



ANALYSIS FOR THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF Nature Based Tourism (Final)

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USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL)

Component 4: Improve and diversified livelihoods that are environmentally
sustainable and resilient to Climate Change

Winrock International

Executive Summary

Nature based tourism is derived from the words –‘Ecosystem’ and ‘Tourism’. So ‘Nature based tourism’ simply means environment-friendly tourism. Environmental tourism is grounded in the concept of the nature-based tourism. Nature based tourism is more than a catch phrase for nature loving travel and recreation. It is consecrated for preserving and sustaining the diversity of the world’s natural and cultural environments. It accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains and supports the native cultures in the locations it is operating in. Thus, Nature based tourism is regarded as an idea of sustainable tourism in order to develop tourism without damaging ecological balance. Nature based tourism focuses on socially responsible travel, personal growth, and environmental sustainability. Nature based tourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Nature based tourism is intended to offer tourists insight into the impact of human beings on the environment, and to foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats. One important contribution in the nature based tourism framework came from Community-based Nature based tourism of Kersten (1997) who defined Community-based Nature based tourism as a kind of nature tourism wherein the local community maintains full (or major) control over the management and the profits of the project.

Tourism in Bangladesh is managed by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MCAT). Very recently World Travel and Tourism Council’s Bangladesh Country Report 2010 forecasted that the contribution of Travel and Tourism (TT) to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to rise from 3.9% (BDT 265.9bn or USD 3,786.4mn) in 2010 to 4.1% (BDT 788.4bn or USD 8,781.7mn) by 2020. It is believed that Bangladesh should promote nature based tourism development instead of its effort to accommodate a large number of tourists beyond its capacity. Lessons can be learnt from the neighboring country Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka as well as India and Thailand which have developed tourism in a well-planned and well-controlled manner with the theme ‘Low volume, High Values’ which emphasizes capitalizing on optimal benefits with lesser and a manageable number of tourists.

The government has enacted Environment Policy 1992 and Bangladesh Environment Protection Law 1995. The National Tourism Policy framed in 2010 also emphasizes nature based tourism development as well as preservation and conservation of natural and cultural products. In Bangladesh the nature based tourism concept is not properly reflected in the current national tourism development programs. The tourism development issue has been skipped in ‘Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan prepared in 2009 as well as in ‘National Adaptation Program of Action’ developed in 2005.

Market Analysis

The assessment considering CREL’s key focus on looking for opportunities that the target beneficiaries can utilize and can be integrated into the value chain as a mainstream actor, and in doing the mainstreaming, the environment and climactic conditions are unharmed, through minimum utilization of natural resource extraction and minimum adverse impact on environment due to value chain activities.

The assessment began by prioritizing the project sites according to their potential for creating impact within the time frame as locations for nature based tourism. Next, the market actors were identified and their roles, growth and constraints were looked into in order to pin-point the site-wise constraints that impact the beneficiaries. Some of the major sites in the different regions were:

Southwest Zone	Southeast Zone 1	Southeast Zone 2	Northeast Zone
Karamjol, Harbaria, Kotka,	Dudpukuria-Dhopachari	Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary,	Lawachara National Park,

Kochikhali, Dhangmari, Mongla, Dubeki, Neelkomol and Hiron Point	Wildlife Sanctuary, Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, Kaptai National Park	Dulahazara Safari Park, Himchari National Park	Satchori National Park, Khadimnagar National Park, Hail Haor, Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Hakaluki Haor
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Nature based tourism value chain is different from the conventional value chains, but overall in the all the regions it was seen that the major market actors identified were generally in the following categories:

- Tour Operator and Travel Agent
- Hotel/ Resort and Accommodation Provider
- Food and Beverage Provider
- Transport Provider
- On-spot Tourism/ Nature based tourism Service Provider
- Souvenir Center
- Input Provider
- Forest Department
- Co-Management Committees

Based on the data and in-depth information collected from these actors, the major constraints identified were noted to be general for all regions, regardless of the different topographic and demographic features. Tourists are not well aware about the values of nature based tourism, so their expectations from these trips and their behaviour do not suit with nature based tourism packages. Most nature based tourism sites do not have proper communication mechanisms and are difficult to reach by either poor quality roads or through rivers. Most sites do not have proper restrooms, shelters, waste disposable facilities, walking paths, food service, drinking water and children's entertainment provisions. This makes it difficult for tourists to plan to spend time in these sites and causes undue hassles. Also, high quality facilities and services that can attract a high-value niche tourist market are not set up. And lastly, nature based tourism is not specifically promoted or marketed to either the local or the international tourists, leaving a lot of scope for growth being unfulfilled.

Recommendations

Nature based tourism, if practiced correctly, can be an important economic and educational activity. It has the scope to link to a wider constituency and build conservation support while raising awareness about the worth and fragility of such ecosystems in the public at large. It may also promote the non-consumptive use of wilderness areas, for the benefit of local communities living around, and dependent on these fragile landscapes. Involvement of the local community and cost-sharing should be a explicit requirement of community-based nature based tourism, thus Conservation education and training for all stakeholders (local community, conservation officers, tourists, service providers, etc.,) should be developed in an integral part of this process.

Facilities Development would be a priority in developing nature based tourism sites since most of them lack basic facilities which would enhance their profile to both local and international tourists. Some possible facilities include: Restrooms and changing rooms, waste disposal facilities, wooden boardwalks and trails, jetties for boats, shelters and leisure spots, food/ beverage service provisions, tourist centers, souvenir shops. For certain locations, there is even the need to develop more concrete structures like river-crossing facilities in the Chittagong Hill Tract areas, eco-resorts and eco-villages in most sites.

Eco-guides need to be developed to not only make eco-tourists aware about nature based tourism, but also to be able to guide the tour groups through the sites where they can inform the tourists about the local biodiversity and history.

Development of ethno-cultural service provisions like eco-villages, cultural/performance groups where the community people can be engaged in providing services that can enrich the experiences of the tourists during their stay.

Promotion of locally produced herbal or culinary products and local fruits and vegetables by serving local culinary delights at the hotels, restaurants or other food centers in and around the tourism sites.

One of the focus areas of CREL is to promote community-based nature based tourism. With a developing industry like tourism in these regions, the scope to involve the community people into specific enterprises or services becomes very plausible. Some of the ways that they can be engaged into the value chain will be as:

Service providers: The community people can be employed in the hotels, restaurants, eco-resorts, tour vessels, or as eco-guides. They can also be engaged as drivers, boat men, ticketers, guards, cleaners, photographers, etc in the nature based tourism sites.

Small Enterprises: People from the community can establish small enterprises within these regions targeting the tourist population. These can include food stores serving local culinary delights, or transportation facilities like a motorcycle or boat renting shop, or even souvenir and local items store.

Souvenir making: Groups in the communities can be trained in making souvenirs like handicrafts or preservatives (achar, jam, snacks, clothes, pinon, blankets, kantha, shawls, etc.) which can be sold at tourist centers, hotels and resorts. This can be a trade where landless project beneficiaries can get involved in as means for income generation.

Eco-villages and cultural groups can be developed in the more remote areas like Sundarbans, Hill Tracts, Sylhet where the community people can engage directly with the tourists and provide them with local experiences. Cultural groups showcasing performing traditional musical, dance or theatrical performances can be developed and linked with different resorts, hotels and tour agencies.

The potential to develop nature based tourism in Bangladesh is very high. With strong development in infrastructure and services along with promotion at both the local and international level, this industry can be expected to take off. Ensuring community engagement and awareness about conserving the biodiversity and the natural beauty needs to be the focus to ensure the growth of these ventures.

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Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Brief Overview

Tourism has eclipsed traditional industries and livelihood options in many parts of the world and has emerged as the single most important industry in several countries. However, studies that seek to understand its impacts on economy, environment, and culture are constrained by methodological and theoretical limitations. One of the reasons for the ambiguities and inadequacies in the area of tourism research has been its inability to properly appreciate the importance of the ethical dimensions of human development.

Nature based tourism is derived from the words –‘Ecosystem’ and ‘Tourism’. So ‘Nature based tourism’ simply means environment-friendly tourism. Environmental tourism is grounded in the concept of the nature-based tourism. Nature based tourism is more than a catch phrase for nature loving travel and recreation. It is consecrated for preserving and sustaining the diversity of the world’s natural and cultural environments. It accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains and supports the native cultures in the locations it is operating in. Thus, Nature based tourism is regarded as an idea of sustainable tourism in order to develop tourism without damaging ecological balance.

Nature based tourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact and often small scale alternative to standard commercial (mass) tourism. Its purpose may be to educate the traveler, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights. Since the 1980s Nature based tourism has been considered a critical endeavor by environmentalists, so that future generations may experience destinations relatively untouched by human intervention.

