



**Nishorgo Conservation Partnership:
Attracting Private Sector Contributions for
Protected Forest Area**

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Implemented by IRG
With partners: CODEC, NACOM & RDRS



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Executive Summary

Forest cover in Bangladesh has fallen by more than 50 percent since the 1970s, and now, outside of the Sundarbans, only tiny patches of natural forest remain. Recognizing the perilous situation of natural forests in the country, the Forest Department has established a series of Protected Forest Areas. The national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, game reserve, safari parks and eco-parks are collectively known as Protected Areas (PA). These smaller forests are of immense globally significant ecological value and if properly managed represent important economic opportunity for the country.

Bangladesh's current level of legally Protected Areas is one of the lowest in the world at 1.4% of national surface. The poor people of the country largely depend on the forest resource, yet we have the second lowest allocation of forestland per person at 0.0175 hectares per person.

The Forest Department, recognizing this need, created a comprehensive Protected Area Management Program named Nishorgo with technical assistance from USAID. The Nishorgo Program is a comprehensive effort to improve the management of the country's Protected Areas. The Nishorgo Program aims to protect and conserve Bangladesh's forests and biodiversity for future generations. At the heart of Nishorgo is a focus on building partnerships between the Forest Department and key local and national stakeholders that can assist in conservation efforts.

Under the Nishorgo Program, a co-management approach will be followed where Forest Department, and the local and national stakeholders conserve our remaining biodiversity through a collaborative process.

USAID is providing targeted technical and financial assistance to Nishorgo Program through the Nishorgo Support Project. The Nishorgo Support Project works closely with the Forest Department and key conservation stakeholders to develop and implement a co-management approach to help conserve the country's large tracts of Protected Areas, where partnerships for conservation are essential. Nishorgo Support Project is implemented by International Resources Group (IRG) with local NGO partners CODEC, NACOM and RDRS.

The present dire state of our tropical forest commands attention and action from all the corners of the society. It is not possible for the Bangladesh government alone to meet the huge investment needs to protect the remaining tropical forests.

Nishorgo Support Project considers it is vital for a sustainable future to approach the private sectors to come forward to save Bangladesh's natural forests. With careful planning, transparent management and the focus on delivering services to people -- the public and private sectors can collaborate for good for all.

Conservation Partners will be the private sector companies that would financially contribute to Nishorgo Program for the conservation and improved management of the Protected Areas of Bangladesh. Partnerships with private enterprise will provide an alternative means of paying a portion of the costs of conservation. Any multinational or local companies with environment concerns can be the conservation partners. Nishorgo Program would try to encourage the local companies to come forward.

The private companies would develop a partnership with Nishorgo Program that would lead to mutual benefits, not only for conservation but also in terms of marketing and communication for partner private organization as well. The private concerns participating in Nishorgo

Conservation Partnership will basically create a pool of funding for the Protected Area Management of Bangladesh.

Since the private companies would form partnership with a Government Program, so the Nishorgo Conservation Partnerships are required to be designed in a way that will be transparent; will ensure their contributions reach their target with low transaction cost leading to a long-term difference in forest conservation; and will generate beneficial public image for the contributor.

There should be several options presented to the private company to choose from for Conservation Partnership. The options can range from developing infrastructure in and around the Protected Areas, to local community mobilization, from licensing Nishorgo image to assisting in communication tools of Nishorgo or fostering eco-friendly operating procedures. The real challenge would be for the conservation partnership on how to execute and whom to entrust with the funding. This question is raised due to lack of reliability on the public sector by the private sector. This report probes on a number of options and comes forward with several solutions.

Nishorgo Support Project can act as a collaborator among the concerned parties and coordinate with Private Partners, plan and help to execute where as Forest Department's role should be to formalize and facilitate the partnership. Forest Department should sign a formal Partnership agreement with Private Partner to give them legal authority to act and avoid any ambiguity that may arise later. Of course private conservation partners with high financial strength can independently execute their contributions, but it would be hard for the comparatively small-scale partners. Another option is utilizing Arranyk Foundation, established under joint agreement of US and Bangladesh government to assist in conservation partnership. Due to its on-going nature, it can continue to work with the Nishorgo Conservation Partners even after the Nishorgo Support Project expires. Some of the big multinational and local companies together created a forum for helping the deserved sector. Nishorgo Support Project can approach this forum for funding for conserving the fast diminishing biodiversity. This forum has both the financial capacity and managerial capability to look over the tasks for the conservation partnership.

Undoubtedly, to save the Protected Forest Areas of Bangladesh, there must be concerted effort from business community, the entrepreneurs along with the government. Therefore, it is primarily the duty of the Government to foster positive atmosphere where the private concern would be encouraged to form partnership with the government. Donor agencies should provide guidance and necessary assistance for this attempt. However, initially Nishorgo Support Project must play the central role to make the conservation partnership possible.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AF	Arryanak Foundation
BAT	British American Tobacco
DFC	Development Forum of Corporates
ECA	Ecologically Critical Area
FD	Forest Department
FSP	Forestry Sector Project
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
IRG	International Resources Group
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MOEF	Ministry of Environment & Forests
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NSP	Nishorgo Support Project
PA	Protected Area
SOAG	Strategic Objective Grant Agreement
TFCA	Tropical Forest Conservation Act
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Nishorgo Conservation Partnership: Attracting Private Sector Contributions for Protected Forest Area

1. CONTEXT & ISSUES FOR PROTECTED AREA

We all have a very important part to play in creating a better future for forests and all life on Earth. We have lost enough of our forestry already. Widespread clearing of our forests has harmed many of our ecosystems so they no longer retain water, support diverse species, and provide livelihood as they once did.

As humans, we are completely dependent on biodiversity for survival. Yet we are destroying large parts of our natural world. In places far and wide, humans are squeezing out other forms of life, sometimes causing the extinction of entire species.

Forests are the lungs of our planet. They purify the air, protect our water and soil, and are a critical habitat to millions of animals and plants.

By destroying our forests, we are losing our most reliable ally in the struggle with global warming, floods, droughts, and soil erosion. We are wiping out the guardians of the planet's freshwater resources and the forests that give life to medicinal plants, foods, and many other products

If we don't take urgent measures now, then Bangladesh's forests will be gone forever. Forest cover in Bangladesh has fallen by more than 50 percent since the 1970s, and now, outside of the Sundarbans, only tiny patches of natural forest remain. These smaller forests are part of a mosaic of resources—farmland, wetlands, fisheries and settlements—which provide sustenance and economic opportunity to the country's rural households. Sustainable management of the remaining natural forest, especially The Protected Forest Areas demand urgent attention, and investment if these resources are to provide a basis for sustainable economic growth of the country and reduction of poverty of its citizens. Each of our little contributions can help creating a sustainable future for our next generations.

Forest Department, the legal custodian of Forestlands realizes that nature is to be conserved not for its own sake, but for the present and future generations of Bangladesh.

1.1 Present Status of Bangladesh's Biodiversity

The term *biodiversity* is much more than a fad word or a jargon. Biodiversity is all of the Earth's plants, animals, ecosystems, and genes. It includes the tallest tree, the smallest insect, and all living things. Biodiversity is what allows the Earth and all of its creatures to adapt and survive.

Bangladesh is situated at the sprawling inter-linked delta of three great river systems of the world – the Ganges, Meghna and Brahmaputra. The floodplains of Bangladesh represent one of the world's most important wetlands – home to hundreds of species of fish, plants, wildlife, and critical habitat for thousands of migrating birds.

There are three main types of forests: (1) tropical evergreen or semi-evergreen hill forests in southeastern Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and northeastern Sylhet district; (2) deciduous forests in central Bangladesh; and (3) tidal mangrove forests in western coastal area. Due to its unique biophysical setting – the juxtaposition of a large delta freshwater outlet and a large sea fan – Bangladesh, despite its relatively small size, is endowed with a surprisingly rich heritage of plant and animal species.

At the same time, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in the world. The situation presents an unacceptable paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. Pressures on Bangladesh's biological resources are intense and growing due to poor management of aquatic and terrestrial resources, population growth, overexploitation, indiscriminate and unplanned development of infrastructure, and agricultural expansion into marginal lands. Loss of biodiversity is driven in large part by overall loss of critical habitat, which in turn results directly or indirectly from Bangladesh's expanding human population growth. Most of Bangladesh's tropical forests and almost all of the freshwater floodplains have been affected by human activities that are particularly detrimental to the natural resource base.

Reliable, up-to-date statistics on the quantity and quality of tropical forest cover in Bangladesh are hard to come by and contradictory figures are the norm rather than the exception. Recent data suggests that there are about 2.6 million hectares (covering 18 % of the total land surface) in the country. They include: state forest land of 2.2 million hectares composed of 1.3 million hectares of natural forests and plantations (there are extensive plantation areas on reserved forest land, particularly in the hilly regions of the country) under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department and about 0.9 million hectares of unclassified state forest administered by the Ministry of Lands. The remainder of the forest cover is in private hands, notably including the successful homestead plantations common across the flood plain areas of the country and small tracts of natural forest and plantations on estate lands.

With the exception of some of the most inaccessible areas whose actual status is not well known (e.g. in the Hill Tracts), all of the remaining natural forests are reportedly under constant pressure, have been significantly degraded and fragmented, thereby threatening their value as habitat for biodiversity conservation and in the provision of vital environmental services.

Recognizing the perilous situation of natural forests in the country, the Forest Department has established a series of protected forest areas (distinct from gazetted forest reserves). The protected areas of Bangladesh include 7 national parks, 8 wildlife sanctuaries and 1 game reserve. Therefore, there are in total 15 Protected Areas.

Bangladesh's forests come under relentless human pressure as its population grows. Illegal Felling of trees, hunting, Encroachments through agriculture, settlements and industry, and the removal of medicinal plants, are all on the rise and are the major threat to our biodiversity. Many wildlife species and flora are either extinct or in danger of extinction. Yet Bangladesh is rich in its biodiversity, with a wide range of habitats – from the marine to montane, from tropical forests to swamps.

