NISHORGO SUPPORT PROJECT
YEAR 1, 3RD QUARTER REPORT:
FOR THE PERIOD OCT 23, 03 TO FEB 29, 04

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Prepared for
USAID/Bangladesh &
Forest Department
Ministry of Environment and Forests

Prepared by:
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Executive Summary

This Progress Report for the Nishorgo Support Project (also known as the "Co-management of Tropical Forest Resources in Bangladesh" Project) covers the last part of the 2nd Quarter of the Project year (October 22, 2003 to November 30, 2003) and the full 3rd Quarter (December 1, 2003 to February 29, 2004). A progress report was embedded in IRG's 1st Annual Work Plan, submitted on October 22nd, 2003, so this Report picks up where that left off. In the interim, IRG has sent weekly progress reports to USAID and the Project's partners. A sample of this weekly progress status matrix is included in an Annex.

There are 37 Project Results included in IRG's Work Plan. IRG is on track to complete all of these Project Results, although not in all cases on the dates expected in the initial work plan. Where there have been delays in implementation, it has been due in almost all cases to the Project's attempt not to get ahead of the FD and upset what is a trusting and effective working relationship. Rather than rushing to the field, for example, we chose to work to integrate the Project into a larger program of the Forest Department. In the process, we helped the FD describe and promote a new "Nishorgo Program" for protected area management, to which the USAID Project now plays a supporting role as the newly-styled "Nishorgo Support Project". This close coordination with the Forest Department will help to ensure that the contributions of the Project become a lasting and sustainable part of the country's systems.

In spite of the delays due to this coordination with and direct support of the Forest Department, IRG is on schedule to meet the dates of 36 of the 49 time-dated output milestones. And none of the milestones is being abandoned.

As a result of the progress in this latest reporting period, a number of highlights can be mentioned relating to the five central Components of the Project:

- Completion of logo, name and then large public launch ceremony of the Nishorgo Program for the Forest Department
- Completion and submission of Secondary Data Reports as background papers for all five of the proposed pilot sites
- Execution of a planning mission to West Bengal to plan for future community-level cross site visits and future cross site training for the Forest Department
- Support to first Steering Committee meeting, and approval by that committee to proceed at all field sites
- Joint development with the Forest Department of a Project Concept Pro Forma draft for submission by the FD to the Government
- Informal request by the FD for the Project to review, comment on and support improvements to the existing Wildlife Conservation Act

- Development of a range of public communication materials for the Project, including brochure, poster and signboard
- We have developed initial local dialect radio scripts for local communication.

The Project team is also adhering closely to our Cross-Cutting Project Results. As per Result CC1, we are moving rapidly on development of a Project monitoring system, and led that work with an important contribution from IRG's Anne Lewandowski to the Program Monitoring Plan (PMP) of the Mission in November 2003. As per Result CC2, we have developed an extremely close working relationship with the Government's Forest Department. We are actively integrating women at national and field level, and will continue these efforts, and have made special efforts to be sure that USAID's Gender Advisor (Jeannie Harvey) is included at multiple stages of field planning, including the current RRA process. We are coordinating closely with the Arannayk Foundation, with the last two meetings held at Project offices, and we will continue to do so.

With respect to project implementation details, this report touches upon the following notable progress:

- Early joining of Dr. Ram Sharma, Protected Area Management Specialist
- Near complete staffing of the Project technical team. Only the Enterprise Development Specialist remains to be identified, and that post is awaiting completion of the enterprise assessment report.
- Opening of Project offices at two regional centers and posting of Field Coordinators and support staff to these offices
- Opening of Banani offices of the Project, and plans for complementarity with Arannayk Foundation
- We have finalized detailed budgets and reporting systems with our key subcontracting partners.

Finally, we would note that a number of implementation challenges and issues merit being raised in this report. These include:

- Replacement of key personnel Dr. Thomas Costa with Dr. Niaz Khan
- The need to purchase vehicles and other large commodities, and the challenges posed by tax requirements in the Bangladeshi context
- Replacement of Caritas after their withdrawal from the Project team
- Replacement of CFI after their withdrawal from the Project team.

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List of Acronyms

ACF	Assistant Conservator of Forests
AIG	Alternative Income Growth
ATDP2	Agricultural Technology Development Program, Phase 2
BCCP	Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs
CBO	Community-based Organization
CEGIS	Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services
CF	Conservator of Forests
COP	Chief-of-Party
CS	Communication Specialist
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
DCCF	Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests
DFO	Divisional Forestry Officer
ECA	Ecologically Critical Area
EDC	Enterprise Development Coordinator
ESMS	Ecological & Social Monitoring Specialist
FC	Field Coordinator
FD	Forest Department
FSP	Forestry Sector Project
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
IRG	International Resources Group
IRG	International Resources Group
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LGCBS	Local Governance & Capacity-building Specialist
LGI	Local Governance Initiative
MACH	Managing Aquatic Systems through Community Husbandry
PAMS	Protected Area Management Specialist
PCP	Project Concept Pro Forma
PP	Project Pro Forma
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center
RIMS	Resource Information Monitoring System
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SF	Site Facilitator
SOAG	Strategic Objective Grant Agreement
UP	Union Parishad
USAID	US Agency for International Development

1. 1st Year Work Plan Methodology and Organization

The October 22nd 2003 Nishorgo Support Project Work Plan identifies four levels of goals. At a first level are the *"Components"* of the proposed Protected Area (PA) Management Program. These Components – identified as Section headings and titled Components 1 to 5 – are derived from the SOAG between the US Government and the Government of Bangladesh and are reflected in the IRG Contract Components.

