



Evaluation and Learning Series Paper: AAS-2013-24

Learning from implementation of community selection in Zambia, Solomon Islands, and Bangladesh AAS hubs



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Aquatic
Agricultural
Systems

Learning from implementation of community selection in Zambia, Solomon Islands, and Bangladesh AAS hubs

Authors

Report preparation and writing coordinated by M. Apgar with contributions by A. Schwarz, T. Chiuta, K. Kamp, C. Crissman, and the members of the Rollout Working Group.

This publication should be cited as:

CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. (2013). Learning from implementation of community selection in Zambia, Solomon Islands, and Bangladesh AAS hubs. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia. Evaluation and Learning Series Paper: AAS-2013-24.

Foreword

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems takes an adaptive and learning approach to program implementation and achieving impact. The complexity of aquatic agricultural systems and associated livelihoods, the multiple dimensions of poverty, and the positioning of agricultural research as a trigger for lasting change call for an approach to monitoring and evaluation that emphasizes learning. The monitoring and evaluation system of the program is built on use of collectively developed theories of change and impact pathways with stakeholders and partners. Implementation takes a participatory action research approach and provides opportunity for reflection and learning on progress made along the identified impact pathways. Knowledge sharing and learning, is, therefore a core part of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation approach of the program. Establishing practices for knowledge sharing and learning in such a program requires cultural change – it requires building a culture of knowledge sharing and learning among the stakeholders and partners. It requires us to be more open and reflective about our own work and the outcomes and impact we seek. This evaluation and learning series is part of how we aim to building a knowledge sharing and learning culture and practice, providing opportunity to share the outputs of our monitoring and evaluation system.

The objectives of this series include:

- Support critical reflection through the discipline of writing working papers on key evaluation and learning questions that emerge through our implementation.
- Model the culture we are building through encouraging open reflection and documentation of what works as well as what does not work.
- Capture and document critical learning points during program planning and implementation for both internal and external audiences.

The series will therefore include a wide variety of learning papers and we hope they will contribute to building a culture of knowledge sharing and learning among all of us engaging in agricultural research with the aim of improving the lives and livelihoods of the poor and marginalized.

Table of contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Design of Community Selection in the AAS CGIAR Research Program	4
Theoretical considerations from the AAS CGIAR Research Program proposal	4
Practical guidance from the Rollout Handbook	4
Further definitions through Rollout Working Group conversations	6
III. Process and Criteria Used for Community Selection in Three Hubs	7
Community selection in Barotse floodplain – Zambia.	7
Community selection in Malaita hub – Solomon Islands	8
Community selection in the Southern Bangladesh Polder Zone	11
IV. Reflections & Learning for Community Selection in the AAS Program	13
Understanding community and hub	13
Phased approach for selecting target areas and communities	14
Use of hub development challenge gradients	15
Participatory selection	15
Scalability	15
Annex 1: Community Selection and Scaling FAQs	16

List of Figures

Figure 1. Diagram of hub rollout activities	6
Figure 2. Silalos and communities selected in the Barotse floodplain hub	8
Figure 3. Administrative units in Bangladesh	12

List of Tables

Table 1. Key events in selection of first-order communities in Malaita hub	9
Table 2. Five regions identified during scoping and rollout scored on a relative scale from 1-5 against four AAS Rollout Handbook site selection criteria for first-order community engagement	10
Table 3. Selected polders by salinity level	12
Table 4. Criteria for village selection by polder	12
Table 5. List of selected villages for Southern Bangladesh Polder Zone	13

Acronyms

AAS	Aquatic Agricultural Systems [CGIAR Research Program]
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
BRE	Barotse Royal Establishment
DACO	District Agricultural Coordination Offices
DD Team	Design and Diagnosis Team
MPPD	Malaita Province Partnership for Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
RinD	research in development
PAR	participatory action research
SBPZ	Southern Bangladesh Polder Zone

I. Introduction

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS) is a research in development (RinD) program which aims to foster innovation to respond to community needs, and through networking and social learning to bring about development outcomes and impact at scale. It aims to reach the poorest and most vulnerable communities that are dependent upon aquatic agricultural systems. The AAS CGIAR Research Program uses monitoring and evaluation to track progress along identified impact pathways for accountability and learning. This report presents an evaluation of the recommended method for selecting communities during the participatory planning process, referred to as AAS “hub rollout,” in the first year of program implementation. We (the Rollout Working Group) produced this evaluation report for program learning and adaptive management through reflecting on our experience with community selection, in response to a request by the Program Leadership Team in July 2012.¹

The place-based approach we are taking has identified hubs as locations within key aquatic agricultural systems where innovation and learning can bring about development outcomes. In each of the identified hubs, we work with selected communities using a strength-based and appreciative approach to empower them in developing and implementing their own action plans to realize their vision of success. The community action plans are a key source of demand for AAS CGIAR Research Program research to be undertaken through participatory action research (PAR) in partnership with local and hub-level stakeholders. We aim to learn about our approach from the community-based work within the hubs in order to scale it up and out.

Community selection is a key step in the rollout (participatory planning) of the program in each hub. It is the process through which we define and focus our work in specific local communities in order to bring about the desired outcomes locally and provide the necessary environment for learning and scaling up and out. In line with our learning and adaptive management approach, we documented the process used for community selection in each of the three hubs rolled out during 2012 (Barotse floodplain in Zambia, Malaita in Solomon Islands, and the Southern Bangladesh Polder Zone). Following Mayne and Stern,² we have framed our reflection on the implementation process with the following evaluation questions:

- How did we implement the recommended method?
- How did we adapt the method to fit the local context? What challenges did we face? What have we learned about community selection in the AAS program?

This evaluation report provides insight into how the process was undertaken in each hub and what we are learning from this first round of rollout. It is intended as input into the learning process for improving practice in the next rollout during 2013 and beyond.

To provide the guiding context for the actions undertaken in each hub, we first discuss the initial design of the community selection stage of rollout as it was defined in the AAS Rollout Handbook.³

Next we describe the process as it unfolded in each of the three hubs. From this description of the process, we synthesize across hubs and provide reflection and learning.

II. Design of Community Selection in the AAS CGIAR Research Program

Theoretical considerations from the AAS CGIAR Research Program proposal

The AAS CGIAR Research Program proposal posed several theoretical and programmatic considerations regarding our commitment to place and use of a PAR approach to RinD.⁴ A hub is defined in the proposal as “a geographic location providing a focus for innovation, learning and impact through action research.”⁵ Program hubs were therefore conceptualized both as physical geographic spaces where actions take place on the ground and networked social spaces where stakeholders engage and learn together. Further, the proposal indicated that most effort will be focused in areas with high potential for alleviating poverty.

Practical guidance from the Rollout Handbook

Version 1.0 of the Rollout Handbook was developed through a planning session of the Rollout Working Group and brings together the wide range of learning and experience of that team. The Handbook sets out a process intended to guide participatory planning of RinD in each of the three hubs that were to be rolled out in 2012. Figure 1 illustrates the sequence of activities.

Community selection spans several activities in the Handbook. The first step, *Activity 2.2: Hub Scoping*, is to identify and make preliminary recommendations for target communities. The proposed criteria for selecting priority communities include the following:

1. Potential to address issues that are of wide concern across the hub.
2. Potential for partnerships.
3. Potential to capitalize on current development efforts for those planned for the future.
4. Sites that present issues that will tap into AAS program expertise or draw on the ability of the program to catalyze the necessary expertise.
5. Sites that present issues that are “doable”.
6. Sites that present the greatest degrees of asset and income poverty, marginalization, and vulnerability.

The next stage in community selection is found in the Handbook’s *Activity 2.4: Stakeholder Consultation Workshop*. Selection criteria are to be finalized during this participatory process with communities, partners, and stakeholders, who also define the “hub development challenge” – the focus and goal of the AAS program in the hub.

¹ A Program Leadership Team provides leadership and management for the AAS CGIAR Research Program. The team functions through working groups. The Rollout Working Group is tasked with implementing the hub planning and startup phase, referred to in the program as rollout.