About 5,700 species of angiosperms are found in Bangladesh. The country hosts some 1,000 varieties of native rice and has a wide range of local varieties of legumes, fruits, and

vegetables. Bangladesh has around 5000 flowering plants and trees. It is beyond our knowledge to ascertain how many of them would ultimately survive. 125 mammalian species - 10 extinct, 11 threatened. 750 species of birds – out of a sub continental total of 1200; 4 extinct and 13 threaten. We do not know the exact status of our 19 amphibians and around 500 species of fishes.

Our poor people large depend on the forest resources for their livelihood. The continuing degradation has restricted poor people's access towards the natural resources thus their livelihood is threatened.

1.2 Protected Area of Bangladesh

Bangladesh's current system of National Parks, Game Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Eco-parks and Safari Parks -- known collectively as "Protected Areas (PA)".

Each has a slightly different set of conservation and management rules established under the Wildlife (Preservation) Act. All of these protected areas were established after 1980 and like the Reserve Forests from which they were carved, sometimes include forest villages within their boundaries or usage rights for neighboring villages.

These forests are globally significant eco-system, rich in biodiversity. They harbor wildlife including many rare and endangered species.

The very existence of Bangladesh's protected areas is threatened. Though they exist in legislation, they offer few amenities. Felling of hardwoods, hunting, overexploitation of resources, encroachments through agriculture, settlements, and removal of medicinal plants, are all on the rise. As a result, the protected areas are fast disappearing. The ecological impact of the diminishing biodiversity is acute.

As distinct from other forests, focus in Protected Areas is on conservation, not production

However, the country's current level of legally Protected Areas – one of the lowest in the world at 1.4% of national surface area as compared to an international average of 10 percent. Even these areas are under constant threat and are falling rapidly.

The poor people of the country largely depend on the forest resource, yet we have the second lowest allocation of forestland per person at 0.0175 hectares per person. The Forest Department realized that a separate management strategy is required for the management of legally "Protected Areas" than the production forests.

Production forests allow for plantation development, social forestry plantings and -- generally -- direct economic benefit. In contrast, Protected Areas, by law, do not allow for plantations, social forestry, etc. and thus are perceived to have little or no economic value.

Improvement of protected area management would require a comprehensive strategy focusing on co-management, but also including other aspects of PA management, viz, PA financing, institutional strengthening, policies, etc. A broad Protected Area program was thus agreed upon to be the umbrella for all of the Protected Area management efforts within the Forest Department.

The country's sites for nature tourism -- once almost endless tracts of forest -- are being neglected, and are diminishing. Still the remaining Protected Areas include some of the country's most beautiful, unique and tranquil patches of forest and biodiversity.

The private sector has been the motor to Bangladesh's steady economic growth in the past decade. Our middle class is growing in numbers and purchasing power, as is our upper class. As livelihoods improve, citizens are more willing to expend resources to experience nature.

Yet, as the country becomes wealthier, its citizens increasingly want to visit nature in its pure form. They want to walk through intact forests. They want to hear the winds blowing through the forests, and hear birds and mammals moving in their natural habitats. There is a demonstrated demand for nature tourism among the public. The following figures would clarify the need for creating nature visit amenities within the Protected Areas:

- ✧ Approximately 10 lakh visitors per annum visits to Botanical Garden
- ✧ Bhawal National Park received almost 4 lakh visitors yearly
- ✧ Even small Sitakunda Park near Chittagong received 50,000 in a single day recently.

1.2.1 Importance of Protected Areas

These areas are extremely important. They give refuges for biodiversity; provide essential environmental services; maintain natural resources; shelter local cultures and spiritual sites; mitigate against long-term global threats like climate change; reduce border tensions; help reduce poverty; and provide economic benefits.

Protected areas when properly managed provide significant potential for economic and recreational development within the country. Properly managed Protected Areas provide more than divine natural beauty. They serve as poles of local economic growth by attracting visitors, income and investment. Protected Areas represent important economic opportunities for the country, and for the regions in which they are found.

1.2.2 Areas remain under threat

Even after recognizing the immense importance of the Protected Areas, still, our natural areas remain under threat. There are several reasons for this, which are as follows:

- ❑ The Protected Areas are not well managed.
- ❑ Many habitats are not well represented in the current network of Protected Areas, including open seas and coastal areas, marshes and swamps, mangroves, grasslands, and temperate forests.

There are also several long-term global threats to Protected Areas, including climate change, continued conversion of natural habitat, and diversion of water from rivers and other freshwater systems.

On top of this, there is not always enough support from governments, development agencies, business and industry, and sometimes local communities to ensure the long-term success of some protected areas.

Many of the areas included in the Protected Areas are so-called “paper parks”, where little has been done beyond legal establishment, and where illegal felling of hard woods and other threats continue; others, sometimes may be loosely managed Landscape Protected Areas with few benefits to wild species. Local conflicts over land, ever-growing population pressure, corruption within the government, loose law and order situation, etc. largely contribute to the degradation of the Protected Area.

Our present consumption patterns are threatening to outstrip the country’s natural resources and it’s ability to support biodiversity. A sustainable future will require extensive changes in public behavior in terms of forestry and nature conservation. To create sustainable behavior for protected area management it is both necessary to create public awareness and to identify and overcome barriers to long-lasting behavior change.

Lack of awareness, knowledge, commitment and action concerning the Protected Areas continues among the public, including business leaders and even the government in Bangladesh. Promoting the economic and social benefits of resource conservation and management is essential if public and financial support is to be forthcoming for conservation efforts.

1.2.3 World perspective

The last 130 years has seen the largest conscious land use change in history. Since the creation of the world's first national park in 1872 — Yellowstone, in the US — the number of protected areas has increased to over 100,000. Their combined area represents 12 per cent of the Earth's surface, an area larger than India and China put together.

The experience of South Asia and other countries -- confirmed in the 1st and 2nd World Parks Congresses in 1993 and 2003, respectively -- makes it clear that communities bordering on, or living amidst, protected areas should be active participants in the conservation of those Areas. Central resource management institutions (especially central offices of technical ministries such as the Forest Department) and local support institutions (such as Sub-Divisional Forest Offices, Union Parishads, etc.) often hesitate in supporting co-management, fearing loss of resources under their control or diminished authority. However, the Forest Department now recognizes, in light of local and global experience, that efforts should be undertaken to more fully incorporate local stakeholders as partners in the protected area conservation process.

1.3 Wildlife Acts & Amendments

Concern for biodiversity in the country date back to the 1879 Elephant Preservation Act and the 1912 Wild Bird and Animals Protection Act. These regulations were revoked in 1973 when the Government passed the Wildlife (Preservation) Act.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the 1992 Biodiversity Convention elaborated at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and biodiversity issues have received some attention in a variety of sector policy and strategy documents since that time. Bangladesh has also been a participant in earlier global conservation initiatives before "biodiversity" became the watchword of the day. The country has ratified the 1971 RAMSAR Convention on wetlands

of international importance and waterfowl habitat, the 1972 Convention concerning the protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the 1973 Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Of more recent vintage, the theme of biodiversity conservation is discussed in the 1995 National Environmental Management Action Plan (NEMAP), the 1997 draft of the National Conservation Strategy, the 2000 ADB Environmental Operational Strategy, and the 1993 Forestry Master Plan. Recently, the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) with the collaboration of IUCN/Bangladesh and funding support from UNDP, has begun the preparation of the Bangladesh Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan. This 18-month initiative is expected to comply with the requirement for such a plan for each country signatory to the Convention on Biodiversity.

The 1927 colonial Forestry Act had forest protection as its primary goal, and amendments in 1989 and 2000 have incorporated more modern approaches into forest management. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has mandated the Forestry Department as chief implementing agency of forestry sector policies and initiatives. Even so, GOB resources do not suffice to police and protect the country's forests. To do so will require stakeholder cooperation and a concerted government effort to enlist people living in and around the forests as partners in protection.

There has also been another recent development related to Governmental concern for biodiversity and the sustainability of the natural resources base with the declaration of ecologically critical areas (ECA). The Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act of 1995 represents an important point of reference for efforts to improvement management of Protected Areas. The Act includes a provision whereby if the Government is concerned that the degradation of an ecosystem has reached "a critical state" or is so threatened, it may declare the area to be an ECA by notification in the official gazette. In April 1999, the Secretary, MOEF, exercised this authority for the first time on advice of the Director General of the Department of the Environment, in officially notifying the establishment of six separate wetland areas covering approximately 40,000 hectares as ECA's.

However, it is deemed at present that the present Wildlife Act (Amended) is not sufficient for effectively conserving our rich natural heritage of forestry and the biodiversity in it. At present the Forest Department is in the process of reviewing and revising the Act.

1.4. USAID's Activities in Bangladesh's Environment Sector

USAID/Bangladesh's current plans and investments in the environment sector are a direct result of decades of assistance to rural development, family planning, poverty alleviation and food security. Achievements in these areas, in particular increased agricultural productivity and a reduction in the population growth rate, have given rise to an opportunity to refocus the overall program characterized by the Mission's stated goal: **'Poverty Reduced through Sustainable Economic Growth'**

As part of its programmatic response for realizing this goal, and in light of the three "areas of greatest importance to the sustainability of economic growth in the country--population,

food and water", USAID/Bangladesh has created an explicit environmental strategic objective.

The Intermediate Results of this Strategic Objective are:

- Effective Community-based Resource Management Mechanisms Implemented;
- Select Habitats and Ecosystems Restored;
- Selected Policies Implemented that Support the above;
- Public Awareness of Key Issues Increased; and
- Improved Institutional Capacity

USAID/Bangladesh addresses the natural resources management issues under its Strategic Objective (SO) 6: *Improved Management of Open Water and Tropical Forest Resources*. The overall goal of SO 6 is to strengthen the efforts of the GOB and the NGOs in environmental and natural resources management. The objectives are to demonstrate improved, environmentally sustainable, participatory management of aquatic and tropical forest resources, and to develop replicable models for maintaining or restoring ecosystem function of aquatic and forest habitats. The program is based on the following themes:

- ⇒ Re-linking people with natural ecosystems;
- ⇒ Re-linking the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem continuum for biodiversity conservation;
- ⇒ Forward thinking on global climate change and biodiversity.