At the second level of goals – closest to what in World Bank language is called "impacts" – we have proposed a set of *PA Management Targets*. These Targets require the effective action not just of this Support Project, but also of other key stakeholders, from the FD to other Government Ministries and other international and national actors. The timeframe for achievement of these impacts is the longest, scheduled for 5 years. While the FD has made its intention to formalize a PA Management Program clear in its Nishorgo Program launch, the Department has not yet formally made it their own.

During this last reporting period, the Nishorgo Support Project was put into the context of a *Project Concept Pro Forma (or PCP)* for formal submission to the Government's Planning Commission. This PCP, submitted in Bangla, will become for the Forest Department, the working document outlining Objectives, Activities and Outcomes of the Project for the remainder of its life. In that document, the five components of this Work Plan were regrouped into four "objectives". And the specific activities included in our initial work plan were transformed into a number of Activities and Outcomes in the PCP. In the next reporting year, and in the next work planning process, we will closely show how these PCP targets coincide with the SOAG and Contract targets included in the IRG Contract.

At a next level of impact – closest to what the World Bank calls "outputs" – we have identified a series of *Project Results*. These Results, which are by and large within the manageable interest and achievability of this Support Project, are less compelling to those unfamiliar with the PA Management Program, but no less important. Their achievement implies that progress is being made toward achievement of the higher-level Program Targets. While the ultimate date for achievement of these Results is the fifth year of this Support Project, many of these results can be achieved earlier. Responsibility for achievement of these Project Results are clearly allocated to members of the Support Project staff, who will themselves work in close collaboration with FD staff and key stakeholders.

Because we have organized this Work Plan by contract component, and the same components represent USAID's Intermediate Results in the SO6, our Targets and Results can be used to track contributions to USAID's overall Strategic Plan, and USAID's Strategic

Objective No. 6 ("Improved Management of Open Water and Tropical Forest Resources") in particular.

Finally, within each Project Result, we have identified one or more *Milestones and Activities*. Milestones, as the name implies, assist both the internal Project staff and external partners to gauge progress toward achievement of the selected Project Result. Activities serve the same function, although they are not as discretely recognizable as milestones.

The five Components defined here were developed by USAID in consultation with the GOB. The proposed PA Management Targets, Project Results, Activities and Milestones were jointly developed by the IRG Team – after meetings with partners, consultation of key documents and analysis of field issues – and were submitted to partners in October.

2. Technical Progress Reporting Processes and Timeline

IRG's first Work Plan was submitted on October 22nd, 2003 to cover the period from submission date through end-December, 2004. However, at a planning meeting of the CTO, the Chief of Party and the IRG Project Manager in early November, 2003, it was agreed that the Work Planning and Reporting cycle should be aligned directly with the Contract cycle. Since the IRG Contract became effective on June 1, 2003 and ends May 31, 2008, it was agreed to base quarterly and annual reports, as well as annual work plans, on that cycle.

The October 22nd Work Plan included a section entitled "Summary of Support Project Progress and Results to Date" and represented a thorough review of progress and issues into the 2nd Quarter of the Project year.

This current Progress report picks up where that one left off, and includes progress for the period October 23, 2003 through the end of the 3rd Contract quarter, or February 29, 2004. Rather than adding to paperwork by doing a second progress report for the 2nd quarter -- since a progress report was already submitted during the second quarter -- we believe it is more apt to proceed to the next quarter, as this report does. Thus, with the submission of this report, progress reporting as per Contract requirements is up to date.

For each of the 37 Project Results included in the October 22nd Work Plan, this Progress Report shows status against key milestones listed. The milestones are organized by Result, as in the original work plan. In addition, a final section entitled "Additional Implementation Issues" has been added.

All subsequent Quarterly Progress Reports will follow the quarters of the Contract year. The next progress report due after this one will be the Annual Progress Report, due for completion 30 days after the end of the reporting period, or June 30, 2004. That First Annual Report will include the progress of the fourth quarter, as well as the progress of earlier quarters. Since each Annual Report will by definition include the progress of the 4th quarter, it should not be necessary to submit both a 4th quarter report <u>and</u> Annual Report at the same time for the same issues.

IRG believes that Quarterly Reports such as these are not a sufficient tool for regular dialogue with our partners at USAID and elsewhere. For this reason, and to enable both better reporting and management of the Project, *IRG has also instituted a <u>weekly</u> Results Progress Matrix*. Each of the Nishorgo Support Project Results is included in this matrix, and weekly progress is noted against key deliverables or expected milestones. The milestones

are drawn from the approved work plan, and additional milestones are typically added. The Results Progress Matrix is reviewed by the full IRG Technical Team at a brief weekly meeting where coordination is furthered and issues can be resolved. The Forest Department attends this meeting from time to time. At the end of each week's review, the Matrix is updated and circulated to all members of our Project, our CTO, and to the Forest Department. The Matrix provides a more "real time" tool for informing partners of what we are planning, and for correcting errors before they get too far along. For the future, we would recommend that this weekly matrix, along with a semi-annual report on progress, would be a more effective combination of management information than the quarterly reporting system stipulated in the IRG Contract.

A sample of one of the Results Progress Matrices is included in Annex 2 below.

