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INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREA CO-MANAGEMENT (IPAC)

Report of IPAC Development Project Proforma (DPP) Workshop

February 19, 2009

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Venue: Conference Room, Forest Department, Bana Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

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USAID Contract N° EPP-I-00-06-00007-00
Order No : EPP-I-01-06-00007-00

Submitted to :
USAID/Bangladesh

Submitted By :
International Resources Group (IRG)
With subcontractors:
WWF-USA, dTS, East-West Center
Environmental Law Institute, Epler-Wood International
World Fish Center, CIPD, RDRS, CODEC
BELA, Asiatic M&C, Oasis Transformation
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Ban Bhaban Workshop
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The Inception workshop was initiated with welcome address from **Mr. Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad**, Project Director, NSP/IPAC and Conservator of Forests, Bangladesh Forest Department. He asked all the participants (ACFs, DFOs and CFs) to provide their inputs for the preparation of DPP under IPAC.

He also introduced the following topics that were to be focused on during the meeting:

- a. The infrastructural and other development activities to be carried out under IPAC
- b. Completion of RPA formats with updated information
- c. Cluster wise input regarding development of habitats, eco-tourism, etc
- d. Draft generic GO for IPAC sites for implementing Co-Management in all the forest Protected Areas (PAs).

Mr. Azharul Mazumder, Team Leader, Environment and CTO, IPAC/USAID spoke next. He mentioned that the following two components are important for effective IPAC implementation:

- a. Physical Component- Establishing Infrastructure and Facilities
- b. Biological Component- Ecological restoration of PAs

According to him, it was important that standard and systematic approaches were utilized in order to monitor the development and restoration of the identified PAs.

He added that environmentally sound building construction guidelines were going to be discussed in the future meetings and the feedback from the participants will be used in finalizing the guidelines.

Mr. Abdul Motaleb, Chief Conservator of Forests was next requested for his inaugural comments. He said that by definition the meaning of IPAC (Integrated Protected Area Co-Management) includes both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. He reasoned that even though the Forest Department was already co-managing the forest PAs, there was a need to involve an external body because the natural regeneration of the forests were in critical condition, and therefore required support from other entities. Along with this, he emphasized that unless benefits were provided to the local people, it would not be possible to make them appreciate the importance of conserving nature in general and forests in particular. Two examples that he mentioned in support of his idea were Social Forestry and Co-Management. He asked the participants to contribute by making logical suggestions, and added that if success was achieved within the identified PAs, then FD could continue this work in future even after the end of IPAC.

He also talked about his understanding regarding IPAC: According to his understanding, IPAC was trying to keep the natural forest resources intact by providing benefits to the local stakeholders including alternate income generation initiatives and other conservation linked enterprises.

Mr. Utpal Dutta, Governance Specialist, IPAC next presented on the process and steps for CMC formation in IPAC sites. He argued that the formation of CMCs in the NSP pilot PAs required many steps as explained below:

- a. Information Collection/ Data Collection (PRA and RRA)
 - Social Mapping (Social and Transect)
- b. Secondary Data Collection
 - Collection of publications regarding the PAs
 - Collection of Maps
- c. Preparation of Report
- d. Information/Data Analysis
- e. Stakeholder Analysis
 - Their dependency on the forests
 - Relation to forests' degradation
 - Power structure in the area
 - Selection of Stakeholders: Grading was done by figuring out which stakeholders faced loss due to conservation through Co-Management.
- f. Dialogue: To figure out who would support the implementation of Co-Management and who would not. Public opinion was taken, and the team worked out the whole process accordingly.
- g. Formation of Co-Management Council: This was done by creating a public opinion in support of Co-Management.
- h. Group Formation: Repeated meetings were held to form User Groups. This included meetings with the forest users and their group formation; education, FUG federation, representative selection for Co-Management Committee and planning.
- i. Livelihood Support and AIG training to selected participants. Some members were chosen for training livelihood options. They received skill development training and kind support.
- j. Meeting with Stakeholders: Selection of the CMO representatives. At first, local stakeholders were shown how the project was beneficial for them, and then they were asked to nominate representatives for CMOs.
- k. The Co-Management Organizations are formed based on field experiences. The draft GO was then developed and approved. The organization comprised a council and its executive committee. These CMOs subsequently got registered as NGOs under Social Welfare Department.
- l. Annual Development Plan
 - Preparation by CMC
 - Regional ADP workshop after the draft ADP prepared locally by CMC of regionally drafted ADPs.
 - Central ADP workshop and finalization
 - Implementation of ADPs
- m. Monitoring
 - Social monitoring
 - Forest monitoring- through FD and local forest stakeholders

After the presentation, Mr. Md. Yunus, CF Central asked what would happen to the CMC later onwards after the project ends. He said, "We are giving in physical inputs, but how much are we

supporting the local people?" It was clarified that the CMCs in 5 pilot sites are valid even after the NSP ends.