Recognizing that environment is not a stand-alone issue, USAID also addresses environmental issues from a cross-cutting perspective. The environment program maintains a close relationship with the energy program due to the inherent linkages between global climate change, natural resources and biodiversity. Because sound environmental management is also an outcome of good governance, the program maintains a strong link with the US Mission's Democracy and Governance Strategic Governance.

USAID's investment in co-management of tropical forest resources and biodiversity conservation will also provide important cross-sector relationships and opportunities for synergy with other programs of the portfolio. On the one hand, local level, forest related land-use planning and management skills, as foreseen with both community-based resources management committees and at the Upazila level Development Committees, would by definition, constitute a *prima facie* case of decentralization- a goal of USAID's Democracy and Governance Program. By vesting greater understanding and authority for land-use planning at the more local level, communities and the authorities which represent them will enhance their capacities for "drawing down" the development resources they justly need, thereby overcoming the perennial issue of the "top-down" approach to development that now troubles local development in the country.

1.5. Other Donor Agencies Funded Activities in Forest Sector

Specific biodiversity conservation components have been included in some of the major multilateral bank funded loan projects, including the World Bank-funded Forest Resources Management Project (FRMP), the Asian Development Bank-funded Forestry Sector Project

(FSP), and most recently, in the Asian Development Bank-funded Sundarbans Biodiversity Conservation Project. A recent project approved by UNDP and GEF-- the Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project (BGD/99/G31)-- will be the first effort to make the ECA concept operational at four sites: Cox's Bazaar Beach and adjacent islands and Hakaluki Haor (UNDP 2001).

Under the Ministry of Environment and Forests implemented and UNDP-supported Sustainable Environmental Management Program (SEMP), a number of sub-components actively pursue participatory wetland ecosystems management and biodiversity conservation in Haor, Floodplain and Charlands. All these sub-components have significant activities in participatory forestry. SEMF is in the fourth year of implementation of a five-year program.

Table 1: List of Different Forest Sector Projects

Project Name(s)	Target	Funding Source
Sunderbans Biodiversity Conservation	Sunderbans	ADB
Forestry Sector Project	Focus on buffer zones around 7 PAs	ADB
Nishorgo Support Project	Focus on 5 PAs, 3 in northeast & 2 in south	USAID
Eco-parks & Safari Parks	Small & recreational parks	Gov't of Bangladesh

Under the FSP, a series of management plans were prepared for various protected areas and the importance of biodiversity conservation in each of the country's Forest Divisions was also synthesized to guide the efforts of the Forest Department to engage in this new mandate for biodiversity conservation. These plans, however, have as yet to be acted upon and they have been used in part, with the blessing of the Forest Department, in the elaboration of the present programming document for USAID.

1.6 Co-management

This principle of collaborative process to manage the Protected Areas is not new: for more than ten years, the World Parks Congress has made the principle – which they call “co-management” – a central element of their recommendations.

Experience world-wide has now corroborated the fact that the "Co-Management Approach" must be based on the simple reality that conservation, no matter how compelling from a societal or even global perspective, can rarely be achieved on the backs of those local people least able to afford it. Attempting to rigorously enforce unilateral protection of valuable conservation areas is almost impossible to achieve. Such an approach flies in the face of the simple economic realities of supply and demand. Rigorous protection of forest resources has the effect of curtailing supply or at a minimum creating the perception of curtailed supply. As demand is likely to remain constant, given the subsistence nature of much of the usage patterns in de facto "open access" forest areas, prices will rise. This stimulates more pressure on the forest resource base, something that becomes especially acute in a densely populated country like Bangladesh.

Collaborative management -- or co-management -- is defined as **"a situation in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee amongst themselves a fair sharing of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources."** (Borrini-Feyerbund, IUCN: 2000). In Bangladesh, co-management "actors" will include the Forest Department, as legal custodian of protected forest areas, and the local and national stakeholders that have a role in conservation management.

Co-management can be viewed as:

A pluralist approach to managing natural resources (NRS), incorporating a variety of partners in a variety of roles, generally to the end goals of environmental conservation, sustainable use of NRS and the equitable sharing of resource-related benefits and responsibilities

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A political and cultural process par excellence: seeking social justice and "democracy" in the management of natural resource

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A process that needs some basic conditions to develop, among which are: full access to information on relevant issues and options, freedom and capacity to organize, freedom to express needs and concerns, a non-discriminatory social environment, the will of partners to negotiate, confidence in the respect of agreements, etc.

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A complex, often lengthy and sometimes confused process, involving frequent changes, surprises, sometimes contradictory information, and the need to retrace one's own steps the expression of a mature society, which understands that there is no "unique and objective" solution for managing natural resources but, rather, a multiplicity of different options which are compatible with both indigenous knowledge and scientific evidence and capable of meeting the needs of conservation and development (and that there also exists a multitude of negative or disastrous options for the environment and development)

The history of co-management is rooted in decades of field-based and theoretical efforts by individuals and groups concerned with:

- Social justice and equity
- Sustainable use of natural resource
- Community-based and community-run initiatives

An equitable sharing of benefits and costs of PAs' protection and management among the stakeholders is, therefore, an important part of co-management approach. An effective linking of socio-economic and ecological incentives and biodiversity conservation will be instrumental in eliciting stakeholders' participation in this approach.

A sustainable partnership will require an equitable sharing of both benefits and costs. Due to widespread impoverishment of local people it is not expected that they will come forward in investing cash money in the conservation efforts of PAs. However, due to widespread unemployment and under-employment it is plausible to solicit their voluntary labor contribution in an effective protection and management of the PAs and also create self-employment opportunities through alternative income generation activities. This will not

only help in instilling ownership feeling among the partners but will also help utilize surplus labor productively for efficient allocation of human and land resources for effective wildlife and habitat conservation.

2.6.1 Characteristics of Co-management

The composite elements of the co-management approach, all of which will be necessary for its successful implementation, may be characterized as follows:

- ❑ **The Value of Conservation for Local Communities:** A central theme therefore of the co-management approach is to demonstrate the value of natural resources management (matching land-use to land capability) to local people, i.e., that they themselves will be better off over the long-run by participating in the sustainable use and management of the resource base.
- ❑ **Brokering Genuine Community Participation:** Achieving the community consensus for sustainable natural resources management requires concerted dialogue and a real partnership between the communities and those governmental agencies responsible of protecting the natural forests and the biodiversity for the society at large. For sustainable forest resource management, it requires understanding and commitment from all the parties involved. For encouraging genuine community participation, the policy makers should involve the local community in both the activity and decision making stage. For example, communities will agree to relinquish unsustainable usage patterns in return for compensatory measures including alternative income generation activities.
- ❑ **Sharing the Full Benefits Stream--Products and Services:** The core areas within the protected terrestrial forest areas will not be harvested and therefore they require an off-site source of benefits to compensate local people with either recognized user rights or traditional user rights for the production trade-offs they willingly accept to meet the conservation goals of the program. There are several ways in which the resources formerly harvested by local users will be compensated under the forestry program. Social forestry, homestead forestry, participatory forestry plantation programs on adjacent reserved forest land, sustainable use zoning and *kebas* land-based community forestry schemes (a potential innovation) opportunities will be explored and where appropriate promoted in the buffer zones around the protected area.

The forest areas benefiting from this enhanced community stewardship will in turn yield other values in the form of environmental services (watershed and biodiversity conservation, disaster prevention from storm protection). These services will have positive impacts as well on the productivity of downstream wetland ecosystems, on floodplain agriculture, on safeguarding home and community infrastructure from flash floods, and on recharging vital groundwater aquifers. They may also provide interesting opportunities to diversify the local economy through the provision of outdoor recreation and ecotourism based enterprises.

- ❑ **Local Organizational Development:** The other fundamental part of the co-management approach is localized organizational development. These efforts bring together the user community and different interest groups within them (women, woodcutters, collectors of non-wood forest products, livestock owners, etc) and makes it possible for them to express a degree of community consensus about their needs and expectations related to the adjacent forest areas, thereby empowering them as co-

managers of the resource. Furthermore, such an approach is the epitome of enhanced local governance systems whereby local people learn to analyze their local problems and participate in deciding how they may be resolved. Such an approach, anchored in the actions to meet natural resources management and conservation goals will also spin-off a build-up of self-esteem and self-reliance within the communities. Creating this capacity to "draw-down" the well-justified governmental assistance they need to meet locally identified development goals will go a long way to overcoming the present "top-down" approach to development.

2. NISHORGO: SAVING BANGLADESH'S FOREST FOR FUTURE GENERATION

Recognizing the urgency of citizens' needs for more and better opportunities to visit nature, and the need to conserve unique biodiversity before it disappears, the Forest Department has responded with creation of a new Protected Areas management program called "Nishorgo" with the financial assistance from USAID through Nishorgo Support Project.

2.1 Nishorgo: The Protected Area Management Program

The Nishorgo Program is a comprehensive effort to improve the management of the country's Protected Areas of all kinds. The Nishorgo Program aims to protect and conserve Bangladesh's forests and biodiversity for future generations. At the heart of Nishorgo is a focus on building partnerships between the Forest Department and key local and national stakeholders that can assist in conservation efforts.

Nishorgo is the overall Program for improving the management and conservation of Bangladesh's protected areas with the general goal of ensuring a coherent and integrated PA strategy. Nishorgo is a Government of Bangladesh Program that receives financial support for Protected Areas Management from USAID and other donor agencies at present.

