

Press Release

The Netherlands and Bangladesh have had substantial cooperation in the field of water management since Bangladesh's independence. Both countries are working together to create a safe, sustainable and prosperous delta which will ensure long-term water and food security, economic growth and environmental sustainability. Bangladesh is implementing the BDP (Bangladesh Delta Plan) 2100, a water centric economic development plan prepared by Bangladesh with Dutch technical and financial support. After the Netherlands, Bangladesh is the second country in the world to prepare such an ambitious water management plan.

In line with the BDP2100 framework, an administrative arrangement for the *Char Development and Settlement Project – Bridging Phase (CDSP-B)* has been signed by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Government of the Netherlands (GoN) and the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB).

This administrative arrangement is provided for under Article I of the Agreement on Technical Co-operation between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the People's Republic of Bangladesh, signed in Dhaka on 19 May 1977 and includes a Dutch contribution of € 5.000.000 to the CDSP-B project available in the form of a Technical Assistance Grant.

The overall development objective of CDSP-B, funded by GoB, the United Nations International fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and GoN is to reduce poverty and hunger for people living on newly accreted coastal chars, which would be achieved via improved and more secure livelihoods.

The project will specifically address the challenges of climate change. Engineering designs take into account likely future rises in sea levels. At the household level the project will reduce vulnerability and mitigate risks from climate-related factors.

The accretion of land, primarily to the east of the mouth of the Meghna estuary, has been adding to Bangladesh's land area. Given the extreme population pressure in Bangladesh and continual loss of land to river erosion and urbanisation, this new land is a vital resource. Despite rising sea levels, this land accretion will continue.

The Netherlands has supported the development of newly accreted land and the settlement of these lands since 1994 through the successive phases of the Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP phases I to IV). This project aims to provide secure land titles to vulnerable households and support agricultural production. The most recent phase (CDSP IV) was funded by IFAD, GOB and a grant from the Government of the Netherlands.

Future investment is also vital to char development in the south-eastern delta and substantial preparatory work is required, and the project will undertake a planning exercise for potential land development and settlement.

A more permanent institutional and organisational arrangement or structure will be designed which will be able to act as planning and coordination mechanism between the GoB agencies involved in char development in the coastal areas.

Five Bangladesh Government institutions are participating in CDSP-B: Bangladesh Water Development Board; Ministry of Land, Forest Department, Local Government Engineering Department; Department of Public Health Engineering. Technical Assistance is provided by Euro consult Mott MacDonald (Netherlands) and Socio consult Ltd. (SCL) with Bangladesh Engineering and Technical Services (BETS), Bangladesh.

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