Nature based tourism focuses on socially responsible travel, personal growth, and environmental sustainability. Nature based tourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Nature based tourism is intended to offer tourists insight into the impact of human beings on the environment, and to foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats.

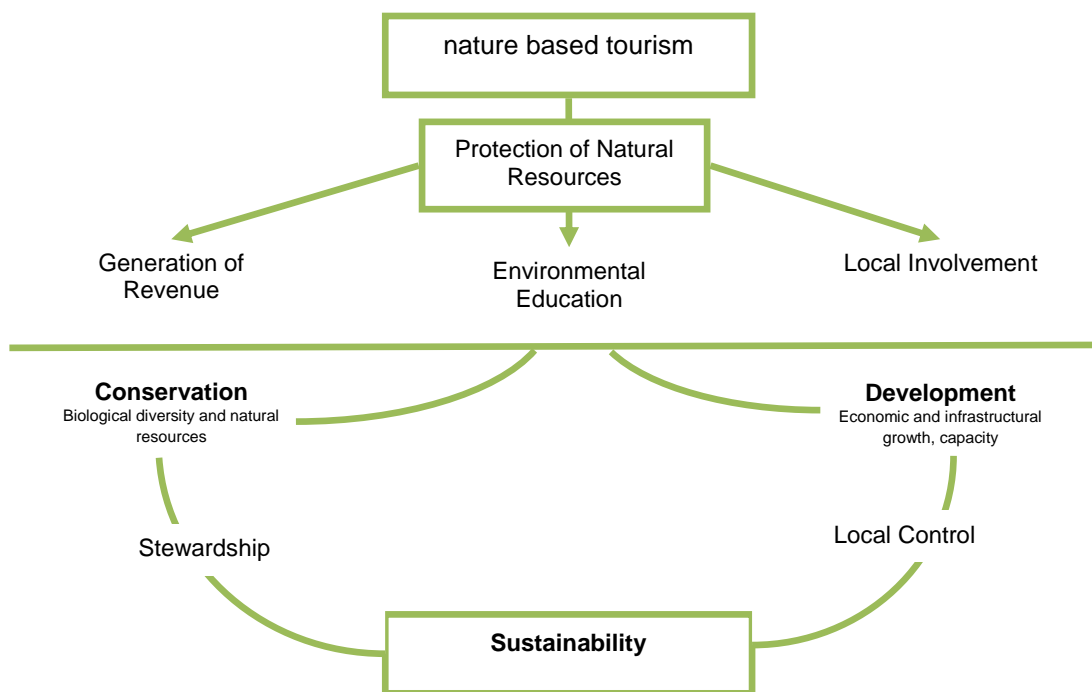
Responsible nature based tourism programs include those that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, an integral part of Nature based tourism is the promotion of recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation, and creation of economic opportunities for local communities. For these reasons, Nature based tourism often appeals to advocates of environmental and social responsibility.

Nature based tourism is a form of tourism that involves visiting natural areas—in the remote wilderness or rural environments. According to the definition and principles of nature based tourism established by The International Nature based tourism Society (TIES) in 1990, nature based tourism is "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" (TIES, 1990). Martha Honey expands on the TIES definition by describing the seven characteristics of nature based tourism, which are:

- Involves travel to natural destinations
- Minimizes impact

- Builds environmental awareness
- Provides direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Respects local culture
- Supports human rights and movements such as:
 - conservation of biological diversity and cultural diversity through ecosystem protection
 - promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity, by providing jobs to local populations
 - sharing of socio-economic benefits with local communities and indigenous peoples by having their informed consent and participation in the management of Nature based tourism enterprises
 - tourism to unspoiled natural resources, with minimal impact on the environment being a primary concern.
 - minimization of tourism's own environmental impact
 - affordability and lack of waste in the form of luxury
 - local culture, flora and fauna being the main attractions
 - local people benefit from this form of tourism economically, often more than mass tourism

Figure 1: Schematic Diagram for Nature based tourism

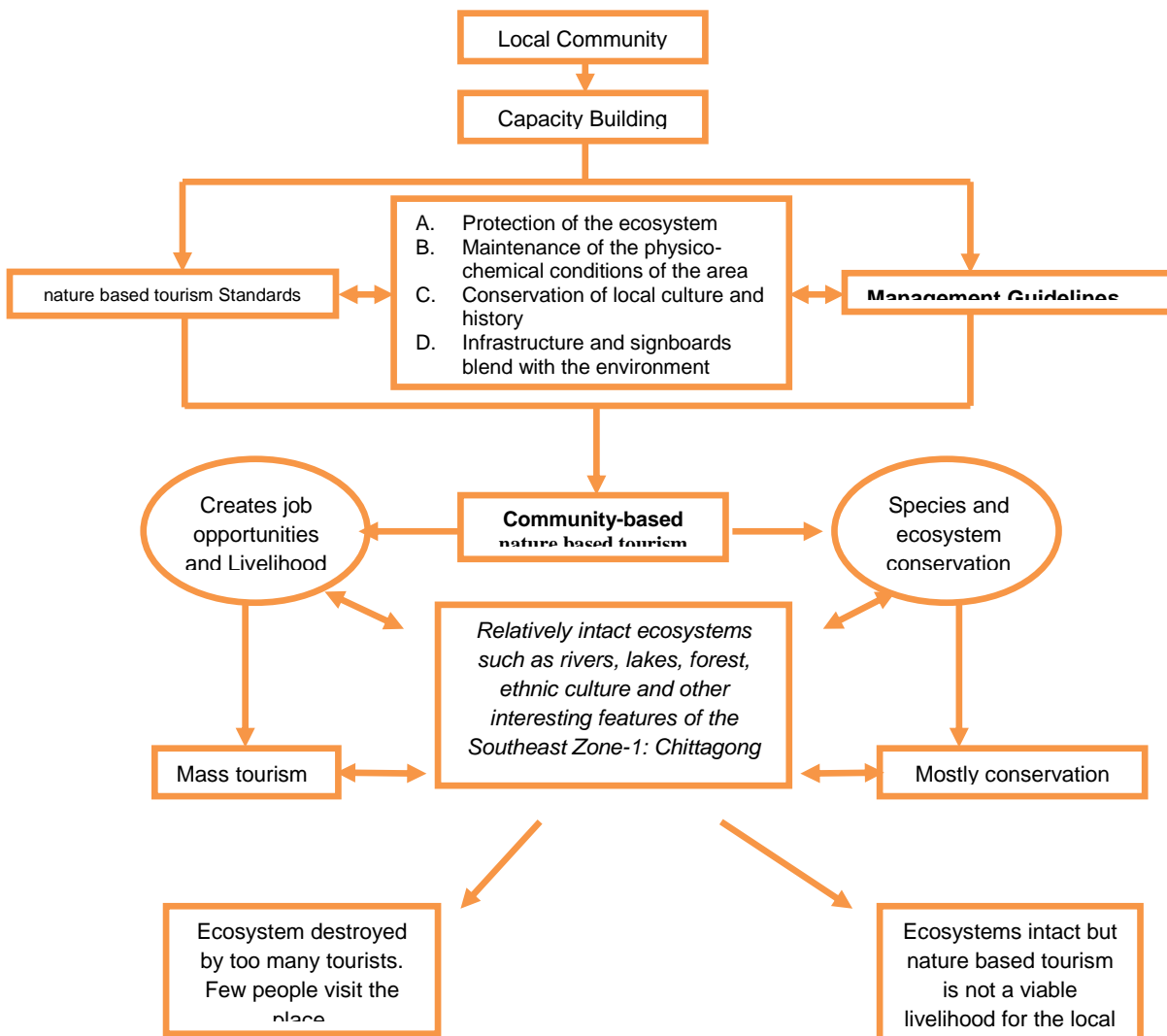


Community-based Nature based tourism: One important contribution in the nature based tourism framework came from Community-based Nature based tourism of Kersten (1997) who defined Community-based Nature based tourism as a kind of nature tourism wherein the local community maintains full (or major) control over the management and the profits of the project. Figure 1 shows a

schematic diagram of the community-based Nature based tourism principles¹. The emphasis of this strategy is community development and participation of the marginalized sector (including indigenous groups) rather than on regional or national development. It also has the following aims:

1. to help preserve ecosystems and natural areas (usually already within protected areas) with a high tourism potential;
2. to cultivate environmental consciousness among the local population by educating them about the dangers of overexploiting resources and unrestricted number of tourists;
3. to promote new economic incentives, e.g. selling of local (environmentally safe) products, crafts, and cultivated medicinal plants thereby create some entrepreneurial skills;
4. to ensure communal ownership and control, and that part of the profits flow into community development programs rather than into personal enrichment; and
5. to foster a feeling of pride and community through a revival or preservation of “traditional” practices and cultural techniques.