2.1.1 Evolution towards Nishorgo Program

The Forest Department – responsible for management of the country's 15 National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Game Reserves – has recognized the urgent need to act in favor of Protected Areas, and in favor of the citizens that can benefit from them. The Department formalized and launched a Protected Areas (PA) Management Program aiming to conserve the natural value of the country's Protected Areas, which is simply known as Nishorgo.

Improvement of Protected Area management would require a comprehensive strategy focusing on co-management, to be sure, but also including other aspects of PA management, viz, PA financing, institutional strengthening, policies. Keeping all these in mind and to protect our natural forest from completely being lost, Forest Department undertook the Nishorgo program with the technical support of USAID. This program was formerly known as Co-management of Tropical Resources or CTFR.

The program was designed in close consultation among the Ministry of Environment & forests (MOEF), Forest Department and USAID.

Table 2: Chronology of initiation of Nishorgo Program

Year	Event
2002	US-Bangladesh Strategic Objective Grant Agreement (SOAG) - Focus on declining Tropical Forests and relevance for poverty reduction and sustainable development
2002	Program Designed for “Co-management of Tropical Forest Resources in Bangladesh
2002	Feasibility Study for Project on Co-management of Tropical Forest Resources
2002-03	Project designed on Co-management of Tropical Forest Resources
2002-03	USAID/FD collaborate on modifications discussions
2003	Competitive bids released to international bidders
2003	IRG Team (with CODEC, NACOM and RDRS) selected to implement
2003 (August)	Team mobilizes in Dhaka
2004 (February)	Official Launching of Nishorgo Program
2004	Project Concept Paper (PCP) forwarded to Planning Commission

2.1.2 Description of Nishorgo Program

The Nishorgo Program is a comprehensive effort to conserve the forestry through co-management by aiming to provide economic sustainability for the local people. Nishorgo Program was officially launched in Bhawal National Park on February 24, 2004 with the motto “আমরা প্রকৃতিকে বাঁচাবো আগামী প্রজন্মের জন্য” or “*Let us save nature for our future generation*”.

As the name Nishorgo implies, the Program is in essence an enhancement and preservation of the unique beauty and biodiversity of the tropical forest of Bangladesh for our future generation. Further, Nishorgo will also promote the beauty of these natural forests through facilitating nature visits.

At the heart of the Nishorgo Program is a focus on building partnerships between the Forest Department and key local and national stakeholders that can assist in conservation efforts. Nishorgo pioneers collaborative approach to the Protected Area Management in the country. It does not ignore the forest dwelling people. They and the other stakeholders are at the heart of the program – they are the partners with the Forest Department in Nishorgo Program. These formal agreements -- called co-management agreements -- are designed to share responsibility for, and obligations to, protect our natural areas.

The stakeholder will get ownership of the of program not only in terms of benefit sharing but also management decisions will be taken collaboratively and through discussion.

The partners of Forest Department in the Nishorgo Program are as follows:

- The local people in and around protected areas. In many, if not most of our Protected Areas, Forest Villagers maintain permanent residence. The program and support project would work closely with these people, and ensure all of them as key and central partners in local efforts

- Other partners include the private business community. The Nishorgo Program needs to reach out to them as a key member of a conservation support group.
- Other Ministries of Bangladesh Government are the partners as it is necessary to ensure well-coordinated Government efforts.
- The international donor communities would also act as partners in providing a measure of the resources necessary to put this program in place.
- The other local and international nature conservation institutes such as IUCN, Bangladesh wild life trust, etc. and the nature enthusiast individuals are also the partner and stakeholder of this program.
- The urban educated population who would be beneficial in generating public awareness and possible consumer for nature visits can also form partnership with the Program.
- Lastly but not the least, the young people are stakeholders.

The true beneficiary of Nishorgo Program is the next generation of our country for whom the forests and the biodiversity will be preserved. Therefore, the program will always give special emphasis involve the younger generation in the program. The process of incorporating the youth has already started with the very beginning. From a national competition arranged for the school and college level students, the name Nishorgo was selected. A student from Jhinaidoha proposed the name. The word Nishorgo evokes the idyllic and even surreal beauty of nature within Bangladesh.

The wildlife Circle of Forest Department is in charge of Nishorgo Program

2.1.3 Objectives of Nishorgo Program

The primary objective of Nishorgo Program is to conserve the biodiversity within the PA of Bangladesh.

The detailed objectives are as follows:

- ✓ A marked slowing of biodiversity loss in targeted Protected Areas;
- ✓ Active and formalized participation of local communities dependent on forest resources;
- ✓ An increase in the number of Protected Area sites and the capacity to receive visitors;
- ✓ Formalization of a Protected Area management system;
- ✓ Strengthening of local economy and betterment of living standard of local stakeholder

2.1.4 Expected Activities

Expected activities of Nishorgo include the following, among others:

- ⇒ Development of formal co-management agreements for specific Protected Areas between the Department and stakeholders;
- ⇒ Sharing of economic benefits from Protected Areas with local participating stakeholders;
- ⇒ Determining avenues for alternative income generation activities for the local people
- ⇒ Assist in enterprise development opportunities around the PAs.
- ⇒ Formalization of processes for reducing local conflicts over Protected Areas;
- ⇒ Installation of visitor amenities in protected forest areas;

- ⇒ Improvement of Forest Department facilities with Protected Areas;
- ⇒ Refinement of the policy framework for Protected Areas management;
- ⇒ Facilitation of eco-friendly private sector investment that can provide key services to Protected Areas;
- ⇒ Support to applied research on Protected Areas that can improve future planning

2.1.5 Components of Nishorgo Program

The Program consists of six components, each necessary for the success of the overall Nishorgo effort.

- ✦ At the center of the Program is an effort to build and formalize the partnerships. The Program component will work to put in place collaborative management agreements between the Forest Department, local communities and other key partners.
- ✦ Offer alternative income generating opportunities to those presently living from forest resources.
- ✦ Nishorgo Program will work to reinforce policy efforts. And it will work to reach out and communicate the rules and policies to all stakeholders.
- ✦ The fourth component of the Program includes a focus on institutional capacity and sustainability. Program must help build the capacity of other key stakeholders
- ✦ Without proper infrastructure within the Parks, particularly for such things as well-marked trails, functional visitor's centers, staff housing, even user facilities for parking and access, the Nishorgo Program must ensure to put such infrastructure in place.
- ✦ Finally, we must focus in a final component on the need for well-thought out and careful efforts to manage the delicate habitats we are trying to protect. It isn't enough always to stop the cutting of trees or the extraction of resources. At times, we will need to work to restore our forests to what they once were, with a careful eye to what is acceptable to local people.

Together these are the core components of the Nishorgo Program. Addressing all these core components simultaneously is essential and urgent.

2.1.6 Communication Strategy

The communication strategy of Nishorgo Program is formulated in a way that it would bring about the desired behavioral change in the target audience.

It must be noted that one of the major reason for Sunderban to be better preserved than the small patches of Forests all over the country is the wide public awareness for its conservation needs.

All the messages of Nishorgo Program would use the central theme “আমরা প্রকৃতিকে বাঁচাবো আগামী প্রজন্মের জন্য” or “*Let us save nature for our future generation*”.

The messages would urge the audience to participate actively in protected area conservation and management process to keep their loved ones free from harm and to make sure their children's future is secure.

The messages would be tailored to the different segments of target audience that are needed reach. With different target groups the complexity and sophistication level of the message, or the media used will vary.

The campaign will be targeted at the local stakeholders along with nation at large with special emphasis towards the younger generation of country. Basically, all the communication efforts of Nishorgo will be executed in three levels:

- Local Community Level,
- National Level, and
- International Level

In general, all forest communities, and all existing and potential users of forest resources are the target audience of Nishorgo.

The ethnic people, woodcutters, farmers, local businessmen, politician, UP chairman, habitants in and around the protected area all consist the local community. However, special emphasis will be given to the women population of the community. It is seen from various studies that the poor women living in or around the forest are the most vulnerable group as their sole dependence on forest resources are relatively larger.

It is essential to ensure coherence between public understanding of forest conservation issues and pursuit and implementation of these issues at the local community level. Cooperation from government, policy maker, implementers at all levels are equally important. Therefore, Policymakers, Forest Department staff, and other relevant groups must be communicated properly to ensure effective participation from them to conserve the biodiversity of Bangladesh.

If we consider the local and national level stakeholders, along with international communities, all the communications would be directed to the following groups:

- Local Direct Stake-Holders
- Nature enthusiastic/ Active Nature workers
- Younger Generation of Bangladesh/ Students
- Policy/ Decision Makers
- Urban people seeking nature based recreation
- Private Enterprises
- International Stakeholders

Under Nishorgo Program the local community will be the active partner in co-managing and conserving the natural forests. The active participation and the commitment level of the local community to a great extent will determine the success of co-management approach for Protected Area Management.

Therefore customized and special communication instruments are required to motivate the local people. The devastating consequences for illegal tree felling and animal killing, their own and the future generation's sufferings as a result along with their direct benefit from the program need to be properly communicated to these local stakeholders.

The people living in or around the PAs are mostly poor, illiterate or semi-educated people. Tribes as Khasia, Monipuri, etc. are also the inhabitants in these areas. All these people have their own traditions, rituals and recreation means. They some times even share different dialect (i.e. sylheti, chittagonian, tribal, etc.). National Medias at many instances do not reach these people, specially the under privileged ones.

Customized and more direct behavioral change communication strategy is required to reach the local community. Usage of traditional media to motivate the rural people has been a proven and successful technique in both development and commercial sectors. If the message is blended with the traditional recreational elements of the local community like jatra, potgaan, jarigaan, kobigaan, etc. then the message is always received more positively. It also helps the local people to internalize the message effectively. Local dialects will be used for developing community based communication tools.

The Forest Department has realized that our natural forests must be protected through the people and for the people. Therefore, an effective mass communication strategy using the national media must be undertaken to make the people of Bangladesh aware about the existence of the beautiful and pristine forests in our country and of course the Nishorgo Program of Forest Department.