After the submission of the Annual Report at the end of the 1st Contract year, Quarterly Progress reports will be due covering the following periods: June 1, 2004 through August 31, 2004; September 1, 2004 through November 30, 2004; December 1, 2004 through February 28, 2005. Then, an Annual Progress Report will be due covering the full 2nd year of implementation, while an Annual Work Plan will also cover this period. Reports are due 30 days after the end of the reporting period. The same reporting cycle will repeat itself in the 3rd, 4th and 5th years of implementation.

A summary of the technical Progress reporting timeline is shown below.

Report Name	Period Covered	Due Date
2nd Annual Work Plan	6/1/04–5/31/05	5/1/04
1st Annual Report	6/1/03–5/31/04	6/30/04
Yr 2, 1st Q Report	6/1/04–8/31/04	9/30/04
Yr 2, 2nd Q Report	9/1/04–11/30/04	12/31/04
Yr 2, 3rd Q Report	12/1/04–2/28/05	3/31/04
3rd Annual Work Plan	6/1/05–5/31/06	5/1/05
2nd Annual Report	6/1/04–5/31/05	6/30/05
[Technical progress & work plans would continue in the same way through Project closure.]		

3. Component 1: Develop a Co-Management Planning & Implementation Model

Project Result 1.1: Stakeholder analysis and needs assessments methodology developed and conducted for PAs within landscapes

Progress and Issues: Secondary data reports have been completed and delivered. RRA and PRA reports are scheduled, but their dates have been moved back to allow for the Nishorgo Launch at national and regional level. Without a proper public stand of the FD behind the overall program, the RRA and PRA process would have been hindered in their success.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy)	Status
Deliver secondary data review reports and data	Nov 03	Done on schedule
Deliver RRA reports for each pilot site, with emphasis on stakeholder analysis	Nov 03	Scheduled for early April, 2004. See note.
Deliver PRA reports for each pilot site, with emphasis on stakeholder analysis	Jan 04	Scheduled for June, 2004. See note.

Project Result 1.2: Natural resource assessment and monitoring system methodology developed and implemented for PAs and landscapes

Progress and Issues: IRG's Anne Lewandowski moved quickly on this natural resource indicator process with her October consultancy. That groundwork has served as the starting point for NACOM's Ecological and Social Monitoring Specialist, Mr. Nasim Asiz, to develop a specific NR assessment approach and monitoring system. The basis of that system has been developed in draft, and will be finalized in the next period. Its execution was delayed as IRG worked with NACOM to select the appropriate ESMS.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Identify key/indicator species, vegetation indices or other means of setting initial pilot baseline status and tracking impact	Dec 03	Draft completed by NACOm (Nasim). Undergoing review by partners and improvements by NSP staff.
Deliver status reports on natural resource monitoring	Mar, Jun & Sep 04	Must await completion of baseline indicators.

Project Result 1.3: Socio-economic and institutional assessment and monitoring system methodology developed and implemented for PAs and landscapes

Progress and Issues: Work on schedule.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Propose detailed approach to pilot site socio-economic and institutional data collection exercise	May 04	On schedule.
Deliver preliminary report on socio-economic and institutional assessment of pilot sites	Dec 04	On schedule.

Project Result 1.4: Conceptual model for co-management developed and implemented for PAs and landscapes

Progress and Issues: The COP, DeCosse, prepared an initial conceptual model for discussion with the Forest Department and key stakeholders, but the finalization of this model has awaited the Local Governance and Capacity Building Specialist (LGCBS). The withdrawal of IRG's initial LGCBS (see Section 9 on LGCBS) has set this process back.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Deliver co-management model description	Jul 04	Delayed due to withdrawal of Costa. Now in progress.

Project Result 1.5: Appropriate conceptual approach to local development process is developed and implemented in target landscapes

Progress and Issues: This too has been delayed with the withdrawal of Costa from the IRG Team. With new LGCBS it is now underway.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief description	End (mm/yy)	Status
Propose approach to local based economic and livelihood development	Apr 04	Behind schedule due to withdrawal of IRG LGCBS candidate (Costa). Expected for July, 2004.

Project Result 1.6: PA management plans are developed (or completed) and implemented

Progress and Issues: With the early arrival of Dr. Sharma, this activity is expected for completion ahead of schedule.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Deliver note/memorandum clarifying processes to be followed for PA management plan approval and action	Oct 04	Ahead of schedule with early start-up of Dr. Sharma, the PAMS.

4. Component 2: Improve Ecosystem Management

Project Result 2.1: Market opportunities for micro, small and medium enterprises development linked to improved Pas and landscapes identified and realized

Progress and Issues: The NSP has been working towards a collaboration with the USAID JOBS Project and the Iris Center at the University of Maryland to complete this work. This is an important example of synergy between USAID programs, and an attempt to avoid the "stove-piping" that has often beset USAID programs in the past.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Deliver sector assessment for enterprise development	Oct 04	On schedule.

Project Result 2.2: Household level production technology improvements are made available

Progress and Issues: No need for comment at present.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief description	End (mm/yy)	Status
On basis of RRA and PRA, identify short list of priority technology interventions for each site	Sep 04	On schedule.

Project Result 2.3: Savings and credit support program is made available and used

Progress and Issues: We are on schedule to meet this target, although the withdrawal of Caritas, which was to have managed this component, presents a risk of us getting behind schedule. We hope to work with existing partners to implement the Landscape Development Fund, as noted and discussed in Section 9.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Selection of RMOs working in micro-credit	Dec 04	On schedule.

Project Result 2.4: Community-level landscape interventions are implemented

Progress and Issues: No need for comment at present.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Deliver short-list of community-level landscape interventions to be conducted	Aug 04	On schedule.