Figure 2: Schematic Diagram for Community-based Nature based tourism



¹Regis, Emelina G., 2004. Conceptual Framework of nature based tourism

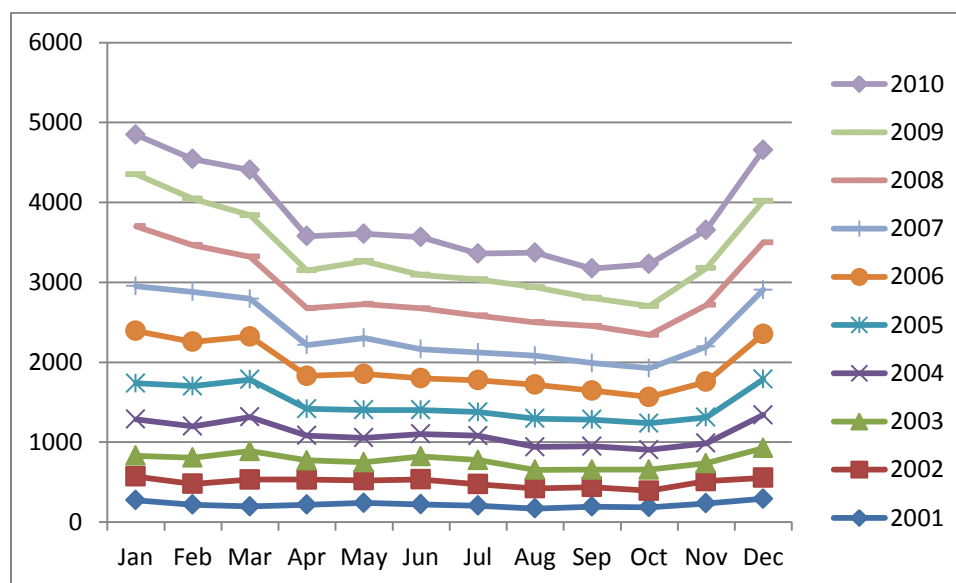
1.2 Market Size

Tourism in Bangladesh is managed by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MCAT). Very recently World Travel and Tourism Council's Bangladesh Country Report 2010 forecasted that the contribution of Travel and Tourism (TT) to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to rise from 3.9% (BDT 265.9bn or USD 3,786.4mn) in 2010 to 4.1% (BDT 788.4bn or USD 8,781.7mn) by 2020.

The Real GDP growth for the Travel and Tourism Economy (TTE) is expected to be 1.7% in 2010 and to average 6.4% per annum over the coming 10 years. The contribution of the TTE to employment is expected to rise from 3.1% of total employment, 2.37 million jobs or 1 in every 32.3 jobs in 2010, to 3.2% of total employment, 3.11 million jobs, or 1 in every 31.1 jobs by 2020.

Export earnings from international visitors are expected to generate 0.5% of total exports (BDT 6.0bn or USD 85.8mn) in 2010, growing (nominal terms) to Tk 20.5bn or USD 228.5mn (0.5% of total) in 2020. Travel and Tourism investment is estimated at BDT 64.0bn, USD 911.9mn or 3.7% of total investment in 2010. By 2020, this should reach BDT 190.7bn, USD 2,124.5mn or 3.8% of total investment.

Figure 3: Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism and Other Travels (2001-2010)²



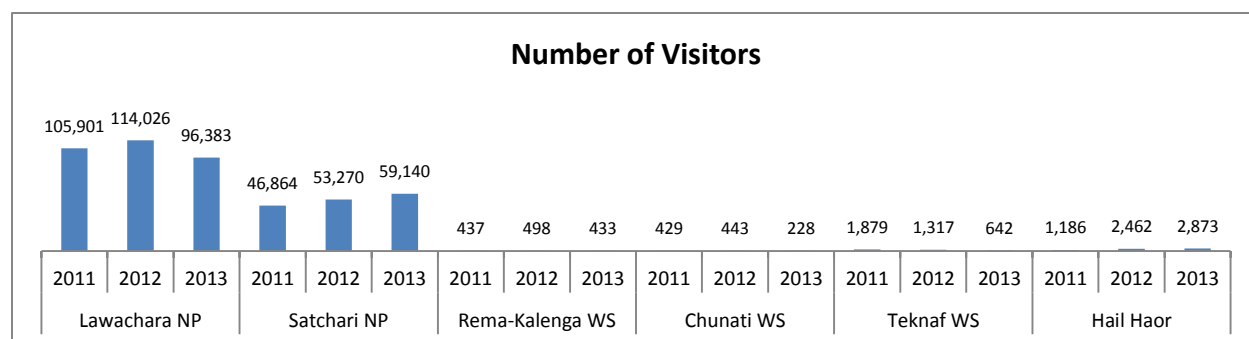
It is believed that Bangladesh should promote nature based tourism development instead of its effort to accommodate a large number of tourists beyond its capacity. Lessons can be learnt from the neighboring country Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka as well as India and Thailand which have developed tourism in a well-planned and well-controlled manner with the theme 'Low volume, High Values' which emphasizes capitalizing on optimal benefits with lesser and a manageable number of tourists. If Bangladesh targets 4-5 lakh tourists by 2020, will the nature based tourism sites be ready to sustain such a number of tourists. Therefore, it is also imperative that along with the development of nature based tourism, need of well-trained guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication will be critical. The need for educating the members of the surrounding communities, youth, CMC, VCF as well as the host community will also become important.

²Source: Bangladesh Bank. N.B: Foreign Exchange Earnings 2010 All Figures are Provisional

Potential Increase in Number of Tourist

The number of tourists has been increasing trend for the last 3 years (2011-2013). From the table below we can see that numbers in reported 6 nature based tourism sites has been consistently increasing. Few noticeable characteristics that we see from these numbers are – Lawachara NP, Chunati WS & Teknaf WS has lower number of tourist in 2013, which is mostly due to the unrest country condition affecting tourism in those areas. But the number has increased in other 3 (three) sites since they are situated outside of the main town. Also, there's a very large number gap between LNP & SNP with other sites. This gap is an indicator of sheer lacking of the nature based tourism infrastructure in those areas. RKWS & HH are located in comparatively remote areas with hard to access transport situation. Nearly same distance oriented problem prevails for both CWS & TWS. But putting these problems aside, tourists are getting more and more interested towards nature based tourism. Despite the lack of infrastructure more tourists are visiting these locations to experience the nature's beauty through nature based tourism.

Figure 4: Number of visitors in 6 nature based tourism sites from 2011 – 2013



1.3 CREL Objectives

Since all the projects within CREL working areas are focused on poverty eradication and climate conservation, CREL aims to develop the nature based tourism potential of selected sites with two objectives:

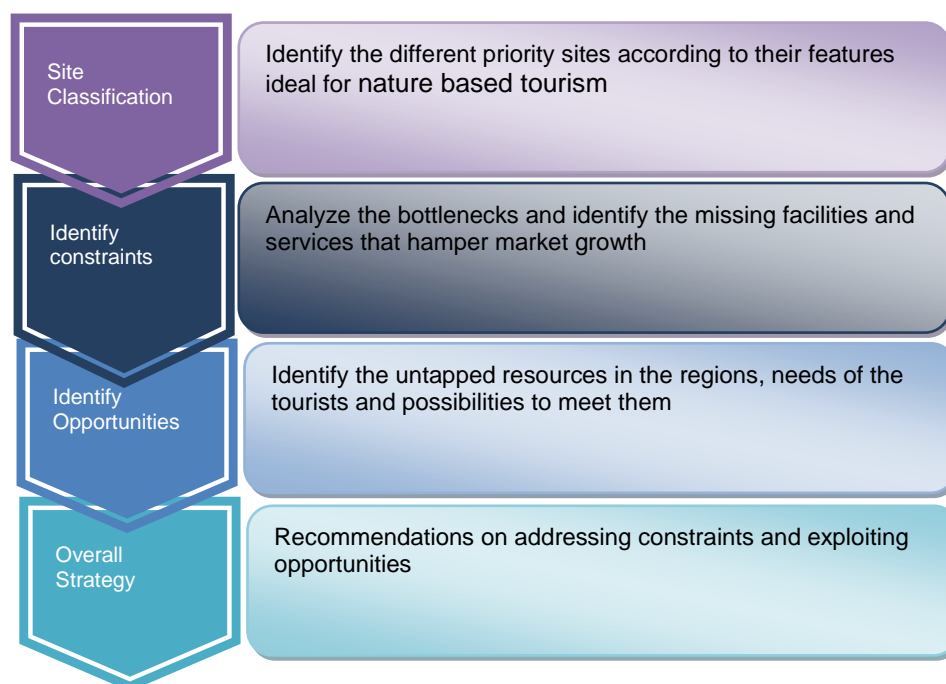
- (i) To look for opportunities that the target beneficiaries can utilize and can be integrated into the value chain as a mainstream actor. If the target beneficiaries are already involved in the chain actively, the strategy would define opportunities to increase the scope of value addition by the beneficiaries.
- (ii) In doing the mainstreaming, the environment and climactic conditions are unharmed, through minimum utilization of natural resource extraction and minimum adverse impact on environment due to value chain activities.