Nishorgo would try to develop partnership with the target audience by developing newsletters, brochures, websites, arranging seminars, workshops or organizing painting, essay writing or photography competition for the younger generation.

2.2 Nishorgo Support Project

Under its partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, USAID is providing targeted technical support to aspects of the Nishorgo Program through the Nishorgo Support Project. The Nishorgo Support Project works closely with the Forest Department and key conservation stakeholders to develop and implement a co-management approach to help conserve the country's large tracts of Protected Areas, where partnerships for conservation are essential.

2.2.1 Pilot Sites

The Project is working at five initial pilot sites to begin adapting a Protected Area co-management approach for Bangladesh. It is assumed that after a year the model will be replicated in other Protected Areas. The initial Sites are:

- ***Lawachara National Park:*** At the Lawachara National Park, where our beautiful tropical forests hold hundreds of species, including primates, in a setting of well-established and enclosed forest. Indigenous people such as Khasia and Tipra live around here.
- ***Rema Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary:*** Also in the Sylhet Division, Nishorgo have begun work to improve protection of the more remote, but nonetheless beautiful, Rema Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary. This Sanctuary, tucked into the border region, provides

some of the country's best bird watching experiences. But its remoteness and difficulty of access makes it a special challenge.

- ***Satchuri Reserve Forest:*** Soon to be designated the newest of our Wildlife Sanctuaries - is a gem of a forest. Widely accessible to all from the roadside, this small forest is only three hours from Dhaka, and is also a home to many unique species, especially birds. But here too, the threats are increasing every day.
- ***Teknaf Game Reserve:*** In the Cox's Bazaar region, Nishorgo is working at the Teknaf Game Reserve. This area is one of our largest tracts of preserved land in the country, and contains patches of tropical forest that remind one of the rich forests of the past. We need to act urgently at Teknaf to protect the forests that are left, and to build co-management agreements that will allow regeneration of forests that have been lost in part. Almost all the once dense and lush forest at Teknaf is gone
- ***Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary:*** And, finally, Nishorgo Program has undertaken preparatory work at the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, and is planning on implementing the Program here also. Chunati is perhaps the most threatened of the protected areas, and has been for years. The rate of loss of forests in this Sanctuary is truly alarming. And yet it remains an important area for elephant migration, and is one of the largest areas of protected land near the large urban centers of Chittagong. Therefore, Chunati poses a real challenge for the Nishorgo Program.

Annexure 1 shows detailed Map of the Areas.

2.2.1 Project Team

From a competitive international bidding International Resources Group (IRG) was selected to implement to project in Bangladesh.

International Resources Group (IRG) is an international professional services firm that helps governments, the private sector, communities, and households manage critical resources to build a cleaner, safer, and more prosperous world. Since 1978, IRG has completed over 600 contracts in more than 125 countries, delivering high-quality, cost-effective services that promote positive economic growth, institutional and social change, and intelligent use of resources—human, physical, environmental, financial. IRG's international development staff includes world-renowned specialists who have pioneered many of the analytical techniques employed in their fields. IRG's ability to provide management, economic, and technical advice is further enhanced by the diversity, cross-cultural experience, foreign language skills, and management capabilities of staff based in the Washington, DC, headquarters, corporate offices in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and 20 project-dedicated offices around the world.

IRG is the main contractor of the Nishorgo Support Project - the USAID funded project and will work in close collaboration with the FD. Under Nishorgo Support Project IRG will work with 3 subcontractors, which are the local NGOs and are CODEC, NACOM and RDRS.

CODEC and RDRS work for local level community mobilization and implementation of co-management in the southern and northern site respectively while provides key inputs to the planning and analytical process, including an oversight of environmental and social monitoring efforts.

2.2.2 Objective of Nishorgo Support Project

NSP aims to collaboratively develop co-management agreements leading to measurable improvements in forest and resource conservation in selected protected areas and their buffer zones. Nishorgo Support Project has the following specific objectives:

- Develop a functional model for formalized collaboration in the management of protected areas.
- Create alternative income generation opportunities for key local stakeholders in and around protected areas.
- Identify and facilitate nature based enterprise development opportunities around the PAs like eco-tourism, herbal medicine nursery, handicrafts, etc.
- Develop policies conducive to improved protected area management and build constituencies to further these policy goals.
- Strengthen the institutional systems and capacity of the Forest Department and key stakeholders so that improvements under the Project can be made permanent.
- Build or reinforce the infrastructure within protected areas that will enable better management and provision of visitor services.
- Design and implement a program of habitat management and restoration for protected areas.

2.2.3 Nishorgo Support Project Components

The Nishorgo Support Project includes five core components:

- **Development of a co-management planning and implementation model:** Under this component, processes will be developed and established to ensure that protected areas are jointly managed under formal agreements between the Forest Department and local stakeholders.
- **Improved ecosystem management:** Along with the development of participatory agreements to co-manage protected areas, the Project will support targeted interventions in the broader landscape that provide both incentives and income enhancements to households (this is called “Alternative Income Generation”) and broader-scale ecosystem improvements. All these ecosystem management improvements are targeted to encourage the changed behavior of key stakeholders that can contribute to improved conservation.
- **An enhanced policy environment for co-management:** At a policy level, the Project will support the Forest Department in advancing legal, institutional and financial policy instruments that provide a context for improved protected area management. Expected target areas include protected area financing mechanisms,

legal and regulatory support to the co-management approach, and support to the Project Steering Committee and Wildlife Advisory Board.

- **Lay the foundations for a conservation constituency:** In order to reach out to and engage a broad range of national and international stakeholders, the Nishorgo Program will employ appropriate communication tools and approaches. This component of the Project will provide support to the Nishorgo Program in its communications efforts to multiple key stakeholders at the local, national and international levels.
- **Ensure the institutionalization of co-management:** Among the Nishorgo Program's most important challenges are the development of human capacity in the relatively new (to the Forest Department) area of protected area management. The Project will help build the capacity of national training institutions so that those institutions can turn out qualified protected area managers in the future. And the Project will also help to put in place the necessary capacity, skills and systems within the Wildlife & Nature Conservation Circle to meet the growing challenges of protected area management.

3. NISHORGO CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

All individuals and institutions have a mutual responsibility to act as Trustees of Earth, seeking the choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will eliminate pollution, poverty foster peaceful progress, awaken the wonder of life, and realize the best potential for the future of the human advancement.

We must realize that our natural resources are finite and with careless use they will be exhausted one day. The earth will continue to regenerate its life sources only as long as all the peoples do their part to conserve its natural resources. It is a responsibility that every human being shares. Through voluntary action, each of us can join in building a productive land in harmony with nature.

The collective experience of countries throughout the world has made it clear that nature conservation progresses rapidly only when the leading members of the private sector perceive nature conservation as good for the economic health of the country. Conversely, when leading business interests do not stand behind conservation, it doesn't happen.

The Nishorgo Program believes that it is in the mutual interest of private businesses and the Government to work together to strengthen public services.

The present dire state of our tropical forest commands attention and action from all the corners of the society. For a sustainable future, the responsibility cannot be left alone to the government.

It is not possible for the Bangladesh government alone to meet the huge investment needs to protect the remaining tropical forests. Even the USAID funding or the other donor agency's funding or grant is not sufficient to cover all the major aspects of conservation. Therefore, the Nishorgo Support Project considers it is vital for a sustainable future to approach the

private sectors to come forward to save Bangladesh's natural forests. With careful planning, transparent management and the focus on delivering services to people -- the public and private sectors can collaborate for the good of all.

3.1 What is Conservation Partnership

Partnership can be defined as ‘A partnership is not itself a goal, but rather a means of achieving a goal. It is a voluntary, mutually beneficial, and desired arrangement entered into between the Forest Service and another or others to accomplish mutually agreed-upon objectives that is consistent with conservation of our natural forests and serves the public interest’.

Conservation Partners will be the private sector companies that would financially contribute to Nishorgo Program for the conservation and improved management of the Protected Areas of Bangladesh. Thus the private company would play a crucial role in protecting our forestry and biodiversity.

The private companies would develop a partnership with Nishorgo Program/ or Nishorgo Support Project that would lead to mutual benefits, not only for conservation but also in terms of marketing and communication.

The Nishorgo conservation partnership with the private companies will be basically like creating a pool of additional but very much required funding for the PA management of Bangladesh.

The partnership can be done for a short-term basis focusing on any specific even or for long term for a sustainable future.

Basically, the Private-Public Conservation partnership is not a totally new concept worldwide. Many of renowned big Multinational companies forms partnership with different public conservation organizations in the developed countries to save the regional heritage sites in the developed countries.

Even in our countries the local companies along with the Multinational companies are becoming more aware of their corporate social responsibility and coming forward for the cause. Of course, for forming the partnership the company must have its willingness to show its corporate responsibility along with financial strength to do so.

3.2 Why it is urgent to have partnership

The conservation partnership will endow with monumental benefits to the PA, GOB and the private enterprises as well.

Protected Areas in our country are part of a mosaic of natural resources— farmland, wetlands, fisheries and settlements. However, the we have lost more than 50% of our forest cover in the last three decades and the remaining forests are fast disappearing which will eventually result in ecological imbalance, increase poverty of the people depending on the forest resources. On the other hand, if properly managed, they will provide sustenance and economic opportunity in the region.

However, the constant degradation of our forest resources has reached an alarming point and it is not possible for the GOB to overcome the situation alone. To save the remaining biodiversity, the FD must integrate the private business enterprises for conservation of the PAs.

Partnerships with private enterprise will provide an alternative means of paying a portion of the costs of conservation. If private sector operations can maintain sufficient profit margins, provide economic benefits to aspiring populations, and still conserve significant biological diversity, then they can very efficiently complement the conservation investments of government agencies and conservation organizations.