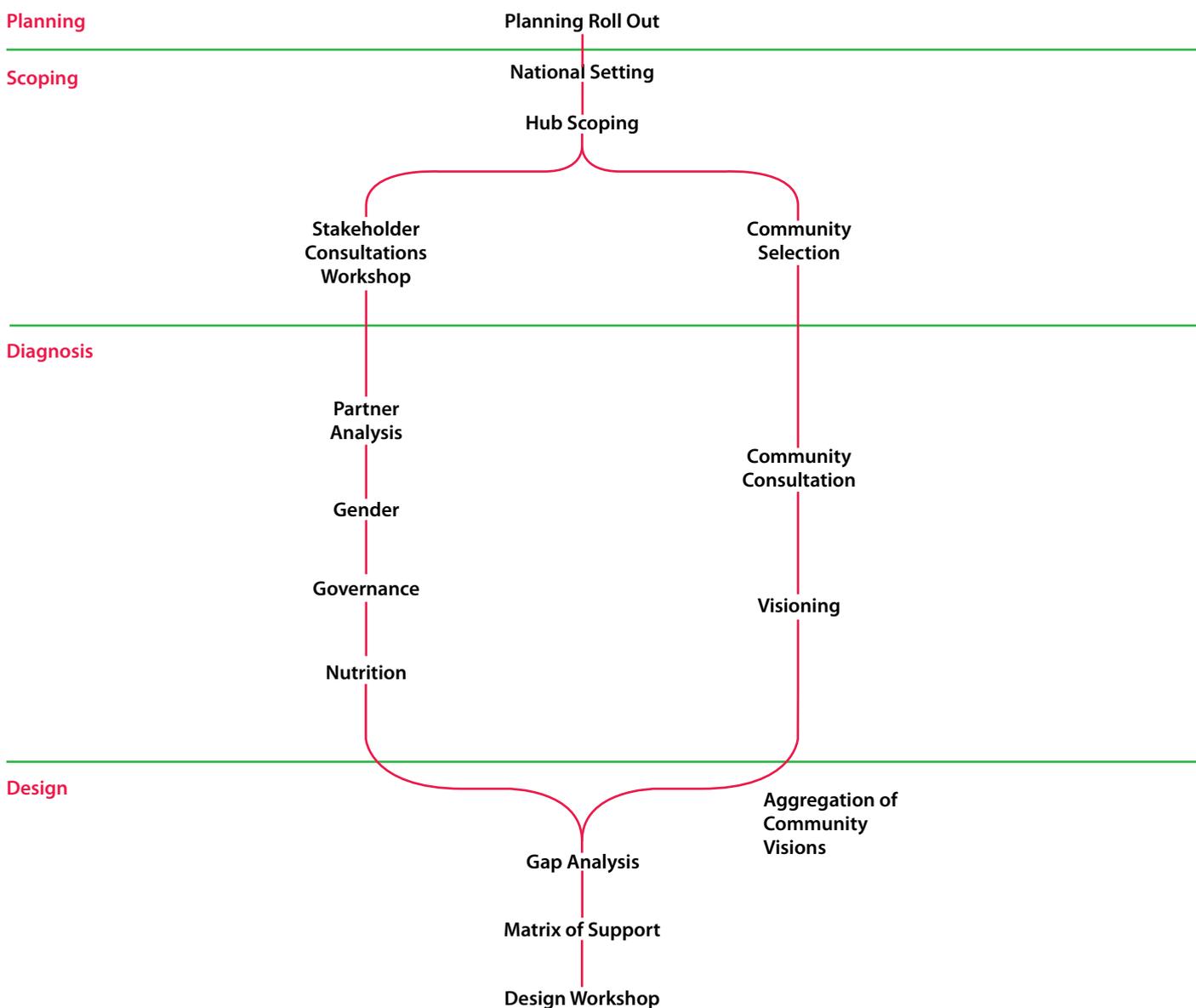
² Mayne, J. and E. Stern (in press). Impact evaluation of natural resource management research programs: a broader view. ACIAR Impact Assessment Series.

³ The AAS Rollout Handbook guides the process of rollout and is used by each hub.

⁴ The AAS RinD approach “entails a change in primary focus from research that generates global public goods, followed by investment in dissemination and extension to help these technologies reach users, towards research that is embedded within ongoing processes of development and change” (AAS CGIAR Research Program Proposal, page 8). See also RinD Program Brief – <http://aas.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/AAS-RIND-Approach.pdf>.

⁵ AAS CGIAR Research Program Proposal, page 71.

Figure 1. Diagram of hub rollout activities.



The culmination of community selection is described in *Activity 3.2: Confirm Community Selection* in the Handbook. It describes selection as intent to “... establish a network of communities of sufficient scale to be able to have tangible impact on the development challenges identified. To do this we select communities in the following way:

1. Define development challenge.
2. Look at areas where the development challenge is most pressing
3. Within those areas identify gradients⁶.
4. Identify partner organizations and their reach; based on their longer term commitment to an area, their ability to achieve scale and support local level community visions.
5. Make selection (selection in clusters along gradients). Select communities that have the highest potential to take solutions to scale ensuring that they also are spread across gradients so as to capture some of the diversity of development challenges in the hub, and within reach of partners.”

The process as laid out in the Handbook proposes that community selection occur in phases. During scoping, criteria are used to help identify areas where the program has the highest potential to target the most vulnerable and to undertake work that is both efficient and

has potential for scaling up. The next phase is to define the criteria further through a participatory process with the main stakeholders to help address the collectively defined hub development challenge. Finally, communities are selected using the identified criteria along the identified gradients.

Further definitions through Rollout Working Group conversations

The Rollout Handbook was silent on the definition of community. During the rollout process, we confronted the need for more precision as to whether we define community as an administrative, economic, cultural, or other space. Through our conversations, we defined community as:
*... a geographically bounded “community of interest,” where the interest will be tackling the development challenge and its manifestations on the ground. Villages and other local administrative units are made up of many groups with many, sometimes conflicting, interests. The key will be to frame the development challenge in such a way that it brings different groups together to tackle a common challenge, and in so doing creates opportunities for scaling and further collaboration.*⁷

⁶ “Gradient” is used to describe variations in a factor of interest; for example, in Bangladesh the gradient is the level of water salinity in the polder.

⁷ Community Selection and Scaling FAQs, shown in Annex 1.

At the same time, we realized that how we understand and select communities is directly related to how we understand scaling up and out in the AAS program. This led to the following definition (see Annex 1):

Our understanding of community further relates to our understanding of scaling up and out, which we defined as follows:

- *Scaling out: A horizontal spread of technologies/ideas/strategies from farmer to farmer and community to community, within the same stakeholder groups. It implies an “organic” spread from farmer to farmer, as well as a more organized spread by means of a strengthened capacity of farmer groups and networks of farmer groups that embrace technologies and ideas as a means to achieving their own development objectives.*
- *Scaling up: Scaling up provides greater opportunities for scaling out. It begins with the movement of ideas, technologies, and strategies from the level of the farm to ever-higher levels of organized support: from farmer groups to farmer networks, local government, NGOs, higher levels of government, the private sector, and the donor community. Changes at higher institutional levels ensure and support greater grassroots adoption.*

After the first stakeholder consultation workshop in Zambia, further conversations emerged regarding a proposal to use first- and second-order communities to identify work that occurs through direct engagement and work that supports scaling up and out for impact at scale. Based on the experience in Zambia, the following definition was adopted for the pairing of first- and second-order communities:⁸

1. **A first-order community is small enough to implement an action plan involving work on the ground;** for example, a village made up of a few households.
2. **A second-order community is a grouping of first-order communities that will help with scaling out and up of what starts to happen in the first-order communities;** for example, a grouping of villages.

III. Process and Criteria Used for Community Selection in Three Hubs

In this section, we describe the process used for community selection in each of the hubs and identify criteria used at each phase of the process.

Community selection in Barotse floodplain – Zambia

Definition of community

The term “community” is part of the common vocabulary used in the development sector in Zambia. The team in Zambia discussed the various definitions and typologies, as well as what constitutes a community. For example, a community can be a farmer group, such as the Zambia Farmers Union, or it may simply be a group of people who live in the same place. The Design and Diagnosis Team (DD Team), in consultation with stakeholders, decided to define a community in the Barotse floodplain as a group of people living together in a geographical location who share natural resources and are tied together by local traditional rules and values.

Due to seasonal flooding, the population of the Barotse floodplain is migratory, moving between the floodplain and upland areas. Considering these transhumance characteristics of life in the hub, target community selection posed a challenge that had to be discussed with various key stakeholders at the hub level, including those who attended the stakeholder consultation workshop, the district authorities (including district *indunas*), *silalo indunas*,⁹ and camp officers. In May 2012, we held the

⁸ The pairing of first and second order could also refer to other forms of organizations, such as cooperatives as first-order communities and their mother organization as a second-order community.

⁹ *Induna* is a traditional Lozi political, administrative, and judicial head of the Barotse Royal Establishment. *Silalo* is an administrative unit of the Barotse Royal Establishment.

orientation workshop for the Barotse floodplain DD Team. During the workshop we deliberated on the community selection process. A two-stage sampling approach was discussed:

- (i) First, selection of an administrative unit using criteria to identify strategic locations where the main technical challenges and development opportunities of the floodplain system can be addressed.
- (ii) Second, defining a set of criteria to identify communities within these locations to work with the program.

Target area selection process and criteria

At its orientation meeting, the Barotse floodplain DD Team discussed the diagnosis and design unit of analysis – definition of the hub. The DD Team first defined the administrative unit we would use for the initial step of selecting target areas. Two options were presented and discussed, corresponding to the two systems used by the key agricultural development partners in the hub:

- (i) the Ministry of Agriculture through the Provincial Agricultural Coordination Office unit – **camp**.
- (ii) the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) unit – **silalo**.

Camps are well-mapped areas that are the smallest administrative units used for agricultural extension purposes. In addition to agricultural camps (livestock and crops), fish camps also exist (not necessarily in the same geographical location), and these are managed by a fisheries extension officer.

The silalo unit, on the other hand, is part of the social organization under traditional administration. The silalo is managed by a silalo *induna*. Silalos frequently span both upland and floodplain areas and may be made up of 20–100 villages. Silalos are not mapped or characterized.

The DD Team decided that the silalo unit was more appropriate as a diagnosis and design unit than the camp unit because it resonates with the focus and approach of the AAS program (i.e., a community-integrated systems approach). Silalos are more inclusive than camps because they include farmers and non-farmers. The social dynamics of villages (i.e., diversity of livelihood strategies, very strong bond with traditional leadership, etc.) and the fact that transhumance occurs within a silalo provides a context for building the sustainability of the program through use of traditional structures. The DD Team presented a proposal to use the silalo unit at the stakeholder consultation workshop to seek endorsement of the stakeholder.

During the stakeholder consultation workshop, participants endorsed the development challenge of the Barotse floodplain hub that had been defined by the DD Team as “... *making effective use of seasonal flooding and natural resources in the Barotse Floodplain System through more productive and diversified aquatic agricultural management practices and technologies that improve lives and livelihoods of the poor.*” This statement was used to focus the process of selecting silalos as areas that could help address the challenge. In order to select a silalo in each of the districts, a process that involved consultations with key informants, establishing a selection panel, and a final review by the DD Team was used.

The following selection criteria were presented, discussed, and endorsed at the stakeholder consultation workshop:

- a. impacts of flooding (and drought).
- b. crop, fish, livestock, and natural resources bases, and scope for growth.
- c. market and service access.
- d. people (density, ethnicity, mobility).
- e. geographical spread.

After the approval of the selection criteria, the DD Team formed a group of key informants comprised of Lukulu, Mongu, Kalabo, and Senanga District Agricultural Coordination Offices (DACO); BRE district indunas; and development partners. The informants identified strategic silalos where the main technical challenges and development opportunities of the floodplain could be addressed, using the approved criteria. The informants were asked to submit their suggested list of silalos, including a shortlist of four silalos that best suited the criteria.

A selection panel comprising some key members of the DD Team – BRE, Caritas, Concern, CGIAR (Mongu), and DACO (Mongu District) – was constituted and invited to the CGIAR office in Mongu to review the selected silalos. Upon review of the selected silalos, the selection panel realized that the DACO and NGOs had identified agricultural camps, while the BRE had identified silalos, which is the unit of analysis in the AAS program, and camp and silalo boundaries do not always coincide. The panel then performed another round of short listing of the four silalos that best fit the criteria. The process of silalo selection and the finally selected silalos were presented to the full DD Team meeting held in the CGIAR office in Mongu on Monday, July 23, 2012. The final list was endorsed by the DD Team.

Village selection process and criteria

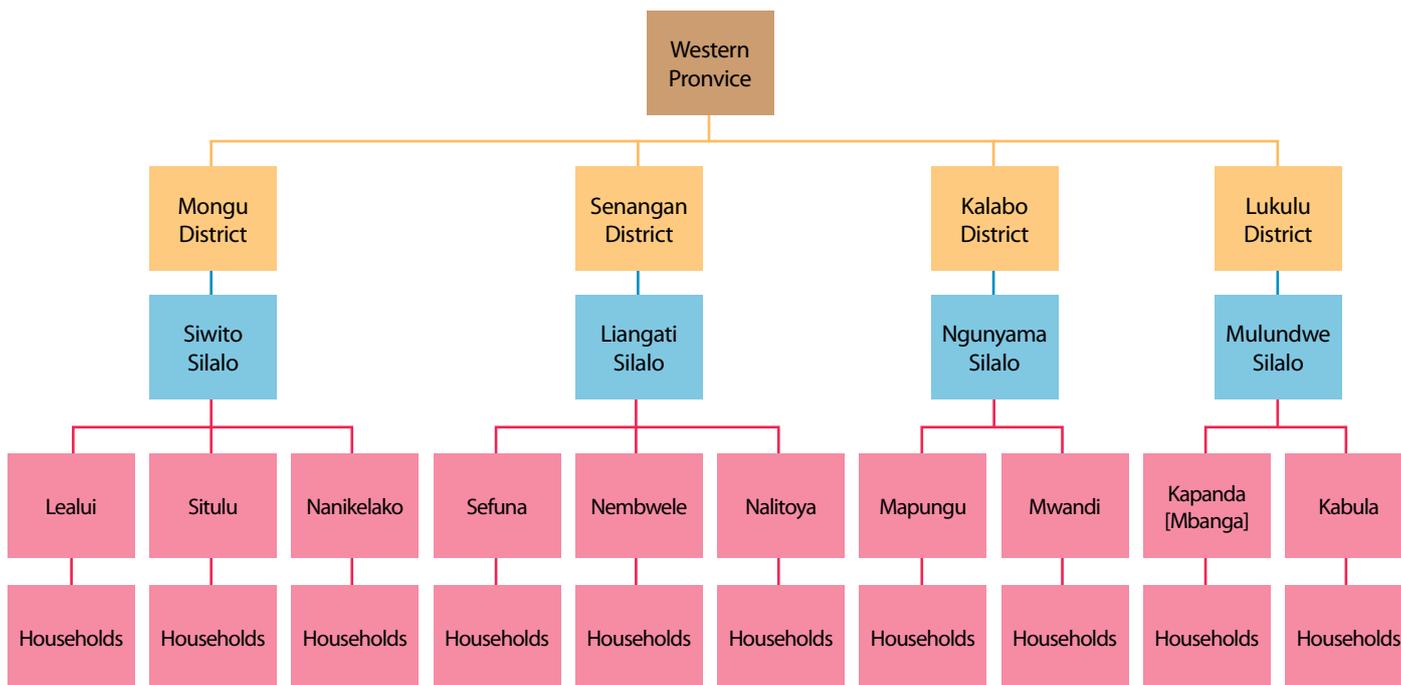
At its July 2012 meeting, the DD Team discussed and agreed on the number of communities to be selected from each of the four

Through this process, a list of communities was compiled. Using the list, the hub team consulted with the village indunas to verify the villages, and a final list of ten communities was selected. The selection was further verified during the pre-community consultation visits conducted by the community visioning and action planning teams. For example, the pre-community consultation visits to Situlu and Lealui revealed that population sizes of the villages seem to be very small; there are only about 30 households in Situlu and about 80 households in Lealui. The DD Team therefore agreed that where the population size of a village is very small, villages within the radius of 5 kilometers will be included as part of the selected community (Figure 2).

Scaling up and out strategy

The selected communities in the Barotse floodplain are the initial target communities for the program. The plan is to increase the number of communities reached as the program scales out. Within these ten initial communities, the AAS program will work through PAR to support community-developed action plans and address the hub development challenge. Working through these initial communities, approaches and appropriate technologies will be developed and piloted, and lessons will be shared (through knowledge fairs, farmer exchange visits, etc.) with the surrounding communities within the silalo, district, and province.

