

Satkhira CMC Receives Award for Conservation



Satkhira Co-Management Committee (CMC) received an award for their role in conservation of Sundarbans. They received the award on the occasion of ‘Tree Fair-2017’ organized by Shyamnagar Upazila Parishad of Satkhira District on August 7-10, 2017. Satkhira CMC, with USAID’s CREL Project support, has been planting mangrove trees in their area since 2014. More than 150 hectares of Munshiganj area of Satkhira have been covered with various species of mangrove trees. In some areas, these trees have grown to 2.5 meters tall, which will protect these areas from land erosion, storms and cyclones. These trees are also now providing communities with their fuel wood requirement. Fruit collected from these trees are sold as a source of additional income for the community.

Two farmers, Mr. Amin Ali and Mr. Habibur Rahman, were given the “Best Farmer” award in the same event. They were recognized for their role in supporting and providing information that helps local farmers to adopt improved farming techniques. CREL provided training on improved resilient farming techniques to selected farmers and “service providers” and they have spread information more widely in the local communities. After receiving training and information, local people are now earning more money from their homestead vegetable production, and this is helping to reduce their dependency on the forest resource for their livelihoods. Now, these people are working as advocates for conservation of Sundarbans- a national resources.

Regional Co-Management Congress Consultation held in Cox’s Bazar

Cox’s Bazar District has five forest Protected Areas (PA) and seven active Co-management Committees that are working to conserve these protected areas jointly with Forest Department. These CMCs and Forest Department are cooperating with other Government agencies, Non-Government Organizations, and local communities to address challenges and threats to forest habitat and biodiversity through a widespread campaign advocating for conservation and co-management in Bangladesh. To further this partnership and campaign, CREL is organizing four Regional Co-Management

Congress Consultation Workshops, the first of which was held in Cox’s Bazar on August 29, 2017. The objectives of these consultations are to address gaps in CMC communication and coordination, identify necessary

policy support to co-management, and promote sources of sustainable funding for CMCs. A wide range of district-level government officials, Forest Department officials and community members participated in the workshop. When all four regional consultations are completed, their findings and recommended actions on issues will be raised at the 2nd National Co-Management Congress to be held in Dhaka in early November this year. This is expected to help gain commitments of key stakeholders to address key shortfalls and constraints affecting co-management.



Teknaf CMC Advances Towards Financial Sustainability



Several Co-Management Committees have made measurable progress towards attaining financial sustainability. The Teknaf Co-Management Committee, one of three responsible for Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary, recently met with private donors and encouraged them to contribute to its conservation activities. Subsequently, six individual benefactors contributed about 30,000 Taka to be used for conservation awareness campaigns among forest-resource dependent people living around Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary.

In another effort, Teknaf CMC convinced the Department of Fisheries in Teknaf to help the Community Patrol Groups in this area. Department of Fisheries has agreed to provide fish fingerlings worth about 8,000 Taka for Community Patrol Group to release in two ponds that they have leased for aquaculture. Members of Community Patrol Groups patrol the forest voluntarily in support of the Forest Department. An additional income from aquaculture will provide an incentive for the CPG members to continue with their role in conservation.

Youths Promote Conservation Through Ecotourism



USAID's CREL Project organized a daylong event on 21 August 2017 to engage youths in ecotourism promotional activities. Thirty students for different colleges and universities joined the event near Shahasrodara waterfall in Baraiyadhala National Park. For some of the participants, this was their first visit to the fall. Fahim (age 22), one of the participants, expressed his feelings - "Now I understand the importance of conservation; no forest means no waterfall".

CREL has been working with communities to promote ecotourism in protected areas. Revenue generated from ecotourism would support conservation of the forests. The participating youths are expected to spread the word regarding the attractions of protected areas and how to be a responsible visitor through their social media networks. The event was designed to change attitudes among the participants, who then will become advocates for ecotourism among their peers and communities. Members of the Baraiyadhala CMC, Forest Department officials and CREL team were present in the event. The event ended with a pledge from the students to promote ecotourism in their respective communities.