Thus, the challenge for this project is to maintain the balance between sufficient revenue generation opportunities for sustainable livelihood while controlling the damaging ecological impact of tourist presence and consequent commercialized development of the surrounding areas.

1.4 Assessment Methodology

Keeping the objectives of this project in mind, the following methodology was adopted for the assessment:

Figure 5: Methodology of Nature based tourism Assessment



The assessment began by prioritizing the project sites according to their potential for creating impact within the time frame. Next we analyzed site-wise constraints that impact the beneficiaries. After that we looked at the opportunities which popped up from tourists' need, still unmet. Finally, we designed overall strategies to address the bottleneck and maximize on the opportunities to build on potential livelihoods.

2. Regional Nature based Tourism

2.1 Regional Sites

Each of the project regions around Bangladesh has different tourist sites with specific features, their own opportunities for growth and specific constraints hampering them.

2.1.1 Southwest Zone

The Southwest region is known for the tourism in the Sundarbans, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Known as the largest single block of tidal halophytic mangrove forest in the world, located in the southern part of Bangladesh. It lies on the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta at the point where it merges with the Bay of Bengal. The forest consists of about 200 islands, separated by about 400 interconnected tidal rivers, creeks and canals. Different studies found here a total 453 faunal species of birds, 42 species of

mammals, 35 reptiles and 8 amphibian species³. Among these, about 46 species of coastal wildlife are endangered with certainty and the actual number would be much more⁴. Among the endangered species are five mammals, 25 birds, 14 reptiles (one crocodile, eight turtles, four lizards and one snake) and two amphibians (frogs). There are at least 36 species of marine shrimps. Among them Penaeide shrimps are commercially important. About 336 species of mollusks; covering 151 genera have been identified. In addition, 3 lobsters and 31 species of turtles and tortoises of which 24 live in freshwater are found in this part of Bangladesh.



Tourist sites in the Sundarbans can only be reached by the river and the most common means to travel is to use the tour vessels from Dhaka or Khulna, local tourists also tend to take trawlers for short tours from Mongla. The major sites in the Sundarbans are outlined below, where some basic facilities are available for the tourists:

Karamjol	Harbaria	Kotka/Kachikhali	Neelkomol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boardwalk in the forest Crocodile Breeding Center Deer Breeding & Care Center Mangrove Museum Natural Mangrove Forest Observation Tower Boat trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boardwalk in the forest Mangrove Natural Forest Observation Tower Royal Bengal Tiger sighting Relaxation hut made of Golpata leaves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jamtola Observatory Center Keura Forest on the River Bank Old Forest Department's Rest House Boardwalk on the river bank Observation point: birds, deer, monkeys, tiger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Heritage Site Sign Boardwalk in the forest Observation Tower to view the forest canopy Bird sighting Deer and tiger sighting Forest Department's Rest House Naval base & helipad

Other major tourist sites in the Sundarbans include Dhangmari, Mongla, Dubeki, and Hiron Point being the southern-most site in the region. Most of these sites have almost no development or infrastructure, and can only be reached via the river.

2.1.2 Southeast Zone 1

The study area of Chittagong Southeast Zone-1 is comprised of three protected areas (PA): Dudpukuria-Dhopachari Wildlife Sanctuary, Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaptai National Park. The forests are tropical evergreen or semi-evergreen. The overall topography of these sites is undulating, with elevations ranging from slightly too highly elevated. A number of rivers and their branches surround the region. Major rivers and canals are Karnaphuli, Ichhamati, Sangu, Matamuhuri, Dolukhali, Ichhakhal, Shilokkhal etc. Regardless of continuous



³O. Quader, Sept. 2010, Coastal and marine biodiversity of Bangladesh (Bay of Bengal), Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO), Proc. of International Conference on Environmental Aspects of Bangladesh (ICEAB10), Japan

⁴Saheed S.M., 2006, The state of Land, Water and Plant Nutrition Resources of Khulna Division of Bangladesh, Country Report

degradation of the forests, this region is still regarded as home to one of the widest variety of flora and fauna in Bangladesh.

Dudpukuria-Dhopachari Wildlife Sanctuary (DDWS) is a tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forest, which was established under the Integrated Protected Area Co-Management (IPAC) with the financial assistance from USAID in 2010. This sanctuary on 4,716 hectares of land is located under Dudpukuria, East and West Kurushia, West Dhopachari and Jungle Dhopacharimouza. The Ministry of Forest and Environment declared 'Dudpukuria-Dhopachari' area as a wildlife sanctuary located in Kurushia range of Ranguniaupazila and Dohazari range of Chandanaishupazila.

Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) was formally established in 1986. The total area of the Sanctuary is 7,764 ha distributed in seven beats (Chunatisadar, Aziznagar, Herbang, Jaldi, Chambol, Puichhari and Napora) of Chunati and Jaldi forest ranges. Banskhaliecopark is situated in the western edge of Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary and provides a range of recreational nature activities.

Kaptai National Park (KNP) is situated on an area of 5464 ha forest, which is a tropical semi-evergreen type with a hilly terrain and many valleys. Kaptai National Park is unique for its historic monumental Teak plantations. These plantations have taken the look of natural forests and supports wildlife. This park has two ranges – Kaptai and Karnaphuli – comprised of several forest beats: KaptaiSadar, Bangchhari, Kamillaachari, Sukhnachari, Rampahar, KarnaphuliSadar, Kaptaimukh, Kalmichara and Fringkeong.

The different sites have different kinds of facilities available for the tourists. These facilities and service provision are mentioned in the table below:

DDWS	Chunati WS	Kaptai NP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-cottage Trekking (forest trail) Observation tower Boat trip in Sangu river Wildlife observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trekking (forest trail) Observation tower Boat trip in lakes Food and beverage Wildlife observation Cultural display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-cottage Trekking (forest trail) Observation tower Boat trip in Kaptai lake Recreation spots Food and beverage Wildlife observation Cultural programs

2.1.3 Southeast Zone 2

The study area of Chittagong Southeast Zone-2 is mostly comprised in and around Cox's Bazar region which is well known as the world's longest natural sandy sea beach. The main tourist attraction in the region is the beach, but taking into consideration the focus on nature based tourism, the nearby areas are more pertinent for this project.

Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary (TWS) is a Protected Area (PA) broadly classified as a tropical evergreen forest. It has been under the realm of co-management since 2005 when the USAID funded project IPAC's preceding project 'Nishorgo Support Project' started working with 5 pilot areas. Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary, renamed thus in 2010 from the former Teknaf Game Reserve, covers an area of 11,615 hectares. The Teknaf area as a whole has been well studied in the past and is one of the most bio-diverse areas of Bangladesh. An exceptional 286 species of birds have been recorded from the Teknaf peninsula, including coastal and wetland habitats. The PA still supports the largest population of Asian elephants in Bangladesh. The *Nishorgo* Support Project (NSP) introduced the concept of Co-Management Committee

to assist the Forest Department in their endeavors to conserve the sanctuary. As a result, the locals are more intricately involved in the preservation of their natural surroundings.



Dulahazara Safari Park (DSP) which was developed on an undulating landscape of around 2,224 acres (9.00 km²) of area at Chakaria, Cox's Bazar, with an objective to create facilities for eco-tourism, research work and entertainment aside from conserving wild animals in a natural environment has been quite successful in attracting visitors. Since the park was made open to the public, it has been drawing a huge crowd all year round - 6,000 visitors daily during peak season (November to March) and 2,000 visitors daily during off season (April to October).

Himchari National Park (HNP) consists in an areas of 1,183 hectares with the primary attraction being the waterfall. Every year around 6,00,000 tourists tend to visit this site. HNP is home to several exotic animals such as Asian Elephant, Snakes, Birds etc., but in recent years their numbers and visibility is close to nil. The park had carried out promotional activities in the past, and was able to earn up to Tk 1.2 crores last year from ticket sales. The communication facilities to the Park is quite developed and can be reached by jeeps, CNGs and electric taxis. It is one of the closest and most commonly visited sites from Cox's Bazar town.