Dr. SMA Rashid later presented the RPA draft report:

His presentation included:

- a. Infrastructure/ Facility Development
- b. Habitat Management & Ecological Restoration
- c. RPA program: \$ 1.2 million out of \$ 2.5 million: for habitat restoration (40%), Endowment fund (23%), Infrastructure/ Facility (30%) & AIGs (7%).

After the presentation, **Mr. Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad** asked everyone to divide into 4 cluster groups, and then deliberate and express their written comments and opinions. They were asked to give their input, and suggest what sort of development was required in their respective areas.

After this presentation, one of the participants asked Mr. Azharul Mazumdar whether the project was still a pilot one like NSP, and whether the fund was for the FD or the project.

Mr. Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad replied that it was the concept of Co-Management that they were trying to explain in the meeting, and that they did not want to keep it restricted within the boundaries of the project only. He said that if the concept was good, then they should adopt it and eventually expand it to other forest areas.

Dr. Azharul Mazumder replied that NSP was a pilot project mainly to test co-management implementation. IPAC is not similar to NSP but will support the extension of co-management by FD for all the PAs. Thus a National Protected Area Co-Management Strategy would be developed. This strategy will be supported by IPAC, and implemented by the FD and Fisheries Department and the Department of Environment. He also said that a revision was required in the plantation policy, facilitating CMCs to plant and manage trees inside the PAs. Plantation was required in the degraded forests of the PAs, and therefore, a change is required at the policy level.

A participant commented that we should have good understanding of the impacts on the PAs in order to develop our forests. Another participant who had worked in the Sylhet Cluster said that NSP progressed well during the first year. Later, the division between Wildlife and Territorial Forestry Divisions created problems in field implementation, particularly illicit felling. Mr. Zaheer Khondkar, CF, Bogra suggested to monitor the impacts that NSP had already created and then take them on board in implementing IPAC. He added that the money sanctioned under IPAC for habitat and forest restoration was insufficient. Mr. Yunus Ali, CF Central said that eco-tourism needed to be implemented in the Hakaluki Haor. Ms. Rafiqa Sultana, ACF, said that it was mentioned in the CMC GO that in places where there were no Nishorgo Clubs, Youth Clubs can be included in the CMC. She asked, "What about the areas where there are both?" She added that the CMC evaluation study suggested that the ACF would be the Member-Secretary of a CMC and Co-Management Council. However, the existing GO mentions that the Range Officer (RO) would be the Member-Secretary. She also suggested to immediately start drafting the DPP.

The CF, Chittagong, asked about the exact fund that would be sanctioned for Co-Management model, livelihood activities, constituency development and capacity building. He said that there should be more transparency all throughout the process, and better understanding regarding the amount of money that would be allocated for different purposes. He asked, “If FD is not integrated with IPAC’s work, then how will we continue the work after the project finishes?” He added that if a GO is sanctioned, then it should be feasible enough for successful outcome.

The DFO, Sylhet, said, “Some opportunistic members such as illegal fellers, hooligans etc are demanding the salary allowance that was promised to them, and also the withdrawal of illegal cases. Such matters need to be taken into consideration.”

The CF, Khulna, said, “The ecosystem of Sundarban is different, and so a different modality is required there. The area requires a lot of infrastructural development. So, the question as to which areas should we work in is important? Will it be inside or outside the PA?”

Mr. Abdur Rahman, ACF, Cox’s Bazar asked, “What activities are there in the AIGs?” He said, “The CMC is important for an area. If managerial work is done for 3 years, then how much time is left for restoration? A constraint that lies in FD is that we are unable to respond quickly to CMC demands. Primary health care and education also need to be integrated within the project.” He added, “If we cannot ensure proper livelihood options for the poor, then the whole process implemented by IPAC won’t sustain.”

The DFO, Cox’s Bazar said that since the CMC did not favor the FD’s choice of location to build a LGED road for the Teknaf Game Reserve, the members were not supporting FD for this work. Also, the patrollers were not getting paid for their work anymore. Moreover, sometimes they claimed themselves to be FD staff. He added that the FD suggested them to find a solution to their problems by discussing with their CMC.