Figure 2. Silalos and communities selected in the Barotse floodplain.



silalos. Considering population numbers in Mongu and Senanga districts, the team agreed that three communities should be selected from each of the silalos in these districts, and two each should be selected from Kalabo and Lukulu, where the population numbers are low. In order to select communities within the four identified silalos, a lengthy process involving consultations and discussions with the relevant silalo indunas, camp extension officers, and key development partners was used. These key stakeholders were requested to identify strategic communities using the community selection criteria approved at the stakeholder consultation workshop:

- a. willingness and ability to cooperate.
- b. evidence of “self-help”.
- c. type of economic activities
- d. size, composition, and mobility.
- e. relative wealth or isolation.
- f. link to AAS program partners.

Community selection in Malaita hub – Solomon Islands

Definition of community

In Solomon Islands, the term “community” is loosely used to describe the geographical bounds of a group of households or a village; however, the term may also refer to a cluster of small villages or scattered households that have tribal affiliations conferring ownership or user rights to natural resources (land and sea). In many cases communities are defined more by tribal linkages than geographical village boundaries.

The community selection process in Malaita hub began with scoping in early 2012 and was completed during the design and implementation phase. The selection of specific communities for a long-term program commitment initiated

through a community life competency approach did not occur until May 2013. There were two main reasons for this taking longer than in the other hubs and longer than the plan described in the Rollout Handbook. The first relates to the desire of the Solomon Islands WorldFish staff, experienced in working with Solomon Islands communities, and of stakeholders, to ensure that community expectations were able to be managed. This reflected an evaluation of the readiness of the AAS team to enter into a long-term community engagement (staff numbers and capacity) and a level of uncertainty about available budget.

The AAS program still had work to do to build capacity and establish a working knowledge of the program design and approaches among a young, growing in-country research team.

the regions and wards where no development NGOs were active (excluding churches). The areas encompassed much of the main island of Malaita and were as follows:

- North Malaita (coastal and artificial island communities) [ADRA working in fewer than five communities]
- North Malaita (inland communities) [ADRA working in fewer than five communities; Save the Children project sites]
- Small Malaita [World Vision active]
- Langalanga Lagoon and Central Kwara'ae [Save the Children in a small number of communities]
- East Malaita (Kwara'ae Kwaio and Are'are) [No development NGOs active at the time of scoping, although World Vision was also scoping at that time]

Table 1. Key events in selection of first-order communities in Malaita hub.

Date	Consultation process	Community selection step
Jan.–June 2012	Hub-wide consultation, scoping	Defined priority aquatic agricultural systems-dependent regions
June 2012	Stakeholder consultation workshop	Mutually agreed-upon community selection process
Oct. 2012	Community consultation workshop	Community perspective on hub development challenge and community selection process captured
Nov. 2012	Design workshop	Gradients defined for first-order community selection
Feb. 2013	Further one-on-one partner consultations	Provincial government representatives, World Vision, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Kastom Gaden Association, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA); purpose to seek partners who could support community action planning processes and absorb a new program (AAS) into their existing community development work
Feb. 2013	Hub steering committee (MPPD)	North Malaita endorsed as the priority region for first-order communities
Apr.–May 2013	Populated matrix of 21 “communities”	Identified three first-order sites in North Malaita

New partnerships with organizations active in the hub also needed to be nurtured and formalized before embarking on making commitments to new communities. Much has been written during the scoping phase of AAS rollout in Solomon Islands of the perils of raising unrealistic community expectations.¹⁰ It was only post-design (December 2012), once gradients had been agreed upon based on the development challenge, that financial and human resources could realistically be identified, and hence community selection could proceed. Between January 2012 and April 2013, all these levels of uncertainty were adequately resolved.

Target area selection process and criteria

The Malaita Provincial Government delineates Malaita Province into five administrative regions: North, South, Central, East, and Outer Islands. Political boundaries within each region have been defined for the purposes of modern central government and for the delivery of services to rural people. The smallest of these comprise wards that encompass a number of villages. A staged community selection approach (Table 1) was undertaken, moving from a large to an increasingly smaller scale, from region to ward to community or community cluster. This process involved consultations with key informants, stakeholder consultation workshops, establishing a steering committee, and a final review by the hub team.

Initially, five priority regions and sub-regions¹¹ in Malaita were identified by the AAS team. These were areas where the program has the highest potential to target the most vulnerable populations through a direct community-engagement approach, and to undertake work that has potential for scaling up, while not selecting locations that were so remote that an action research partnership could not be managed effectively from an Auki (provincial capital) base. This took into consideration where partners and WorldFish already had active projects, as well as

At the time of scoping, WorldFish was actively working in communities in Langalanga Lagoon (Central), Lau Lagoon (North Malaita artificial island communities), and Maramasike Passage (Small Malaita).

Community perspectives on the development challenge and selection process

A draft development challenge was articulated during scoping, and was formally articulated and agreed to by stakeholders at the stakeholder consultation workshop. The Malaita hub development challenge is as follows:
Rural people in the Malaita hub of Solomon Islands face major challenges from rising population and diminishing marine and land resources. The development challenge is to improve their lives through more productive, diversified livelihoods that empower communities to be better able to adapt to change and make more effective use of their resources. The research challenge we will address with the people of the Malaita hub is to develop and test alternative approaches to livelihood diversification and resource stewardship that will accelerate development and restore the productivity of their resources.

In the hub-level workshop, a participatory session was held to determine the process for ensuring that community perspectives on the development challenge were not only captured but would also be drivers of the design of the program during the diagnosis phase. Through deliberation on how to best manage expectations of communities, it was agreed that community perspectives would be sought at one central meeting.

For the resulting community workshop, participants were selected from communities where WorldFish or partners (specifically Kastom Gaden, World Vision, and OXFAM) were already working in Malaita Province and where ongoing activities are expected. This meant that at the community

¹⁰See the Solomon Islands Learning Journal and Stakeholder Consultation Workshop Report.

¹¹These were loosely based on the constituency unit of the national governance structure.

workshop there were no representatives from East Malaita¹² or Malaita Outer Islands,¹³ although both of these regions were represented at the stakeholder consultation workshop. Communities were asked to send people who rely on aquatic agricultural systems for their livelihoods, were not necessarily leaders or political figures, and represent men and women plus some youth participants. Their task was to provide a perspective on the development challenge and the community selection process to feed into AAS program design.

Seventeen men and five women participated in a three-day workshop held in Auki, the capital of Malaita, representing five community clusters (wards) from three of the five regions of Malaita. Led by The Constellation, an AAS partner, the participants worked through the community life competency process¹⁴ to identify priority areas for interaction with the AAS program and to contribute their perspectives on how communities should be selected for engagement in AAS program implementation. The AAS program team did not present a proposal to the community workshop on how communities would be selected except to explain that the perspective of the people in the room was being sought owing to their current relationship with an NGO.

Comments from the forum included the following:

- “The first communities to be involved should be those already working with WorldFish [currently from North, South, and Central regions].”
- “Specific actions now are more concentrated on communities in the Southern and Northern regions, and they should be the starting blocks.”
- “More disadvantaged communities [in our regions] need to be included [not just those that already have NGO contacts], and as the program grows it will be appropriate to seek expressions of interest from other communities.”
- “We [community members] should play our part in sharing information and motivating others.”
- “Leaders from communities which have links with WorldFish should [continue to be] involved in the planning phase, as they will be the ones experiencing the program outcomes.”

In summary, the perspective of the workshop participants on community selection was that communities where WorldFish was already working should be the starting point for the program and that other communities in their regions, particularly the most

disadvantaged (which they could help us identify), should be encouraged to express an interest in being involved later on. This has been addressed in part by defining first-order communities (vulnerable sites that do not necessarily have a formal development partner and where the program will newly engage) and sites where WorldFish or partners are already active and there are opportunities for scaling through processes other than an intensive community visioning and action planning approach.

Design

The information gleaned from scoping and diagnosis resulted in a two-phase community selection process for first-order communities being proposed during the program design phase:

- Stage 1: identifying the regions and wards in which we would work.
- Stage 2: identifying the specific communities (clusters).

The scoping phase of rollout identified that AAS issues related to the development challenge spanned a range of villages and tribes in all regions in Malaita, from those on the coast who are highly reliant on marine resources to inland people who have limited access to regular sources of protein. This defined the gradient for community engagement. The five AAS-dependent areas listed earlier, all comprising more than one ward, had been identified through the scoping and diagnosis process as having a high degree of asset and income poverty, marginalization, and vulnerability, and as having issues that were of wide concern across the hub.¹⁵

Each of the five areas was then evaluated for the remaining four criteria using the relative scale (illustrated in Table 1) identified in Activity 2.2: Hub Scoping in the Handbook. The four criteria used were as follows:

- Potential for partnerships (NGO partnerships).
- Potential to capitalize on current development efforts for those planned for the future (degree of networking).
- Sites that present issues that will tap into AAS expertise or draw on the ability of the program to catalyze the necessary expertise (existing AAS initiatives).
- Sites that present AAS issues that are “doable”.

A region-by-region summary was presented by the country program leader to the design workshop, and through discussion, Table 2 was populated.

Table 2. Five regions identified during scoping and rollout scored on a relative scale from 1-5 against four AAS Rollout Handbook site selection criteria for first-order community engagement.

Criteria	North Malaita Sea	North Malaita Land	South Malaita	Langalanga and Central Kwara'ae	East Malaita (Kwara'ae, Kwaio, Are'are)
• Potential for partnerships (NGO partnerships)	2	2	3	3	2
• Potential to capitalize on current development efforts for those planned for the future (degree of networking)	3	3	3	4	1
• Sites that present issues that will tap into AAS expertise or draw on the ability of the program to catalyze the necessary expertise (existing AAS initiatives)	3	3	2	3	1
• Sites that present AAS issues that are “doable” ^a	5	5	4	2	5
TOTAL	13	13	12	12	7

^a Assessing this criterion took into account accessibility for program staff as well as known obstacles that will require long-term solutions beyond community engagement processes, such as known governance issues in Langalanga Lagoon.

¹²Note that the AAS scoping team visited East Malaita and, since the time of the community consultation workshop, World Vision has planned a project in East Malaita for implementation in 2013.

¹³In late 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock initiated a gardening project in Malaita Outer Islands, their first.

¹⁴For more information on this process see <http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/en/8-community-life-competence-process>

¹⁵Criteria 1 and 6, Activity 2.2 Selection Criteria, Rollout Handbook v1.

The order of priority for regions in which the program will engage first- and second-order communities, at a rate depending on program resources, is as follows:

- First order: North Malaita (a contrast of sea and land-owning people)
- Second order: Central Malaita; Langalanga and Kwara'ae (a contrast of sea and land-owning people)
- Second order: South Malaita (coastal communities)

East Malaita is expected to be incorporated through a partnership with World Vision as the implementation of their new program in the region progresses during 2013. At this stage it is not envisaged that the AAS program will have the resources to work directly in Malaita Outer Islands.¹⁶

First-order village selection criteria and process in North Malaita

In March 2013, a suite of criteria for specific community selection was agreed upon with the Malaita hub steering committee, a role being taken on by the Malaita Province Partnership for Development (MPPD) Network.

The criteria are:

1. An aquatic agricultural systems-reliant community has expressed interest in community development around aquatic agricultural systems issues or such issues have been raised through community action planning activities with partners.
2. Community champions can be identified to help facilitate PAR initiatives in the community.
3. Development partners are active in the community or expect to be interested in partnering in the community in the future.
4. There is support from community leaders to engage with the program, and the community members demonstrate that they can work together.
5. The population is greater than 20 households and/or there is proximity to other household clusters to improve opportunities for scaling.

An expression of interest was then sought from land and sea communities in North Malaita via their provincial government representatives for direct community engagement as first-order communities by the AAS program. Twenty-one villages or community clusters were proposed, and the AAS team developed a matrix of information around factors related to the criteria above. From these, three community clusters have been identified, comprising 8–10 villages for engagement in 2013. These are in increasing order of reliance on the sea: the Kwai/Suafa cluster in Ward 9, Fumato'o on Manaoba Island in Ward 12, and the Alea cluster (Wards 10 and 12), which encompasses villages with good access to land for agriculture as well as nearby artificial islands that are heavily reliant on the sea.

Scaling up and out strategy

WorldFish has had an active community-research-focused program in Solomon Islands since 2005. In preparation for moving to a programmatic approach and in line with the AAS proposal, the Solomon Islands team began designing and implementing bilateral projects, aligned to AAS program goals and themes, in the three years prior to rollout. The bilateral projects in Malaita hub are operating at scales analogous to the AAS first-order community level (in North Malaita) and second-order landscape level, although the community engagement approach has not been as explicit as in the AAS program. The AAS program will complement these initiatives through strengthening the PAR approach, by enabling new communities to be added to create a cluster of first-order communities in North Malaita, and by

increasingly better defining the priorities for hub strategic research based on community-identified priorities.

Cultural and language groupings within Malaita strongly determine aspects of people's lives such as who their *wantoks*¹⁷ are and who they will share information and resources with. Other institutions, such as the church, can strongly influence the dissemination of information. Communities within first-order clusters are expected to be either of the same language group (e.g., Lau) or to be loosely tied through market exchange and/or the need to negotiate shared resource access (e.g., Langalanga and Kwara'ae) and/or through church affiliation. These ties are expected to facilitate scaling out of lessons learned through horizontal community-to-community spread of information.

Scaling up of agricultural and fisheries innovations (processes and technologies) that evolve through village-based action research, as well as landscape scale approaches for commonly accessed resources, will require processes in addition to one-on-one community engagement. The selected regions in North and Central Malaita include a range of four distinct cultural, language, and resource access "groups" of people. Working across this range and understanding the influence of these factors will help us better understand how these characteristics and others, such as the consequences of different strengths of governance, might influence mechanisms around going to scale, thereby better informing our community engagement and scaling-up processes.

Community selection in the Southern Bangladesh Polder Zone

Definition of community

In Bangladesh, "community" generally refers to a social group that has similar occupations, shares some common characteristics or interests, and is perceived as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists, such as a fisher community, Baowal community (collecting wood from the forest), Mouwal community (collecting honey), agricultural farming community (in a broader sense), etc. However, some religious, ethnic, or tribal groups are also referred to as communities. These communities cross administrative boundaries all over Bangladesh. In the AAS program in Bangladesh, we use the concept of "village" as our first-order community, which is the smallest administrative unit where people from different communities live in the same geographic area and own and share resources.

Target area selection and criteria

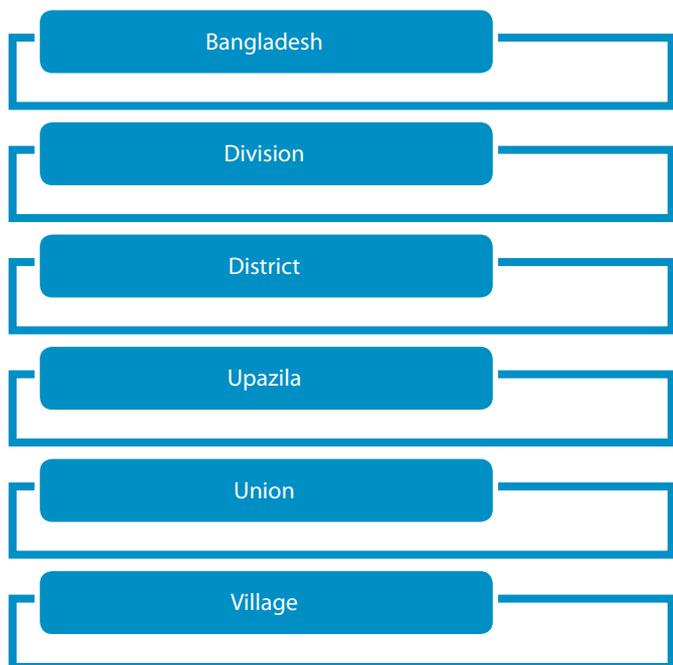
The AAS Southern Bangladesh Polder Zone (SBPZ), previously known as AAS Khulna hub, is defined by the polder areas situated along the coast of Southern Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, a "polder" refers to a floodplain area enclosed by embankments (dikes) that form a separate hydrological entity, meaning that it has no connection with outside water other than through manually operated sluice gates. The Bangladesh Water Development Board, under the Coastal Embankment Project, constructed 92 polders in the early 1960s and 1970s along the coastal zone. The purpose of the polders was to protect against intrusion of saline water from the sea in order to grow crops in the floodplains. The polders do not follow the administrative boundaries; that is, one polder may fall under different administrative boundaries/units.

The SBPZ includes eight districts from three divisions along the coastal area. There are 58 *upazilas* and 10,465 villages in the SBPZ. Figure 3 illustrates the administrative boundaries/units used in Bangladesh and the relative authority of village, union, upazila, district, and division.

¹⁶ Malaita Outer Islands is the only region not represented in the program. However, the program has an extensive communications and networking component that will aim to reach all the people of Malaita.

¹⁷ The pidgin word *wantok* is the common local term for "tribe" or "clan," drawn from "one talk," representing people who converse in the same language. It is an important concept associated with networks of distinct tribal, ethnic, linguistic, and geographic groupings in Melanesia.

Figure 3. Administrative units in Bangladesh.



The impacts of climate change in the SBPZ are likely to be prominent due to the proximity of the ocean, increasing occurrence and severity of cyclonic storms, increased occurrence of floods, and erratic rainfall patterns. There are clear distinctions in the aquatic agricultural farming systems in the coastal area related to the different levels of water and soil salinity. For agricultural scientists and farmers, the level of salinity of a particular area is therefore an important consideration for developing a research agenda to support development and has become the overarching gradient used to select target areas and AAS communities in the coastal zone.

In order to capture the diversity of aquatic agricultural systems, we divided the coastal zone into the following three areas according to water salinity: i) high water salinity area, ii) medium water salinity area, and iii) low water salinity/freshwater area. We selected three districts to represent the three water salinity areas: Satkhira, Khulna, and Barguna districts, respectively. This selection will enable the program to work across the salinity gradient.

A second consideration for selection was the opportunity for collaboration with ongoing CGIAR centers and other WorldFish projects. We therefore focused on polders where other CGIAR centers and WorldFish projects are ongoing. We did initial scoping in six polders but realized that it was unrealistic to manage the workload in six polders scattered around the region. We decided to work in four polders from the selected three districts covering all three water salinity zones, selecting one upazila per polder. The broader geographical locations for implementation of the AAS program in the SBPZ are summarized in the table below.

Table 3. Selected polders by salinity level.

	Water salinity level	Name of district	Name of upazila	Polder number
1	High water salinity area	Satkhira	Kaligonj	Polder 3
2	Medium water salinity area	Khulna	Dumuria and Bataighata	Dumuria: Polder 29 Bataighata: Polder 30
3	Low salinity/freshwater area	Barguan	Amtoli	Polder 43/2F

We chose to work in two polders of medium salinity, as they have the highest diversity of salinity.

Village selection process and criteria

A set of selection criteria was used for village selection within the four polders identified as target areas. The selection criteria were developed by the AAS Bangladesh team in order to identify and engage people whose livelihoods depend upon the aquatic agricultural system in the polder zone with greater opportunities for effective partnership. The following criteria were used:

- I. **Salinity level in water and land:** Impacts of different levels of salinity on natural resources and cropping systems are considered as one of the main criteria in village selection. The criteria were considered differently for three different areas per the table below.

Table 4. Criteria for village selection by polder.

SI	Polder	Criteria
1	Polder 3 (Kaligonj, Satkhira)	Impacts of high salinity on natural resources and farming systems
2	Polder 29 (Dumuria) and Polder 30 (Bataighata), Khulna	Impacts of medium salinity on natural resources and farming systems
3	Polder 42/F (Amtoli, Barguna)	Impacts of climate change on low salinity/freshwater farming systems

- II. **Participation of women:** Women are willing and have access to participate in the household and community livelihood development.
- III. **Interest of community people and resources:** Community people are willing to participate in the AAS program.
- IV. **Road communication:** Good road communication is taken into account so that the community people can access the AAS program and the other stakeholders' and partners' support/services, as well as the market for the products.
- V. **Internal and external conflict:** The communities do not have major internal and external conflict that might affect or hinder the AAS program.

A five-step process was followed to finalize the selection of villages.

Step 1: A checklist was developed for data collection in the villages in the respective polders:

- Livelihoods dependent upon aquatic agricultural systems.
- Salinity gradients within the upazila: (high, medium, low/fresh).
- Road network sufficient for staff to travel to the villages during all months of the year, particularly during the monsoon season.
- Presence of functional interest groups, such as commodity/market focus.
- Villages where WorldFish is currently active and using existing groups if available from the following projects or programs: Cereal Systems Initiative in South Asia, Local Government Engineering Department, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Feed the Future, Challenge Program on Water and Food.
- Diversity of land and water resources to work on issues related to them (*ghers*, ponds, cropland, canals or *khals*).
- Areas which are less developed and for which obvious opportunities for diversification and intensification are present.
- History of low conflict.

- Vulnerability to climate change and increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events.
- Presence of women who are eager and available to participate.
- Representativeness of other neighboring villages that have similar problems.

Step 2: Using the checklist, the program team conducted stakeholder interviews, which included the following government departments: Department of Agricultural Extension, Department of Women’s Affairs, Department of Fisheries, and Department of Livestock Services. Some local NGOs were also interviewed, as were local elected representatives. The purpose was to strengthen partnerships and elicit the views of the village-level development partners in relation to village selection.

A comprehensive list of unions and villages within the selected polders was collected from the relevant Union Parishad Office and an overall context of the selected polders was established.

Step 3: A short visit was made to all of the listed villages. A few villages that were too difficult to reach, had a history of high conflict, or did not have aquatic agriculture as a core system were omitted. A small group of people from each village was engaged in discussion to develop a simple picture of each village, noting:

- water salinity
- type of natural resources
- broad farming systems
- economic status of the village

Due to the large number of villages, primary information collected in this process was analyzed in an effort to form a few clusters of villages that had similar features within the respective polder to visit. Via this process, 4–8 clusters of villages (with 4–6 villages in each cluster) were formed for each polder.¹⁸

Step 4: One sample village was selected from each cluster to study in more detail. More detailed quantitative and qualitative information was collected from the sample villages through 3–4 small group discussions and key

informant interviews for each village. Finally, a village information matrix was prepared for the sample villages for each selected polder.

Step 5: The village information matrix was used to compare the suitability of each sample village against the village selection criteria. The final village selection was made by the AAS team based on this analysis. Five of 16 final selected villages have WorldFish and/or partner programs and activities ongoing, and another five have WorldFish interventions in neighboring villages. This creates opportunities for the AAS program to contribute to other WorldFish ongoing projects through its research and innovation output and scaling-up strategy.

Scaling up and out strategy

Two main selection criteria were considered as part of the strategy to ensure scaling up and out:

- Villages were selected that were part of clusters of villages with similar agroecological conditions. The types of livelihoods activities and research to be conducted around them are therefore likely to be similar and support scaling out through village-to-village sharing and learning.
- In ten of the 16 villages, there are WorldFish or partner programs ongoing, providing opportunities to link into other programs and assist in scaling up and out the AAS approach.

IV. Reflections & Learning for Community Selection in the AAS Program

In this section we present our reflections from the comparative analysis of the three processes for selecting communities for engagement in the AAS hubs in 2012. We seek to identify similarities and differences to support an adapted rollout process in 2013 and beyond.

Understanding community and hub

The term “community” was used in an undefined manner at the beginning of the 2012 activities for hub rollout. As the 2012 work proceeded, we reflected on the meaning of the term in the program, as well as how to contextualize it into a working

Table 5. List of selected villages for AAS SBPZ.

SL NO	Name of Village	Name of Union	Name of Upazila	Name of District	# of Polder
1	Hatbati	Batiaghata	Batiaghata	Khulna	30
2	Fultola	Batiaghata	Batiaghata	Khulna	30
3	Gongarampur	Gongarampur	Batiaghata	Khulna	30
4	Andharia	Gongarampur	Batiaghata	Khulna	30
5	Gojendrapur	Sahosh	Dumuria	Khulna	29
6	Akra	Sorabpur	Dumuria	Khulna	29
7	Sahosh	Sahosh	Dumuria	Khulna	29
8	KDC	Sahosh	Dumuria	Khulna	29
9	Khekuani	Gulishakhali	Amtali	Borguna	43/2 F
10	Bazarkhali	Gulishakhali	Amtali	Borguna	43/2 F
11	Gojkhali	Gulishakhali	Amtali	Borguna	43/2 F
12	Bainbunia	Gulishakhali	Amtali	Borguna	43/2 F
13	Ghonapara	Noapara	Debvata	Satkhira	3
14	Kazla	Nolta	Kaligonj	Satkhira	3
15	Taraly	Taraly	Kaligonj	Satkhira	3
16	Boreya	Taraly	Kaligonj	Satkhira	3

¹⁸ Because each polder has considerably different amounts of land and total number of villages, the number of clusters per polder varied considerably.

concept in each hub. What we have learned is that as a program, we need to start with understanding the social and cultural dimensions of the places in which we are working – the concept of community in each hub is defined by the people and institutions that we work with and not by the program. Hub team members will be familiar with what makes sense in the hub, so they must be involved in the process of defining community and hub from the beginning.

