



Evaluation of Participatory Disaster Preparation and Mitigation Project in Tien Giang and Dong Thap Provinces, Vietnam

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

June 2008

Commissioned by: Oxfam GB

Evaluators: Ian Wilderspin and Oxfam GB

Table of contents

Table of contents	2
Executive Summary	5
Abbreviations and Acronyms	14
Terms used in the report	14
I BACKGROUND	15
1.1 Context.....	15
1.2 The project	15
1.3 Project summary	16
1.4 Project objectives	17
II JOINT EVALUATION PROCESS	17
2.1 Purpose of the Mid-term Review	17
2.2 Review team and methodologies	17
2.2.1 <i>Composition and responsibilities of the team:</i>	17
2.2.2 <i>Scope of the Mid-term review</i>	18
2.2.3 <i>Review methodology</i>	18
2.3 Constraints	19
III MAIN FINDINGS	19
Component 1 Objective	19
1.1 <i>Developed and implemented community based disaster management action plans</i> 20	
1.2 <i>Informed households and improved preparedness</i>	21
1.3 <i>Established or improved early warning systems</i>	22
1.4 <i>Improved commune search and rescue teams</i>	22
1.5 <i>Swimming training for women and children</i>	22
1.6 <i>Repaired or constructed small scale infrastructure</i>	23
Component 2 Objective	23
2.1 <i>Appropriate disaster management training</i>	24
2.2 <i>Monitoring and evaluation, communications and data management</i>	25
Component 3 Objective	26
3.1. <i>Increased awareness amongst households and changed practice on flood-related health and hygiene</i>	26
3.2 <i>Increased access to clean water</i>	26
Component 4 Objective	26
4.1 <i>Support for income generation</i>	27

4.2	<i>Improved management of livelihood assets</i>	27
Component 5 Objective		27
5.1	<i>Strengthened capacity of project management and coordination</i>	27
5.2	<i>Active coordination and collaboration with INGOs and other stakeholders</i>	29
Monitoring, evaluation and learning		29
Humanitarian accountability		29
Sustainability		30
Gender equality (mainstreaming) or as a cross cutting issue		30
IV	REVIEW COMPONENTS	31
Relevance and appropriateness		31
Coverage		32
Effectiveness and cost effectiveness		33
Efficiency		33
Impact		34
V	MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	34
Component 1 Objective		34
1.1	<i>Developed and implemented community based disaster management action plans</i>	34
1.2	<i>Informed households and improved preparedness</i>	35
1.3	<i>Established or improved early warning systems</i>	36
1.4	<i>Improved commune search and rescue teams</i>	36
1.5	<i>Swimming training for women and children</i>	37
1.6	<i>Repaired or constructed small scale infrastructure</i>	37
Component 2 Objective		37
2.1	<i>Appropriate disaster management training</i>	37
2.2	<i>Monitoring and evaluation, communications and data management</i>	38
Component 3 Objective		38
3.1	<i>Increased awareness amongst households and changed practice on flood-related health and hygiene</i>	38
3.2	<i>Increased access to clean water</i>	39
Component 4 Objective:		39
Component 5 Objective:		39
5.1	<i>Strengthened capacity of project management and coordination</i>	39
5.2	<i>Active coordination and collaboration with INGOs and other stakeholders</i>	40
Monitoring, evaluation and learning		40
Humanitarian accountability		40

Sustainability.....	41
Gender equality (mainstreaming) as a cross cutting issue	41
VI LESSONS LEARNT	42
Annex I Terms of reference	44
Annex II Strengths, limitations, opportunities and challenges	52
Annex III Learning from the process of the review	54
Annex IV Quantitative data on activities completed to date	56

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Vietnam - Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement

In 2003, Oxfam Great Britain (OGB), in order to expand its existing programme in disaster management, made an initial approach to the Provincial People's Committees in Dong Thap and Tien Giang. Subsequently, a comprehensive and collaborative baseline assessment was later developed by OGB and Oxfam Australia and a project document submitted within the framework of the Vietnam - Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement (VANGOCA). By June 2005, a five year project (2005-2010) with a budget of AUD\$2,804,440 was approved by AusAID and OGB started implementation on behalf of Oxfam Australia, the main AusAID partner.

Project goal

The goal of the project is: *“To mitigate the negative impact of floods on rural men, women and children”*, and the purpose: *“To reduce the risk of floods to rural men, women and children in Tien Giang and Dong Thap by decreasing their vulnerability and increasing the capacity of communities and institutions”*.

Location and organisational structure

Within the two provinces, project activities are focused on 24 communes in 5 districts, with a population of approximately 265,000. To implement the project OGB formed partnerships with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Tien Giang Province and the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) in Dong Thap Province. In each province a Project Management Board was created comprising a director, a deputy director¹, and an accountant. These are supported through strategic directions in the biannual meetings by a Project Steering Committee, comprising representatives from members from the Committee for Flood and Storm Control in the province.

Purpose and methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this Mid-term Review was to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the project during the first two years of implementation. The ToR essentially is to assess achievements with: *“reference to the purpose, output and learning of the project”*. The review also aimed to: *“provide capacity building to project partners, sharing learning and recommendations for remaining period and the future projects”*.² Based on the findings, the review was to provide recommendations to improve project implementation.

The review team specifically aimed to assess:

- a. the effectiveness of project activities in contributing to the key objectives of the project
- b. the impact of project activities on the target communities, in particular, the level of beneficiary participation in project activities

¹ in Dong Thap

² in addition, the *appropriateness, coverage, progress, participation, coherence, efficiency, management, impact, cost effectiveness, effectiveness, sustainability and learning* of the project were examined

- c. the effectiveness of project management, particularly the partner's capacity in coordination, monitoring, planning, reporting, learning and resource management
- d. the overall strengths and weaknesses of the project activities during the past two years and recommend ways to enhance effectiveness and impact.

Review team

The review team³ comprised of one external international consultant; one external national consultant; one Oxfam Australia staff member; the OGB Project Coordinator; two OGB Project Officers; two Provincial Coordinators from the two provinces, and one translator⁴. The team were involved in all review activities in both provinces; the international consultant worked as the overall Team Leader.

Review methodology

The team utilised a range of qualitative and quantitative review methods, including: documentation review (of project proposal, reports, training and IEC materials); in-depth discussion with OGB project staff and project directors; focus group discussions with the Project Management Board, and with Steering Committee members from the Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC) at province, district and commune level; field visits including interviews and field observations in a representative sample of targeted communities; visits to selected households and one-to-one interviews with village leaders and community representatives, government counterparts and other key informants in the communities. Two feed back sessions, one in each province, were held and post-review discussions with the Humanitarian Programme Coordinator and OGB Country Director.

Constraints

The evaluation process was constrained by the limited time in each province. Time scheduling meant that every field day was full of interviews, resulting in limited time for team meetings for sharing, process, reflection, analysis around the field visits - which is an integral part of a participatory approach and provided valuable learning for both partners and OGB staff. Visits were made to 4 districts and 7 communes but whether that was truly representative was questionable (of the 5 districts and 24 communes under the project). Some key informants were absent and there were no opportunities for dialogue with external stakeholders. As such the findings in this report are based on an assessment of the communities visited, and may not include all evidence relating to the progress and challenges facing the project.

Main findings under the review components

Relevance and appropriateness

- A significant number of project activities have been accomplished to date; all the main project activities in the log frame have been achieved. The training events and development of the IEC materials has resulted in over 6,000 men, women and children so far benefiting from access to awareness raising and capacity building in disaster management.

³ Ian Wilderspin, (International Consultant and Team Leader); Nguyen Thi Phuc Hoa (National Consultant); Georgia Noy (Oxfam Australia, Programme Management Adviser); Bui Kim Huu (Oxfam GB, Project Coordinator); Pham Thi Thuy An (Oxfam GB, Project Officer, Tien Giang); Nguyen Van No (Provincial Coordinator, Tien Giang); Bui Thi Minh Hue (Oxfam GB, Project Officer) and Le Van Tan (Provincial Coordinator, Dong Thap)

⁴ Do Quang Huy

- The project is being undertaken in the correct locations in some of the most flood prone parts of the country responding to the needs of 5/18 districts and 24/337 communes in both provinces.
- Village Action Plans (essentially disaster preparedness plans) have been developed in strong consultation with the people in all the communities, detailing assigned roles and responsibilities and ideas for small scale mitigation works.
- There has been a focus upon the development of training material and training in a broad range of different issues, based on community needs and requests.
- A sizable “flexible fund” exists (for disaster risk reduction activity) which may be utilised to reduce local vulnerabilities; both non-structural and structural components are complementary and valid parts of the project, although some challenges have arisen in the structural aspects of the project.
- There is potential for project partners to raise advocacy issues to the provincial and local government concerning the needs of the communes and to utilise OGB funding as leverage.

Coverage

- The process of consultation with people in the communes, with the local authorities, combined with close and regular dialogue with the PMB and the various members of the CFSC at the different levels has helped to ensure that the project is responding to actual needs.
- Every effort has been made in the selection and training of people from the target areas, to ensure that a representative and diverse range of people participate. This has ensured that influential people from the various communities and representatives from the Mass Organisations and local government participated and many were able to further share the knowledge/information acquired from the training events.
- There has been wide engagement with people from all sections of society, with training events ensuring the participation of men and women, children and elderly persons.
- There was strong engagement with people in the project areas, and it was felt that needs were being met through the project, although the overall scale and associated impact still needs to be addressed.
- Scope exists for further dissemination through the existing organisational structures and the CFSC membership, to potentially increase outreach.

Effectiveness and cost effectiveness

- The Project Management Boards and Steering Committees in both provinces have provided active support; the Provincial and District Project Coordinators have worked exceptionally hard. The communities are engaged and active. The fact that all the objectives set out in the logical framework have been achieved to date indicates a commitment to the project by partners and local people, as well as the dedication and commitment by local OGB staff.
- The Women’s Union, the Youth Union and the Viet Nam Red Cross - as well as other Mass Organisations - have participated actively and there is great potential to utilise further these existing networks to more fully achieve the project objectives.
- There have not been any unforeseen effects of the project, although some challenges have to be overcome between the project partners and OGB (due to the decisions and the practical arrangements for the utilisation of the flexible funds and the most appropriate mechanisms for accessing safe water).
- The project has achieved its main outcomes regarding the training activities.

- No financial analysis or comparisons of relative costs were feasible during the duration of this review; however, for all procurements, proper procedures, conforming to strict OGB guidelines were followed.
- The project has procured items for search and rescue and for early warning system which were of good quality and appropriate to the situation. Procurements in greater quantities could have resulted in increased cost effectiveness.

Efficiency

- All activities were implemented according to schedule (with the exception of the utilisation of the flexible fund and the safe water component). Fund transfers from OGB were undertaken at an appropriate time, and the OGB system is considered by project partners as being flexible and no major problems were encountered. The fact that training and procurements have been undertaken in a timely manner indicates that the systems are efficient.

Impact

- The widespread impact of the project is challenging to see at this juncture, however, clearly over 6,000 people have directly benefited from the various training events; equipment procured is in regular use (benefiting considerably more people), members of Mass Organisations have made opportunities to disseminate knowledge and skills learnt. The IEC “disaster management clubs” offers potential for wide scale dissemination and potential behavioural change. In the bigger picture relatively few people in the communities have so far directly benefited from the project’s activities and there is potential for unease amongst some who feel that they have so far “missed out”. The challenge of how best to scale-up the programme activities to better engage with the whole community remains.
- There were no negative impacts reported as a result of the project’s interventions.

Main conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusions and the corresponding recommendations of the Mid-term Review are as follows:

1. To build knowledge, skills and resources to mitigate, prepare for and respond to floods amongst leadership and households in 24 flood-affected communes

Community based disaster management action plans

Training of facilitators

- Good quality ToTs were conducted and there are a high number of facilitators but there is still a need for more, particularly at the commune level.
- All the training events according to the work plan have been organised.
- The quality and quantity of the training facilitated has been of a high standard although there is a lack of a comprehensive methodological training course.
- Participants are eager to share what they have learnt, have increased confidence to do so, however, scale and outreach remains a challenge.

Continue to invest in quality ToT and develop a stand alone curriculum focusing on **adult training and participatory methodology**, to develop a **cadre of commune level facilitators** and through these, **conduct more training at the commune and village level.**

Training materials

- The material is relevant and appropriate to the local context and the content quality relatively high. Sometimes too much information is presented.
- There is an ambitious, broad training agenda.
- Although quality materials exist there is not a consistent “packaging” of training materials and in some the format and layout is not inspiring or concise.

Develop a **consistent OGB training product/or package** for each course with improved layout and more user friendly appearance, comprising: a reference manual, facilitator’s training notes and schedule, a trainee’s workbook and teaching aids. In all training material increase the number of illustrations/pictures/photos.

Participants

- Participant selection criteria are appropriate and resulted in respected, influential people being selected.
- All the training events planned have been conducted, although still relatively few people have benefited and the needs of the local people with regards to training are high.

Increase the **number of facilitators** at the training events. Try to work more **coherently** with other organisations involved in disaster management training. Increase the **duration and number of training events** for influential people at the commune level.

Informed households and improved preparedness

- The IEC materials are of an excellent standard in terms of content, style and format. The selection of IEC volunteers and their training has been good, but could be improved with greater emphasis on the methodological component.
- The disaster management club model has potential to be effective but must be supported and resourced, to ensure coverage and subsequent behaviour change.

Increase the **number of IEC volunteers** and focus on their **capacity building**.

Diversify **dissemination strategies**, e.g. use street drama, puppet theatre, radio and TV as well as the better and synchronised use of the information systems provided.

Established or improved early warning systems

- The provision of equipment is suitable, appropriate for the local context and responsive to community needs, although the number of loudspeakers for the early warning system is inadequate to reach remote areas.