2.1.4 Northeast Zone

The Northeast Zone of the project focuses around the Greater Sylhet region which has been a blooming tourist area in recent years, attracting both local and international tourists. The geographical scope of this region is very diverse ranging from tea gardens to hills and with a huge expanse of water bodies spread around the region. Some of the major tourist sites in the region include:

Lawachara National Park (LNP) is a major national park and nature reserve in Bangladesh. The park is located at Kamalganj Upazila, Maulvi Bazar District in the northeastern region of the country. It is located within the 2,740 ha West Bhanugach Reserved Forest. The terrain of Lawachara is undulating with scattered 10 to 50 m hillocks. Biological diversity in the Lawachara National Park consists of 460 species, of which 167 species are plants, 4 amphibian species, 6 reptile species, 246 bird species, 20 mammal species, and 17 insect species. One of this is the critically endangered western hoolock gibbons, of which only 62 individuals remain in the area. There are about eighteen villages near Lawachara, two of them (Magurcharapunji and Lawacharapunji) located within the boundaries of the park. Indigenous peoples in the area include the Christian Khasia people, the Hindu Tripuri people, the



Tipra people, and the Monipuri people. The rest of the population are mostly Muslim migrants from Noakhali, Comilla, and Assam.

Satchori National Park (SNP) Satchari National Park is located in Habiganj District, Bangladesh. Total area covered by this national park is 243 hectare. This site has not yet been fully developed yet, and thus has a high potential of being developed for nature based tourism, given its expanse of river tributaries and hills.

Khadimnagar National Park (KNP) located very close to Sylhet town and has good transportation available. The site mainly has a few tea garden tracks surrounding a small artificial forest, and there are no demarcations for the forest. This means anyone can easily enter the forest areas, and there are also some trails for tourists to take for walks into the forest.

Hail Haor is located in the Sylhet basin between the Balishira and Satgaon hills under the Moulvibazar district. The haor originates from the surrounding hill streams. It is a large shallow lake in a saucer-shaped depression, bounded in the south, east and west by low hills and in the north by the plains of the Manu and Kushiara rivers. The haor is almost encircled by a chain of tea estates and natural forest blocks.

Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the densest, largest forests in Bangladesh which has remained pristine. The communication to the area is not very good, thus hampering the current scope of tourism. But, given its strong biodiversity, there is much scope for this area to be promoted and developed for nature based tourism.

Hakaluki Haor is rich in biodiversity and has good accessibility, however, it's not known for tourism and does not have any facility or activity as such. Thus, there is also very good potential to develop this area for nature based tourism.

2.2 Market Actors

Nature based tourism is less likely to be presented by a conventional value chain map. However, a brief description is outlined below to show the actors involved in nature based tourism and their major roles in the different zones of the project.

2.2.1 Tour Operators and Travel Agents

A number of public and private tour operators are actively involved to establish nature based tourism in all the project zones. Travel agents and tour operators are responsible to make arrangements for modes of transport and ground handling respectively. They offer arrangements for individuals and groups of inbound foreign visitors, expatriates and affluent domestic tourists. Tour operators within the sector are organized into a formally recognized association, Tour Operators' Association of Bangladesh (TOAB) having more than one hundred members. Mainly expatriates and Bangladeshis use tour operators to access destinations that are otherwise hard to reach. On the other hand, the members of Association of Travel Agents (ATAB) are mostly concerned with outbound and ticketing. Most of them are located in the major district cities, including Dhaka. In the study area, some tour operating companies are listed below, who provide nature based tourism services regularly or on demand in different sites of Bangladesh:

- Bengal Tours Ltd.
- River & Green Tours Ltd.
- Journey Plus
- Sureswar Travels
- The Guide Tours Ltd.
- Time Travel & Tour
- Discovery Tours & Logistics
- Riverine Tours
- Safari Plus
- Galaxy Travel International and Galaxy Holidays
- Royal Vision Tourism
- Rupantar Ecotourism Ltd.

2.2.2 Hotels/ Resorts/ Accommodation Provider

Accommodation includes hotels, motels, eco-lodges, home stays, campsites and other accommodation provisions that are available to both local and international tourists coming to these regions in Bangladesh. These are closely connected to other actors and service providers in nature based tourism value chain. Many of the hotels or resorts are managed by the same authority offering tour operating services. They may also take up the responsibility of making arrangements for transportation to and from a destination. Most of the major nature based tourism sites in these project regions do not have adequate accommodation providers – either in quantity or quality – as per the demands of the tourists.

2.2.3 Food and Beverage Provider

This includes all kinds of restaurants, bars, canteens, food and tea stalls in an around the nature based tourism sites. In most of the sites that the project focuses on, there is almost no provision for food or beverage providers. This is largely due to the fact that these areas are located in somewhat remote locations and are not very easily accessible. But, one of the major factors is the lack of awareness of the local community people about the business viability of such ventures and the lack of access to capital for such enterprising ventures.

2.2.4 Transport Provider

A number of public and private airlines operate their itinerary between Dhaka - Chittagong - Cox's Bazar routes, Dhaka - Sylhet routes, and Dhaka - Jessore routes. Railway connection and services are available between Dhaka and all the major district towns near the tourist sites. The road connection between Dhaka and the rest of the divisional heads is mostly well organized, but traffic can be a major hurdle in this regard. There are plenty of transport agencies, who provide bus services directly destined to Chittagong, Bandarban, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Khulna and Jessore from Dhaka. There are also many different launch services taking the riverine route from Dhaka to Khulna and into the Sundarbans. To reach specific sites, tourists commonly get rickshaw, van, taxi cab, CNG-driven mini-taxi, 2-stroke hauler, motorcycles, trawlers, boats and other different modified version of local transports.

2.2.5 On-spot Tourism/ Nature Based Tourism Service Provider

This includes those actors who offer services at the tourist spot to add value to the tourism experience through different services. Some major eco-tourism services and facilities prevailing in the different areas are: walkways, observation towers, boat trips, eco-resorts, cultural performances, etc. Local community people have started to get engaged into these positions and also as Tour Guides with knowledge about the local history, culture and natural resources, including biodiversity. Other on-spot service providers include small shopkeepers, stall-owners, mobile vendors, photographers etc.

2.2.6 Souvenir Center

There are a number of souvenir centers and boutique shops in the more developed and well-known tourist destinations of Chittagong, Bandarban, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Khulna, etc. These showrooms or display corners sell different souvenirs, handicrafts, jewelry, shells, handloom, local fabrics and textiles, bamboo products, silk, floor mats, pottery or local food items. Linkages between these centers and the producers of such products need to be done to ensure a market for these kind of local souvenir items.

2.2.7 Input Provider

Input providers are responsible for providing necessary inputs to other actors in the eco-tourism value chain such as indigenous/local producers who supply to local shops. Some suppliers provide fresh vegetables, fruits, meats and fish to the local hotels, restaurants and canteens. Different food processing and beverage companies are operational in the study area, who supply various processed food and drinks (packed, bottled or canned) to the restaurants and food corners.

2.2.8 Forest Department

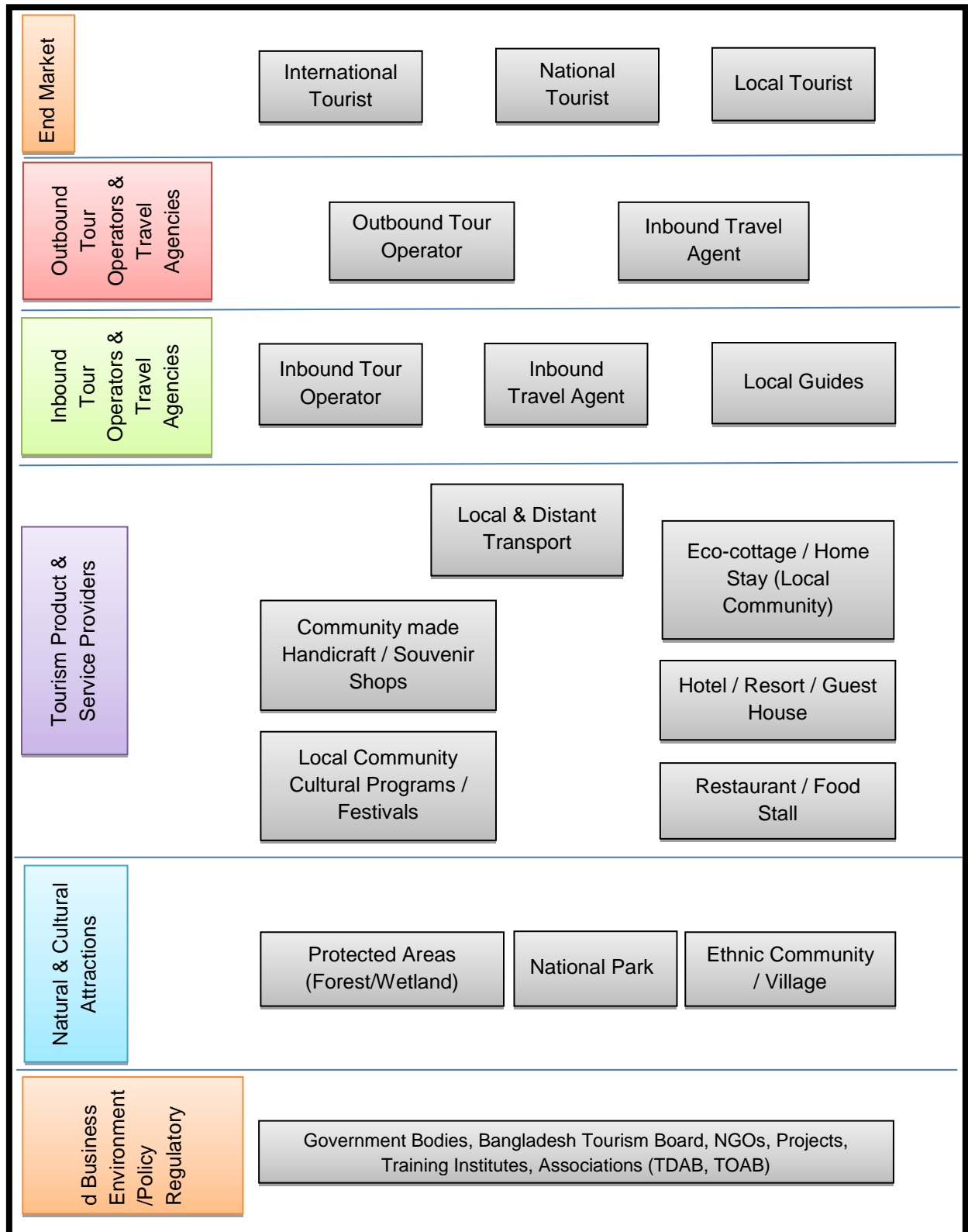
Forest Department is the key regulatory body in the protected areas and has the overall responsibility for management, conservation and development of the PAs through planting, harvesting, patrolling and guarding the forest resources. Forest officials mentioned about the challenges they confront, such as illegal felling, forest land encroachment, forest fire, livestock grazing etc. Although some of the beneficiaries engage themselves in cultivation and extraction, their involvement around the protected areas should be co-managed effectively. An institutional change is also necessary within the Forest Department, from administrative roles to those of facilitators, given the more public oriented approaches taken in the past and present like social forestry and co-management initiatives.

2.2.9 Co-management Committees

Under the *Nishorgo* Network, Bangladesh's growing group of forest and wetland PAs are being conserved through co-management. Co-management brings together community, government and other stakeholders to work together to conserve Bangladesh's rich natural heritage and eco-system services in a manner that contributes to long-term sustainable development, increased food security, and integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation. This co-management committee shares roles and responsibilities between communities and government, demonstrating economic benefits of PA conservation to local communities through eco-tourism and sustainable alternative income generation activities. They also aim to actively involve the communities in conservation management of PAs through participation in co-management organizations and joint patrol initiatives.

2.2.10 Stakeholder Map of Nature based Tourism

Figure 6: Stakeholder Map of Nature based Tourism



2.3 Constraints Analysis

When identifying the major bottlenecks in the different zones, it was noted that even with different topography and context, the actual constraints faced in developing and promoting nature based tourism were almost the same. The issues identified can be noted as:

2.3.1 Lack of awareness about the values of nature based tourism

Tourists are not well aware about the values of nature based tourism regarding the need to conserve and leave the nature in its unharmed form. Nature based tourism is more about being closer to nature, and experiencing it in its true form. Thus, eco-tourists also need to respect the natural environment while they are in these areas – not taking anything from the areas, keeping noise pollution to a minimum, not breaking or harming the plants, not littering, etc. are some of the things that tourists need to be made aware of before they come to visit these Protected Areas.

2.3.2 Lack of proper communication to the sites

Many of the sites are not easily accessible due to poor road conditions or simply because of their locations. Many of the sites need to be reached using boats and shallow-engine vehicles which are not the properly maintained, thus creating insecure situations for the tourists.

2.3.3 Lack of proper infrastructure in the tourism sites

Most sites do not have proper restrooms, shelters, waste disposable facilities, walking paths, food service, drinking water and children's entertainment provisions. This makes it difficult for tourists to plan to spend time in these sites and causes undue hassles.

2.3.4 Lack of niche Nature based tourism facilities

There is also a lack of high quality accommodation and service provision that can be marketed to the niche tourists who would be willing to pay more for specialty experiences. Eco-resorts, eco-villages, "experience holidays" (living in a village, fishing, hunting, cooking, honey collecting, etc) and adventurous treks – these can be some of the genres of eco-tours that can be promoted to the niche local and expat tourists.

2.3.5 Lack of promotion

Nature based tourism is not promoted in the Bangladesh media. Traditional tourism and tour facilities are well-known among the local and international targeted tourists. Nature based tourism needs to be promoted separately and highlighting it as a niche market for both local and international tourists. This will encourage the development of the market as well as bring in international currency to the country.

2.4 Assessment of the regulatory environment

The government has enacted Environment Policy 1992 and Bangladesh Environment Protection Law 1995. The National Tourism Policy framed in 2010 also emphasizes nature based tourism development

as well as preservation and conservation of natural and cultural products. In Bangladesh the nature based tourism concept is not properly reflected in the current national tourism development programs. The tourism development issue has been skipped in 'Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan prepared in 2009 as well as in 'National Adaptation Program of Action' developed in 2005.

National Tourism Policy (2009) emphasizes the following objectives

- To create interest in tourism among the people
- To preserve, protect, develop and maintain tourism resources
- To take steps for poverty-alleviation through creating employment
- To build a positive image of the country abroad
- To open up a recognized sector for private capital investment
- To arrange entertainment and recreation
- To strengthen national solidarity and integrity

In line with the policy, the Government provides incentives to attract private sector partners. The incentives include tax-holiday, loans, concession rates for taxes and duties and in specific cases, allotment of land etc.

There are some camps of Army, Police and BDR forces in and around some of the project areas, for example in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. These bodies also play some roles in regulating the extraction from forests and especially the army has been involved in developing infrastructure facilities in these areas.

There are also private sector associations, training institutes, lobbyists, consultants, media, multinational and local private companies or entrepreneurs, community development agencies, NGOs, national or international projects and governmental bodies involved in the promotion, regulation and coordination of development efforts in development of nature based tourism in the project areas.

2.5 Opportunities for Development

Given Bangladesh's growing interest in promoting tourism, some of these sites mentioned earlier have already proved to be a success for mass tourism, both for local and international tourists. But this has also led to the damage to the ecosystem in these areas. Thus, specific steps need to be taken when considering the promotion of nature based tourism in these regions. Developing a tourist site, while ensuring the conservation of the ecosystem and the natural health of the area, needs to be the priority.

Nature based tourism or Tourism value chains are quite different to value chains for manufactured or agricultural commodities (such as horticulture and crops) because of the nature of the product. Tourism is a complex set of complementary services, including accommodation, transport, food, entertainment, cultural heritage, and shopping. Thus, when assessing the potential for developing a nature based tourism industry, it is necessary to ensure the involvement of the different services which can allow for this market to thrive.

2.5.1 Southwest Zone

The Southwest region of the Sundarbans can generally only be reached through the river on trawlers or large boats. Also, because of the location of these sites, and the wild animals situated here, the development of facilities inside the Sundarbans has been very limited. The main feature of tourism in this region has been to travel by boat and view the natural beauty of the Sundarbans mostly from a distance.

Thus, there is a huge potential to promote nature based tourism related facilities here which would allow the tourists to engage more closely with nature. The potential to establish nature based tourism related facilities and services in this region is very high, given the large tourist groups that tend to visit the region on a regular basis. Eco-resorts, food/beverage providers, tourist centers, eco-villages, trekking paths and wooden boardwalk trails, shelter spots from rain or sun, leisure spots, restrooms, etc would be some of the requirements that tourists tend to demand as essential for making their trips more comfortable and memorable. These would encourage more tourists and also provide the services to accommodate for the adventurous and niche target groups.

2.5.2 Southeast Zone 1

As the project areas of Chittagong (Southeast Zone-1) are situated along the hilly terrain of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), the protected sites are highly promising for attracting tourists for nature based tourism. One of the highlights of this zone is the diverse population of the Hill Tracts – there are over 15 ethnicities living in this region bringing in different cultural perspectives into the area. These ethnic groups include Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya, Chak, Pankho, Mru, Murung, Bawm, Lushai, Khyang, Gurkha, Assamese, Santal, and Khumi. Both domestic and international tourists have been visiting the sites in rising numbers. For many international visitors nature based tourism is a primary motivation behind their visit to Bangladesh. In the investigated area, in spite of being blessed with natural bounty, existing tour operators or nature based tourism service providers are yet to gauge the magnitude of the demands of nature based tourism in the respective area. Most of the prevailing services are not up to the mark. , primary investigation and secondary data show that the visitors commonly ask for quality services in accommodation, security, sanitation and transport. Some tourists also demand recreational arrangement of cultural displays and entertainment and game facilities for children. Younger tourists tend to look for more adventurous provisions for them to undertake, like trekking, entertainment, etc. Thus, there is a scope to introduce different types of nature based tourism in these areas catering to these different needs. Eco-resorts and eco-villages (focusing on the ethnic groups) can be developed catering to needs of the less adventurous tourists, whereas different trekking trails can be targeted for the adventurous youth groups. These facilities developed and promoted properly can create a large growth in the tourist industry in this region.

2.5.3 Southeast Zone 2

Tourists flock to Cox's Bazar to witness the beauty of nature as well as the wilderness in serenity. It is estimated that nearly two million people visit Cox's Bazar in peak season from November to March (Bangladesh Hotel and Motel Owner's Association). Visitors are mainly Bangladeshi nationals originating from all parts of Bangladesh. The basic itinerary of visitors includes walk along the beaches, sea bathing, shopping from the Rakhaine stalls. The beaches of Labonee, Kalatoli, Himchari and Inani are particularly heavily visited. Labonee beach is reportedly one of the most heavily visited tourist destination in the country (daily visitors areas high as 30,000.) The area from Labonee to Kalatali beach has about 500 hotels, motels, cottage, rest and guest houses and restaurants, around 300 in number developed by both private and government for tourist.

The main requirement in places in this region would be distinguish between nature based tourism and mass tourism, given the high tourist traffic around the year. The need to ensure that Protected Areas, especially places like Saint Martin's Island, are conserved properly, the accessibility to these areas need to be restricted. This can be done by developing privately owned Eco-resorts which will invest in conserving those areas and allow only their guests access in return for the accommodation fees. Specific marked out areas can be open to the public, in order to limit damage to a minimum zone.

2.5.4 Northeast Zone

Geographically, Sylhet stands on the banks of Surma River surrounded by Khasia and the Jainta hills on the north, and the Tripura hills on the south. The terraced tea gardens, winding mountainous rivers, thick tropical forests and country side extending to the horizon make greater Sylhet a major tourist attraction of the country. Sylhet also has many haors which are usually shallow and bowl shaped, very deep and turbulent during the rainy seasons and drying out during winter. These haors also provide shelter for a large number of migratory birds flying from cold countries. Another fascinating feature of Sylhet is its ethnic population - the Monipuris, Garos, Khasias and Tipperas. Their lifestyle on the hills, practicing age-old rites, rituals, traditions and celebration festivals continuing from time immemorial has made Sylhet's culture richer. During festivals like Rash Leela (full-moon night in February) and Doljatra, charming young tribal girls adorn themselves with colorful robes and dance with their chosen and loved males of the tribes. The famous Monipuri dance is performed on allegorical love themes of the ancient mythology.

Sylhet also has good accessibility from Dhaka and also within its own regions, thus tourism has flourished there in recent years. Sylhet still has many sites undeveloped for tourism and has the potential to specifically promote them only for nature based tourism. With the development of facilities and marketing, these areas can be targeted to the niche local and international tourists. Setting up walking and trekking trails, putting up camping sites, developing eco-resorts and eco-villages will ensure a different and quality experience for the tourists.

2.6 Recommendations

Healthy natural ecosystems are critical to the ecological well-being of all living entities as well as for the economic security of people. Nature based tourism has the potential to enhance wilderness protection and wildlife conservation, while providing nature-compatible livelihoods and greater incomes for a large number of people living around natural ecosystems. This can help to contribute directly to the protection of wildlife or forest areas, while making the local community stakeholders and owners in the process. A site-specific Nature based tourism Plan for each Protected Area must be prepared and approved in a participatory way by the Forest Department, The Government, the community, the civil society organizations, and other related stakeholders.

Nature based tourism, if practiced correctly, can be an important economic and educational activity. It has the scope to link to a wider constituency and build conservation support while raising awareness about the worth and fragility of such ecosystems in the public at large. It may also promote the non-consumptive use of wilderness areas, for the benefit of local communities living around, and dependent on these fragile landscapes. The mushrooming of tourist facilities around protected areas particularly in HNP may lead to exploitation, disturbance and misuse of fragile ecosystems. It may also led to misuse of the term 'nature based tourism', often to the detriment of the ecosystem, and towards further alienation of local people and communities. Thus, it is necessary to develop specific and uniform directives and guidelines for nature based tourism which should be made applicable to all the Protected Areas - National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, reserves, conservation reserves, etc. It should also include specific guidelines for sound environmental design and use of locally produced and sustainable materials should be given priority such as use of solar, rainwater harvesting, bio-gas, etc. Involvement of the local community and cost-sharing should be a explicit requirement of community-based nature based tourism, thus Conservation education and training for all stakeholders (local community, conservation officers, tourists, service providers, etc.) should be developed in an integral part of this process.

2.6.1 Facilities Development

The priority in these regions to make it accessible to tourists is to ensure proper facilities. Even if communication is amicable for reaching these sites, most of them have almost no infrastructure facilities which are conducive for tourism. Some of the basic amenities need to be developed to ensure better service provision for the people visiting these areas:

Restroom and changing facilities: There is a lack of proper restrooms available in all these sites. This is a necessity to ensure a quality experience for the tourists. Changing rooms also makes it easier for people to enjoy facilities like swimming where they are able to change back into dry clothes afterwards. Also, quality restroom facilities ensure that the tourists will maintain the cleanliness of the environment.

Waste disposal facilities: Nature based tourism promotes the need for keeping the environment untainted, and ensuring proper waste disposal is necessary to make tourists aware and ensure that they are not littering and leaving the site undisturbed.

Wooden boardwalks and specified trails inside the forests (especially in the Sundarbans): To control the traffic of tourists inside the Protected Areas, it is necessary to mark out specified trails, so that all areas of a forest will not be open to tourism. For regions where walking on the soil or mud is difficult, there needs to be simple solutions of wooden boardwalks which would allow people to roam around easily.

Jetties for boats: Most of these sites have water bodies which are open for boating to tourists, but there are no jetty infrastructure available which makes it easy to get on and off these boats. This would also ensure that people are able to access only the specific sites and not harming other areas of the Protected Areas.

Shelter facilities or leisure spots developed: There are almost no basic shelter facilities, especially in the trails of the Protected Areas. Thus, it becomes very difficult for people to find shelter during rain or under the strong sun. Basic thatched roofed, wall-less huts with benches will ensure a simple shelter for tourists and make their visit more pleasant.



Mobile food centers might be suitable for some of the sites.

Food/beverage service provisions: Specific areas can be developed as food courts. This would act as a service for both the tourists, and also as a mechanism to ensure that they do not litter or bring in food in to the Protected Areas. This is also a way to engage the community, since they can be involved in being part of service or even having their own small enterprises serving local culinary delights. This can also be a means to promote local food as part of the tourist experience.

Tourist Centers with service facilities and souvenirs: Sites should be equipped with simple Tourist Centers which allow

them provisions like lockers, renting binoculars, photography corners and souvenir booths. These services ensure a better quality experience for tourists. This also allows the provision of engaging the community into producing souvenir items.

Infrastructure development: For certain locations, there is even the need to develop more concrete structures like river-crossing facilities in the Chittagong Hill Tract areas. Simple hanging bridges or walkways may be a cheaper solution for this. Ferrying service provision is available for riverine areas where the current is not very strong.

On a larger scale, there is also a need to develop major infrastructure in most areas in order to promote the tourism

industry. Most of these regions lack proper hotels and resorts which would attract more niche tourists to the area. Developing eco-resorts or eco-villages with high standard of facilities will be one mechanism to attract Nature based tourism specific niche tourists to these areas.



In Nepal, the community people are still using indigenous ropeways to cross rivers and mountains. Feasibility of using similar cost-effective ropeways can be looked into carefully both in HNP and TWS.

