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“Sustainable Financing for Co-Management Organizations” Dialogue Held in Cox’s Bazar



USAID’s Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project and partner organizations, in association with the Bangladesh Forest Department, organized a dialogue in Cox’s Bazar on “Sustainable Financing for Co-Management Organizations in Bangladesh” in March 2016. Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Honorable Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), was the chief guest of the event while Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) of the Bangladesh Forest Department, presided over the dialogue. In his speech Mr. Yunus declared March 23 as Co-Management Day and called for responsible action on forest conservation from stakeholders at all levels, saying that co-management was a praiseworthy approach for conservation. “In Bangladesh, USAID supports co-management as a primary tool for conserving biodiversity,” said Mr. Farhad Ghaussy, Director, Economic Growth Office, USAID Bangladesh, in his speech as special guest. Four parallel sessions were organized as part of this dialogue to identify the roles of government, the private sector, development partners and co-management organizations to ensure sustainable financing for the co-management organizations in Bangladesh. This dialogue actively involved 104 participants representing government, non-government organizations, civil society, the private sector, media and co-management organizations.

Border Guard Bangladesh Acts to Conserve Endangered Turtles

CREL has been working to protect the rare Olive Ridley Turtle in the Cox’s Bazar area. Building awareness for protection among CMC members, including law enforcement agencies, paid off in March 2016. A Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) patrol group spotted a boat crossing the Naf River illegally to Myanmar during a regular patrol. The BGB searched the boat and found 149 turtle eggs along with other goods. The patrol group immediately contacted the CREL site team and handed over the turtle eggs. The CREL team transferred those eggs to the Shilkhali turtle hatchery. Through March 2016, CREL has supported the collection of over 10,000 turtle eggs from Sonadia ECA, Teknaf Peninsula and St. Martins Island ECA for hatching, and released 3,000 hatchlings to the sea. CREL has been working towards enhancing the knowledge base of stakeholders, and as a result, stakeholders and organizations are responding by proactively participating in conservation initiatives led by CREL.

CCF Distributes Uniforms Among Community Patrol Groups in Mongla

The Honorable Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) of Bangladesh, Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, attended a Community Patrol Group (CPG) orientation and uniform distribution session at Joymonighol, Chadpai, Mongla in the South West region in March 2016. This event was organized by the Bangladesh Forest Department with support from CREL where the CPGs were instructed on their responsibilities, roles, and duties. Mr. Yunus led the oath session of the CPGs and ensured that the groups will get maximum support from the Forest Department.



USAID Team Visits CREL Activities in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong

One of the objectives of the USAID Bangladesh team's visit to Cox's Bazar and Chittagong was to see the impact of USAID's long-term interventions in implementing co-management in natural resources management, addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation, and building technical capacity at the local level. The members of USAID team were Mr. Farhad Ghaussy, Director, Economic Growth Office and Mr. Azharul Mazumder, Environment and Climate Change Specialist and AOR for CREL. They were accompanied by Md. Abdul Latif Mia, CF, Chittagong Circle and PD CREL Project senior members of CREL project including John Dorr, CoP, Kevin Kamp, DCoP, and Mr. Abu Mostafa Kamal Uddin Senior Advisor. The team visited the ANR site, Cap Making Centre, Pebble Centre and Tailoring Centre in Medhakachapia National Park and Chakoria area. They also visited Shikhali, Borodale, Teknaf CMC office, Teknaf Nature Park and Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary.



Protected Area Management Rules 2015 Moves Ahead

Co-Management approach in forest Protected Areas was initiated in Bangladesh through USAID supported projects - Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) and Integrated Protected Area Co-Management (IPAC). Success to this approach led to several milestones including policy instruments to strengthen people's participation in forest conservation with the Social Forestry Rules'04, 50% revenue sharing Order'09 with forest Co-Management Organizations (CMOs), Nishorgo Vision'10 and Wildlife Act'12. The need for a stronger and comprehensive legal framework became apparent over the years; which led to recent initiative by USAID's CREL with the Bangladesh Forest Department, development of the country's first Protected Area Management Rules to legitimize CMOs, secure voices of the poor, increase forest protection and a legal basis for CMO sustainability. CREL has mobilized resources in the past 3 years to develop this Rules, under the Wildlife Act'12 and linked to the Social Forest Rules'04, after extensive consultation with various stakeholders at local, regional, and national levels. Following Forest Department and CREL's official proposal, the Ministry of Environment and Forests was requested to review co-management sustainability options for all forests PAs along with the periphery of Sundarban Reserve Forest. At the inter-ministerial review workshops on PA Rules, the ministries were briefed about provisions for financial support to Community Patrol Groups, Village Elephant Response Team and Village Tiger Team, PPP, integrated management, livelihood improvement and Co-management operations. The MoEF has started its second review and called for another level of inter-ministerial consultation to discuss the draft Rules to be facilitated by CREL.

CREL Promotes High Impact Climate Smart Agricultural Demonstration

"We are getting over 100 curious visitors almost every day who want to learn what is happening in these demo plots," says Ashmat Ali, a demo farmer in Daria Nagar of Cox's Bazar region. He is talking about CREL's high impact demonstrations, using different types of demonstrations to promote technologies among the targeted farmers. CREL has trained 136 lead farmers, local service providers and project officials and 28 demonstration plots are now operational in four regions of the project Thirty-two more will be established in April 2016.



The key features of these demos are: targeted to increase production to 200% from the current level; use of effective communication tools to ensure that fellow farmers receive proper information and are motivated to replicate; signs with brief and clear messages that provide information; signs with photos to demonstrate the technology used for the increased production.

These demo plots and signs have created greater interest among the community and CREL estimates that these demo plots will reach over 60,000 farmers in one year, thereby increasing the impacts on farmers' cultivation methods.

CREL Promotes Climate-Resilient Wetlands and Fisheries Management

CREL organized a two-day training on climate-resilient wetlands and fisheries management in Sreemangal in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries (DOF), with technical assistance from World Fish. The basic objectives of the training were to enhance knowledge of wetland management policies and guidelines, to build a comprehensive understanding of the wetland and fisheries management principles, and to provide scope to gather practical experience regarding conservation and sustainability. Twenty-six government officials participated in this training, with Mr. A.S.M. Rashedul Haque, DD, Sylhet Division, DOF, inaugurating the



training course as chief guest. Dr. Md. Abdul Quaiyyum, Project Director (DoF), CREL Project, was present as a special guest and a field visit was organized for the participants for practical observation and learning, visiting Baikka Beels and Balla Beel of Sreemangal.