Even from the Private sector point of view forming conservation partnership is beneficial for them. In today's corporate world, for the private business enterprises, it's not enough only to earn profit to outlive the competitors. Now a day, the consumers also expect the company of their choice to be socially and environmentally responsible. As competitions are intensifying the companies must find new avenues to earn consumer trust in addition to providing quality product or service. Independent research shows that consumers have high regard for a company that invests in its social and environmental responsibilities.

3.2 Preconditions for Partnership

To form a successful partnership, the agency and potential partners must have a common understanding of what a partnership should and should not include. Nishorgo Conservation Partnerships are required to design and offer interested private businesses a vehicle for contributing to long-term forest conservation in a way that:

- is transparent;
- ensures that contributions reach their target;
- has low transaction costs
- will make a long-term difference in forest conservation; and,
- will generate beneficial public image for the contributor.

The partnership must be fashioned in a way that the Private Sector companies would find it reliable and effective in terms of executing timely services for different conservation issues.

In many instances, the private companies have some sort of reservation for the public sector's speed of action and honesty. Even if the Private companies are convinced to make a contribution, they may fear that their contributions will not reach the target at the desired manner.

Therefore, the foremost task will be to ensure the private companies that their contributions will not be engulfed by corruption or slow pace.

3.3 Who will be the possible partners

Conservation Partners will be the private sector companies that would financially contribute to Nishorgo Program for the conservation and improved management of the Protected

Areas of Bangladesh. Thus the private company would play a crucial role in protecting our forestry and biodiversity.

The conservation partners can be any private company engaged in manufacturing or service sector. The conservation partnership can be formed with the Local, Multinational or Transnational companies. In whichever industry the company might be, the conservation partner needs to have a concern for the eco-friendly sustainable business practices. Otherwise only for business or marketing need, the partnership will not be fruitful.

Nishorgo Support Project must approach to all the possible companies for Conservation Partnership.

The companies that have stake in or around the Protected Areas or whose business practices are under scrutiny for environment friendly practices like the oil companies or the tobacco companies will be more willing to join hands with Nishorgo Support Project to conserve the PAs through sustainable management. For example, the Tobacco Companies are widely accused for deforestation. To combat that accusation, British American Tobacco (BAT) each year undertakes noteworthy plantation program.

Similarly after the Magurchara incident, that made many poor people homeless, Unocol participates in community development program in that area.

The proactive leading commercial organizations more and more realizing their obligation to the environment and many of them are keen to contribute to change the picture of constant degradation of the natural forest of Bangladesh.

3.3.1. Multinational/ Transnational Companies:

In our country, many of the multinational companies are at present investing in environment and social arena for betterment of life. However, though these involvement are often geared by marketing, branding or other purely business practice, they bring in some desired change as well in the society in the large.

Many of the companies have little to significant contributions towards poor community development, forestation program, etc. Whatever the amount of the contribution is, the big news is that the companies are coming forward for saving the nature.

Many of the multinational companies operating globally are opting for the 'green image' in western world and to match that image in Bangladesh is willing to act in the environment sector. For example, Lafarge, the world leader in construction materials, is the first industrial group to become a WWF Conservation Partner, with a relationship that began in 2000. Therefore, their Bangladeshi operating unit will also have to comply with their international image.

In the early 80s BAT was hugely criticized for its deforestation efforts. But BAT was quick to act and with consultation with FD and local community, BAT initiated well recognized program to create mass awareness of the need for afforestation with free sapling distribution program since 1980. Today after more than two decades, they have given away more than 42 millions of free saplings. BAT also received Prime Minister's 3rd prize in 1993 and 1st prize both in 1999 and 2003 for tree plantation.

BAT Bangladesh also drafted its Biodiversity Conservation Strategy in 2002, which is the first one in corporate arena of Bangladesh. Its primary objective is to raise awareness among the company's external or internal stakeholders, promote biodiversity and sustainable use in their operations, and showcase best practice examples, etc.

Since companies like BAT have already embraced the biodiversity conservation issues, it will be easier to convince these companies comparatively to participate in Nishorgo Conservation for the greater benefit of the Nature, local community as well as for their image.

Many companies such as Holcim are becoming ISO:1401 certified which certifies environment friendly operating procedures. Companies like BAT, Unocol, Holcim, etc. undertakes Social responsibility or Environmental related or both projects. They many times go by their own programs by would welcome any guidance for a coherent effort that would create a better impact. Since they have the financial strength to contribute along with the established corporate culture, these multinational companies would be easily motivated to save our forestry if properly approached. To set the standard and practice of participation these companies should be approached first.

3.3.2 Local Private Companies

It will be comparative greater challenge to motivate the local companies to come forward to form Conservation Partnership in Nishorgo Program. The reasons behind are numerous like comparatively lack of financial strength, absence of similar corporate culture and mistrust towards the government activities.

However, it will be deemed to be a greater success for Nishorgo Support Project if it can persuade the local companies for form Nishorgo Conservation Partnership. Even if the amount of the contribution is small still then the Project will be able to showcase the partnership to international donor communities that the local business houses are coming forward for saving the biodiversity.

Many of the local companies are already practicing socially responsible behavior, some are contributing for social development for a relatively long time. Companies like Dhaka Bank, Rahim Afroz, Square Group etc. promotes many social causes such as AIDS, Arsenic poisoning, Acid throwing, etc. and extend their hand of help notably.

These are the companies that can be approached for making them realizing their responsibility to the Mother Nature. The proactive local companies would more actively embrace their environmental responsibility. The conservation partnership can even start in a little way, which will bloom magnificently later. Furthermore, the companies would be also attracted to label their image as '**Green**' company. To attract the local companies, the Nishorgo Support Project must show how the company itself would be benefited in terms of its marketing and brand image along with helping to make a sustainable future for the coming generations.

3.4 Options for Different partnerships

There should be several options presented to the private company to choose from for Conservation Partnership. Therefore, the private company would be comfortable with one

or more of the partnership types that it finds more suitable for its business type. The Partnerships program can offer five distinct ways in which private businesses can participate. Therefore, conservation partnership or sponsorship between the private company and Nishorgo might happen in either or in all of the following 5 ways:

3.4.1. Contribute to Creation of Visitor Services

The Forest Department is working actively to improve the quality of visitor services at key Protected Areas throughout the country. But needs are great and resources are limited. In reality, the required infrastructure to facilitate nature visit in and around the Protected Areas either do not exist or are in very poor conditions. At each Protected Area, educational exhibits are needed to inform citizens about Bangladesh's unique biodiversity, and also about how to visit nature properly. Marked and well-sited hiking trails, while appearing natural, are often expensive to design and construct. And even such mundane visitor services as benches, parking and toilets are critically needed at all Protected Areas.

Under this option, Contributors might sponsor or make a donation to developing an infrastructure or visitor service, and then receive recognition on appropriate plaques with their name and logo at park level to attest to their contribution. For example a sign in front of the watchtower would *'in courtesy of the (company name)'*. This will be unique marketing opportunity for the Conservation Partner as well. Other possible Contributions under this mode might include bird watching hides, rest areas, benches, and sitting areas, or even simple watchtowers.

The tourism and related companies are should specially addressed for this type of conservation partnership. One of the major components of Nishorgo Program is to facilitate nature visit experience for the urban people. Since, Private tourism companies and Nishorgo Program has mutual interest, therefore, together they can achieve a synergy to develop the necessary infrastructure around the PAs.

Under this option

- ⇒ The Partner receives name recognition on plaques at site of contribution, a unique branding opportunity for the private partner, and
- ⇒ Nishorgo receives improvements to visitor services and infrastructure within Protected Areas

3.4.2 Co-Finance Nishorgo Communication

To conserve the forestry in a sustainable way, we must grow public awareness and opinion. Nishorgo program considers that promoting the forestry and biodiversity conservation issues through various media to be befitting for mass awareness and opinion generation. Building a popular and broad consensus for Protected Area conservation is a multi-year and expensive effort. The Nishorgo Program will provide its own funding for communication and outreach efforts to help change behaviors concerning Protected Areas. But the required communication needs vastly exceed what the Government can presently allocate. Even the required financing for a comprehensive and effective communication program is beyond the capacity of the presently USAID funded Nishorgo Support Project.

Strategic communication is regarded as one of the most important ingredient required to tell the story of good forestry to the public. With Strategic Communication it is possible to influence nature friendly behavior that will ultimately turn into sustainable behavior.

The aim of the communication strategy of Nishorgo Program is to conserve the Protected Areas through wide spread public awareness and co-management at the local community level. This enhanced and widespread awareness is expected to generate both public support and active participation from the stakeholders for forest conservation and biodiversity protection. However, to make the communication strategy effectively implemented, a comprehensive, broad-based and coordinated behavioral change communication strategy needs to be implemented using multi-faceted media.

The Partnership will provide an opportunity via this option for private businesses to contribute to the global Nishorgo Program communication goals via financing of selected communications efforts. As special communication programs are undertaken -- say for Earth Day or Environment Day or a special youth-focused Nishorgo Day -- Contributors may provide complementary financing.

In return, Contributors would have their name mentioned in a way such as the following: "This public service advertisement provide courtesy of financing from the XYZ Corporation", and their logo would be shown or whatever is considered lucrative the private enterprise.

For example a private company can come forward and can solely or jointly with Nishorgo Support Project sponsor a national painting competition for school kids that would be publicized as Nishorgo-company X painting competition in electronic and print media, etc.

The Private Partner can also come forward to sponsor TV messages, Print media messages where their name and logo will be tagged alone.

Mass awareness generation along with customized communication to the direct local stakeholders is a key component for the success of the Nishorgo Program. However, these days the mass media is becoming quite expensive. So developing Private-public communication partnership will be extremely beneficial for the program.

Again, this is a lucrative option for the Private Sectors as well, since it will give them high visibility. Further, as their name and logo will appear along with Nishorgo logo in mass media, therefore their image as a green company and fostering social and environmental responsibility will be well communicated to the public. It is considered that this will be a good option for the first timer.