Provide **more loudspeakers** and high concrete poles for the early warning systems and place in strategic locations to ensure greater coverage and enable better audibility.

Improved commune search and rescue teams

- Training events are practical and appreciated, as is the provision of search and rescue equipment; however, investment into these teams (personnel and resources) is still insufficient.

Provide **more village level search and rescue kits** and further investment into personnel, through practical simulation exercises.

Swimming training for women and children

- The swimming lessons were well received and have been successful, but the outreach is limited. The current level of equipment is inadequate to meet training needs.

Determine how OGB can **best** add value to the existing swimming programme being delivered by the Centre for Sports, Gymnasiums and Culture and further support the increasing demand..

Repaired or constructed small scale infrastructure

- Significant flexible fund exists to undertake disaster risk reduction activities; however, some current challenges exist, which needs to be resolved; both OGB and partners are willing to address these concerns and to move forward.

Organise a **high level meeting** between the PMB and OGB; work through and resolve existing issues on the utilisation of the flexible fund.

Establish **clearer criteria for the selection of risk reduction measures** applicable for the flexible fund, clarify the **objectives, processes and procedures** for the flexible fund, and revisit community plans and community/OGB disaster risk reduction infrastructure priorities. To assist with clarifying the fund's objectives, rename the flexible fund the "*disaster risk reduction fund*".

2. To enable the Committee for Flood and Storm Control to facilitate a more targeted, coordinated, timely and effective response to floods in Dong Thap and Tien Giang

Disaster management training

- There has been widespread engagement by the CFSC membership at all levels in a broad range of different capacity building activities, focusing mainly upon training but also simulation exercises and exposure visits.
- Second line departmental staff as well as Mass Organisation staff and volunteers participated and later organised training of their members.
- Clear evidence exists of behavioural change and knowledge improvement amongst the members of the PMB and CFSC.
- Whilst the project has aimed to both strengthen these groups and utilise them for information dissemination, the differing tasks of the members could be better tailored for in training events to ensure that capacities built more specifically meet these. Exposure visits were well received and there was indication of lessons learnt being applied.
- The equipment provided has been useful for the running of the project and for other work of the CFSC members.

Clarify **Oxfam's niche** as to how best to augment existing training and capacity building initiatives facilitated for the CFSC membership to ensure that the differing needs of the CFSC members enables them to better undertake their mandated roles and responsibilities.

Increase the number of **simulation exercises** and broaden the scope of these.

Monitoring and evaluation, communications and data management

- Training in MEL has taken place for CFSC membership at provincial, district and commune level in both provinces and other training is scheduled in communications and data management. Scope exists to improve the amount of mutual exchange, knowledge and sharing events/exposures between the PMB and partners in both provinces.

Ensure agreement on **implementation and MEL frameworks**, and to improve the quality of implementation, via continued communication. Increase the **linkages and involvement between the PMB and CFSC** in both provinces.

3. To reduce the incidence of flood related diseases affecting people in the project area ***Increased awareness amongst households and changed practice on flood-related health and hygiene and increased access to clean water***

- A widespread consultative process regarding various potential means to access safe water was undertaken and a number of resulting options identified, however, to date the most appropriate option has not been decided upon.
- The IEC materials will complement this aspect of the project providing public health and WatSan messages.

During the proposed high-level meeting, resolve the most appropriate mechanism to use with regards to implementing a **safe water project**.

4. To improve flood time food security and the income of selected poor and vulnerable households

- Partners and OGB made a constructive, albeit tough decision and reallocated programme funds from the livelihood support fund to the flexible fund and to integrate other livelihood sub-objectives into other project components.

5. To ensure effective and timely programme management and coordination

Strengthened capacity of project management and coordination

- The relationship between OGB staff, partner staff and the PMB is frank and open and parties are generally committed. There exist a few unresolved challenges primarily around the flexible fund and the safe water component that are affecting this relationship and overall project implementation.
- The Steering Committees, with their biannual meetings are deemed to be good coordinating bodies.
- There is potential for the CFSC membership and the District level leadership to play an even greater role in the Steering Committee.

Resolve during the proposed high-level meeting issues around: the **flexible fund processes**; the 'stalemate' over the **safe water project**, the challenge over the impact of significant inflation costs and the issue of *per diems* for the different levels. Further strengthen coordination between the PMB and OGB through a **bi-annual high level meeting between OGB and partners** with regards to programme strategy and operations. Encourage **more participation of the Steering Committee with the PMB**. Further support the **coordination between all CFSC member organisations** and explore the increased engagement they could have with the project. Increase the involvement of **District leaders** in the project Steering Committee.

Active coordination and collaboration with INGOs and other stakeholders

- Other agencies are present in these provinces and although a certain degree of interaction is happening, further consolidation of this would lead to a more effective programme.

Oxfam and the PMBs should explore opportunities in which to **engage with other INGOs and stakeholders**, so that all respective projects can complement each other, and synergies can be enhanced for a more effective overall programme.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

- Oxfam GB has MEL material for training and guidance of participatory M&E processes and a detailed and relevant M&E component was developed as part of this project.
- The OGB local staff are interested and enthusiastic to learn more about the application of M&E processes; some training in M&E was already conducted for CFSC members and there is increased awareness amongst project partners and local communities. At the commune level, community assessment teams have been established to oversee future infrastructure projects.
- There is potential to increase a more bottom-up input into the M&E processes as well as sharing lessons between the two project sites amongst partner and OGB staff.

Increase opportunities for **sharing about MEL** and the use of guidelines, etc. between the project partners and OGB staff in the two provinces. Explore means to better **engage local people in a participatory M&E approach**.

Humanitarian accountability

- The project has ensured high levels of participation by partners at all levels and by local people - there is already evidence of greater participation during community action planning and of adopting a participatory approach.
- The scale of the project is still relatively small, regarding the number of local people who have access to the training events and to such a participatory approach.

Continue discussions about **opportunities for scaling up** the project and of enhancing participation of local people in the different project activities.

Sustainability

- There are a number of factors that bode well for sustainability of some aspects of the project in the future, these include: the commitment of PMBs and of the CFSC; the widespread engagement with the CFSC membership at all levels; the mature relationship with local government departments; the fact that local community people and government authorities are engaged and enthusiastic about project activities; the strong investment in facilitators at all levels; the development of good training and high quality IEC materials; established disaster management clubs and growing network of trained and committed IEC volunteers; a further two and half years to run; and a strong participatory approach.
- Challenges to sustainability, of course, remain and over the next few years this issue needs to be more earnestly addressed.

The **sustainability matrix** and log frame in the project design needs to be followed up and implemented.

Gender equality (mainstreaming) as a cross cutting issue

- The project intentionally focused on women to strengthen their opportunities and leadership roles in disaster management. This has been undertaken through targeting women as specific beneficiaries.
- Gender issues have been included within each project component that aims to increase equality. However, there are recognised challenges in addressing long standing cultural norms and customs regarding women's roles, and difficulties associated with changing these beliefs and behaviours.

Continue with the **integration of gender throughout** all training events, and to ensure the fullest participation of both women and men in all project activities; encourage **women to take on leadership roles** within the project. Consider developing a strategy to increase opportunities for women to meet and discuss **leadership issues in disaster management** through an existing mechanism, e.g. the Women's Union.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBDM	Community Based Disaster Management	IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
CCFSC	Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control	INGO	International non-governmental organisation
CFSC	Committee for Storm and Flood Control	M & E	Monitoring and evaluation
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
DM	Disaster management	MTR	Mid-term Review
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment	PMB	Project Management Board
DRR	Disaster risk reduction	OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
GoV	Government of Vietnam	ToR	Terms of Reference
IEC	Information, education and communication	ToT	Training of trainers
		VNRC	Viet Nam Red Cross Society
		WU	Women's Union

Terms used in the report

Committee for Flood and Storm Control

At the national level the mandate for coordinating flood preparation and response lies with the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) whilst at the provincial level this is the Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC), which also has structures at the district and commune levels. Membership, resourcing and the structure of the CFSC vary amongst provinces, but generally include representatives from the main departments and organizations such as the police, the military, the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development and Department for Planning and Investment, and the Mass Organisations (under the umbrella of the Fatherland Front) that includes the Viet Nam Red Cross, the Women's Union and Farmer's Union.

Four Tai Cho

The Committee for Storm and Flood Control's principles for flood management:

1. *Chỉ Đạo Tại Chỗ* - command by village leadership - when the floods come, the local leadership (village leaders and commune leaders) will play a leadership role in guiding flood prevention and damage reduction
2. *Lực Lượng Tại Chỗ* - participation for flood control and damage reduction by using mainly local people - when the floods come, local human resource will play the main roles reducing flood damage, e.g. volunteer teams at the community level, local Mass Organisations, and community organizations)
3. *Hậu cần tại chỗ* - services for flood damage reduction should be based in existing community assets such as the village clinic, evacuation points, food storehouses, etc.
4. *Phương tiện tại chỗ* - concerning transportation services such as boats, cars, motorbikes, and materials all coming from the commune or village level.

I BACKGROUND

1.1 Context

1. Cyclical floods have always afflicted the Mekong delta, often lasting several months, however, in recent years, losses caused by the floods have been more serious and complex and influenced by deforestation, improper land use, changes in climate and pollution. Their severity and frequency has been increasing over recent years; in 2001 for a third year in a row, flooding inundated large tracts of the Mekong delta, six provinces were affected and several hundred people died, the majority of whom were children. In the floods of 2000, the worst floods recorded since 1961, 480 people lost their lives.
2. These problems require a holistic and integrated management approach - the floods too can bring disaster but also benefits to people. A well-established strategy practiced for a long time is one of “*living with the floods*”; this recognises that the annual floods make up an important part of the lifecycle of the region and many traditional measures have been developed in the areas regularly inundated. Floods will impact on people’s security, their health and livelihoods, their educational opportunities, their food security and income generation and will affect men, women and children differently. Even during ‘normal’ times, households in the most flood-affected communes with limited or no resources will face real risks.
3. Whilst the government and Mass Organizations have developed significant capacity in flood management, there remain gaps, and opportunities to strengthen the coordination and skills of these organizations exist. Community based disaster management, disaster assessment, knowledge of humanitarian standards and coordination are areas requiring improvement.

1.2 The project

4. The Vietnam - Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement (VANGOCA), is an agreement negotiated between the governments of Viet Nam and Australia to make available AusAID funding for a disaster management programme in the Mekong delta.
5. In June 2005, OGB developed a project design document: “*Participatory Disaster Preparation and Mitigation Project in Tien Giang and Dong Thap Provinces*” which was subsequently submitted and approved by AusAID⁵. The project proposal was later submitted to the Prime Minister of Viet Nam (through the Ministry of Planning and Investment) and the project approved in December 2005. The total budget of the project is AUD2, 804, 440⁶ (for five years from 2005 to 2009). Oxfam Australia is the main partner of AusAID, whilst OGB is implementing the project on behalf of Oxfam Australia.
6. The project activities are focused on 24 communes in 5 districts within two of the most flood prone provinces in the Mekong delta, covering a population of approximately 265,000.

⁵ The project contributes to the AusAID country strategy: Strategic objective 2.3: Develop Human Capital; 2.4: Reduce vulnerability to environmental and economic shocks; and, 2.5: Strengthen the accountability of provincial and local governments and participation of the poor in their governance.

⁶ Including design and maintenance phases: AUD2,652,159, for the implementation phase alone

7. The goal of the project is: *“To mitigate the negative impact of floods on rural men, women and children. The purpose of the project is: “To reduce the risk of floods to rural men, women and children in Tien Giang and Dong Thap by decreasing their vulnerability and increasing the capacity of communities and institutions”.*
8. Oxfam GB was assigned two government implementing partners by the Provincial People’s Committees in both provinces. Oxfam GB formed partnerships with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Tien Giang Province and the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) in Dong Thap Province. In each province a Project Management Board (PMB) was created comprising: a director, a deputy director (in Dong Thap) and an accountant. Both DARD and DPI each recruited Provincial Coordinators⁷ to support the PMB. In addition, in each province a Steering Committee was established, comprising representatives from different member agencies of the Committee from Flood and Storm Control (CFSC). Since its inception, the project has been supported by OGB’s project office in Tien Giang province, with guidance from the country office in Hanoi and the Oxfam Australia office in Melbourne.

1.3 Project summary

9. The project aims to reduce the impact of seasonal flooding on vulnerable people through awareness raising, training, various capacity building initiatives and the provision of resources; it is expected that the local government authorities and people will be: *“better able to prepare for and mitigate the effects of floods on their well being and dignity”.*
10. The membership of the CFSC were provided in both provinces with a broad range of training opportunities, including in community based disaster management (CBDM), monitoring and evaluation (M&E), Sphere, damage assessment and needs analysis (DANA), leadership and gender equality, for which new materials were designed and developed. The efficiency of the CFSC in coordination was also strengthened and the links between the different government bodies with the Mass Organisations from village to provincial levels, enhanced. Equipment for early warning and search and rescue was procured for use by commune and village leaders and volunteers.
11. The initial ideas to provide credit and livelihoods support to some of the poorest in the communities were later changed in light of easier access to credit from the *“banks for the poor”* and the project’s *“flexible fund”* - for disaster risk reduction measures - were bolstered.
12. Projects to improve access to clean water - with a complementary information, education and communication (IEC) campaign, using new materials specifically developed on water, sanitation and hygiene and health practices - were initiated.
13. The project’s primary socio-cultural impacts aimed to take place through enhanced participation, particularly of women. Furthermore, the project provided training in participatory methodology and support to village, commune, district and province level leadership and was expected to create opportunities to incorporate these into regular government practice. Through capacity building initiatives to resist environmental shocks, the project aimed to contribute to the achievement of the Australian Government’s Country Strategy for Viet Nam.

