

## Amendment Proposal of Jalmahal Policy 2009

The 'Jalmahal Management Policy 2009' is the current governance framework for managing Bangladesh's wetlands under the guardianship of the Ministry of Land (MoL). A range of stakeholders involved in wetland management have identified major limitations in the current Jalmahal Policy. One key area of improvement, and a focus of CREL efforts, is the need for more clarity and greater emphasis on equitable co-management provisions for wetland conservation. To address this weakness, in 2013 CREL initiated the formation of a technical working group comprised of Winrock, UNDP, USAID, GIZ, ActionAid, BRAC, CNRS, WorldFish, IUCN and the Department of Fisheries (DoF) to review and recommend amendments to the current Jalmahal Management Policy with a specific focus on community rights and



access. The working group analyzed successful projects to extract best practices and lessons learnt to be used in drafting amendments to the current policy which was jointly submitted to the MoL in 2015 by the DoF and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL). Following this submission, CREL supported the MoL to organize a national consultation on January 5, 2017 for reviewing the draft with MoL

officials, District Fisheries Officers, ADC (Revenue), UNO, Assistant Commissioner (Land), community leaders, donors and technical group members. The consultation concluded with the assurance from the MoL to adopt a revised policy that strengthens wetlands conservation with a greater emphasis on equitable co-management principles and greater participation by local communities.

## Jolmahal Handed Over to VCG of Hakaluki Haor



Hakaluki Haor is one of the largest freshwater wetlands in South Asia and an important breeding ground for local fish species. Hakaluki Haor covers an area of approximately 18,000 hectares including 276 large and small beels (separate waterbodies) within the area. The Ministry of Land (MoL) handed over the management responsibilities of these waterbodies to Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) through an MoU between the two ministries. To conserve the indigenous fish species, the GoB declared 12 water bodies within Hakaluki Haor as fish sanctuaries, many

of which are now managed by Village Conservation Groups (VCGs) with the support of a number of conservation projects and GoB departments. Among the 12 declared fish Sanctuaries, USAID's CREL Project is supporting VCGs for the management of five of the fish sanctuaries. On behalf of the VCGs, CREL Project staff negotiated with relevant GoB agencies for providing the management rights for these five sanctuaries to VCGs allowing them to earn revenue from the fish resources from the adjacent swamp forest and wetlands. On the first day of 2017, the management rights for three of these government owned water bodies within Hakaluki Haor were officially handed over to the Village Conservation Groups (VCFs) by the Department of Environment (DoE). This significant milestone is part of a long and complex effort by the CREL Project.

## Workshop on ECA Rules Held in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar

The 'Regional Orientation Workshop on ECA rules '2016 and Consultation Workshop' for revising St. Martin's Island ECA Management Plan with Upazila level stakeholders at Teknaf was organized at the Teknaf Upazila Parishad Auditorium on January 26, 2017. The participants of this workshop included representatives of the concerned government departments working in Teknaf and community members. The main objectives of this workshop were to share the newly approved ECA rules with stakeholders and to share the St. Martin's Island ECA Management Plan, which was recently developed in consultation with the community of St. Martin's Island. CREL supported and facilitated this workshop.

## Chittagong Regional Nishorgo Network Committee Formed

The Nishorgo Network Committee of the Chittagong region was formed on 18 January at the conference hall in the Conservator of Forest Office, Chittagong Circle. 51 people, including Md. Abdul Latif Mia (Conservator of Forest and FD CREL Project Director) Chittagong Circle, Mr. John A. Dorr (CREL Chief of Party), FD officials of the Chittagong Forest Division, members of co-management organizations and CREL representatives attended the meeting. Mozemmel Haque Sikder (president of Jaldi Co-Management Committee) was elected as the president of the Chittagong Regional Nishorgo Network Committee and KM Morshedul Alam (Range officer of Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary Range) was elected as the vice president. Guests and participants also discussed potential strategies to achieve greater sustainability of co-management organizations during the meeting.

## Entry Fee Collection Starts at Khadimnager National Park



In 2006, the Government of Bangladesh declared the Khadimnager Forest of Sylhet as Khadimnager National Park (KNP). While the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued a letter in April 2012 to introduce an entry fee collection system at Khadimnager National Park, facilities for fee collection were not adequate. To ensure sustainable funding sources for co-management organizations responsible for the management of KNP, USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project has been facilitating the introduction of eco-tourism through Co-Management Committees at KNP comparable to other protected areas in Bangladesh. Consequently, in 2016 USAID's CREL project supported the establishment of essential eco-tourism facilities including an entry fee counter, sitting benches, resting shelters, culverts and parking. With the infrastructure in place, the entry

fee collection system of Khadimnager National Park (KNP) was inaugurated on January 8, 2017 through a ceremonial event organized by the Bangladesh Forest Department and the KNP CMC facilitated by USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project. Dr. Abul Kalam Abdul Momen (a Bangladeshi economist and Former Permanent Representative to the United Nations) attended in the ceremony as chief guest, the Upazila Chaiman of Sylhet Sadar attended as special guest and the event was presided over by RMS Munirul Islam, DFO, Sylhet Forest Department. Other participants included CMO members, eco-tour guides, authorities of the adjacent tea gardens, community people, CREL representatives and the media. The Co-Management Organization will receive 50% of the revenue to be used for improved management of KNP.

## Government Departments Join Hands to Support Gender Efforts in Natural Resources Management in Chittagong Region

A coordination meeting focused on generating greater support for gender issues in natural resources management was organized at the CODEC office by the USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project on January 10, 2017 and attended by 34 people from the Coastal Forest Division DFO (Chittagong), the Deputy Director of the Chittagong Department of Social Welfare, the Department of Youth Development, the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, the Department of Fisheries

and representatives from other divisional GOB departments. The President of the Jaldi Co-Management Committee and representatives of Hazarikhil and Dhopachari CMCs as well as other CREL staff also participated the workshop, including a keynote presentation by the CREL Gender Specialist, Rahima Khatun. The focus of the discussion was on the experiences and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in natural resources management via co-management organizations and a

request for more support for natural resource dependent populations with a special emphasis on more equitable participation and leadership of women. Each GOB divisional official agreed to issue a letter to their respective Upazila officers for providing their available support, services and technical assistance to CMC members in the Chittagong region with a greater focus on women to ensure greater sustainability of successes achieved by the CREL Project in gender mainstreaming in NRM.

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



Department of Environment