Reflecting upon the program use of the term “community” led to discussions on the relationship between the physical place “on the ground,” where specific activities will be implemented around action plans, and the physical and institutional space “at the hub level,” where a commonly identified challenge will be tackled and where the program expects change to occur. The discussion about scaling up and out and the relationship between communities and hubs as part of an AAS program theory of change is only just beginning to emerge, so through most of the 2012 rollout, hub teams were not guided by a clear and agreed-on program-level theory of change. This meant that the selection process in the first three hubs grappled with the need to define and select a place where community-level work, which was largely undefined, could occur to address a development challenge that was emerging, while also supporting a scaling strategy that was evolving. This was the nature of the iterative process of hub rollout.

In each hub, a contextualized understanding of the term “community” developed; in all three hubs the term “village” is now part of the definition of the selected locations “on the ground” where action planning is taking place and participatory action research will take place with farmers and others. However, in defining and selecting the villages across the hubs it also became evident that the space being selected was not just a geographical place for focusing work, but also one with a social and cultural network. The AAS systems approach, which aims to bring about development outcomes and work with diverse livelihoods, requires that on-the-ground work also take place within an area where social and institutional structures and networks are visible and functional. This is important because (i) it allows the program to work through engaging with social/cultural norms and structures, necessary for an empowerment and transformative change agenda; (ii) it provides a context within which AAS program work can be sustainable; (iii) it provides a context for natural resource management issues to be addressed; and (iv) it supports processes for knowledge sharing and learning and scaling up and out.

As rollout progressed during the year, we also learned more about what we called a “hub” in the program. In each of the hubs, focusing on a development challenge has helped to bring life to the concept of a hub as a place for fostering transformative change. The community selection process identified the pattern of networks as a key characteristic of the place within which the program will seek to bring about change. Like the original concept of “community” in the program, the concept of “hub” is both a biophysical area within which we work (such as the Barotse floodplain) and a pattern of networks between organizations, institutions, and people, within which we seek to bring about change through knowledge, sharing, and learning. Linking the geographic and social dimensions of the hub is important for selecting appropriate communities for direct engagement in AAS hubs and for mapping out pathways for impact.

Phased approach for selecting target areas and communities

The selection process as outlined in the Handbook spanned several activities. Adaptation of this process in all three hubs has produced two clearly distinct stages in the selection process.

Selection of target areas

The first stage was the selection of target areas. The target areas defined are contextualized within each aquatic agricultural system – in the Barotse floodplain, the silalos are traditional Lozi administrative units; in Malaita, the regions reflect the ward administrative systems of the Solomon Islands government; and in Bangladesh, the polders are large areas of land protected by embankments built some 50 years ago by the government to facilitate water management. This difference is indicative of the nature of the social, cultural, and ecological systems the program is engaging – all of them aquatic agricultural systems. The target areas are those where the program has the highest potential to reach the most vulnerable, tackle the hub development challenge, and support scaling up.

In each of the three hubs, however, the process and selection criteria used differed. While in all hubs initial thinking around target areas started in scoping, in at least two hubs (Barotse and Malaita), analysis that led to selection of the target areas was undertaken during the design phase by the DD Team. This is in line with the logic of using a hub development challenge to help focus the area that can be addressed by a program of work. Only in the Barotse hub were the proposed selection criteria for the target areas decided in the stakeholder consultation workshop. The degree of stakeholder and partner engagement in the process differed across the hubs.

The selection criteria varied from themes that were similar across the hubs, identifying areas with potential for working within the AAS approach (partnerships, networks, gradients), to more specific criteria defined by types of livelihood systems and local characteristics. The teams employed different strategies for applying the criteria, depending on how much information on the areas was readily available, and how much the team had to rely on what partners and key informants shared. In Malaita, the availability of resources for immediate implementation was a deciding factor in selecting where the program will initiate work in 2013, while this was not explicitly part of the selection method in the others.

Selection of villages

The second stage was the selection of specific villages for direct engagement. The process used was different across all three hubs. One similarity among all was that stakeholders and partners were consulted frequently to gather information that would help apply the selection criteria. The type of information and level of consultation largely depended on the information available and the level of complexity in the region. A notable difference in Bangladesh was that the high population density and levels of ongoing interventions in the hub has required a five-step process, in which two rounds of information gathering were used. In Solomon Islands, on the other hand, concern over raising expectations required careful understanding of the context of each village at a more granular level, while in the Barotse hub, the program relied heavily on the local governance bodies to provide information that reflected the transhumance livelihoods of the Lozi people. These differences speak to the different contexts of the hubs and the different levels of ongoing interaction by WorldFish and the CGIAR as a whole.

Selection criteria used differed slightly across the hubs. The criteria were mostly derived from the generic list provided in the Handbook and reflect the need for communities where the AAS program engages directly to show potential for using a strength-based approach, such as evidence of self-help and willingness and ability to cooperate.

Use of hub development challenge and gradients

The Handbook proposed two steps in the selection process. These were the use of a hub development challenge and the identification of economic, ecological, or other gradients to capture diversity in the aquatic agricultural system and compare across it. The construction of the hub development challenge and its use in rollout varied across the three hubs. In Zambia, it was developed by the DD Team and endorsed in the stakeholder consultation workshop, and the selection criteria were defined at the same time. In Solomon Islands, it was developed during scoping (by the internal WorldFish scoping team) and validated at the stakeholder and community consultation workshops. Selection criteria for target areas were developed in parallel with this process. In Bangladesh, the hub development challenge was developed in a generic way in the stakeholder consultation workshop, and it is unclear how it influenced the selection process.

The identification of gradients across the three hubs also varied significantly. In Bangladesh, the salinity gradient as a key factor in the polder zone was identified early on and guided the process of rollout and community selection. In Zambia, there was no explicit mention or use of an ecological gradient, although the hub development challenge focuses on flooding, which hints at the gradient of lowland to upland villages and the associated transhumance system as a key aspect – the silalos themselves include lowland and upland areas within them. It is unclear whether this explicitly influenced selection. In Solomon Islands, several types of gradient were identified, and it was not till the design workshop that the gradient of access to land and sea was defined and later influenced the selection of villages within the wards.

From these experiences, it seems that gradients and the hub development challenge have influenced selection to varying degrees. Some confusion arises when at times multiple development challenges are referred to (such as in the AAS proposal and in the Handbook) and gradients are used to refer to either the diversity of challenges within the aquatic agricultural system or the diversity that needs to be considered in tackling one identified development challenge. As was highlighted above, the definition of villages as physical places for direct engagement located geographically within a hub and understood as supporting learning across the learning landscape is just emerging from rollout. With this emerging clarity, it would seem that defining a hub development challenge and identifying gradients as the key diversity aspect that needs to be considered in how the program addresses the challenge will help provide clearer focus to the two stages of community selection.

Participatory selection

AAS teams in all locations involved partners and/or stakeholders in the selection process. A participatory selection process was achieved to varying degrees and relates to degrees of ongoing work on the ground with partners, as well as levels of comfort with commitment to engaging with selected communities long term. In Solomon Islands, the concern over raising expectations was so great that the selection process was postponed until after design, but was then undertaken with full involvement of stakeholders and partners. Moreover, expressions of interest were sought from selected villages.

In Zambia, the partnership approach has been pivotal due to the absence of prior WorldFish work on the ground. Partners and stakeholders have therefore played a key role in providing information and advice in the process. The traditional governing body of the Lozi people – the Barotse Royal Establishment – has played a significant role in guiding the process, providing a safe environment in which the program can commit to work with communities.

In Bangladesh, on the other hand, the level of ongoing work on the ground (by both WorldFish and other development agencies) seems to have complicated the selection process, and much information gathering was engaged in by program staff. The high level of development intervention in Bangladesh is both a more complex reality and one in which expectation levels in communities are not as easily raised, so what was most important in working with partners was identifying the best areas for the research approach of the program.