Picture: 1st ever Conservation Partnership with Hotel Water Garden Radisson

In fact, Nishorgo Program is proud to announce its 1st ever conservation partnership with Hotel Water Garden Radisson. The conservation partnership was formed under this category. The pioneer private sector company for forming conservation partnership with Nishorgo is Hotel Water Garden Radisson. In the event of National Tree Fair, Hotel Radisson sponsored two banners at its premise at the Airport Road. The location was prominent. In the banner a message also appeared declaring that in courtesy of Hotel Radisson.

No matter whether the contribution is huge or little, it is undoubtedly a milestone for Nishorgo Program in attracting the private sectors to come forward.

Under this option:

- ⇒ The Partner receives name recognition on media,
- ⇒ The mass become aware of the Partners green commitment
- ⇒ Nishorgo receives financial contributions to Nishorgo communications activities

3.4.3 Help Improve Livelihoods of People Around Parks

In the heart of Nishorgo Program are people. The Nishorgo Program's success relies upon building a strong and mutually self-interested relationship with those communities living in and around Protected Areas. Unless communities are fully engaged in ensuring PA conservation, the Program will not be successful. And communities will not participate if simple survival consumes the entirety of their efforts.



Picture: They deserve to experience Nishorgo also

Contributors may also want to help improve the livelihoods of the local people who can make the most difference in PA conservation. They might finance self-help projects, economic opportunities, women's empowerment, educational programs, or any of a number of community interventions. The Nishorgo Program can make recommendations concerning local NGOs and community associations that can be recipients of such Contributions and help ensure the contributions to livelihoods result in improved PA conservation.

Some of the Multinational companies are already working on the community level to improve the life standard. Unocal, BAT, etc. work with the local community. However, it is argued that their contributions are to some point are business driven and not on purely benevolent purpose.

Even acknowledging the above argument, it is important that the companies do their stakeholder analysis and contribute for community mobilization. If Nishorgo Support Project can convince the companies to invest in local community development in and around the PAs, then naturally the local people's pressure on forest resources will decrease.

Under this option:

- ⇒ The Partner receives participation in improving the livelihoods of rural citizens while improving forest conservation,

- ⇒ Partner's name gets highlighted in all Nishorgo Support Project Reports, Nishorgo website, and USAID reports, thus receives acknowledgement from international donor agencies.
- ⇒ Nishorgo receives the benefit of local citizens around PAs that may be more interested in conservation.

3.4.4 License the Nishorgo Image

At present, products conveying the beauty of nature, and of the country's Protected Areas, are in short supply. A few fuzzy postcards of tigers in the Sunderbans can be purchased, but few nature products beyond this can be found. Other countries can boast of hundreds of postcards, t-shirts, hats, other clothing items, books, posters and other products which capitalize on people's desire to "own" a piece of nature. At concession stalls in national parks around the world, visitors expend more on purchasing memorabilia from concession stands than they did in entering the park. And tourists, even if they haven't had time to get to the serene natural settings, still want to purchase products that suggest they had.

As one option to Contributors, the Nishorgo Program offers an opportunity to license the Nishorgo logo and name for use in creating and selling nature based products. Receipts from the licensing program will be allocated to local community development (75%) and maintenance of the infrastructures of national parks and wild life sanctuaries (25%).

It is the objective of the Nishorgo Program to focus particularly on influencing high school and university students by creating a "buzz" about Nishorgo, and more generally about conservation of the country's remaining Protected Areas. The Nishorgo concept, image and brand will increasingly be considered interesting to this market segment.

Companies with a proven track record of corporate environmental responsibility and whose products are manufactured using environmentally friendly practices and materials may be eligible to apply for a licensing agreement.

Under this option,

- ⇒ The Partner receives use of the Nishorgo logo & name in selling nature products, and
- ⇒ Nishorgo receives licensing fee revenue to use for communities and PA conservation.

3.4.5. Practice Park-Friendly Behavior

This option is focused only on those businesses or individuals that are located in the landscapes around PAs. In such landscapes, it is particularly important that private businesses act in a way that assists PA conservation. Businesses in those areas that act in a way supportive of PA conservation may be given the right to use the "Certified Nishorgo-Friendly" label. Criteria for receipt of the label will be set by the Partnership, in consultation with businesses in the local communities. In regions around the northeastern PAs, for example, the tea estates and pineapple cultivators, oil companies may need to demonstrate that their practices are not causing soil degradation that may create runoff into the PA. Other companies for example, considerations



Picture: Eco-friendly business operating procedures are needed

can be shown in waste disposal, CO emissions, or fuel type selection, to name a few.

Here, the name of Unocal should be mentioned separately as they are operating near Lawachara National Park, and any negative consequences would be monumental and irrevocable. Therefore, for example, a real opportunity exists to assist such the private sector in controlling the important knock-on effects of company practices and ensuring environmental friendly operating procedures.

Under this option,

- ⇒ The Partner receives the right to advertise its "Certified Nishorgo-Friendly" label, and
- ⇒ Nishorgo receives better corporate citizens around Protected Areas.

3.5 Levels of Partnership

Some Contributors will want to make more substantial contributions than others. In all the communication materials of the Nishorgo Program (website, annual report, brochure, etc.) the Partnership will classify Contributors on the basis of their annual giving into the following Bangladesh-specific classes:

- *Hoolock Gibbon Class:* The Hoolock Gibbon once thrived in the forests throughout the country. It is now only found in patches of the north and southeast. Members of this class contribute over Taka 5 lakh per year.
- *Bengal Fox Class:* Few of these elegant mammals remain in the country, and their numbers dwindle by the day as their habitat is converted. Members of this class contribute over Taka 3 lakh per year.
- *Garjan Class:* The majestic garjan was once found throughout our deciduous forests in the south and east. Today, only patches remain, some of them in the areas Nishorgo is working to protect. Members of this class contribute over 1 lakh per year.
- *Hooded Pitta and other birds class:* Forests like Lawachara, Satchuri, Ruma-kelanga or Teknaf was once full of chirping of birds like hooded pitta, Indian pitta, etc. Now it's hard to find them. Sponsors of this category would donate an annual fee of Tk 50,000.



Picture: Garjan Forest, Dulhazra Safari Park

3.6 Benefits for the conservation Partners

Partnerships are plain smart management. They are a vital means of achieving goals; goals that might not be achieved by the Forest Department alone. Partnerships are also the foundation for productive, sustained relationships. They develop a knowledgeable, supportive constituency. In all senses, they enhance the ability of the Forest Department to accomplish the objectives of the Nishorgo Program.

Public-Private Conservation Partnerships generate a multitude of environmental benefits. Partnerships make economic, social, political, and ecological sense; as long as they are done legally and under proper authority.

Even the private partner will gain the invaluable intangible asset of increasing their company image. The public would view them as Green Company that would increase their reliability note worthily. Even apart from the economic or business benefits the private partner would receive, they would also carry out their responsibility to the mother earth, the very reason for their existence.

Nishorgo Conservation Partners receive a number of direct publicity benefits mentioned under the 5 types of Partnerships above.

In addition, Partners will receive the following additional benefits:

- √ A more environmentally friendly image with consumers;
- √ Inclusion in the list of Nishorgo Program Partners in the Nishorgo Program Annual Report and website (www.nishorgo.org).
- √ Presentation at national and international meetings on and publications on Park management.
- √ Receipt of bi-monthly Nishorgo Program newsletters;
- √ Invitations to special environmental events in the Protected Areas and in Dhaka arranged by NSP, other conservation organizations, International Donor Agencies, etc.

3.7 Possible Actors in the Partnership

The Partnership achieves this through an innovative public-private relationship between the following actors:

(1) Forest Department: As custodian and legally designated manager of the country's Protected Area, the Forest Department will establish priorities for key improvements to the Protected Areas of the country, especially in the areas of visitor services, communication targets, livelihood improvements and establishment of new PAs.

(2) Nishorgo Support Project: This US-financed technical assistance Project -- led by a private US environmental institution -- is designed to support achievement of the objectives of the Nishorgo Program of the Forest Department. The Project currently has staff at the Nishorgo Program's five priority protected areas, along with a central office in Dhaka. The Project will assist in design of modalities of label development, Partnership operational procedures, communications documents and materials.

(3) Arannayk Foundation: As an independent, private, non-profit, Bangladeshi corporation created with support from the US Government to support tropical forest conservation, the Foundation can act as the objective and independent body providing transparent management of contributions.

(4) *Contributing Partners:* Contributing Conservation Partners can be any private company engaged in manufacturing or service sector. Contributors may also be benevolent individuals or private foundations. The Partner should have a demonstrated concern for eco-friendly and sustainable business practices, and a love for Bangladesh's environment.

3.8 Mode of Execution of the Partnership

It is noted earlier that many of the private enterprises may have reservation to pay the funding directly to FD or the MOEF. One of the main challenges will be of conservation partnership on how and who would spend the funding.

There can be multiple methods for execution of the funds. Each and every partnership will be a unique one and depending on the situation, the best suited execution method can be chosen. The following describes the different types of execution methods:

- **Nishorgo Support Project:** Since NSP is acting as the liaison between the FD and the private companies and they would be in charge of marketing the 'Private-Public Conservation Partnership' Concept to the private companies they would be the ideal candidate for taking responsibility for execution of the funds. Their reliability with private enterprises will be relatively higher in terms of effectively and efficiently using the financing.

However, there are several important considerations. First of all NSP is designed for 5 year period only. On the contrary our Protected Areas will be forever and would need a continual support from the business community. Therefore, there must be a devise for long term financing and ensuring that the Conservation Partnership continues even after the exit of NSP.

Further, NSP being a USAID funded project and company policy of IRG does not allow NSP to receive direct funding from the private business enterprise.

Instead, NSP should be in center of contact and coordinate with Private Partner, plan and help to execute. NSP must also initiate the whole conservation partnership process. It should be the responsibility of NSP to market the Nishorgo Program and the concept of Conservation Partnership to the potential Private Enterprises. NSP must also coordinate with FD and USAID for smooth operating procedures. NSP must create quality brochures, e-newsletters, website and other publishing materials, arrange seminars and make formal presentation at the potential organizations for motivating the business enterprises to enter into Nishorgo Conservation Partnership.