2.6.2 Service Development

There is a major gap in the tourist industry in availing the proper services to the tourists. In order to promote nature based tourism, there is a big need to ensure that the concept and values regarding nature based tourism is conveyed properly to the tourists. Thus, there is a need for specific services in this area:

Awareness and sensitization of tourists: in visitor centers and by guides to protect natural resources: As mentioned earlier, there is a need for tourists to be well-informed about the values of nature based tourism and how to respect the nature around them. There needs to be strong awareness campaigns, at national and local levels to ensure that those willing to visit these sites know the do's and don'ts of an eco-tourist's etiquette. Tour agencies, resorts, guides need to be the ones to ensure the adequate service to their tourists to make them aware and help them to act accordingly when they are visiting nature based tourism sites.

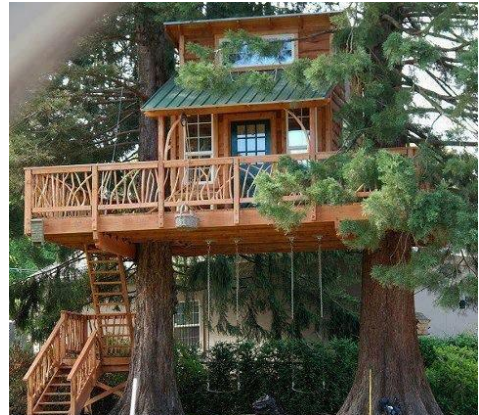
Eco-Guides with knowledge about the local biodiversity

and sites: Eco-guides need to be developed to not only make eco-tourists aware about nature based tourism, but also to be able to guide the tour groups through the sites. Eco-guides with knowledge about the local biodiversity will be able to point out fauna and wildlife and provide the tourists with information about the history and biodiversity of the sites. This adds to the experience of being on an eco-tour as opposed to mass tourism.



Development of ethno-cultural service provisions like eco-villages, cultural/performance groups: Investing in quality facilities targeting the niche local and expat tourists would be through providing them with high standard facilities, services and experiences that enrich their stay in these areas.

Promotion of locally produced herbal or culinary products and local fruits and vegetables: Food centers and tourist centers can be linked to the promotion of local cuisine and agriculture, ensuring a quality experience for the tourists as well as engaging the community into the nature based tourism industry.



Examples of forest-based Eco-resorts

2.6.3 Private Sector Engagement

A tourism industry is a major scope for developing the economy of a region, both at a local level and nationally. Promotion of nature based tourism will provide the potential for engagement of different levels of private sector – from small enterprises and service providers to national and international corporations being engaged in developing the region.

Large private sector corporations can get engaged into promoting and providing funds for specific local developments. They can fund specific facilities developments – like restrooms, pathways, jetties, bridges, etc. The private sector can also invest into developing and managing facilities inside these areas, and generate revenue from ticket sales. These can include boating services, resting areas, food courts, etc.

Promotion of nature based tourism is a major requirement in facilitating the nature based tourism industry. Public-Private partnerships might be most suitable to create awareness about values of nature based tourism through nation-wide promotional activities, media campaigns, websites, publications, etc.

To ensure that nature based tourism sites are not prone to damage, it would be necessary to categorize different types and facilities for different forms of nature based tourism. Nature based tourism cannot survive if a site has a mass tourist traffic coming into it. To ensure the preservation of biodiversity and nature, specific sites in all these areas – like Rema-Kalenga WS and Hakaluki Haor in Sylhet, specific wilderness sites in the Sundarbans, Dudpukuria-Dhopachari WS and Teknaf WS in Chittagong – can be promoted as niche nature based tourism sites. These can accommodate specialty services or even facilities, which can be targeted towards the more niche tourists.

2.6.4 Community Engagement

One of the focus areas of CREL is to promote community-based nature based tourism. With a developing industry like tourism in these regions, the scope to involve the community people into specific enterprises or services becomes very plausible. Some of the ways that they can be engaged into the value chain will be as:

Service providers: Community people can easily be interlinked with the developments. Working in the resorts, hotels, tour vessels (Sundarbans) will be an employment opportunity for them. It is not only a income generation activity for them, but also a means to involved into the being engaged ensures as a part of a growing industry. They can also be engaged as drivers, boat men, ticketers, guards, cleaners, photographers, etc in the nature based tourism sites.

Being Eco-guides is already a provision that has started in most of these areas, but to ensure continuous work, they need to be linked with the hotels, eco-resorts, and tour agencies. Also, untrained people are starting to get involved in these ventures, so a scope of licensing and promoting licensed eco-guides would be a means of ensuring quality service.

Small Enterprises: People from the community can start establish small enterprises within these regions targeting the tourist population. These can include food stores serving local culinary delights, or transportation facilities like a motorcycle or boat renting shop, or even souvenir and local items store.

Souvenir making: Making souvenirs like handicrafts or preservatives (achar, jam, snacks, clothes, pinon, blankets, kantha, shawls, etc.) which can be sold at tourist centers, hotels and resorts. Community groups can be developed and trained to produce different types of souvenir items in bulk and linked to souvenir stores in the regions and even in the district levels. This can be a trade where landless project beneficiaries can get involved in as means for income generation.

Eco-villages and cultural groups: Developing eco-villages in the more remote areas like Sundarbans, Hill Tracts, Sylhet where the community people can engage directly with the tourists - activities like “A day as a Villager” engages the tourist to experience the life of a villager – working, cooking, etc. Spending time in communities would be a specific “experience holiday” targeting a very niche population, but the potential is high.



An Eco-village in the Phillipines

Cultural groups showcasing performing traditional musical, dance or theatrical performances can be developed and linked with different resorts, hotels and tour agencies. They can constitute of people from different communities and would be able to perform regularly at different places near their areas.

The potential to develop nature based tourism in Bangladesh is very high. With strong development in infrastructure and services along with promotion at both the local and international level, this industry can be expected to take off. Ensuring community engagement and awareness about conserving the biodiversity and the natural beauty needs to be the focus to ensure the growth of these ventures.

2.7 Destination Development Steps for Nature Based Tourism

Phase	Activity	Potential Actors/Private Sector/Industry
Phase – I (Site selection & policy development)	Site selection & protection policy development	GoB, Designated Gov. Departments, Development projects
	Development of regulatory & management committee	
	Identification of ethnic/local communities	
	Identification of infrastructural development needs & management committee capacity development needs	
Phase – II (Developing Consultation)	Stakeholders Identification	Development projects, Co-management committees, Forest Dept. & Other respective Dept. of GoB
	Service provider selection & development - Capacity development through training	Development projects, Tour Companies
	Linkage development with inbound/outbound tours & travel operators	Tour companies, Hotels & Resorts
	Creating opportunities for private sector development	Co-management committees, Private sector in Real Estate, Food products etc., Forest Dept. & Other respective Dept. of GoB
Phase – III (Facilities Development)	Infrastructure development	
	- Entrance Construction-Park entrance Gate, Different subside gate	Cellular Company, Cement Industry
	- Walking Trail Development- Information board, Small Bridge, Seating Arrangement, Resting shed, Waste bin, Arrow mark	Cellular Company, Cement Industry, Advertising / Media company, Iron Industry, Steel Meals, Banks & Financial Institutions
	- Infrastructure Development-Ticket counter, Information centre, Interpretation centre, Tourist Shop, Souvenir Shop, Museum, Toilet / Wash room, Water Facilities	Cellular Company, Cement Industry, Iron Industry, Steel Meals, Banks & Financial Institutions, Food & Beverage company, Hotel & Resorts, Tour Operators
	- Training-Eco-guide training, Nature based tourism training of FD staff, Nature based tourism Service People Training	Banks & Financial Institutions, Cellular Company, Hotel & Resorts, Tour Operators
	- Transport-Sightseeing Vehicles, Tourist boat	Transport company, Automobile company
	- Accommodation / Recreation – Cottage, Picnic Spot Facilities	Cement Industry, Iron Industry, Steel Meals
	- Voluntary Human Resource-	Scouts, Girls Guide, BNCC, VDP
	- Waste Management	Banks & Financial Institutions, Cellular Company, Hotel & Resorts, Tour Operators
	- Fast aid service	Pharmaceutical Company
	- Uniform-Eco-guide, Nature based tourism Service People, Community Patroller	Garments & Buying house, Cellular Company, Hotel & Resorts, Tour

		Operators
Phase – IV (Demand generation & Promotion)	- Printing Materials – Brochures, Leaflets	Cellular Company, Tour Operators, Advertising / Media company
	- Promotion of Nature Based Tourism in national and international media	Publication company, Tourism media, TV Channels, Hotels & resorts etc
	- Tourism Fair	Event management companies, Hotels & resorts, Tour Companies etc.
Phase – V (Quality control & Assurance)	Regular monitoring & maintenance of the whole system	Co-management committees
	Continuing promotional activities	Advertising / Media Company