5. Component 3: Enhance Co-Management Policy Environment

Project Result 3.1: The FD develops a vision and strategy for improved PA management, and begins implementing it

Progress and Issues: The Vision 2010, initially developed based on a visioning exercise conducted in August, was officially presented to the Forest Department in a retreat late in the period. It is now under revision and should be presented again in its revised form to the FD in late April. This feedback process will continue, and the Vision 2010 will then be presented to the Steering Committee and ultimately to the public as part of the Nishorgo Program.

First Year Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
An initial communication effort of the FD PA vision is presented to the public	Nov 04	On schedule.

Project Result 3.2: A high-level Government Steering Committee advances the cause of improved PA management by the FD

Progress and Issues: First Steering Committee meeting was held on February 26, 2004. This meeting was held later than expected because the FD and the MoEF wanted a completed and submitted Project Concept Pro Forma from the Forest Department. The NSP worked as a result to prepare the document for discussion with the FD and eventual forwarding to the SC. The Steering Committee gave full support for the sites of the NSP.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description.	End (mm/yy)	Status
Prepare initial submission of project status, including field site selection and context, for the 1st Steering Committee meeting	Nov 03	Completed, but behind schedule due to need for PCP submission prior to meeting.
Prepare materials for any subsequent SC meetings.	Dec 04 & beyond	On schedule.

Project Result 3.3: A national network of co-management practitioners exists and serves as a platform for knowledge improvements

Progress and Issues: The NSP has considered that the FD and the IUCN/B may jointly host such a Co-management Working Group focused on PA co-management. General discussions concerning the structure of the possible group are still being held with the FD.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Identify the terms of a "Co-management Working Group"	Aug 04	On schedule.
Hold first meeting of practitioners	Oct 04	On schedule.

Project Result 3.4: Papers on select priority issues are developed and vetted

Progress and Issues: As noted above, the Vision 2010 was submitted and initially discussed with the FD and the internal NSP team. One of the other major developments in this area has been the informal request by the FD to have the NSP support them in the revisions to their Wildlife Presentation Act.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Complete and submit 1st White Paper: Vision 2010	Nov 03	Completed, but at end of the reporting period.
Complete and Submit 2nd white paper	Jun 04	On schedule. Presently working on a second paper concerning the Wildlife Act.
Complete and submit 3rd white paper	Sep 04	On schedule.

6. Component 4: Lay the Foundation for a Conservation Constituency

Project Result 4.1: A communications strategy is developed and implemented for the FD's PA management program

Progress and Issues: After many months of work on the Nishorgo logo, name and image, a formal launch was held at Bhawal National Park on February 24th, 2004. More than 200 people attended this major event, which represented the public launch both of the Nishorgo Program of the FD and of the Nishorgo Support Project of USAID/IRG.

The Project has already drafted a comprehensive Communications Strategy and is reviewing it internally before forwarding it to the FD and USAID for review.

First Year Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Publicly announce name and present image and logo of the new Program	Nov–03	Image and logo of the new Nishorgo Program completed. Official launch of the Program occurred on February 24th.
Strategy completed and approved by the FD	Jul–04	On schedule.

Project Result 4.2: A communications strategy is developed and implemented for the PA Support Project

Progress and Issues: This Project-focused communication strategy is included in the draft Nishorgo Program strategy discussed above.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Complete and submit working Support Project Strategy to USAID	Aug–04	On schedule.

Project Result 4.3: Informational and educational resources concerning the PA network are made widely and readily available

Progress and Issues: Web site has been developed in draft form, and is soon to be reviewed by the FD.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Website launched	Nov–04	Draft site developed. On schedule for launch.
Submit proposed structure and approach to FD/USAID	Apr–04	On schedule.
Digital and hard copy reference center operational at Support Project offices	Nov–04	On schedule.

Project Result 4.4: The FD and its partners prepares multiple research and programmatic contributions for presentation at regional and international conferences on PA management

Progress and Issues: The NSP has worked closely and now has a common understanding with the FD that applied research should form a core component of the Project. We have met with a number of University researchers from North South University, the University of Dhaka, the University of Chittagong, and others. We are working actively to put in place an applied research internship program precisely to achieve these publishing -- and ultimately communication -- goals of the Project.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Three presentations on aspects of the country's PA Management Program are made at international conferences	Dec–04	On schedule.
Deliver Washington–based presentation to no less than 40 decision–makers from World Bank, USAID and key conservation NGOs WWF and CI	May 04	Will be completed in October 2004 by George Taylor of IRG.

Project Result 4.5: A communications program targeting key high-level decision-makers is implemented

Progress and Issues: No need for comment at present.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
No less than five presentations are made to targeted decision–makers (targeted in the PA Management Strategy document)	Jun 04	On schedule.
No less than five VIP visits have been executed at pilot sites	Dec–04	On schedule.

Project Result 4.6: The number and quality of press clippings concerning the PA system increase

Progress and Issues: The Federation of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) collects environment-related clippings from all Bangladeshi newspapers. We are working with the FEJB -- in their reference library -- to collect our baseline report on news articles relating to the environment. This effort is being preceded by the development and circulation of a baseline indicator proposal relating to news articles. A draft has been presented to the COP and is under review.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Baseline status report on PA news is completed	Apr-04	On schedule.
Number of PA-relevant newspaper articles in Bangla & English doubles, while quality improves, off base period	Dec-04	On schedule.

Project Result 4.7: A program is established to expose young urban students to the PA network

Progress and Issues: We have planned to develop a program under which high school age youths from well-educated and relatively influential families and schools, become better acquainted with the country's parks and protected areas. During planning for this program, we have learned that many of these students' parents have serious security concerns about letting their children visit distant parks where they believe security for their children cannot be ensured. As a result of these concerns, we are exploring alternative means of achieving the same target. One important option is consideration of a partnership with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of Bangladesh. These organizations hold annual meetings in rural areas, and we are in the process of discussing a possible partnership with them, where the Project would facilitate their visits within national parks and protected areas.

First Year Output Milestones

Description	End (mm/yy)	Status
With the FD, jointly conduct at least 4 audio-visual presentations to schools in Dhaka	Dec 04	On schedule. Focus may be changed to Scouts.
Preparatory work completed to facilitate at least one field visit for students from Sylhet or Chittagong to field sites	Dec 04	On schedule.

J. Project Result 4.8: A program is developed and established to engage landscape-level stakeholders in PA conservation actions

Progress and Issues: We have already developed locallanguage radio broadcasts for the Sylhet dialect and protected areas. We are working to launch the northern sites in a large

scale communication effort at Lawachara National Park, to which community members from all three sites would be invited. This too will be an important communication event. But once the program is publicly launched at the site level, it will be necessary to do considerable additional communication work in locally appropriate means. To this end, both field NGOs are working with our Communication Specialist to develop these approaches in an integrated fashion.

First Year Output Milestones

Description	End (mm/yy)	Status
Identify and allocate responsibility for development of appropriate communication tools	Jul 04	On schedule
Initial community-level communication tools implemented in all pilot sites	Sep 04	On schedule
Communication tools used at communication sessions with non-village local stakeholders	Oct 04	On schedule

7. Component 5: Ensure Institutionalization of Co-Management

Project Result 5.1: Understand and where possible quantify the economic costs and benefits of PA

Progress and Issues: The delay in launching of the RRA -- for reasons stated above -- has made it necessary to move back by two months the completion of an initial applied research agenda for economic issues in the PA system.

First Year Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Propose applied research agenda for economics of PAs, after review of available secondary data and RRA results	Mar 04	Delayed until May 04 due to need to complete RRA first.
Deliver final research agenda and implementation approach for economics of Pas, including capacity-building plans	Jun 04	Delayed until July 04 due to need to complete RRA and then initial agenda.

Project Result 5.2: Develop and implement a strategy for the long-term sustainable financing of PAs

Progress and Issues: At the request of the Forest Department, this sustainable financing strategy is being moved back to follow the broader study of the needs of the FD and local stakeholders to manage PAs. The sustainable financing study is thus expected for October/November of 2004.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Propose strategy and recommendations for sustainable financing of the PA System	Apr 04	At request of the FD, this financing strategy will follow capacity assessment (Result 5.4).

Project Result 5.3: Identify and pursue co-financing opportunities with national and international donors

Progress and Issues: An initial assessment of opportunities for co-financing and leveraging opportunities for the Nishorgo Program (<u>not</u> the Project) has been started by the COP. Further information will be obtained at a near term presentation to the Local Consultative Group on the Environment, including all donors for the sector. A number of co-financing opportunities have already arisen and are being pursued.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Deliver initial "Outlook report on co-financing opportunities and suggested strategies for leveraging"	Mar 04	Moved to May 04 to follow preliminary presentation of financing approach at first donor LCG presentation in late April.

Project Result 5.4: Assess the existing and needed capacity of the FD and local stakeholders to co-manage PAs

Progress and Issues: Assessment is planned for May.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Deliver "Capacity-building Plan for PA Management at the FD"	Aug 04	On schedule.

Project Result 5.5: Implement a capacity building program for FD PA managers and key local PA stakeholders

Progress and Issues: No need for comment at present.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Formalize and sign MoU with two different universities for MSc level thesis research at pilot sites	Aug 04	On schedule.

Project Result 5.6: Identify phase-out plan and exit strategy

Progress and Issues: No need for comment at present.

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
White Paper on Phase out plan submitted for consideration to FD and Steering Committee	Dec 04	On schedule.

Project Result 5.7: Network with other Asian PA managers and learn from best practices for PA management in other countries

Progress and Issues: In response to the withdrawal of CFI from IRG's team (see Section 9 below), IRG invited Dr. David McCauley and Mr. S Palit to provide inputs to the Project on regional experiences in co-management and options for networking and exchanges between Bangladesh stakeholders and others in the sub region.

As a result of this visit, and some of the knowledge gained from it, IRG organized a mission in November to West Bengal to begin planning for a cross-visit by co-management communities was undertaken by the COP. It became clear on this trip that inter-Governmental bureaucratic requirements and the weather patterns (only February/March is an appropriate time to take field-level stakeholders in mass to field sites in West Bengal) made it necessary to move the planned trip from June 04 to early 2005. We are now targeting the mid-2005 date for bringing an estimated 50 local co-management participants to visit with co-management communities in the West Bengal region.

To further achieve this Project Result, we have also done the necessary planning to send five to six Forest Department staff members to visit and learn from co-management sites and colleagues in the West Bengal region. This trip is planned for April 2004.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Execute 1st cross-visit to co-management sites in India with pilot site stakeholders	Jun 04	Moved to March '05 due to reasons cited above, principally meteorological.

8. Cross-Cutting Project Results

Cross-cutting Project Result C1: A project management monitoring system is established and functioning

Progress and Issues: Most of the work has been done for the preparation of the monitoring system. Anne Lewandowski of IRG developed a monitoring program relating to Mission results in November. And our ESMS -- Nasim Aziz -- has moved forward on adapting this to the Project. While the Approach and Methodology will be delivered on schedule, the full complement of baseline measures is likely to be delayed. We underestimated the time it would take to collect a number of the baseline indicators.

First Year Output Milestones

Brief Description	End mm/yy	Status
Deliver Project Monitoring Approach, Methodology and Baseline Measures	Apr 04	Approach & Methodology will be delivered, although actual baseline measures expected for late 2004.

Cross-cutting Project Result C2: The Support Project team works closely with, and is trusted by, the FD PA management Wildlife Circle

Progress and Issues: We have developed an extremely close working relationship with the Forest Department. They have invited us to open a Nishorgo Support Project office in their Ban Bhaban office space. We work regularly with them, and have fully met this Result.

Cross-cutting Project Result C3: Management systems for the support project are functioning

Progress and Issues: Management systems are fully functioning. For a detailed review of special implementation issues relating to this, see Section 9 below.

Cross-cutting Project Result C4: Forest co-management activities under the Project are complementary to and supportive of efforts of the Arannayk Foundation

Progress and Issues: We have made special efforts to build synergy with the Arannayk Foundation. Our current Nishorgo Support Project office includes a space that the Arannayk Foundation has now officially decided to inhabit. We have provided Secretarial support to their meetings, and have hosted their last two meetings. We will continue in this vein.

Cross-cutting Project Result C5: Women are integrated as central actors at all levels of project implementation

Progress and Issues: We are succeeding at including women at all levels of implementation. We have actively sought to encourage application of women to the LGCBS post and to the ESMS and Communications Specialist posts. Our Communication Specialist -- Ms. Mehrin Mahbub -- has proven an enormous asset to the team already in the few months she has been with us. At the local level, our partners are working actively to include women in their hiring. Many of these women are expected to come from within the communities where we work. Our local NGO partners have also included seven women in the planned RRA planning and implementation process. We will continue to work at all levels to achieve this result.

Cross-cutting Project Result C6: The project actively engages the full range of PA partners in public and private sector

Progress and Issues: We have been working to build formal partnerships with environmental NGOs (BELA for the law review and FEJB for communications), with universities (North-South, Dhaka, Chittagong, and others). We will continue to engage a cross-section of public and private actors.

Cross-cutting Project Result C7: The Project benefits from synergies with other USAID projects

 Progress and Issues: We have succeeded in developing a jointly financed purchase order with experts from the University of Maryland's JOBS Project staff and Consultants. This represents an important effort to break away from the "stove-piping" of many projects. We are also continuing to explore options for linkages to the ARD Governance project and the MACH Project.

<u>First Year Output Milestones</u>

Brief Description	End (mm/yy))	Status
Identify opportunities for conducting a nature-based enterprises sector assessment with JOBS	Jan 04	Work program developed jointly with JOBS and submitted to USAID for approval.

9. Additional Implementation Issues

Site Selection and Site Specific Accomplishments

We have succeeded in getting full approval from the Steering Committee, the Minister, the Permanent Secretary for moving to the field sites proposed in our October 22nd work plan. This represents an important accomplishment.

While we would have liked to move immediately to the pilot sites faster, it was essential that we do it in full partnership with the Government, which meant waiting for approval from the Minister and other senior officials. Even now that approval has been given by the Steering Committee, we are not yet working under an approved PCP or PP of the Government, which means a full authority for our Team's presence at site level cannot be given. We can and will, however, continue to work.

It is worth illustrating the Government's reticence to work at field level with partners. We are now conducting RRA, which we had planned to conduct at the end of 2003. We are doing the planning and fieldwork for RRA jointly with the FD local field staff, which is precisely the way this diagnostic effort should be done. But those field staff would <u>not</u> have attended such sessions if we had pushed to hold the RRA back when it was scheduled in our original work plan, as they would have had no "green light" to proceed from their seniors in Dhaka. Even now, as noted above, the National Project Coordinator does not have full authority from the Government to send directives to support our fieldwork, but he because of such public events as the Nishorgo Launch of February, he is willing to send the orders to field staff to proceed on RRA and other field initiatives. This brief example illustrates both the cause of our delays in field implementation and the positive impact such delays are already generating for overall Project success.

Project Offices in Dhaka

The Project team officially inaugurated offices in Banani on February 26th, 2004. These offices represent not only a working space for the Project team, but also a space in which the overall challenges and goals of the Nishorgo Program of the Government can be highlighted. The Project has also succeeded in identifying a space that can be used by Arannayk, and we have planned to share conference rooms space, the resource center and other facilities with Arannayk. This represents an important success in trying to ensure coordination and complementarity of USAID-funded programs.

Field Mobilization Status

Our field mobilization was delayed in part to the issues mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, and also due to the importance of holding the national Nishorgo Launch prior to going to field level. The national Launch was the opportunity for all of the FD's protected area managers to be made aware of the Nishorgo Program and the Nishorgo Support Project. With that meeting completed in late February, our counterpart National Project Coordinator forwarded a message to the FD field staff ordering them to provide support and facilitation to the Project team.

Subsequent to this, our field NGO partners -- RDRS for the three northern sites and CODEC for the two southern sites -- established and opened field offices for the Field Coordinators. An office has been opened in Cox's Bazaar for the southern Field Coordinator and another in Srimongal for the northern Field Coordinator.

We have now made site visits with the Forest Department to all of the field sites. At Satchuri, one of the three PAs in the north, we have identified the location for RDRS PA level office, and obtained agreement with the FD concerning refurbishing of a derelict office for use by the Project.

We do not intend to open site level offices until the RRA process is complete, as that process will give us a better indication of whether our site offices should be opened on FD land or in the neighboring vicinity.

Although site offices have not been opened, we have identified and hired Site Facilitators for both southern sites and two of the three northern sites.

Recruitment Status and Team Mobilization

We have nearly completed our full core staff recruitment process and team mobilization. The following is a review of our team mobilization against planned targets in the work plan of October 22nd. We are pleased to report that the Protected Area Management Specialist -- Dr. Ram Sharma -- is beginning work earlier than expected. This will provide an implementation boost to the project. The Communication Specialist has been hired in October. The Field Coordinators and five of six Site Facilitators have been hired. The Ecological and Social Monitoring Specialist has been hired in January.

We have decided to hold the hiring of the Enterprise Development Specialist (EDS) until we have completed the enterprise pre-assessment with JOBS. The outcome of that assessment will help us in determining the exact makeup of this staff position.

On the administrative side of the Project, we have nearly hired our full complement of staff. The Director, Administration and Finance was hired in October. More recently, two accounting staff members, an Executive Assistant, a Receptionist and support staff have been hired. We have not, however, hired two administrative staff support team members, although we have advertised for these positions on two occasions.

We have been delayed in hiring of the LGCBS position, which was to have been Dr. Thomas Costa. This issue is treated in the next section.

Replacement of Local Governance & Capacity Building Specialist (LGCBS)

IRG's proposed candidate for the Local Governance and Capacity Building Specialist -- Dr. Thomas Costa -- has decided not to take this position. A separate letter has been prepared to the RCO explaining this issue. In that same letter, approval is requested for a replacement of key personnel in the person of Dr. Niaz Ahmed Khan. Dr. Costa's decision to withdraw from this position was entirely out of our control, and IRG has moved rapidly to address the gap left in the team. In fact, as we now move into the RRA and field local governance diagnosis phase, we have begun working on a short-term basis with our candidate to replace Dr. Costa. So, in fact, there has been little or no impact on the speed of implementation resulting from this change in key personnel.

In the long run, we are confident that Dr. Khan's skills are in fact superior to the previous candidate in light of the needs of the Project. Certainly, the most important element of the LGCBS position is the preparation of analytical documents on governance processes, and the relationships of local stakeholders to the protected areas we are trying to improve. Dr. Khan is vastly more experienced in such analyses than the previous candidate. Indeed, Dr. Khan is as qualified as anyone in Bangladesh in this area. We are extremely pleased to have identified him, and we believe he will make an enormous contribution to USAID's overall goals for the sector, and for this Project in particular.

Formalization of Contractual Relations with IRG Subcontract Partners

Final subcontracts were signed with all of the three subcontractors -- NACOM, RDRS and CODEC -- during the reporting period. In addition, final five year detailed budgets have been approved and agreed to between IRG and all three of the subcontractors. In addition, billing format and processes have been discussed and agreed to by IRG and its subcontracting partners.

Contractual Relations with Caritas, and Implications for the Cross-site Training and Landscape Fund Work

IRG has not, however, signed a subcontract with Caritas to undertake work in cross-site training and the $300,000 Landscape Fund management (the two priority areas of Caritas in

the team). In early November, after working with IRG for nearly three months of work planning, IRG was surprised to learn that Caritas demanded a 120 percent increase in its contract budget, short of which it threatened to pull out of the contract entirely. Not wanting to jeopardize the team composition, IRG attempted to negotiate a solution with Caritas. After three months of attempts, it became clear in January of 2004 that common ground could not be reached, and Caritas informed IRG that it was withdrawing from discussions and any participation in the Nishorgo Support Project.

These delays in finalizing the two areas of Caritas work have not in fact slowed the Project down, since these two areas were not scheduled to be activated until after all site RRA, PRA and initial planning were entirely completed. Prior to undertaking the Fund, for example, it will be necessary to have identification of the Resource Management Organizations (RMOs) that would be taking loans from the Fund. Prior to conducting large scale cross-site training, it will be necessary to have all key members of the site co-management committees and communities identified and informed of Project goals and targets, and that activity is still in process.

IRG believes that the most effective and efficient means of address the removal of Caritas from the team is to spilt the Caritas responsibilities between our two existing NGO field partners. At present, IRG is preparing a detailed recommendation to resolve the problem, and will be forwarding that detailed recommendation, along with a request for approval to proceed, to the RCO. The letter should be received by the RCO on or about April 10.

Withdrawal of Community Forestry International (CFI) and Replacement of Their Contributions

Soon after the IRG Team mobilized in Bangladesh, IRG was informed by Community Forestry International that it had withdrawn from the IRG Team. This was done in spite of CFI having signed all commitment letters. IRG informed the CTO of these developments in a letter of October 19, 2003, and explained our approach to meeting the technical contributions that would have been expected from CFI.

As per the IRG Proposal, CFI was to have provided inputs in four broad areas: (1) a working group on participatory co-management; (2) co-management lessons/best practices in NE India and across Asia; (3) exchange visits for cross regional learning; and (4) case studies, including analytical and applied research support

As an immediate step to address the removal of CFI, IRG invited Mr. S Palit of Kolkata (who had been included in the CFI team) and Dr. David McCauley to provide input concerning items (2) and (3) in the above list. But in its October 19th letter, IRG stated that we were exploring a more comprehensive solution to address all the technical needs represented by the CFI Team.