Mr. Bob Winterbottom said, “IPAC will establish a national co-management system of PAs. The funding from USAID should be considered as a means to develop and promote the whole national co-management system. It is a good beginning, and just the seed money for the whole initiative. The endowment money can increase later onwards with contributions from other donors, climate change funding and other sources.” He added, “Further work can also be done through public-private partnerships. IPAC will be especially involved in capacity building and training programs, to enable FD to move ahead with co-management at the national scale. Co-Management is all about collaboration of the tasks to be carried out, and increased capacity and support is required from the FD.”

Dr. Ram Sharma said, “There should be no doubts about the proposed IPAC activities to be included in the DPP as it will be prepared by the FD. The role of IPAC is to support the FD in the preparation of DPP by including all activities to be implemented by using DPA and RPA funds.”

Mr. Utpal Dutta pointed out, “There will be pros and cons during any project initiation by any institution. The initiative that Nishorgo took never happened in Bangladesh in the past. Its initiatives will act as a pioneer for the other institutions, and the processes it tried to implement will take time as it requires social movement. We should look at the good sides too. We should be proud

that a patroller from out Whykeong CPG gave his life while protecting the forest on 23rd March 2008. Other good co-management outcomes include: In Banskhali, Sungrass is no more brought by collectors using trees/poles; and the CMC took the matter with the FD and the Deputy Commissioner for controlling the brick fields situated within the PAs.”

He said that an eco-guide asked him, “How will we survive if we don’t have the forests?” This shows strong concerns of local stakeholders for biodiversity conservation. Overall, he asked everyone to look at the good outputs that Nishorgo helped to achieve. Another participant added, “Either involve someone as the Head such as the local principal or someone who is a local resident of the area, or ensure that the UNO knows what work he should be doing.” Mr. Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad said, “A forum has been created in the form of CMC. Now, the FD has to work with the CMC and collaborate with IPAC.”

Participants were invited for plenary presentations after this. The following issues were presented and discussed:

Chittagong Cluster- South Eastern

- a. Teknaf and Chunati WS are already managed by NSP, and these areas need smaller amount of infrastructural development.
- b. The two new areas will need more infrastructural development
- c. Forming ‘Medha Kachopia Canopy Walk Way’ can be a good tourist attraction.

North Eastern- Sylhet Cluster

- a. Pro-active steps from FD need to be taken
- b. Analyze forest stakeholders and find the absolutely forest dependant people. Empower them through AIG activities, health and sanitation, and education.
- c. Include people living in and around the forests.
- d. Afforestation in limited scale
- e. Strengthen community patrollers. Pay for their work.
- f. Institutionalize Eco-tourism
- g. Human Resource Development
 - i. Train Forest Guards
 - ii. Conceptual development of co-management at local level
- h. Carefully do the training programs and include the biological and zoological aspects.
- i. Skill development programs- can be structured for a short duration.

North Central Region

- a. Habitat Restoration
 - i. Plantation
 - ii. Buffer Plantation
 - iii. Re-excavation
 - iv. Fruit and Fodder plantation

- b. Infrastructural Development
 - Official buildings
 - Visitor Interpretation Center
 - Student Dormitory
 - Fencing
 - Other Utilities- TV, fridge, computer etc
- c. Economic benefits for community- Ticket system to be operationalized
- d. Bhawal National Park
 - Plantation
 - Aquatic activities
 - Rose Plantation
 - Entry Ticket- share with CMC

Sundarbans

- a. Mangrove plantation
- b. Other type of plantation in non mangrove areas
- c. Golpata plantation
- d. Infrastructural Development- Dorms and Barracks
- e. Information Center at Katka and Kochikhali
- f. Observation Tower at Kochikhali- It is in poor condition. Very weak structure and unstable
- g. Renovation and Fuel- launch, Trawler, country boat etc
- h. Drinking Water Facility- ponds
- i. Ponds and filter
- j. Solar panel for Electricity generation- 90% got destroyed during Sidr
- k. Foot trails- RCC
- l. Umbrellas
- m. Jetty- At Katka, Kochikhali and Jamtola
- n. Wooden trail and wire protection at Katka and other risky places since forest guards cannot accompany visitors always

Mr. Altaf Hossain, DCCF concluded the meeting with following observations:

- a. Evaluation of the pros and cons of the work done by CMCs is required for effective work in the future. Use the lessons learned from NSP to make IPAC more successful.
- b. Incorporate the suggested inputs from the four clusters and implement them through the project
- c. Need for skill development programs
- d. Include local people to manage the forests

The meeting ended with vote of thanks.