⁷ In addition, 3 District Coordinators in Dong Thap and 2 in Tien Giang

1.4 Project objectives

14. The project originally proposed had five interrelated components or objectives:
- To build knowledge, skills and resources to mitigate, prepare for and respond to floods amongst leadership and households in 24 flood-affected communes.
 - To enable the Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC) to facilitate a more targeted, coordinated, timely and effective response to floods in Dong Thap and Tien Giang.
 - To reduce the incidence of flood-related diseases affecting people in the project area.
 - To improve flood-time food security, and the income of selected poor and vulnerable households.
 - To ensure effective and timely programme management and coordination.

II JOINT EVALUATION PROCESS

2.1 Purpose of the Mid-term Review

15. In the original Project Documentation a mid - term review was to be conducted at the end of the second year of the project and to have five key objectives⁸. This was later modified in the ToR, which is essentially to assess achievements with: “*reference to the purpose, output and learning of the project*”. The review also aimed to: “*provide capacity building to project partners, sharing learning and recommendations for remaining period and the future projects*”.
16. The purpose of this review was to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the project during the first two years of implementation. Based on these findings, the Mid-term Review team was tasked with making recommendations to improve project implementation.

2.2 Review team and methodologies

2.2.1 Composition and responsibilities of the team:

17. The review team⁹, comprised one external international consultant; one external national consultant; one Oxfam Australia staff; the OGB Project Coordinator; two OGB Project Officers; two Provincial Coordinators from the two provinces, and one translator¹⁰. Project Officers and Provincial Coordinators were involved in all review activities in both provinces. The international consultant worked as the overall Team Leader. Both consultants had experience in disaster risk management in Viet Nam and in conducting participatory disaster risk assessments. The review process took three weeks from 19th May until 6th June 2008. The full team met in My Tho, Tien Giang province on the 20th May to start the review process.

⁸ See Viet Nam – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement, VANGOCA: “*Participatory Disaster Preparation and Mitigation Project in Dong Thap and Tien Giang Provinces*”, (2004-2009), page 55, Mid-Term Review

⁹ Ian Wilderspin, (International Consultant and Team Leader); Nguyen Thi Phuc Hoa (National Consultant); Georgia Noy (Oxfam Australia, Programme Management Adviser); Bui Kim Huu (Oxfam GB, Project Coordinator); Pham Thi Thuy An (Oxfam GB, Project Officer, Tien Giang); Nguyen Van No (Provincial Coordinator, Tien Giang); Bui Thi Minh Hue (Oxfam GB, Project Officer) and Le Van Tan (Provincial Coordinator, Dong Thap)

¹⁰ Do Quang Huy

2.2.2 Scope of the Mid-term review

18. The Mid-term review team was tasked with addressing the following questions posed in the ToR:

- *What should we have achieved in the project by now?*
- *What information have we gathered, how, and from whom?*
- *What's working well and why?*
- *What problems are there and how can they be solved?*
- *What are the external and objective view, information and assessment of the project for decision making on the implementation for the remaining period of the project?*
- *What are practical recommendations for partners aiming at ensuring the most efficient and effective implementation of the remaining period of the project?*
- *What have we learnt about: 1) the context of the project; 2) the project outcomes; 3) the monitoring process itself?*
- *What are we going to do about it?*
- *Who will take action and when?*
- *What will we feed into other reports and discussions?*

19. In addition, in the ToR, under the “scope of the Mid-term review”, the team was asked to concentrate on a series of questions to examine: *appropriateness, coverage, progress, participation, coherence efficiency, management, impact, cost effectiveness, effectiveness, sustainability and learning.*

2.2.3 Review methodology

20. To address the questions posed in the ToR the team opted to utilise the following qualitative and quantitative review methods:

- a. Review all available relevant documentation concerning the development of the project and its implementation; verification of indicator data and secondary data collation, including a review of existing data and relevant materials related to the proposal, village/commune action plans, M&E and learning materials, training manuals, IEC materials, District and Commune profile forms, statistical data/information on each target district and commune and other reports;
- b. Review of training and Information, Education, Communication (IEC) materials and of technical assistance provided, e.g. loudspeakers (for early warning) and search and rescue equipment;
- c. Consultation and in-depth discussion with OGB project staff and with Oxfam's Humanitarian Programme Coordinator regarding the project's history, development and implementation, partnerships, opportunities and ongoing challenges;
- d. Development of a review design and working strategy, including a detailed review and discussion of the ToR with OGB Project staff and Provincial Coordinators; identification of the most appropriate data collection and analysis tools (e.g. key informant interviews, focus group discussion); agreement upon the outline for the review report in line with Oxfam impact assessment/Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) guidelines; review of the field schedule and processes;
- e. Preparation and consultation by the review team to finalize questionnaires to be used as guides for interviewing community members and government counterparts;
- f. Focus group discussions with the PMB project partners: the DARD and the DPI and with Steering Committee members from the CFSC at province, district and commune level;

- g. Conducting field visits, including interviews and field observations in a representative sample of targeted communities. Visits to a limited number of selected households and one-to-one interviews with village leaders and community representatives, government counterparts and other key informants in the communities;
- h. Two feed back sessions, one in each province and sharing preliminary findings with the PMB partners and project staff to discuss preliminary review findings;
- i. Final post-review discussions with the Humanitarian Programme Coordinator and OGB Country Director to discuss the review strategies.

2.3 Constraints

21. This review focused on the progress to date and also the overall project management skills displayed by both partners and OGB staff. An important component of the review was to build the capacity of project partners and OGB staff through undertaking the review with a participative approach. However, the process has been constrained by a number of factors, mainly relating to:

- Limited time in each province for the teams, and therefore restrictions upon the time available for the review team to engage in initial data analysis discussions;
- Time scheduling by the project partners and OGB staff, meant that the field days were full of interview time slots. This again meant there was limited time for process, reflection, analysis and preparation of presentations for debriefing sessions with project partners and PMB. There was little time for team meetings and sharing around the field visits, which is an integral part of initial participatory analysis and would have been a valuable learning component for both partners and OGB staff. It was felt that there was limited understanding of the need for sufficient processing time during such a participatory evaluation;
- Whilst visits were made to 4 districts and 7 communes whether the number of people met of the total of project beneficiaries in the 5 districts and 24 communes under the project was truly representative was questionable; larger focal group discussions, bringing together people who had undertaken various types of training events may have yielded more information and required less travelling;
- Absence of certain key informants within OGB and some partners;
- No opportunities for dialogue with external stakeholders (notably other INGOs and UNICEF working in the vicinity of the projects), who are important in terms of sectoral coordination and would have contributed valuable insight to the review.

III MAIN FINDINGS

Component 1 Objective

To build knowledge, skills and resources to mitigate, prepare for and respond to floods amongst leadership and households in 24 flood-affected communes

1.1 Developed and implemented community based disaster management action plans

Training of trainers and the facilitators

22. Oxfam GB utilised several highly experienced facilitators from the Women's Union (WU) and the Vietnam Red Cross Society (VNRC) to initially facilitate the training of trainers (ToT) courses, and to help with material development.
23. Overall, respondents were positive about the training events, although there was concern about the quantity of material needing to be imparted in the short time period of the some of the training events (e.g. swimming courses). It was also noted there was limited time allocated in the CBDM ToT for the methodological training component.
24. Many persons interviewed by the review team mentioned the comprehensive inclusion of gender in the revised CBDM training material and that it was integrated effectively.
25. The selection criteria for those trained was deemed appropriate and relatively rigorous. Facilitators interviewed seemed knowledgeable, skilful and enthusiastic and feedback from participants and project partners about their performance was generally positive. In interviews, some villagers stated that they were not able openly to share their opinions with the trainers when they are the Vice- or Chairperson of the People's Committees.

Training events

26. There was a wide range of training events conducted in: CBDM, gender equality, swimming, search and rescue, MEL, leadership, First Aid, Sphere¹¹ and DANA¹². These topics reflect the needs identified in the initial base line survey - so are relevant to the community members. This is an impressive achievement in the timeframe and some 6,710 people¹³ have directly benefited from these events. The review team interviewed a representative sample of participants who attended these events and concluded that, in general, these training events were appropriate, relevant and of a good standard. The major challenge is that although many training events have been held, the potential impact may remain relatively small given the total population of the two provinces. Conducting training alone obviously limits the potential for greater outreach.

Training materials

27. A wealth of comprehensive and detailed training materials¹⁴ has been produced within the project, that is contextual, relevant and reflects the various perspectives and needs of the different audiences at provincial, district, commune and village levels.
28. Although master copies of each training module exist, there is still a gap in terms of developing a final product for each type of training, i.e. a training package comprising a

¹¹ Minimum Standards to be adhered to in disaster response in five key sectors: water and sanitation, nutrition, food, shelter and health care

¹² damage assessment and needs analysis

¹³ Of whom 2,292 were men, 2,355 women and 2,063 children

¹⁴ Training material includes: "Oxfam Gender Training Manual for Humanitarian Programme", January, 2006; "Women Leadership Training at Grassroots Level", December 2007; "ToT on Community Based Disaster Management Planning", May 2006; "District Disaster Risk Management Action Planning Manual", August 2007; "Project Management: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)", March 2007.

training reference manual, teacher's guide/schedule, a participant's workbook and teaching aids. There were some comments that the CBDM manual still requires some further revision and compilation to make it more contextually specific and to increase the information regarding disaster risk reduction. In addition, DANA was said to be increasingly used and requests were made for the project to develop an appropriate handbook.

Participants

29. The selection criteria for course participants were considered to be appropriate and has resulted in the inclusion of respected and influential people. Currently only a small percentage of the total commune population received the training, e.g. 102 people received CBDM training out of 2,000 households (approximately 10,000 people).

1.2 Informed households and improved preparedness

Information, education and communication materials

30. The information, education and communication (IEC) materials are of an excellent standard and are a result of a widespread consultative process, that included community members, Oxfam International specialists, OGB staff, partners and other sectoral stakeholders. The quality product - the brochure for IEC volunteers and households - provides clear, colourful illustrations and minimal relevant text; the accompanying easel is an excellent teaching aid resource. Without exception, interviewees from all the various levels, including the CFSC membership, the PMB, and provincial, district, commune and household representatives, commented on the excellent quality of both content and presentation format. A substantial number of 45,000 copies have been printed and in some areas the distribution coverage has been impressive (i.e. 43,610 of 50, 690 households had received a copy of the IEC brochure).

Information, education and communication volunteers

31. A well thought through selection criteria had been developed for IEC volunteers and mainly respected and influential community members, e.g. community leaders and Women's Union representatives were chosen. There were, however, some comments referring to the varied level of competencies of the IEC volunteers, and that for some, it was challenging to deliver the messages effectively. Seven day courses have been conducted over the past 4 months for 123 IEC volunteers¹⁵ on the content, the best use of the resources and the methodology for dissemination. Several comments inferred that the methodological component needs further bolstering and prioritisation, so as to support and consolidate the effective dissemination via the IEC volunteer network.

"Disaster management clubs"

32. During the latter part of the second year, there were 123 disaster management clubs set up in villages, each having up to 30 members. These participate in IEC training and are responsible for dissemination amongst family and neighbours. This model has been well received by partners and village leaders as they believe it is one of the more effective ways to gain greater outreach of the messages in the IEC materials. The model is based on a multiplier principle (or ripple effect), in which each member is required to bring 5 other community members into the club membership. At the time of the Mid-term review it is too early to see

¹⁵ 52 from Tien Giang and 71 in Dong Thap

if this multiplying effect is truly working, however, it is evident that there is high demand to be a member of such clubs, but currently insufficient IEC volunteers to meet this demand.

33. There were some concerns expressed by volunteers themselves and others in the communities visited by the review team that the current allowances provided (for 2 hour sessions/month) were insufficient in terms of covering basic transport costs.
34. If dependent on IEC volunteers only there will remain limited coverage; however, there is strong potential to utilize mass media as the majority of homes have TV and radios, and the culture is responsive to street drama, billboards, pamphlets, calendars, etc.

Improved preparedness and behavioural change

35. At the time of the Mid-term review, it was too early to report confidently any form of significant behavioural change as a result of the dissemination of the messages covered in the IEC component.

1.3 Established or improved early warning systems

36. The project has procured a variety of equipment¹⁶ for an early warning system, including loudspeakers and amplification systems and already distributed these to 14 target communes in Tien Giang and Dong Thap provinces; however, discussions with the CFSC, village leaders and others suggest that this communication mechanism is still not reaching the more isolated rural areas. Another challenge was that complaints had been received by households living in close proximity to the speaker systems; some consideration needs to be made to the positioning of speakers to minimise this. The quality of equipment is good and is being used for the communication of other important community based messages. To date, though, there has been no provision of training in the best use of this equipment to spread the IEC messages.

1.4 Improved commune search and rescue teams

37. Existing First Aid and rescue teams have benefited from the project in terms of complementary practical training and provision of equipment - including life jackets, stretchers and life buoys. Women, in particular, felt further empowered to engage more fully in search and rescue activities and have been encouraged to participate and subsequently respond if needed. These team members commented how they had benefited from the practical skills learnt during the simulation exercises.

1.5 Swimming training for women and children

38. With few exceptions, interviewees were positive about the swimming training being provided for women and children and facilitated by trainers from the Centre of Sports, Gymnasiums and Culture. Of the participants who undertook the 5 - 7 day swimming courses, there were reports of 85-95% pass rates in tests conducted at the end of the courses. Respondents reported that they definitely felt an increased level of confidence in water and have actively practiced their swimming since their lessons. As with other training events, relative to the

¹⁶ In Tien Giang: 45 loudspeakers, 3 amplifiers, 8 micro-amplifiers, 35 megaphones and 3,500m of special cable. In Dong Thap: 29 radio cassette players, 6 radios, 37 megaphones, 97 high frequency speakers, 7 loudspeakers, 14 amplifiers, 22 speaker sets, 54 transformers for loudspeakers and 17,420 metres of special cable

total commune populations, few have so far benefited, although 2,688 women and children have, to date, received swimming lessons.

39. The Centre for Sports, Gymnasiums and Culture are active in both provinces throughout the year and provide swimming lessons¹⁷. The swimming training component certainly met a felt need expressed by commune people. There is an increasing demand for swimming lessons and the provision of training should be scaled up to meet the demand. The project in Dong Thap has, to date, trained 2,000 people, out of a total of about 80,000 in the districts (covered under the project)¹⁸, but there is much more demand. The Centre believes that they have the capacity to respond to this demand, but requested consolidation support from the project. This includes a current lack of adequate equipment, i.e. floats, quality swim cages, etc.

1.6 Repaired or constructed small scale infrastructure

40. The potential of the flexible fund¹⁹ and what it could deliver in terms of disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities is valued by partners and some communities, as reflected by the identified needs in the commune Action Plans. Selection criteria for projects were developed and it is evident that both partners and OGB staff are clear as to how to ensure that the projects identified truly reflect community needs, are disaster risk related and therefore relevant to the project. However, there is currently some frustration amongst OGB and project partners as to the slow progress in project implementation.
41. The fact that the flexible fund represents a tangible, concrete component of the overall project cannot be underestimated, so it continues to be an integral component of the project. There was clear indication that the communities are committed to small-scale infrastructure projects related to disaster risk reduction in terms of providing personnel and some resources. Some people in the communities met mentioned activities such as the development of water, sanitation and shelter facilities on an existing safe haven space. There are, however, currently some concerns around the realistic expectations of the community's financial contribution and too the partner utilising OGB's finances as leverage to access finances from the provincial and local government. There is also a related concern regarding the raising of community expectations.
42. According to interviewees, good guidelines exist for use of the flexible funds; however, there are complexities around the compatibility of the differing OGB and government procedures. These complexities, combined with the fact that companies are not interested in bidding for small-scale projects, have caused delays and unrealistic, increased budgets due to inflation; all of these issues collectively have resulted in some tensions arising between OGB and partners, which need to be addressed.

Component 2 Objective

To enable the Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC) to facilitate a more targeted, coordinated, timely and effective response to floods in Dong Thap and Tien Giang.

¹⁷ e.g. there are 63 district trainers in Dong Thap

¹⁸ approximately 1.2%, although not all those would be eligible to undertake swimming classes

¹⁹ *flexible fund* - the project's name for a pool of funding available to communes for resourcing some of the needs identified through community based action planning for DRR activities/measures

2.1 *Appropriate disaster management training*

43. There has been widespread engagement in the project with CFSC membership²⁰ at all levels, however, one challenge has been that the project has not been able to attract the main target audience, i.e. the more senior CFSC staff of the different members as these leaders are often too busy to attend the training events. These have therefore focused upon the second line staff, this is however, considered to be acceptable and a worthwhile investment. These staff were reported to feedback to colleagues following the different training events, so some information was presumably disseminated to others. However, more training, refresher events and follow-up was requested.
44. A broad range of training events were facilitated under the project that aimed at building the capacity of the various CFSC members. This included training in gender equality; innumerable interviews were typical of comments by women in the Red Cross who reported that: *“there has been some behaviour change in that men now assist with the domestic duties more. More husbands are allowing wives to participate in community social activities and meetings”*. There was also positive feedback on the training in Sphere and DANA, and clear recognition amongst interviewees, that Viet Nam is reaching some of the targets and providing too a great incentive to strive to reach the others.
45. The training events were described as being: *“practical and relevant, for example, we are currently planning for evacuation when the floods come and are using the international Sphere standards, re. the number of people/the capacity of school buildings for evacuation centres, etc. and the amount of water and number of latrines that are also required; we realise it is not just about moving people to safety but also providing for them when they get there..”*
46. There were also positive reviews about the simulation exercises conducted. People commented upon the large numbers who had participated and the practical and diverse range of simulation events that had been organised and from which they had learnt, e.g. hands-on application about rescuing people from collapsed houses and saving people from drowning. Other training events covering Project Planning and MEL were also commented upon favourably.
47. In the short timeframe of the project, there is clear evidence of behavioural change and knowledge improvement amongst the members of the PMB and CFSC regarding the disaster management planning process. Particular reference was made to the action planning process which was described as being much more *“bottom up”* rather than being almost exclusively *“top down”*; a change reported before and after receiving the CBDM and Action Planning training. Commune leaders interviewed were appreciative of the skills that they had developed in the use of participatory planning techniques and processes and how these had improved existing disaster preparedness plans. The disaster preparedness planning is now based on local needs and the voices/suggestions from the community members are being

²⁰ The CFSC comprises some 15 - 20 different organisations in each province. Aside from representatives from the main government ministries, the Mass Organisations, under an umbrella organisation – the Fatherland Front - include the Viet Nam Red Cross Society (VNRC), the Women’s Union, the Youth Union, the Farmer’s Union and many others who have been active as partners in the project.

integrated into the plans; before, the plans were based on a budget allocation and not on local needs. Such commitment bodes well for future application and replication.

48. Throughout the country within the CFSC, there exist strong, well established networks: the Women's Union, the VNRC, the Youth Union, the Farmer's Union and others. Under the CFSC these groups have been mandated assigned roles and responsibilities before, during and after a disaster event. The project has aimed to both strengthen these groups and utilise them for information dissemination. However, it is important that the project recognise the differing tasks of the members and better tailor its' training events to build capacities to specifically meet these.
49. Interviewees from the Women's Union, the Red Cross and the Youth Union reported that their members who had attended different training events, notably the CBDM training at the commune level, had gone on later to run similar training events themselves amongst their own members and too with the '*shock brigades*'²¹.
50. The exposure visits undertaken by CFSC members and accompanying OGB staff were reported favourably upon. The provincial CFSC in Dong Thap stated that the exposure visits to The Philippines and to Thua Thien Hue had both been useful. In The Philippines, the team had seen the importance of good coordination amongst stakeholders, including strong engagement with NGOs, regarding early warning and had subsequently tried to apply this approach into their own systems. In addition, lessons were learnt on how to mobilise communities in disaster preparedness and to more actively involve local people. From the visit to Thua Thien - Hue participants had learnt the importance of having a good contingency plan for evacuation, so that people reacted before the floods and did not panic. The visit had taken place during a flood and the CFSC were able to see a response in reality. Subsequent to the visit, documents have been provided by the Thua Thien - Hue CFSC and an exchange is being considered.
51. The provision of equipment (notably computers and modems, etc.) has been useful for the running of the project but also for other work of the CFSC members. There are plans to purchase software and in time, to link up all the computers to access maps and data produced at different levels and at the time of a disaster DANA data - all of which seems feasible and realistic. The CFSC intends to organise training for this to ensure efficient roll out.

2.2 Monitoring and evaluation, communications and data management

52. Training in M&E was provided to CFSC members during several training courses. Further training on the use of the early warning system for relaying messages from the IEC and other training material has yet to be provided. Training on the use of the computer systems provided to the project partners and appropriate software to help with DANA and the transfer of information to different levels has also yet to be provided.

²¹ "*Shock brigades*" - or rapid emergency response teams - normally comprise 10-15 persons at the village and commune level comprising volunteers from different CFSC member organisations, notably the VNRC, the WU, the Farmers Union and Youth Union

53. Outreach from the equipment supplied to improve communications is still limited. One commune chairperson reported that the loudspeaker system (also used as an early warning system) needs to be expanded. They have five at the moment and currently they broadcast public notices three times daily but during the flood season the strong winds means that five is ineffective.

Component 3 Objective

To reduce the incidence of flood related diseases affecting people in the project area

3.1. Increased awareness amongst households and changed practice on flood-related health and hygiene

54. The excellent IEC materials developed include a large number of sections related to health and hygiene issues and is being disseminated via the network of IEC volunteers and the establishment of disaster management clubs (*see Section 1.2, re: IEC*).

3.2 Increased access to clean water

55. Oxfam OGB aims to prioritise the provision of safe water to people living in remote areas. In order to determine the best way to achieve this, OGB embarked on a widespread consultative process regarding various potential means to access safe water. This involved local communities, OGB headquarters, UNICEF, CARE, Plan International and an external consultant²².

56. The resulting options identified are:

- *a water pumping system* - considered to be too expensive, providing clean water to only a limited number of households and not to those in the more remote and in accessible areas;
- *the provision of water containers* - which provides greater outreach/coverage and is a cheap option, although it is questionable whether this is really what is needed by the communities and does not address the project's objective about how to make water safe; to date OGB has not approved this as water containers are not related to clean water provision;
- *the provision of water filters* - these have reportedly not been accepted by communes/authorities, but this may be due to the type of filter presented (and concerns about spare parts, durability and appropriateness to the local context).

57. To date the most appropriate option has not been decided upon.

58. The IEC materials complement this component by providing high quality public health and WatSan messages.

Component 4 Objective

To improve flood time food security and the income of selected poor and vulnerable households

²² a few challenges were caused when OGB brought in national consultant to scope viable safe water options, as it was considered that local researchers with OGB staff and partners, could have undertaken the work and saved project money

4.1 Support for income generation

59. Since the project's conception, increased access to the "banks for the poor" by the rural poor has meant the initial target audience (i.e. the rural poor) are now able to access funds elsewhere. As a result, there was no need for OGB to include this as a project component. Partners in Dong Thap province and OGB made a constructive decision, albeit challenging, to reallocate programme funds from the livelihood support fund²³ to the flexible fund and to integrate the livelihood sub-objectives (e.g. IEC) into other project components.

4.2 Improved management of livelihood assets

60. Under the existing IEC campaign, households receive information about how best to save their livelihood assets during floods and other disasters.

Component 5 Objective

To ensure effective and timely programme management and coordination

5.1 Strengthened capacity of project management and coordination

Project management

61. The local OGB staff - the Project Coordinator, Project Officers and Provincial Coordinators - and the Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, showed a high degree of commitment to the project and were experienced, skilful and knowledgeable. In addition, they showed clarity and openness about the projects strengths, limitations, opportunities and the challenges that lie ahead (see Annex III). Some of the OGB local staff were particularly adept at working with the PMB and Steering Committee members.

62. The relationship between OGB staff, partner staff and the PMB in both provinces is frank and open. Clearly though there have been issues regarding the inclusion of DPI in Dong Thap as the main project partner for OGB - which stem back to the project's inception. However, the DPI has "clout" and also considerable experience of managing Overseas Development Assistance. Although DPI takes the lead it certainly has not meant that the CFSC and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) - who are the main partners in Tien Giang - are not involved with programme implementation, in fact, the DARD Vice-Chair is actively involved. The respective roles of the DPI, the PMB and other CFSC members within Dong Thap are clear and the relationship between the DPI and other CFSC members positive and effective; good coordination was reported amongst the CFSC membership.

63. The project partners and PMB staff displayed knowledge and commitment to the project and reported positive benefits. However, the challenges in Dong Thap, where unresolved issues concerning the flexible fund and safe water project have tarnished this relationship and progress of implementation, need to be redressed. There is a willingness expressed by both sides - OGB and partners - to meet and resolve these outstanding management issues. Currently the Project Steering Committee meets biannually, which is acceptable, with a mechanism for extraordinary meetings as required; at the current time this needs to be better realised.

²³ *Livelihoods support fund* - the project's name for package of revolving credit, income generation and disaster management training being offered in 4 communes

64. Some of the underlying issues that have contributed to the tensions include:

- difficulties regarding the retention of an OGB Project Coordinator;
- a few incidents around financial procedures and differing standards between OGB and the government finance systems;
- issues of trust and confidence from both OGB and partners;
- the fact that partner project staff perceive this project and its responsibilities to be above and on top of their everyday jobs, and are not sufficiently remunerated.

65. As stated, there is clear evidence that partners, communities and OGB staff are committed to progressing with this project. People interviewed during this review have stated that the design phase and the inception of the partnership was good and that there were clear expectations between the PMBs, partners and OGB, which are reflected in the annual plans that are developed in consultation with all parties involved.

66. There are regular communications and visits from the Hanoi OGB finance staff at least every 6 months, including meetings with the PMB. In addition, there are mutual resourcing contributions (i.e. office space and computers) all of which contribute to the development of a strong partnership.

Partnership issues and the tripartite approach

67. The partnership between OGB and the project partners has run smoothly for the first year and a half, however, some challenges have arisen over issues related to procurement processes and confusions and differences between OGB and government of Viet Nam guidelines. Although clearly, both OGB and the government uphold the same values, there are some differences in procedures which need to be discussed and a way forward determined to overcome the current impasse; both sides agreed that only some relatively small adjustments, with good faith, need to be made so that the project can be implemented smoothly.

68. Globally Oxfam works through partnerships and sees partnership as an important strategy for maximising resources and increasing the chances of sustainability of community projects. Alongside the participatory approach in this project, a tripartite model was agreed upon during the design process, i.e. the communities plan and implement with support from both government and OGB, thus allowing a collaborative approach where the resources and potential contribution from all parties involved is stipulated and agreed on from the beginning.

Project partner coordination

69. The CFSC members interviewed as part of this review process consistently expressed their commitment to the project and their desire to be even more fully engaged with the PMBs in their role in the Steering Committee.

70. There is potential for greater knowledge sharing and learning between the DPI (in Dong Thap) and DARD (in Tien Giang), with regards to their respective implementation successes and challenges; this could enhance also their respective project management experiences.