More clarity on the commitment that the AAS program has to the selected villages and how work will proceed in them will likely minimize the discomfort felt over selecting communities for direct engagement. The partnership strategy to work with local and regional authorities – such as the Malaita Provincial Government and the Barotse Royal Establishment – helps build a safe space for participation and direct engagement. Identifying these structures and working within them early on will further support the partnership approach taken in the AAS program.

Scalability

We noted above that the key learning from reflecting upon community selection is its direct relationship to the scaling up and out strategy of the program. When community selection was being planned and implemented in the first hubs in 2012, the definition of scaling up was still emerging. Through the Rollout Working Group discussions, we agreed that scaling out was through direct farmer-to-farmer and community-to-community sharing of learning, and scaling up was a movement of technologies and learning to higher levels of organization, such as from farmers to networks of farmers. We see from the experiences shared in this document that all were aware that one of the criteria for selection of sites for implementation was how they would support scaling up and out, but without a clear strategy this criterion was applied based on each team's understanding in the hub, indicating the difficulty in keeping consistency across hubs.

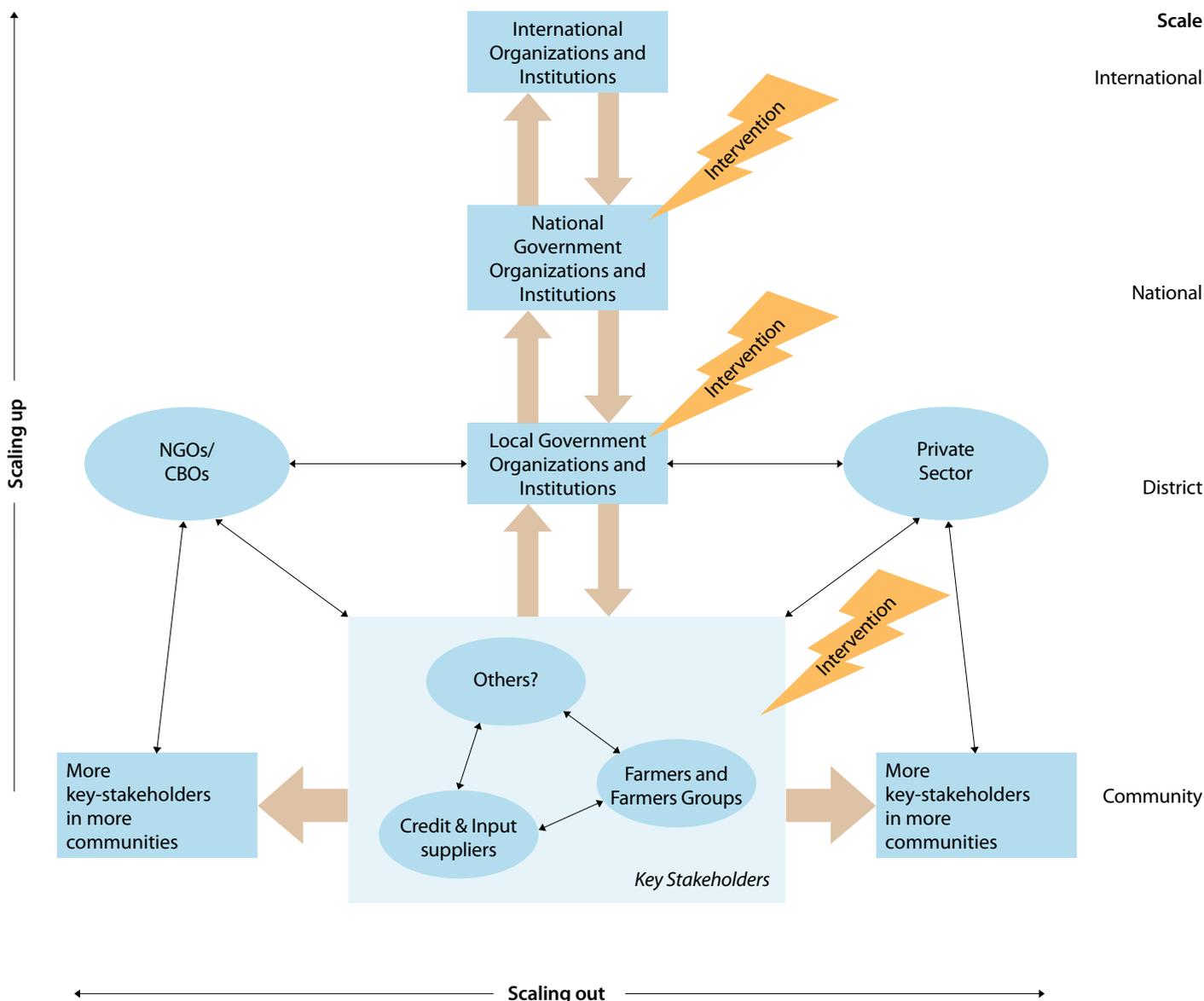
To ensure that AAS work on the ground provides scope for going to scale through the hub/learning landscape approach that is now emerging, it is necessary to reach collective agreement on potential mechanisms through which this will be accomplished to help build coherence with future hubs.

Annex 1: Community Selection and Scaling FAQs

The FAQs and answers come from our two-hour discussion during the Rollout Planning Workshop, March 6–9, 2012.

What is scaling out?

A horizontal spread of technologies/ideas/strategies from farmer to farmer and community to community, within the same stakeholder groups. It implies an “organic” spread from farmer to farmer as well as a more organized spread by means of a strengthened capacity of farmer groups and networks of farmer groups that embrace such technologies and ideas as a means to achieving their own development objectives. See diagram here.



What is scaling up?

Scaling up provides greater opportunities for scaling out. It begins with the movement of ideas, technologies, and strategies from the level of the farm to ever-higher levels of organized support: from farmer groups to farmer networks, local government, NGOs, higher levels of government, the private sector, and the donor community. Changes at higher institutional levels ensure and support greater grassroots adoption. See diagram here.

What are we scaling in AAR?

At the farm and community level – the ideas, knowledge, strategies, and technologies coming out of the program of work we fund to address farm-level development challenges. This is the “proof of concept” that argues, by example, that embedding and supporting research in development at the community level is an effective strategy for tackling hub-level development challenges.

At the hub level – the effectiveness of integration and collaboration of research efforts across CGIAR and other research centers in tackling the hub development challenge(s).

How do we select the communities we work with to ensure scaling?

1. Define the development challenge.
2. Identify areas where development challenges are most pressing.
3. Identify partner organizations based on their longer term commitment to an area and their ability to achieve scale and support local-level community visions.
4. Select communities that have the highest potential to take solutions to scale, ensuring that they also are spread across gradients so as to capture some of the diversity of development challenges in the hub.

How many communities do we need?

This will depend on the population density in the hubs in which we work, the strength of the farmer groups, how well groups are networked, and the nature of the broader development strategies of our partners at the grassroots level. Possibility of achieving transformative change will also be an important consideration. The key will be selecting and working with the right partners and approaching communities in the right way so that as ideas and viable solutions emerge they can quickly be scaled out and up.

What do we define as a community?

We understand a community to be a geographically bounded “community of interest,” where the interest will be tackling the development challenge and its manifestations on the ground. Villages and other local administrative units are made up of many groups with many, sometimes conflicting, interests. The key will be to frame the development challenge in such a way that it brings different groups together to tackle a common challenge, and in so doing creates opportunities for scaling and further collaboration.

This page intentionally left blank

This page intentionally left blank



With communities, changing lives

This publication should be cited as: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. (2013). Learning from implementation of community selection in Zambia, Solomon Islands, and Bangladesh AAS hubs. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia. Evaluation and Learning Series Paper: AAS-2013-24.

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems is a multi-year research initiative launched in July 2011. It is designed to pursue community-based approaches to agricultural research and development that target the poorest and most vulnerable rural households in aquatic agricultural systems. Led by WorldFish, a member of the CGIAR Consortium, the program is partnering with diverse organizations working at local, national and global levels to help achieve impacts at scale. For more information, visit aas.cgiar.org.

Design and layout: Eight Seconds Sdn Bhd.

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Photo credits: Front cover, Felix Clay; back cover, WorldFish.

© 2013. WorldFish. All rights reserved. This publication may be reproduced without the permission of, but with acknowledgment to, WorldFish.



Contact Details:
CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems
Jalan Batu Maung, Batu Maung, 11960 Bayan Lepas, Penang, MALAYSIA
Tel: +604 626 1606, fax: +604 626 5530, email: aas@cgiar.org



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Aquatic
Agricultural
Systems