

Groundwater Irrigation in Bangladesh: Changing Modalities, Resultant Policies

National stakeholder workshop by IWMI- SDC-SoLAR project and CGIAR TAFSSA and Mitigate+ Initiatives

Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka

Date: 2nd December 2022

Time: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm BST

Background:

Despite being one of the key drivers of food production and food security in Bangladesh, diesel irrigation is responsible for a rising fiscal burden on the state exchequers and environmental costs to the country. For the country's energy security and given the government's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bangladesh should shift away from diesel irrigation to clean and renewable energy like solar. However, this transition is also unavoidable given the rapid electrification in the country and the proactive introduction of solar irrigation pumps toward the government's commitment to green energy. With an emerging change in the modality of groundwater irrigation in the country, it is critical to understand how access to cheap irrigation may affect farmers' income and agricultural production, as well as the implications on groundwater sustainability in the future.

Workshop Partners

To understand these issues, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), under the [“Solar Irrigation for Agricultural Resilience”](#) (SoLAR) project, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is organizing a national stakeholder workshop in Bangladesh in collaboration with the Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL), NGO Forum, and the CGIAR initiatives [“Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia”](#) (TAFSSA) and [Mitigate+: Initiative for Low-Emission Food Systems](#).

The SoLAR project is a South Asia regional initiative involving Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, implemented by IWMI and funded by the Global Programme of SDC. The project aims to support the climate-compatible development of energy and water systems in rural South Asia for resilient livelihoods. IWMI is partnering with IDCOL to mainstream solar irrigation in Bangladesh.

IDCOL is the pioneer organization in financing renewable energy in Bangladesh and has contributed immensely to the solar irrigation sector.

NGO-Forum is a non-governmental organization in Bangladesh engaged in promoting WASH, nutrition, health, governance, humanitarian responsiveness, safe migration, and climate resilience to improve public health and safety, especially for the poor, marginalized, and excluded segments of society.

TAFSSA is a CGIAR initiative with aims to support actions that improve equitable access to sustainable healthy diets, improve farmers' livelihoods and resilience, and conserve land, air, and water resources in South Asia.

Mitigate+ is a CGIAR initiative that aims to reduce annual global food systems emissions by working closely with key actors in the target countries to ensure they are equipped to make evidence-based decisions and address challenges in food systems discourse, policy development, and implementation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Workshop Format and Agenda

The workshop will be conducted in a hybrid mode (virtual + on-site) and in three sessions on (i) the scope and impact of replacing diesel with solar irrigation pumps, (ii) the consequences of rapid electrification on the groundwater market, and (iii) ways for tackling the threat to groundwater sustainability posed by cheaper irrigation. The purpose of this workshop is to facilitate deliberations and a better understanding of these issues to strengthen the policy research on the challenges and opportunities of Bangladesh's evolving groundwater irrigation sector.

TIME	Presentation/panel (with panelists)		DURATION
9:30 – 10:00	Registration		
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome remarks from IDCOL and SDC		10 min
10:10 – 10:20	Introduction of workshop's partner organizations		10 min
10:20 – 10:30	Opening remarks from the Chief Guest - Ms. Munira Sultana, Chairman SREDA		10 min
SESSION 1 – Role of SIPs in replacing diesel – status and future scope			
10:30 – 10:40	The promise of SIPs in Bangladesh	Archisman Mitra (IWMI)	10 min
10:40 – 10:50	SIP grid Integration in Bangladesh: Setting the incentives right	Md. Abdullah Al Matin (IDCOL)	10 min
10:50 – 11:30	Panel discussion: Prioritizing grid integration of SIPs in BD Participants 1. Salima Jahan (Ex. Member SREDA) 2. Nazmun Nahar (ADB) 3. Mr. Iftekhar Hossain (WAVE) 4. Badrul Alam Khan (GRECL) 5. Md. Abdullah Al Matin (IDCOL)	Moderator – Aditi Mukherji (IWMI)	40 min
TEA BREAK (15 mins) 11:30 – 11:45			
SESSION 2 – Access to affordable irrigation: Threat to GW sustainability?			
11:45 – 11:55	Groundwater sustainability concerns and the Bengal Water Machine in Bangladesh	Anwar Zahid (BWDB)	10 min
11:55 – 12:40	Panel discussion: Tackling GW over-extraction through permits Participants 1. Anwar Zahid (BWDB) 2. Sultan Ahmed (BADC) 3. Md. Jahangir Alam Khan (BMDA) 4. M. G. Mostofa Amin (BAU) 5. Dr. Wais Kabir (Ex. BARC)	Moderator – Alok Sikka (IWMI)	45 min
LUNCH BREAK (1 hour) 12:40 – 13:40			
SESSION 3 – Implications of expanding the grid on informal groundwater markets			
13:40 – 13:50	Electrification of agricultural pumps in Bangladesh	Shreya Ray (IFPRI)	10 min
13:50 – 14:30	Panel discussion: Implication of electrification of agricultural pumps on water markets Participants 1. Md. Saidur Rahman (BAU) 2. Nazmun Nahar Karim (BARC) 3. Manoranjan Mondal (IRRI) 4. Dr. Md. Ayub Hossain (BARI) 5. Shadman Bin Zahir (IDCOL)	Moderator – Shreya Ray (IFPRI)	40 min
14:30 – 14:40	Closing Remarks	Aditi Mukherji (IWMI)	10 min
End of Event			
TEA BREAK (20 mins) 14:40 – 15:00			
15:00 – 16:30	5 th SDC-SoLAR C-PMC meeting (only for SDC-SoLAR CPMC members)		1.5 hours

You can also join us virtually https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KNV8FggvTsKTc9Ext9QrJA