5.2 Active coordination and collaboration with INGOs and other stakeholders

71. Other organisations, notably, CARE, ADPC, SC Denmark, and UNICEF are working in the two project provinces in disaster management and other related sectoral activities. Whilst there has been intermittent dialogue and linking between these agencies, there is definite potential for greater synergy and complementarities between these agencies, e.g. SC Denmark is providing disaster management training for school children, which provides a linking opportunity with OGB. It is acknowledged that regular dialogue remains challenging as these agencies often do not have permanent offices/staff presence in Dong Thap or Tien Giang.
72. There is a need for the project management (i.e. the PMB/OGB) to communicate further on recent national strategies related to disaster management, on how best to implement these at the local government level.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

73. Oxfam GB has well developed monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) material for training and guidance of participatory monitoring and evaluation processes. Based upon this, a detailed and relevant MEL component was produced as part of the project design. However, there is further potential to increase a more bottom-up input into the M&E processes as well as sharing lessons between the two project sites amongst partner and OGB staff.
74. Although, staff, partners and communes have busy implementation schedules and there is limited time to invest in M&E capacity development and processes, the OGB project staff are interested and enthusiastic to learn more about the application of M&E processes. Also there is increased awareness amongst project partners and local communities of the importance of a participatory M&E process. In addition, M&E teams have been established at commune level for infrastructure projects²⁴. Training in MEL has already been conducted for 29 people from the CFSC membership.

Humanitarian accountability

75. Although this review did not specifically focus on reviewing accountability²⁵, it is important to note that specific interview and focus questions did include ones around partnership values and participation. One of the strengths of the project, that was apparent throughout the review, was the learning from communities and OGB staff about ‘participatory methods’ and how increased participation inherently leads to higher quality outputs (i.e. more detailed, owned and appropriate disaster management action plans) and is also linked to increased sustainability.

²⁴ Under Vietnamese Government policy, infrastructure built in communes must be assessed by community members before being finally approved and paid for. A community assessment team is the means for doing such an assessment

²⁵ One World Trust has identified four strategies for greater accountability: transparency, participation, evaluation (in terms of learning) and complaint mechanisms. This definition can resonate with various models of development work, regardless of whether it is long term development, relief, and advocacy and/or risk reduction. One World Trust publishes the Global Accountability Report which documents the results of their assessment of 30 of the world's most powerful organisations (including Oxfam) from across the inter-governmental, non-governmental and corporate sectors.

76. There was clear evidence that a diverse range of people from the communities had been involved in the development of the village Action Plans and that these reflected their participation. This included both men and women from the poorer sections of the community, elderly people and young people. Amongst these also were commune and village leaders and a wide range of people who were members of various Mass Organisations. During discussions with the review team, such people met were able to show their understanding of the projects activities, interest and involvement.

Sustainability

77. There are a number of positive factors which favour the future sustainability of aspects of the projects. The Disaster Management Clubs have already been established and there is a growing network of trained and committed IEC volunteers. The engagement with other local government departments (e.g. the Centre for Sports and Gymnasiums and Culture) is also a positive element and a significant project achievement. However, there is a rather limited pool of experienced, trained, trainers of trainers which will pose challenges for the expansion of further training at commune and village levels in the future unless addressed (such people are not readily available from their daily work).

78. The commitment of the PMBs to increased development of capacities of partners and sincere engagement of the Steering Committee membership, most notably of the Women's Union the Red Cross and Youth Union also augurs well for the future and much already has been done in terms of ensuring their fullest engagement and building of capacities.

79. Of great importance too is the fact that local people and authorities were engaged and enthusiastic about project activities. The project is long enough in duration (another 2.5 years to run) to support some sustainability initiatives and component outcomes. The strong participatory approach may contribute also to inherent sustainability, e.g. in the participatory disaster planning processes adopted. However, as with many projects the sustained participation from the government and local people if incentives are not provided after project completion remains a concern as does the potential of lack of resources, re. technical input after the project concludes.

Gender equality (mainstreaming) or as a cross cutting issue

80. Gender empowerment and equity are two important impact areas for Oxfam globally, and has a crosscutting relevance throughout the whole project. The project has intentionally focused attention on women in order to strengthen their access to decision making opportunities and leadership roles within the context of DRR and response. This has been undertaken through a strategy of positive discrimination or the targeting of women as specific beneficiaries. Within each project component, gender equity considerations have been included when developing implementation strategies.

81. The project strategy and objectives aim to address change and increase equity across both women's and men's different roles, tasks and responsibilities.

82. The OGB team faces considerable challenges in addressing long standing cultural norms and customs regarding women's roles in Viet Nam. In some communities, and at district and provincial level, there is in general, ongoing resistance based on long held traditional

stereotypes and norms, e.g. at the beginning of the project both women and men thought that the search and rescue training was appropriate for men only. It is difficult to change these beliefs and behaviours which impact on women's daily lives, particularly in the domestic sphere. As a result, these changes and the ability to demonstrate significant impact on the quality of women's lives should continue to be an ongoing priority for OGB and this project.

83. Both women and men interviewed during the review showed an awareness of gender issues and some said that they believed there has been increase in the sharing of traditional male and female roles and tasks within the household and communities. Specifically men and women described men being more willing to assist with caring for the children, cooking and housework, whilst concurrently encouraging their wives to become more involved in community committees and, for example, undergo swimming lessons.
84. Whilst this review noted that women were extremely vocal in commune level meetings and focus group discussions, the few observations made on the participation of (often the same) women in district and provincial level meetings indicated that there remain cultural and social barriers to women participating and speaking out (e.g. in CFSC at provincial and district levels). The relatively small sample of men and women interviewed by the review team revealed an awareness of gender issues - some said that they believed they had seen a change the sharing of male and female roles and tasks within their households and communities.
85. Clearly there is a difference between attending meetings and contributing ideas, and to having those contributions listened to and taken on board (it is quite probable that women's involvement in decision making forums is relatively passive rather than active). This issue highlights the important role and responsibility of men; villagers, government counterparts; and OGB project staff to create safe spaces that encourage women to speak and to actually respond positively to the ideas and issues raised by women. Another possible mechanism may include developing a strategy to increase the sharing and support through a forum for women to discuss issues around leadership in disaster management (e.g. within the existing mechanism of the Women's Union).

IV REVIEW COMPONENTS

Relevance and appropriateness

- The project is being undertaken in the correct locations in some of the most flood prone parts of the provinces (a good selection was made based on need and baseline surveys), however, it is only responding to the needs of 3 districts out of 8, and 10 communes out of 168 (Tien Giang province; in Dong Thap 2 districts out of 9, and 14 communes out of 169 communes (and one city, one town) so in the bigger picture, the overall needs of the province are not being met. Scale up and/or roll out are needed.
- The project has helped to develop village Action Plans in strong consultation with the people in all the communities, although these are essentially disaster preparedness plans detailing actions to be taken before, during and after flooding, and outline the assigned roles and responsibilities. Ideas for small scale mitigation works have been developed.

- The project has focused heavily upon the development of training resource material and training, as personnel development is inherently important because it's investing in people, and is sustained from generation to generation and saves lives. Concurrently the infrastructure projects are vital for immediate delivery and to encourage community participation/engagement. The training events are relevant and appropriate - based on community needs and requests; swimming training for women and children seemed of particular relevance.
- According to the original proposal, the flexible fund may be utilised for improving small-scale infrastructure in an effort to reduce local vulnerabilities. Examples of the types of needs that currently exist include: repairs to existing dykes and upgrading paths to key facilities such as evacuation points or health care centres. Changes on this scale are expected to result in improvements in access and safety of local people.
- Both non-structural and structural components are complementary and valid parts of the project, although some challenges have arisen in the structural aspects of the project.
- The project has accomplished a significant amount to date, achieving all the main project activities in the log frame, particularly noted are the training and IEC materials developed and utilised and the fact that over 6,000 people have so far benefitted from different types of training events.
- No clear advocacy issues were determined by the review team, however, there is potential for project partners to raise issues to the provincial and local government concerning the needs of the communes in the project area and to utilise OGB funding as leverage to secure other funds, particularly for mitigation works.

Coverage

- The process of consultation with people in the communes, with the local authorities, close and regular dialogue with the PMB and the various members of the Steering Committee at the different levels has helped to ensure that the project is responding to actual needs. Whether further risk assessment is required (at this juncture in the project lifespan) was questioned by the review team, however, local staff and partners agreed that the project was responding to needs, although scale remains a concern.
- The project has made every effort in the selection and training of people from the target areas, to ensure that a representative and diverse range of people participate. Most events held have disaggregated data on the basis of sex and age. This has ensured too that influential people from the various communities were engaged and in many cases representatives from the Mass Organisations and local government were able to further share the knowledge/information acquired from the training events with others in their organisations, e.g. the Women's Union have units in all villages which met bi-weekly and provide good forum for dissemination.
- There has been wide engagement with people from all sections of society, with training events ensuring the participation of men and women, children and elderly persons. In addition, both the Project Coordinators and OGB staff were fully engaged with local people and considered that the project was meeting felt needs; however, concern remains over the impact of the project and more needs to be undertaken to ensure that this issue is addressed in the coming years.
- The main challenge that the project faces is one of scale, even within the confines of the communes and villages the project is targeting relatively few persons who have attended training events. More scope, however, exists for dissemination through the existing

organisational structures and the CFSC membership (e.g. the Women's Union, Youth Union, etc.) and there is potential for more CFSC members to undergo training and therefore heighten opportunities for further dissemination amongst their respective membership.

Effectiveness and cost effectiveness

- In both provinces there has been active support for the achievement of the project objectives by the PMBs and the Steering Committees; in addition the Provincial and District Project Coordinators have worked exceptionally hard. The community are engaged and active (although require incentives to attend the training events). The fact that the project has achieved all the objectives set out in the logical framework in the time period indicates a close commitment to the project by partners with and local people, as well as the dedication and commitment local OGB staff.
- There has been active participation particularly from the Women's Union, the Youth Union and the Red Cross - as well as from other Mass Organisations - all of whom have extensive membership (e.g. the Women's Union in one locality in Dong Thap had 1,242 members and meetings twice/week to discuss different issues/topics and the Women's Union board meets monthly) and there is great potential to utilise these existing networks to further achieve the project objectives.
- To date there have not been any reported unforeseen effects of the project. There has, however, been some negative impact on the relationship between the project partners and OGB. This has arisen due to challenges that remain concerning the decisions and the practical arrangements for the utilisation of the flexible funds the most appropriate mechanisms for accessing safe water.
- The project has achieved its main outcomes regarding the training activities.
- No financial analysis or comparisons of relative costs were feasible in the duration of this review; however, for all procurements proper procedures, conforming to strict OGB guidelines were followed. Direct negotiation was undertaken with a printing company for the production of IEC materials which proved to be considerably less expensive than an alternative company in Dong Thap. A larger print run would have resulted in further savings and should be considered in the future.
- The project has procured items for search and rescue (lifebuoys, life vests) and for early warning system (loudspeakers, amplification equipment and hand held megaphones) which were reported by the CFSC members and others interviewed to be of good quality and appropriate to the situation. Procurements in larger quantities would have no doubt resulted in further cost savings. To date no decision has been made over the most suitable solution for safe water supply; local ceramic filters, ceramic water storage jars and riverside pumping and filtration systems should be considered alongside the current proposed solutions.

Efficiency

- All activities have been implemented according to the schedule (with the exception of the utilisation of the flexible fund and the safe water component, which are behind schedule). Fund transfers from OGB were undertaken in a timely manner, and the OGB system is considered by project partners as being flexible and no major problems were encountered. The OGB and Government of Viet Nam financial and procurement procedures (naturally) do differ and there have been some issues of compatibility; however, these were not considered to be major challenges. The audits undertaken and the regular visits of OGB financial staff were welcomed (although have posed some challenges).

- The fact that the training activities and various procurements have been undertaken in a timely manner indicates that the systems are efficient and that these outcomes have been achieved.

Impact

- At this point in time widespread impact of the project is challenging to see, however, clearly over 6,000 people have directly benefited from the various training events (which is a sizable number of people within the two year time frame); equipment has been procured and is in regular use (benefiting considerably more people, viz. the loudspeaker systems), and many of these individuals will have, either in their own homes or to other people involved in Mass Organisations, made opportunities to disseminate knowledge and skills learnt. The IEC “disaster management clubs” offer potential for wider dissemination and potential behavioural change.
- The use of participatory planning techniques and processes had strengthened the capacity of local planners and improved existing disaster preparedness planning.
- At the time of this Mid-term Review, there were no negative impacts reported as a result of the project’s interventions; however, it is recognised that relatively few people in the communities have so far directly benefited from the projects activities and there is potential for unease amongst some who feel that they have so far “missed out”.
- The challenge of how best to scale-up the programme activities to better engage with the whole community so that more are aware of the project remains.

V MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main conclusions and the corresponding *strategic and operational* recommendations of the review are as follows:

Component 1 Objective

To build knowledge, skills and resources to mitigate, prepare for and respond to floods amongst leadership and households in 24 flood-affected communes

1.1 Developed and implemented community based disaster management action plans

Training of facilitators

- C1** Initial ToTs were of a high quality as OGB utilised experienced resource people (from the WU and the VNRC), to date, a high number of facilitators have been trained but there is still a need for more, particularly at the commune level. The main criticism was that too much information was delivered in too short a timeframe. The course in CBDM lacked comprehensive methodological training. There are relatively few trained trainers used to undertake the ToT which poses challenges for expanding further training at the commune and village levels.
- C2** To date, all the training events according to the work plan have been organised. Given that the project is only in its second year, the quality and quantity of the training facilitated has been of a high standard. Training events have been appreciated by facilitators. Participants are eager to share what they have learnt, have increased confidence to do so, however, scale and outreach remains an issue.

- R1** Continue to invest in quality ToT, and lengthen the course. Develop a stand alone 5-7 day methodological ToT curriculum that focuses on **adult training and participatory methodology** and not on technical content which would be accessible to all other trainees. Consider hiring the services of a **professional ToT** organisation to help to oversee the quality of training events, to stand in as required when other facilitators may be busy make delay in project implementation and to further develop the materials.
- R2** Develop a **cadre of more commune level facilitators** by prioritising investment in the further selection of more facilitators from the villages and developing ToT at the commune level. Provide the existing facilitators with annual refresher training. Through the increased number of commune trainers, **conduct more training at the commune and village level**. Roll out training to other communes but not at the expense of quality. Continue with the existing 24 communes to ensure consolidation.

Training materials

- C3** The material is relevant and appropriate to the local context and the content quality relatively high. However, sometimes too much information is presented, which is challenging for participants. The project has embarked upon an ambitious training agenda and the scope of training activities is broad including: CBDM, swimming, First Aid and search and rescue, gender equality, leadership and MEL. Although quality materials exist there is not a consistent “packaging” of training materials and, in some, the format and layout is not inspiring or concise. Limited equipment and resources have been made available for the swimming classes.
- R3** Develop a **consistent OGB training product/or package** for each course with improved layout and a more user friendly appearance, comprising: a reference manual, facilitator’s training notes and schedule, a trainee’s workbook and teaching aids. In all training materials increase the number of illustrations/pictures/photos.

Participants

- C4** Selection criteria for course participants are appropriate and have resulted in respected and influential people being selected. Although the diverse audience presented challenges to the facilitators with regards to pitching the class appropriately to the different educational levels and needs, the various perspectives gained throughout the training events was also said to be positive. All the training events planned have been conducted; however, still relatively few people have benefited and the needs of the local people with regards to training are high.
- R4** Increase the **number of facilitators at the training events** to assist with desegregating the classes and/or work more coherently with others, e.g. Save the Children. Increase the **duration and number of training events** to accommodate for the amount of information and increase training for more influential people at the commune level; consider increasing the length of some of the courses (e.g. swimming).

1.2 Informed households and improved preparedness

- C5** The IEC materials are of an excellent standard in terms of content, style and format. The IEC volunteer selection has been good; however, it cannot be underestimated how

integral and dependent the success of the messages in the material for dissemination is upon the IEC volunteers. Training of the IEC volunteers is also good but could be improved if there was more emphasis on the methodological component. The disaster management club model has potential to be effective but must be supported and resourced, for outreach and coverage, and subsequent behaviour change to be achieved. Issues around the allowances provided (for a 2 hour session/month) by the project were a cause for concern.

R5a Increase the **number of IEC volunteers** and invest in their development. Focus on the **capacity building of the volunteers/facilitators** so as they become more effective - as they need to know how to talk to local people to disseminate messages within the IEC materials - vital if the contents are going reach a wider audience. Consider the development of a **self-monitoring mechanism** whereby club participant's feedback to OGB/project partners.

R5b Diversify within this training programme with regards to **dissemination strategies**, e.g. use street drama, puppet theatre, radio and TV as well as the better and synchronised use of the information systems provided, e.g. broadcast messages through the loudspeaker system after 5pm. **Encourage local initiatives** to diversify IEC methods used (i.e. get the villagers to propose IEC methods that are relevant to their capacity, the local situation, etc).

R5c Discuss **allowance concerns** due to the increased inflation and cost of living and consider an increase of the IEC allowances (for staff involved at the commune level) from VND50,000/month to VND100,000/month (to cover the increased costs of transport, etc).

1.3 *Established or improved early warning systems*

C6 The provision of equipment is suitable, appropriate for the local context and responsive to community needs. However, the number of loudspeakers for the early warning system is inadequate to reach remote areas and to date there has been no training of how best to use the equipment to disseminate the IEC/other messages and to provide early warning.

R6 Provide **more loudspeakers** and high concrete posts for the early warning systems. These should be placed in strategic locations to ensure greater coverage and enable better audibility (whilst also being sensitive to disturbance caused to local households). For each village, **training** should be provided for communication officers using the speaker systems to disseminate IEC and early warning messages.

1.4 *Improved commune search and rescue teams*

C7 The complementary training events are practical and appreciated, as is the provision of search and rescue equipment; however, investment into these teams (personnel and resources) is still insufficient.

R7 Provide more **village level search and rescue kits**, comprising: life vests, life-buoys, megaphones and motorised canoe boats, as well as further investment into personnel through **practical simulations**.

1.5 *Swimming training for women and children*

C8 The swimming lessons were particularly well received and have been successful, but the outreach is limited. The current level of equipment is inadequate to meet training needs.

R8 Determine **Oxfam's niche** with regards to how best to add value to the existing swimming programme being delivered by the Centre for Sports, Gymnasiums and Culture and further support the increasing demand.

1.6 *Repaired or constructed small scale infrastructure*

C9 Significant funding exists within the flexible funds to undertake disaster risk reduction activities within the parameters of an allocated financial limit per village. However, challenges exist in current utilisation due to issues around prioritisation of projects, budgets available, the complexity and relative compatibility of OGB and UK Charity Law procedures relative to those of the Government of Viet Nam and raised community expectations. There is still little evidence that communities have been approached to contribute further finances towards the projects and/or that OGB finances are being used as leverage to access more funds (from the provincial and other local government levels). These issues currently remain unresolved. However, there is willingness from both sides - OGB and partners - to address these concerns to ensure this project component moves forward.

R9a Organise a **high level meeting** between partners, the PMB and OGB to clarify roles and responsibilities; and to work through and resolve existing issues, notably where the additional funds are coming from to augment OGB's flexible fund contribution.

R9b Establish **clearer criteria for the selection of risk reduction measures** applicable for the flexible fund (i.e. for co-financing, having disaster mitigation as a priority, etc). Clarify flexible fund **objectives, processes and procedures**, including revisiting community plans and community/OGB disaster risk reduction infrastructure priorities, which can be addressed through the implementation of a small-scale DRR village level finance fund (e.g. the project has X dollars for Y villages which amounts to X per village to be spent in a set time frame). To assist with the clarification of the fund's objectives, the project could potentially rename the flexible fund the "*disaster risk reduction fund*".

R9c Provide further guidance and support for the local **monitoring teams** overseeing the construction works.

Component 2 Objective

To enable the Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC) to facilitate a more targeted, coordinated, timely and effective response to floods in Dong Thap and Tien Giang

2.1 *Appropriate disaster management training*

C10 There has been widespread engagement in the project with CFSC membership²⁶ at all levels in a broad range of different capacity building activities. This has focused mainly upon training (i.e. CBDM and Action Planning, Sphere, DANA, gender equality, Project

²⁶ including the Mass Organisations of the Viet Nam Red Cross Society, the Women's Union, the Farmers Union, the Youth Union and others

Planning and MEL), but also simulation exercises and exposure visits. Although more senior CFSC staff were often too busy to attend the training events, second line departmental staff as well as Mass Organisation staff and volunteers participated and furthermore later organised training of their members based upon the training received under the project.

- C11** Clear evidence exists of behavioural change and knowledge improvement amongst the members of the PMB and CFSC, e.g. regarding the disaster management planning process. There exist strong, well established networks within the CFSC which have mandated assigned roles and responsibilities before, during and after a disaster event. Whilst the project has aimed to both strengthen these groups and utilise them for information dissemination, the differing tasks of the members could be better tailored for in training events to ensure that capacities built more specifically meet these. Exposure visits were well received and there was indication of lessons learnt being applied. The equipment provided under the project has been useful for the running of the project and for other work of the CFSC members.
- R10** Clarify **Oxfam's niche** as to how best to augment existing training and capacity building initiatives facilitated for the CFSC membership to ensure that the differing needs of the CFSC members is enabling them to better undertake their designated/mandated roles and responsibilities.
- R11** Increase the number of **simulation exercises** and broaden the scope of these by inviting people from other communes to help to strengthen links through visits, exchanges and attending training events.

2.2 *Monitoring and evaluation, communications and data management*

- C12** Training in MEL has taken place for CFSC membership at provincial, district and commune level in Dong Thap. Other training is also scheduled in communications and data management. More potential exists for cross exchange between project partners and Steering Committees in both provinces.
- R12a** Ensure agreement on **implementation and MEL frameworks**, and to improve the quality of implementation, via continued communication.
- R12b** Increase the **linkages and involvement between the PMB and CFSC** in both provinces and too the amount of mutual exchange, knowledge and sharing events/exposures between the PMB and partners in both provinces.

Component 3 Objective

To reduce the incidence of flood related diseases affecting people in the project area

3.1. *Increased awareness amongst households and changed practice on flood-related health and hygiene*

- C13** Oxfam GB aims to prioritise the provision of safe water to vulnerable people living in remote areas. To achieve this, a widespread consultative process regarding various

potential means to access safe water was undertaken and a number of resulting options identified (viz. a water pumping system, the provision of water containers and water filters); however, to date, the most appropriate option has not been decided upon. The IEC materials produced will complement aspect of the project providing high quality public health and WatSan messages.

R13 Resolve the current impasse through the holding of a **high level meeting**; consider other alternatives to those proposed, too.

3.2 Increased access to clean water

C14 Despite an extensive consultative process, involving other stakeholders and an external consultant, the most appropriate water supply mechanism for the identified target audience is still to be decided upon. To date this continues to cause some tension between the PMB and OGB and is affecting overall project implementation. The most suitable solution for safe water supply, e.g. the use of locally manufactured ceramic filters, ceramic water storage jars, and riverside pumping and filtration systems should be considered alongside the current proposed solutions.

R14 During the proposed **high level meeting between partners, PMB and OGB**, the issue of what safe water mechanism is most appropriate must be resolved as well as where additional funds are to come from to augment OGB's financial contribution.

Component 4 Objective:

To improve flood time food security and the income of selected poor and vulnerable households

C15 Partners and OGB made a constructive, albeit tough decision and reallocated programme funds from the livelihood support fund to the flexible fund and to integrate other livelihood sub-objectives (e.g. IEC and asset protection) into other project components.

Component 5 Objective:

To ensure effective and timely programme management and coordination

5.1 Strengthened capacity of project management and coordination

C16 After two years of project implementation, the relationship between OGB staff, partner staff and the PMBs is frank and open and parties are generally committed. However, there exist a few unresolved challenges that are affecting these relationships and project implementation. The Steering Committees, with their biannual meetings are deemed to be good coordinating bodies.

C17 There is potential for the CFSC membership and the District level leadership to play an even greater role in the Steering Committee which may be worth exploring further.

R16a Organise as soon as possible, a **high-level meeting** between the PMB partners and OGB, to discuss management and partnership issues and include the resolution of:

- the flexible fund processes;
- the 'stalemate' over the safe water project;
- financial procedures, including the need to ensure official written documentation around financial decisions;

- the challenge over the impact of significant inflation costs (estimated at over 19.6%), on partner wages, volunteer incentives, and the issue of *per diems* for the different levels (which should be consistent (i.e. VND 70,000 per day) for all levels (commune, district, provincial).

R16b Further strengthen coordination between the PMB and OGB through a **bi-annual high level meeting between OGB and partners** with regards to programme strategy and operations.

R17 Encourage **more participation of the Steering Committee with the PMB** so they can understand more about the project and the associated issues and move away from *ad hoc* involvement. Further support the **coordination between all CFSC member organisations** and explore the increased engagement they could have with the project. Increase the involvement of **District leaders** in the project Steering Committee so they can contribute their views and have more involvement in the direction of the project and an opportunity to use their leadership skills.

5.2 *Active coordination and collaboration with INGOs and other stakeholders*

C18 Other agencies are present in these provinces and although a certain degree of interaction is happening, further consolidation of this would lead to a more effective programme.

R18 Oxfam and the PMBs should explore opportunities in which to **engage with other INGOs and stakeholders**, so that all projects can complement each other, and synergies can be enhanced for a more effective overall programme.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

C19 Oxfam GB has MEL material for training and guidance of participatory M&E processes and a detailed and relevant M&E component was developed as part of this project. The GB local staff are interested and enthusiastic to learn more about the application of M&E processes; some training in M&E was already conducted for CFSC members and there is increased awareness amongst project partners and local communities of the importance of a participatory M&E process, although there is limited time to invest in M&E capacity development and processes. At commune level, M&E teams have been established to oversee future infrastructure projects. There is potential to increase a more bottom-up input into the M&E processes as well as sharing lessons between the two project sites amongst partners and OGB staff.

R19 Increase opportunities for **sharing about MEL** and the use of guidelines, etc. between the project partners and OGB staff in the two provinces. Explore means to better **engage local people in a participatory M&E approach**.

Humanitarian accountability

C20 The project has ensured high levels of participation by partners at all levels and by local people - there is already evidence of greater participation during community action planning and of adopting a participatory approach in other activities. The scale of the project is still relatively small, regardless of the number of local people who have access to the training events and to such a participatory approach.

R20 Continue discussions about **opportunities for scaling up** the project and of enhancing participation of local people in the different project activities.

Sustainability

C21 There are a number of factors that bode well for sustainability of some aspects of the project in the future:

- commitment of PMBs and of the CFSC members to increase the development of capacities of partners
- widespread engagement with the CFSC membership at all levels
- mature relationship with local government departments, e.g. the Department of Sports, Gymnasiums and Culture
- the fact that local people and government authorities are engaged and enthusiastic about project activities
- strong investment in facilitators at provincial, district and commune level
- development of good training materials for a wide range of subjects
- high quality IEC material
- established disaster management clubs and growing network of trained and committed IEC volunteers
- the project is long enough to support some sustainability initiatives and component outcomes
- participatory approach itself may contribute to inherent sustainability.

Challenges to sustainability, of course, remain - as with any project whose funding will, in time stop - and over the next few years this issue needs to be more earnestly addressed. It is doubtful whether it be viable to sustain participation from the government and local people if incentives are not provided after project completion and there needs also to be a realistic assessment about the continuity of technical input after the withdrawal of resources.

R21 The **sustainability matrix** and logical framework in the project design needs to be followed up and implemented.