For example, in the Conservation Partnership with Hotel Radisson, NSP not only coordinated with Hotel Radisson but also arranged for physically setting up the banner.

For small expenditures, NSP can spend and the Private partner in that case would reimburse to NSP. But it should be noted here that this kind of arrangement is short term basis arrangement.

It should be undoubtedly agreed that the NSP should be main point of contact and would do the planning and would be responsible for overseeing the execution.

- **Forest Department:** Nishorgo is a component of FD, which will be managed under its Wildlife Management Circle. Because of the perceived bureaucratic image of FD many of the private enterprises may be unwilling to directly hand over the funding to FD. Moreover, it is also true that FD is severely constrained by lack human resources. Most of the senior personnel oversee more than one positions. Therefore, it would be difficult for the FD to be in charge of execution of activities of conservation activities.

Instead, FD's role should be to formalize and facilitate the partnership. FD should sign a formal Partnership agreement with Private Partner to give them legal authority to act and avoid any ambiguity that may arise later.

The big companies like BAT, Unocal can work in close collaboration with FD as their jurisdiction of work often cross path.

- **Private Business Partners:** Private business Partners are the focus of the Conservation Partnership. With the approval of FD and with close contact with NSP, the Private Partners themselves can execute the intended activities. For example, they can actively and directly take part in community development program under the partnership.

Of course, the formal agreement with FD would determine the scope and design of the activity. NSP will maintain close contact with the Private Partner from activity design to execution. However, independently carry out activities of the partnership will only be possible for the big companies with huge financial strength to spend in the environment sector.

- **Arranayk Foundation:** In 2000, the Government of Bangladesh and the U.S. Government signed an agreement under the Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) that provide debt relief for Bangladesh and establish a conservation fund entity, later to be called the Arannayk Foundation (AF). The TFCA requires that the AF Board consist of a majority of civil society (NGO) representatives, in addition to representatives appointed by the US Government and the Government of Bangladesh. AF is an on-going independent concern, therefore, would be able to assist the conservation partnership even when the term period of NSP is expired.

AF is formed in a way that it can receive funding from the private business partners and manage them transparently. At present AF is situated at NSP office awaiting to start its activities. Therefore, NSP can involve AF for all the work of conservation partnership and work in close collaboration. For example AF can facilitate forming partnership with tea estate owners like Finlay in PA vicinity with FD to protect the natural Forests. They can provide the required technical know-how's, interventions and carry out the activity on behalf of the partners.

- **Development Forum of Corporates (DFC):** This is a really encouraging step taken by the private sector to alleviate our societal and environmental status. Eight (8) business enterprises at present created a forum for the development of Bangladesh.

The rationale of creating this forum is that instead individual attempts the companies together would create a pool of fund to meet their obligation towards the society.

Naturally their joint effort will have far more effective impact and more financial strengthen to implement any major program.

Though the big multinational companies dominate this forum, it is really encouraging that a local company is also member of this forum. BAT Bangladesh is the coordinator of this forum. This forum was created recently in April 2004 and will next meet in August 2004. They are at present evaluating at different sectors where their contribution is most needed and will be most effective. Their prime two options are health and environment sector of Bangladesh. Whatever sector they would operate in, DFC is very much interested to do things that would alleviate living standard of the local community. Along with nature and biodiversity conservation, Partnership with Nishorgo program would DFC to work for the local community.

The member corporate organizations of DFC are:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| ↳ BAT | ↳ City Corp. |
| ↳ Unocal | ↳ Standard Chartered Bank, and |
| ↳ Rahim Afrooz | ↳ HSBC, |
| ↳ BATA | |

Instead of individual companies, DFC can form a partnership with Nishorgo Program of GOB. In that case DFC can take charge of the Partnership and work for the community mobilization, biodiversity conservation through facilitating proper infrastructure development in and around the PAs and or assist in generating mass awareness for the conservation of our unique and invaluable tropical forestry.

Nishorgo Support Project should do necessary measurements to such as making formal presentations based on facts and figures, etc. to this group to attract their pool of funding for Bangladesh's forest conservation. In consensus with GOB and NSP, this forum can start its own program for community mobilization and biodiversity conservation. Even DFC can nominate or employ a person for overseeing the Nishorgo Conservation activities at the PA level. That person can be located at the NSP head office at Dhaka to maintain close collaboration with NSP and FD.

4. RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, to save the Protected Forest Areas of Bangladesh, there must be concerted effort from business community, the entrepreneurs along with the government. There is much that the private sector can do, at both the small and large scale, to make Nishorgo Program a success. FD must utilize the competitive spirit of these businessmen to help in establishing a clean, lasting and ecologically friendly infrastructure around the PAs, Mobilizing the community in a true sense that would assist in making the Nishorgo Program a lasting and successful program. Forest Department must do the necessary to take advantage of this mutual interest in environmental conservation, and to use the mutual interest for the good of the Program.

The collective experience of countries throughout the world has made it clear that nature conservation is only possible when the leading members of the private sector perceive nature conservation as good for the economic health of the country. It is also true for Bangladesh context. It is apparent by now that it is not feasible for the FD alone to conserve our forestry in a sustainable manner in their traditional way. The Forest Department must take advantage of the creative energy of this country's entrepreneurs and established businesses.

The philosophy of creating and managing conservation partnerships continues to evolve. No two partnership opportunities are the same. And although consistency with the Forest Department's objective and traditions is important, times change. New trends, conditions, changed biodiversity status and ways of doing business become the norm.

Governments, private industry owners and managers, conservation-minded groups and individuals, and the public should recognize that these new partnerships hold tremendous potential, and should be encouraged. The concerned parties must also comprehend that by forming partnership between the FD and the private sector and by leveraging the Private Sector market driven approach is the surest way to save our remaining biodiversity and to attain the objectives of the Nishorgo Program.

Governments can do this by requiring conservation-compatible resource exploitation management plans, giving favored status to companies, which form such partnerships or are "green" certified, and ensuring transparency in management.

Donor agencies should support innovative conservation partnerships between the private sector and the FD and the related actors.

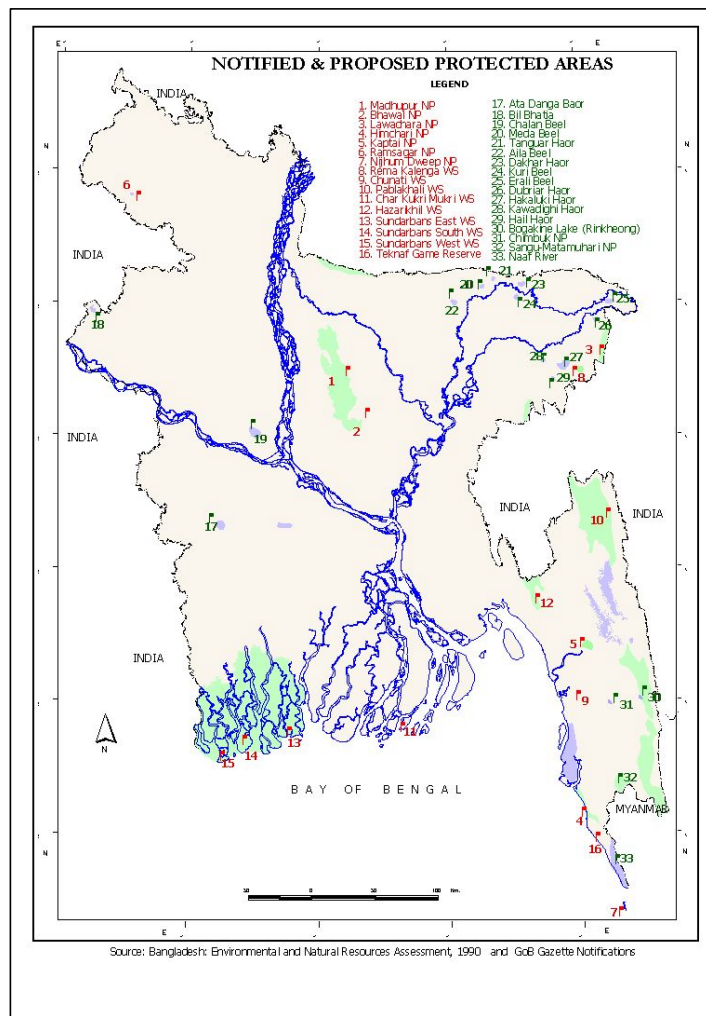
Last but not the least, Nishorgo Support Project must give its full effort at first to market the 'Nishorgo Program' of the government to the potential private companies. Once the partnership is formed the role of NSP should be to make liaison among the partners and provide necessary support initially to start the concerted conservation effort.

After all, all must concur with the motto of Nishorgo Program – 'Let us save nature for our future generation.'

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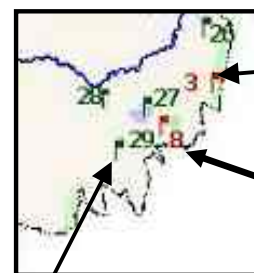
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ANNEXURE



Annexure A

Initial Co-management Sites



Lawachara
National

Rema Kalenga
Wildlife

Satchari
Wildlife
Sanctuary

Chunati Wildlife

Teknaf Game



ANNEXURE B

LIST OF INTERVIEWED COMPANIES/ ORGANIZATIONS

- Forest Department
- Nishorgo Support Project
- Environment Team, EGFE, USAID
- British American Tobacco Bangladesh
- Holcim (Bangladesh) Ltd
- Square Consumer Products Ltd.
- Square Toiletries Ltd.
- Asiatic Marketing Communications Ltd. ltd.
- Radisson Water Garden Hotel Dhaka
- IUCN
- Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh
- Arranyk Foundation
- The Guides Tours Ltd.
- GETCO
- Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd.