation Training (April 5 - 7, 1997) the other two for senior government officials, jointly organized by BPATC and the Centre on Human Resource Development, Jahangir Nagar University. The workshop was funded by Asian Development Bank through the APREETA project.

Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) organized a four-day regional workshop on Sustainable Development and Disaster Reduction (December 8–12, 1997) with collaboration of CIRDAP-Commonwealth

formulate and implement policies which have bearing on sustainability of environment and economic development.

2. Increase the awareness of institutions and agencies of the Government responsible for national planning and contributing to the process for planning and analysis tools, such as natural resources accounting, sustainable development framework modelling and organization for necessary database for environmental planning of setting the policy targets for environmentally sound and sustainable development (ESSD).
3. Enhance the capacity of relevant government organizations to delineate and establish the modalities of sustainable development planning and to integrate environmentally sound policy goals into the economic policy-making process.
4. Provide technical guidance and train prospective intermediaries in planning and facilitate effective implementation of tools and methodologies for ESSD including their incorporation into the curriculum of organizing training institutions.
- (5) Understanding of Generalized Algebraic Modelling System (GAMS) and simulation exercise with available data.

Training Session was conducted according to the programme designed by ESCAP. Three working sessions were conducted in each day of the workshop.

Training methods included among others, lectures and discussions on ESSD, group sessions with modelling and database, demonstration and use of the model through computer and syndicate sessions on integration of environmental consideration into national economic planning.

Twenty nine participants from different government ministries, (Planning Commission, Agriculture, Industry, Environment and Forest, Department of Environment, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics) training institutions, universities, NGO's representatives participated in the workshop. Topics included in the workshop represented different aspects of environmental management. Important topics were : use of economic instrument in environmental planning, valuation of natural resources and natural resources accounting, GAMS and its application, database for environmental planning.

The participants were divided into three groups ; each group was assigned with specific agenda to formulate recommendations and presentation in the concluding session. The important agenda included :

- Incorporation of ESSD Framework in the curriculum of training institutions.
- Regional policy scenario and applicability in the context of Bangladesh.
- Dissemination mechanism of ESSD by training of prospective intermediaries in the training institutions in the effective implementation of tools and methodologies.
- Modalities of integrating environmentally sound and sustainable modelling into the economic policy-making process.
- Economic Policy instrument in environmental planning : Bangladesh perspective.
- Increase awareness of institutions and organizations of the government responsible for national planning and contribute to the process for planning and analysis, tools for natural resources accounting and sustainable development framework modelling.
- Infrastructural requirement for generation and compilation of necessary database for environmental planning.

Following are few recommendations put forward by the participants.

1. ESSD framework should be introduced as compulsory subject in every regular programmes of all the training institutes. Separate training courses may also be designed on this subject in consultation with relevant experts.

2. Apart from the training institutes, environmental education should be incorporated in schools, colleges and universities and create awareness among the people through other mass media.

3. Environmental legislation, environmental reporting, environmental and natural resources accounting, environmental indicators/statistics along with fiscal policy tools are to be provided in respect of framework and policies for protection of the environment. The following applications may be taken into account.

- I. Sectoral legislations are to be introduced;
- II. "Polluters pay" principle may be followed to ensure strict compliance of environmental legislation;
- III. Incentives in the form of tax rebates, tax holiday etc. may be provided and the incremental cost incurred by the environment-friendly entrepreneurs are to be met in various forms.

4. Respective government machineries (from centre to grass-root level) should government organize seminars, workshops, discussion meetings involving the local expatriate consultants to indentify specific environmental issues and concerns and ways to solve the problems, Appreciation seminars for the local representatives (MPs, union council chairmen, local elites etc.) should be arranged for better effectiveness of the ESSD programme.

5. The suggested model by ESCAP is appreciated. However, it seems in embryonic phase. There is a need to examine/specify and quantify the variables in Bangladesh perspective. Calibration of data with specific variables are to be derived and a model should be prepared incorporating relationship among variables and constraints as needed in LP model.

6. Guidelines should be developed for standardization of :

- Water Quality
- Sound Quality
- Standard of Emission from Vehicles e.g. CO₂
- Emissions from Industries
- Solid Waste

7. B.B.S. should be strengthened for capacity building in data collection, compilation and presentation and also in quality assurances. Alongside strengthening BBS, strengthening of Department of Environment, Planning Commission, BIDS is also recommended. Strengthening of BBS may include its reorganization (to suit to present needs), its expansion upto to new districts and new thanas providing necessary manpower, equipment specially computer networking at district level. Strengthening of Department of Environment may include expansion of its data monitoring branches form present 4 divisional headquarters to important district headquarters facing environmental hazards.

Workshop Evaluation

The workshop was evaluated on the following activities :

1. To what degree do you feel the workshop achieved the stated objectives ? 74%
2. To what degree has this workshop been useful to you personally through
 - a) Better information 80%
 - b) New or expanded concepts 83%
 - c) Revealing a wider range of economic modelling 72%
 - d) Enabling you better to formulate Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Economic Planning. 74%
3. To what degree has this workshop been relevant to your current functions ? 80%
4. To what extent did the workshop materials contribute to the effectiveness of the workshop. 81%
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of each session :
 - a) Technical presentation on overall aspects of environmentally sound economic planning 80%
 - b) Environmental/Economic planning-national/regional policies and perspectives 80%
 - c) Use of Economic Instrument in environmental planning 74%
 - d) Environmentally sound and sustainable development planning framework model theories and application. 71%
 - e) Group Sessions with Modelling and Database 68%
 - f) Database for environmental planning 71%
 - g) Valuation of natural resources and natural resources account 66%
 - h) General discussion and Recommendations 82%

6. Please rate the following in terms of effectiveness/ usefulness
- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| a. Overall course management | 82% |
| b. Class room facility | 94% |
| c. ,Reading materials | 79% |
| d. Food arrangements | 80% |
| e. Dormitory facilities | 73% |

7. Any other comments.

I am better informed about the subject which will enable me in designing courses on environment at our training academy and also in conducting sessions.

I was impressed by the etiquette., service and sincerity of PATC staff in particular.

I have learnt a new issue like ESSD and have updated my information of different policy matters on environment.

More homogeneous group of participants should be invited to a particular workshop.

This workshop will help me perform my future responsibilities in a better way, and I received a good feedback from the working session which were more or less lively.

Especially on the modelling perspective the computer training should be more extensive in the future. The relevant departments such as DOE, BBS should be provided with the GAMS programme and user's manual.

As I am from DOE in the future I shall take care so that future projects taken by the different organizations be sound and sustainable if my capability permits.

Hope this workshop will guide us properly for national income accounting with the valuation of natural resources.