Gender equality (mainstreaming) as a cross cutting issue

C22 The project intentionally focused on women to strengthen their opportunities and leadership roles in disaster management. This has been undertaken through targeting women as specific beneficiaries. Within each project component, gender issues have been included, which aims to increase equality. However, there are recognised challenges in addressing long standing cultural norms and customs regarding women's roles and difficulties in changing these beliefs and behaviours; thus work in this area should continue to be an ongoing priority for OGB.

R22a Continue with the **integration of gender throughout** all training events, and to ensure the fullest participation of both women and men in all project activities; encourage **women to take on leadership roles** within the project.

R22b Consider developing a strategy to increase opportunities for women to meet and discuss **leadership issues in disaster management** through an existing mechanism, e.g. the Women's Union.

VI LESSONS LEARNT

The following lessons learnt were developed through a participatory discussion held amongst OGB staff and partners from both provinces following the review process and in light of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report.

- It is essential to ensure strong commitment from the provincial Project Steering Committee, to have their direction in organizing project activities and to help create an enabling environment in which to undertake project activities/training events of quality, quantity and in a timely manner.
- Prior to carrying out any activity there should be good dialogue between OGB and partners to help to ensure mutual agreement and close coordination. The enthusiastic and full participation of the CFSC organizations and local people at the project sites is essential. Engagement of OGB local staff and partners in decision making is also an important enabling factor, helping to ensure that project activities are undertaken in a timely manner, staff confidence is developed and a proactive approach to task management developed.
- A participatory approach should be prioritized and considered to ensure engagement from all sections of the community and other stakeholders during project implementation. All project activities should be designed, carried out and tailored to the practical needs and interests of the communities in terms of spacing and time; otherwise they may become an additional burden to the commune/village leaders, already busy with other work. To help ensure that the project activities run smoothly and effectively, the local authorities should be consulted as to the timing, contents, and methodology for project activities in order that they participate actively.
- To effectively and efficiently utilize the flexible fund, an overall strategy - with implementation guidelines (containing all the procedures, processes, project selection criteria, contractual management arrangements, financial and payment terms and conditions) is required from the onset of the project and prior to the organization and development of the commune/village action plan. All levels and agencies should fully understand and observe this guidance. Such implementation guidelines should help avoid confusion and time wasting. Once parties agree on an activity, deadlines for turn around of a project proposal by OGB should be agreed to speed up the progress of work.
- There needs to be a strong emphasis on a rigorous selection process necessary for the expansion of the pool of trained trainers/or facilitators at provincial, district and commune levels who have strong professional backgrounds, expertise and who can be trained effectively in both disaster management and participatory methodologies.
- For each kind of training activity, a package of training material - "eye-catching" in terms of layout and appearance, understandable, concise and inspiring - is necessitated to ensure participant and trainer interest, usability and longevity.
- Consistent project monitoring, evaluation and learning are required. A self-monitoring mechanism should be developed for the disaster management (IEC) clubs (e.g. to ensure that IEC dissemination groups are undertaken regularly, all refresher courses are organized as

planned). Financial resources for this activity, particularly investment in personnel, are necessary.

- The “grass-root” network of the Mass Organizations, especially the Women’s Union and Viet Nam Red Cross, need to be fully utilized and supported; these are major public institutions which maybe used to disseminate information, raise awareness and bring about attitudinal and behavioral change among the target population in terms of disaster preparedness and mitigation.
- Strong partnerships at all levels - from the provincial to commune and village - engender opportunities to scale up project initiatives and help to ensure sustainability.
- People in the communes and villages are well aware of the context of their local area and its disaster risks; therefore disaster preparedness, mitigation and response activities can be planned and decided appropriately based upon the level of resources within/or outside the area.
- The participation of men, women, children and a small number of disabled people highlighted the needs, interests and experiences of different groups helped to ensure that disaster preparedness plans, measures and activities agreed in the locality were practical and applicable.
- Particular attention is required to ensure strong coordination with the CFSC agencies, e.g. the Women’s Union, the Red Cross and Youth Union, in order to mobilize their potential human and other resources to gain their maximum contribution to the project.

Annex I Terms of reference

Mid-term Monitoring Review of Participatory Disaster Preparation and Mitigation Project in Tien Giang and Dong Thap Provinces

The Mid Term Monitoring Review of Participatory Disaster Preparation and Mitigation Project is to be conducted at mid-term to assess achievements with the reference of purpose, output and learning of the project. The review will as well provide capacity building to project partners, sharing learning and recommendations for remaining period and the future projects. These terms of reference outline the process to be followed.

I. Background

Responding to the negative impacts of the floods in Mekong delta Oxfam and partners started a disaster risk reduction project in Dong Thap in 2002. In 2003, Oxfam and the People's Committee of Dong Thap and Tien Giang developed a concept paper for expanding its community based disaster risk reduction work in flood risk prone districts of Dong Thap and Tien Giang. In this concept paper, the initiative mainly focused on reducing the negative impacts of the floods in Tien Giang and Dong Thap province (please see the annex 1 with the project objectives and outputs). This concept paper was submitted to AusAID within the framework of the Vietnam-Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement (VANGOCA), which was negotiated between the Governments of Vietnam and Australia. In 2004, AusAID approved the concept paper, and supported a 7-month design process to further develop the programme in Dong Thap and Tien Giang having partnership with DPI in Dong Thap and DARD in Tien Giang province. The design process focused on ensuring greater rigour, stronger participation and ownership from partners and communities, sound social and contextual analysis, and a better risk analysis, and was facilitated by a team of four development practitioners (two international and two national staff). Information to inform the design was collected through: Community Based Action Planning, an Institutional Analysis, a Gender analysis, and participatory planning with local partners and other stakeholders. Gender analysis was mainstreamed through each element of the design process.

In 2005, DPI and DARD submitted project design document (PDD) to Ministry of Planning and Investment/ Prime Minister Secretariat to get approval of the project. It took about six months to get approval, however the project team was continuing to implement ongoing activities (developing training manual, communicating with partners etc.) under maintenance phase. Finally the 4.5-year project started in May 2006.

Under this project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework a Mid-term Monitoring Review (MTMR) has been planned to review project performance, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and learning. It will be managed by Oxfam and project partners, and be undertaken by independent consultants, Oxfam and partner staff.

II Purpose of the Mid Term Monitoring Review

- *Assess the effectiveness, achievement and learning of project activities already implemented. This assessment will provide an independent and objective review, and provide recommendations to improve the implementation of the project activities to achieve the goals and objectives of the project within the project time-frame.*

The evaluation team will address the broad areas below:

- *What should we have achieved in the project by now?*
- *What information have we gathered, how, and from whom?*
- *What's working well and why?*
- *What problems are there and how can they be solved?*
- *What are the external and objective view, information and assessment of the project for decision making on the implementation for the remaining period of the project?*
- *What are practical recommendations for partners aiming at ensuring the most efficient and effective implementation of the remaining period of the project?*
- *What have we learnt about: 1) the context of the project; 2) the project outcomes; 3) the monitoring process itself?*
- *What are we going to do about it?*
- *Who will take action and when?*
- *What will we feed into other reports and discussions?*

The Review process will answer the following questions:

Appropriateness

1. What are the vulnerabilities of flood affected women and men and how appropriate are the project components and activities in terms of reducing flood vulnerabilities and building capacities to meet the goal?
2. Is the approach (non- structural and structural) and achievement of project outputs and purpose appropriate?
3. Is the project implementing rapidly enough to meet the needs of the women and men?
4. Are advocacy goals appropriately defined and approached?
5. How appropriate is the impact and process of the indicators selected?

b. Coverage

1. Are the intervention's objectives responding to the needs and priorities of the target populations?
2. To what extent do the project activities reach the vulnerable groups – specifically the physically disabled, elderly, women, boys and girls?
3. Were any particular groups excluded from the services provided?
4. Which resources/opportunities do the target populations make use of for meeting project activities/outputs? (How accessible are project activities/outputs to the target population?)
5. Is the coverage appropriate considering the advocacy goals?

c. Progress

1. Is the project on track to produce stated outputs of the project and core indicators?
2. To what extent are the outputs likely to be achieved?
3. What is the likelihood of the project that project purpose and goal will be achieved?
4. To what extent are the achievements of outputs attributable to project purpose?
5. How is the status of the baseline data?

d. Participation

1. Were women, men and vulnerable groups involved in project design? In which level were they involved both in quality and quantity?
2. Were the leaders involved in project design? In which level?
3. Are men, women and vulnerable group involved in project implementation, action planning, training and other events?
4. Which project activities are the vulnerable group members involved? (How are the vulnerable group members involved in project implementation?)

e. Coherence

1. Which organizations are working in the same project of disaster preparedness nature as our organization? Are they successfully co-coordinated and are there any overlaps, different points of view, strategies/approaches that could have been avoided?
2. How well do our partner's co-ordinate their activities with other organizations – are these organizations carrying out activities suitable to their capacities?
3. Which different methods are used to collaborate and co-ordinate with other organizations, particularly those who are not represented long – term and regularly at any of the main co-coordinating bodies?

f. Efficiency

1. Do Oxfam (and partner's) policies and practices ensure timely and effective implementation of project?
2. Have the available means been optimally exploited? Are the resources in terms of personnel, finance, and facilities transformed into results and outputs or were they used to achieve specific outcomes?

g. Management

1. How are the project documents produced and approached to donors?
2. How is quality of data for drawing monitoring conclusions? Did Oxfam staff participate in and show their integration to implement the projects?
3. What is the management mechanism of the project? Is there any constraint of project management system?
4. How is the project staff managing the project? Is project staffing effective?
5. What are the finance monitoring mechanisms? Does it work as expected?
6. What challenges were faced by the project management and how has it coped?

h. Impact

1. To what extent have the goals of the project been achieved? Could you show us the evidence of the lasting change? How about the quality of evidence? Are the poor women, men and children benefited by the project? How did the projects contribute to achievement of gender equity?
2. Have there been any negative impacts on the population as a result of our project intervention?
3. What wider effects have been caused by the intervention? (as the potential for impact and to what extent has that potential been realized?)

i. Cost effectiveness

1. What have been the actual benefits of the project in order to achieve project goal and outcomes?
2. Have there been alternative outputs within the project that have achieved the same project purpose, but at lower costs?
3. Were expensive methodologies chosen over less expensive alternatives achieved similar outcomes in other areas?

j. Effectiveness

1. Which contribution do the project activities and outputs make to the achievement? What extra activities partly contributed to the achievement?
2. What were the most significant aspects of the project environment that effected the achievement of project objectives – were they foreseen and monitored?
3. What were the unforeseen effects of the project? How quickly were these identified? How could we have mitigated the negative effects? How could we have used the positive effects to the benefit of the project?

k. Sustainability

1. Is there a coherent exit strategy and has it been well communicated all around?
2. What are the main changes achieved that are likely to last, it means that activities can be sustained where necessary and/or that beneficiaries and their organizations have gained significant new capacities in pursuit of their own development objectives?
3. What are the dimensions of sustainability: economic/financial; social/organizational; technological; environmental?
4. Are all project activities carried out in a sustainable manner wherever possible?
5. How are local resources and capacities strengthened in order to be able to use more effectively in the future?
6. Have there been any community development and relationships being formed? Are they likely to initiate other disaster risk reduction projects in the vulnerable community?

m. Learning

- 1) Has evidence of learning opportunities been captured and utilized by the project/country programme? What are the learning opportunities of the project?
- 2) How DARD and DPI are learning from each other? How the learning has been used?
- 3) How are the lessons learnt being shared locally, nationally, regionally and internationally?

III. Review Team and methodologies

Composition and responsibilities of the team:

The review team will consist of one external international consultant, one external national consultant, one Oxfam staff in EA region (TBC), Project Officers, local partners of the two provinces, and one translator. Project Officers and respective partner staff will be involved in reviewing activities of the other province (example - TG partner and Project officer will review DT province activities - DT partner and Project officer will review activities of TG province). The international consultant will work as Team Leader. All consultants should have experiences in disaster risk management and in conducting Participatory Disaster Risk Assessments (PDRA).

Roles and responsibilities of Team Leader and Team members:

The Team Leader:

An independent consultant with experience conducting project evaluations in Vietnam will be the Team Leader for the mission. S/he will:

- Review relevant background documents including the Terms of Reference for the evaluation mission, the project proposal, annual project operational plans for each province, quarterly progress reports, and financial updates along with any other documentation deemed important for the needs of the review;
- Together with other team members, develop a detailed questionnaire for each stakeholder group;
- Together with other team members, finalize the sample of villages which will participate in the evaluation, project beneficiaries and project Committee members to be interviewed;
- Conduct interviews of stakeholders in the target villages in Dong Thap and Tien Giang provinces and present feedback to each village;
- Analyze the results from the fieldwork in each province in relation to the contribution to the achievement of the goal, and objectives of the DM project;
- Write up the key lessons learnt and recommendations in an evaluation report in English (not more than 30pp, excluding the annexes - please see a draft format of MTMR in the annex 2) and provide a presentation on the key issues to the review team; and
- Undertake any other activities deemed necessary to address the objectives of the Mid-term evaluation mission.

Review Team Members:

Team members drawn from Oxfam staff and counterparts in all project provinces will support the Team Leader during the evaluation. Team members will be specifically responsible for:

- Providing input to the development of the detailed questionnaire and the selection of the sample villages and villagers;
- Participating in the field study, conducting focus group interviews and interviewing, and sharing results with other team members;
- Assisting the Team Leader with the presentation of interview results to village/commune representatives; and
- Providing any other assistance required by the Team Leader.

Review Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative review techniques will be applied for this MTMR.

The following review methods will be used:

- j. Verification of some indicator data and secondary data collection (collection of existing data and relevant materials related to proposal, village/ commune action plan, M& E and Learning materials, training manual, reports etc.
- k. District and Commune profile forms – statistical data/information in each target district/commune.
- l. Review team and partners prepare Questionnaires.
- m. One-on-one Interviews with project partners, key informants in the communities and observations of technical assistance and early warning sets of equipment.
- n. Focus group discussions with CFSC, District, province, commune levels, village leaders and community representatives.
- o. Sharing preliminary findings with partners, review findings and finalize these.

Detailed scope of work

The specific tasks of the lead consultant of the review team are to:

- Develop the review design and working strategy, including a detailed review of the TOR, identification of the most appropriate data collection and analysis tools (key informant interviews, focus group discussion, etc.), an outline for the review report in line with Oxfam impact assessment/ MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) guidelines, review of the field schedule and process. In-depth discussions with the Humanitarian Program Coordinator to discuss the review strategies.
- Consult and discuss project development and implementation with key Oxfam staff members through in- depth discussion with Oxfam’s Humanitarian Programme Coordinator and Oxfam project staff to get history of the project, implementation, partnership, opportunities and ongoing challenges.
- Review all available relevant documents of project development and implementation that are provided by Oxfam and partners;
- Consult and discuss with review team for finalization of the developed questionnaires for interviewing community members and government counterparts, and updating on developments of the review

- Conduct field visits in consultation with the review team, including interviews and field observations in a representative sample of targeted communities. To enhance in-depth analysis, the team will visit a limited number of households and stakeholders only.
- Interview project partners and government counterparts.
- Carry out and supervise the professional conduct of the team in carrying out the research in the field.

IV: Timetable and reporting

Duration: Three weeks commencing from 16th of May until 06th of June 2008

a) Output

The Review Team is expected to produce one final report of the mission in English and submit all notes and completed questionnaires collected by the team to Oxfam staff by 20th of June 2008; the final draft in Vietnamese to partners no later than 20th of July 2008.

b) Mission itinerary and Input of the Team

There are five main parts to the review – 1) preparation of consultant, 2) workshop to prepare the review team, 3) fieldwork, 4) debriefing of the team and report drafting and 5) final submission of the report.

NB: The development of questionnaires and research tools is something that can really happen during the workshop with the review team;

The schedule should be more participatory and involve the review team a lot more – a pre-mission workshop with the review team including partners from both provinces should be held before field research is conducted.

The workshop should cover the following tasks:

- (i) Introduce members of the evaluation team to each other;
- (ii) Establish roles and responsibilities within the evaluation team for the interviewing process e.g. who will be responsible for interviewing project management staff, counterparts etc.;
- (iii) Develop detailed questionnaires for the field study; and
- (iv) Decide on the sample of project beneficiaries to be interviewed (including an equal mix of men, women, poor and marginalized community members)

Days	Date	Activity
1 ½		Review all provided documents and discussion with the staff of OGB in Ha Noi about research tools and methodologies.
½		Travel from Ha Noi to Dong Thap and Tien Giang.
1		Conduct pre-mission workshop (development of research questionnaire/ tools having participation of partners and team)
3		Conduct field research in Dong Thap and present the preliminary findings

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with various relevant agencies. • Commune level meeting and focus groups. • Conduct household interviews • Present preliminary findings.
3		Conduct field research in Tien Giang and present the preliminary findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with various relevant agencies. • Commune level meeting and focus groups. • Conduct household interviews • Present preliminary findings.
1		Team discusses, reviews, and debriefs the mission to Oxfam and partners.
5		Analyze data and draft report.
		Submit first draft report for comments.
1		Submit final draft

NB: Field research information should have more details including how it will feedback its findings to the communities – these initial preliminary findings from the focus group discussions and the interviews should be feed back to beneficiaries while the team is still in the field with the final presentation of the review findings being presented to the review team.

Following the field study, the Team Leader can develop a draft evaluation report detailing the findings of the review. The Team Leader can debrief project management staff at the Dong Thap office of Oxfam (TBC).

c) Preparation for the consultancy

Oxfam will provide the consultants with documentation necessary to be reviewed in preparation for the consultancy.

d) Logistical support

Oxfam will contract the two consultants in accordance with Oxfam regulations and guidelines for the contracting management. Oxfam will cover each of the two consultants a return airfare ticket; and all ground transport and accommodation costs. Oxfam will accompany the consultants and the team in the field and during interviews with stakeholders as required.

Project Coordinator will provide all support to the review team as necessary.

Annex II Strengths, limitations, opportunities and challenges

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well thought out design phase, carried out in a participatory manner. The project is clearly designed and structured ▪ From the onset a Fund Agreement and clear project regulations were agreed ▪ The necessary information has been provided to OGB staff, project partners and other stakeholders; there are clear objectives and related activities are well planned and prepared ▪ The project has invested time and commitment into participatory approaches ▪ The project to date has met the target indicators against those in the project log frame and achieved the various outputs ▪ Targeted communities have benefited from the project outputs and have participated in a lot of training events that have facilitated, e.g. in CBDM, swimming, First Aid, search and rescue, etc. ▪ Excellent IEC materials have been developed ▪ Variability of components within the project, i.e. tangible structural elements and capacity development is seen as a positive ▪ There is flexibility of budget lines (e.g. change from the livelihoods support fund to the flexible fund for infrastructural works) ▪ Oxfam has accreditation in both provinces ▪ The Tien Giang Provincial People’s Committee have particularly provided strong support to the project ▪ Despite the turnover of several Project Coordinators, there is currently staff stability; other OGB and project partner staff have remained stable since the design phase and two have been involved for over two years ▪ The Programme Humanitarian Coordinator – who was involved in the conception and design of the project - still remains in position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the beginning of the project, inadequate information was provided to all the target communes and beneficiaries ▪ The duration of training/workshops is still controversial, partly due to the time constraints (the participants generally require longer training events) but also due to the full content of the training events ▪ Incentives are required to ensure that participants attend a training event ▪ OGB has suffered from staff turnover of the Project Coordinators (three to date) which has impacted negatively on the progress of the project ▪ There has been inadequate post-event monitoring of project activities, especially the training and workshops to ascertain how effective the training has been and what behavioral change has taken place ▪ There are difficulties with regards to expansion of the project due to existing programmes and staff and project partner workloads.
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen the existing relationship with CFSC in both provinces and explore further different partnership models with the membership ▪ Support from Oxfam Australia and other regional OGB East Asia and Oxford staff ▪ There remains a further two and a half years for the consolidation, improvement and development of project activities to meet the project objectives ▪ Assuming that the IEC campaign is sustained, the target population can gain more benefits for their lives and properties ▪ More disaster risk reduction initiatives are required to develop and to maintain the project (too heavy a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IEC campaigning (123 mother clubs) cannot be maintained in a sustainable manner if the communities do not understand the CBDM approach (i.e. of voluntarism, solidarity, self-help, etc.) ▪ Infrastructure works have proved to be challenging and complex ▪ Potential impact of major disasters/climate change ▪ Retention of the main OGB staff is critical and every effort must be made to ensure this over the next two years.

<p>focus on training – <i>How can these enhanced skills and knowledge be utilized in the communities?</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ OGB is one of a few INGOs in the provinces to have a disaster risk reduction project but little has been done to engage more fully with CARE, SC (Denmark) and UNICEF who also work in the vicinity and to explore “smarter” ways of working more coherently. More information sharing/commitment is possible as well as with other INGOs in and outside the country▪ Consider further recruitment and OGB staff development to maintain quality and commitment of current staff▪ Potential to explore further what other disaster risk reductions projects could actually be funded and move on from the current stalemate that exists with the lack of progress on the utilization of the flexible funds▪ Greater engagement with AusAID with regards to their expectations and involvement.	
--	--

Annex III Learning from the process of the review

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A minimum of 20 people were involved (including OGB staff and project partners) to develop the ToR which had proved to be challenging in terms of being able to consolidate a ToR where all participants' viewpoints were reflected (some views conflicted) and perhaps a core group, i.e. the internal review team and the Humanitarian Coordinator would have been sufficient to draft the ToR and to then share this amongst internal stakeholders ▪ Two team system worked effectively with differing target groups being interviewed by the different teams (one focusing more on project partners and staff and the other on the benefactors of the project – the trainers, trainees and households); however, there were at times a duplication of efforts, e.g. perhaps a focus group discussion with a representative sample of trainees, for example, in one location would have been better than seeing a number of similar groups at different times ▪ Oxfam Australia provided a resource person to be a team member and to contribute to the overall review process ▪ The importance of adequate hotel accommodation (with Internet connection) was met in both DT and TG; some basic materials for the group work (e.g. butcher paper and pens) would have helped to facilitate the review team discussions; logistical arrangements (vehicles) and meeting timings were extremely well organised ▪ Social time in the evenings with the team and too a half day excursion was also extremely useful for team building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was challenging for OGB to find suitable external resource persons with suitable DM experience in Hanoi/Viet Nam ▪ More substantive input by the external consultants into the ToR prior to the review would have been welcomed (although recognising the challenges that this poses when consultants are busy with other work and their involvement with the review not fully confirmed) ▪ The desire by OGB to have another person on the external team from OGB global programme to help with knowledge sharing/lessons learning was not realised due to the challenges faced finding a suitable person who could be released for a two week period ▪ There had been challenges faced by OGB in agreeing a realistic time table with project partners in both DT and TG – resulting in a tight schedule with no time built in for reflection and analysis until the end of the day; this was a major challenge for the team particularly regarding the capacity building aspects of the review; a half day every other afternoon for the team to work together to process and analyse the findings would be beneficial. There seems to have been a certain intransigence on behalf of the partners with regard to the amount of time required for the review and a lack of appreciation of the need to provide “space” for process and learning ▪ Two days that were negotiated at the beginning of the mission for team building and for briefing by project staff was extremely useful but possibly a further day or half a day would have been advantageous to discuss the methods and overall process ▪ The presence of the Humanitarian Programme Coordinator on the team would have been extremely beneficial to strengthen the “insider-outsider” approach ▪ More time was also required for the English to Vietnamese interpretation and also too for translation of the final presentations for the PMB and other stakeholders ▪ Other persons involved with the programme should have also been interviewed face to face (one such interview was feasible with a former RC national trainer, which provided valuable insights into the training methods/materials used and too of the selection of the trainees) ▪ Interviews with other stakeholders (outside the project) would also have been beneficial (viz.

	<p>CARE, SC, ADPC and UNICEF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Apparently it was not possible to change the timing for the feedback sessions nor to combine the two feedback sessions that took place on consecutive days and it was felt that a learning opportunity was lost▪ A roundtable introductory meeting with the PMB and CFSC partners from both provinces would have been beneficial as would have a single feedback session in either DT or TG for all PMB/SC members, OGB staff▪ Further analysis of the project logical framework and whether the indicators were realistic and had been met, or needed modification for the coming years, was stressed by the OGB team as was a focus upon the quantitative achievements; an emphasis on the importance of the IEC component of the project was stressed in final meetings.
--	---

Annex IV Quantitative data on activities completed to date

No.	Activities	Total	Men	Women	Children
A	COMPONENT 1: To build knowledge, skills and resources to mitigate, prepare for and respond to floods amongst leadership and households in 24 flood - affected communes				
I	Training/workshop				
1	Commune baseline survey	51	32	19	
2	ToF training on CBDM	73	49	24	
3	Village action plan development	1,056	554	397	105
4	Commune action plan development	1,359	798	465	96
5	ToF training on search and rescue	75	70	5	
6	Training on search and rescue at the commune level	818	635	183	
7	ToF training on swimming	31	25	6	
8	Swimming training for children and women	2,688		838	1,850
9	Gender sensitization at commune level	403	236	167	
10	Women's leadership training course	175		175	
11	Men's leadership training course	208	208		
12	ToF training on IEC, volunteers	158	75	83	
13	Training on Emergency Response Project planning, M & E at commune level (Dong Thap)	62	47	15	
II	Flood scenario simulation exercises at commune level	719	687	32	
III	Supply of early warning system equipment				
	In Tien Giang: 45 loudspeakers, 3 amplifiers, 8 micro-amplifiers, 35 megaphones and 3,500m of special cable. In Dong Thap: 29 radio cassette players, 6 radios, 37 megaphones, 97 high frequency speakers, 7 loudspeakers, 14 amplifiers, 22 speaker sets, 54 transformers for loudspeakers and 17,420m of special cable.				
IV	Supply of first aid and search and rescue equipment				
	Tien Giang province: 200 life buoy, 400 life jackets, 10 tarpaulins, 10 torches, 30 stretchers and 40 first aid boxes Dong Thap province: 150 lifebuoy, 190 life jackets, 90 raincoats, 52 torches				
B	COMPONENT 2: Capacity building for commune district, provincial CFSC				
1	Training in gender sensitization at district and commune levels	128	78	50	
2	Provincial Action Plan on Flood Preparedness and Disaster Response	27	23	4	
3	District Action Plan on Flood Preparedness and Disaster Response	72	60	12	
4	SPHERE and DANA training workshop	283	249	34	

5	Emergency Response Project Planning, M & E , province and district (Dong Thap)	97	70	27	
C	COMPONENT 5: Programme management and coordination				
1	Workshop on the development of year II plan				
2	Organization of Steering Committee Meeting (Tien Giang)				
3	Organization of review meeting of year 1 (Tien Giang)	94	81	13	
4	INGO coordination meeting	140			
5	MEL training course	22	13	9	
	Total	8,739	3,990	2,558	2,051

© Oxfam GB 2008

First published online by Oxfam GB in 2010.

This document is part of a collection of programme evaluations available from Oxfam GB in accordance with its evaluation policy.

This document was originally written for internal accountability and learning purposes, rather than for external publication. The information included was correct to the evaluator's best knowledge at the date the evaluation took place. The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect Oxfam's views.

The text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for reuse in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. Email publish@oxfam.org.uk

For further information on the issues raised in this document email phd@oxfam.org.uk

Oxfam is a registered charity in England and Wales (no 202918) and Scotland (SC 039042). Oxfam GB is a member of Oxfam International.

www.oxfam.org.uk