We have taken more time for this process than might have been expected in part because we have been actively seeking small and disadvantaged businesses by whom this work might be completed, so as to comply with Public Law 95 507 and our overall subcontracting goals. We have been able to take relatively more time on this process also because the inputs expected from CFI were by and large not to have taken place in the very early part of the Project. There has been no negative impact on implementation as a result of these delays.

IRG intends to forward our final recommendations for replacement of CFI's work within our team to the RCO by April 25, 2004.

Implications of Tax Requirements

This is gradually becoming a serious issue with important implementation repercussions for the Project. USAID has made it clear that all contractors and grantees should take special care not to pay tax to the Government during implementation of their projects/programs if their work is governed by a SOAG which stipulates that they should operate without paying taxes.

IRG recognizes the importance of this rule, and is doing everything possible to respect it. However, we would note that compliance with this requirement is causing implementation delays in our procurement. As an example, we have not been able to procure air conditioners, photocopier, projectors, etc. because we cannot find a dealer that will get us a tax-free importation clearance form from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) based on the SOAG. The NBR, on the other hand, cannot issue such clearance, as the line ministry (in our case the FD of the MoEF) is the responsible authority to pay for such tax. Without the approved PCP/PP in place, the ministry or department at this stage is unable even to assure (via verbal or written form) they will eventually make that reimbursement once the PCP/PP is approved. As a result, the Project is becoming more and more dependant on rental equipment. Experience shows that the time required for approval of a PCP, starting from preparation down to its approval and conversion to PP, ranges from six months to as high as twenty-four months.

For vehicles, the tax issue is also an important one. We have just begun and do not have means via a PP to have our tax reimbursed via our responsible Government Department. As a result, if IRG is not to bill USAID for the taxes, estimated at anywhere from 100% to 200% of vehicle price (depending principally on engine size), then IRG must carry all of that money until it can be reimbursed by the Government, and that may not be fore years to come. On the vehicle issue, see separate letter sent to the RCO concerning vehicle procurement.

Salary Approval Process

IRG's current contract requires -- if one interprets it strictly -- getting approval for all employees and all consultants of IRG and all our subcontracts. At the same time as

delivering this Progress Report, we are delivering requests for approval to the RCO for some forty consultants or employees (with another 15–20 to come by mid April), quite a number of them earning less than $10 per day. It does not appear to be an efficient use of our time or the RCO's time to request such approvals, and we would recommend that a future contract modification be an opportunity for setting a daily dollar limit above which RCO approval is required and below which it is not.

Purchase of Vehicles

IRG has conducted an extensive search to identify an appropriate vehicle set for our Project. That vehicle purchase request is being sent separately to the RCO at the same time as this Progress Report.

Annexes

ANNEX 1: Summary of Proposed 2008 PA Management Targets and Support Project Results

ANNEX 2: Sample Weekly Results Status Matrix Used for Reporting to CTO and Key Partners

ANNEX 1: Summary of Proposed 2008 PA Management Targets and Support Project Results

Component #1: Development of a Co-Management Planning and Implementation Model

Proposed Five-year Forest Department Program Targets:

1. One third of the National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are operating under a collaborative management model:
2. At sites employing co-management model, local resource users exercise rights to participate actively in protected area management.
3. The existing National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary network increases in size by 10 percent.
4. Degradation is reversed in co-managed National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Proposed Five-Year USAID/IRG Support Project Results:

1. Stakeholder analysis and needs assessments methodology developed and conducted for PAs within target landscapes
2. Natural resource assessment and monitoring system methodology developed and implemented for PAs and landscapes
3. Socio-economic and institutional assessment and monitoring system methodology developed and implemented for PAs and landscapes
4. Cost-effective conceptual model for co-management developed and implemented for PAs and landscapes
5. Appropriate conceptual approach to local development process is developed and implemented in target landscapes
6. PA management plans are developed (or completed) and implemented

Component #2: Interventions and Investments for Improved Ecosystem Management

Proposed Five-year Forest Department Program Targets:

1. Income-generating alternatives – consistent with PA conservation – are realized for key PA stakeholders in target landscapes:
2. Degradation slowed in landscapes around PAs:
3. Livelihood improvement programs being implemented within landscapes around PAs:
4. Local governance institutions overseeing co-management are highly transparent and trusted[1]:
5. Local governance institutions deliver coordinated natural resource management support within landscape:

Proposed Five-Year USAID/IRG Support Project Results:

1. Market opportunities for micro, small and medium enterprises development linked to improved Pas and landscapes identified and realized
2. Household level production technology improvements are made available
3. Savings and credit support program is made available and used
4. Community-level landscape interventions (e.g., land stabilization, tree planting and social forestry, demarcation of park boundaries, road stabilization activities, agreement on establishment of park infrastructure improvements) are implemented

Component #3: The Enabling Policy Environment for Co-Management Enhanced

Proposed Five-year Forest Department Program Targets:

1. FD enhances and clarifies the rights and responsibilities of local stakeholders in PA management
2. FD policy allows partial local retention and management of PA revenues
3. The Protected Area network is exempted from the revenue generation targets made to the FD by the Min of Finance
4. Processes are functioning to resolve land tenure and land use conflicts in PAs:
5. A joint public-private oversight board for the FD's PA system is established
6. FD policy encourages private sector efforts to conserve natural forest habitats:

Proposed Five-Year USAID/IRG Support Project Results:

1. The FD develops a vision and strategy for improved PA management, and begins implementing it:
2. A high-level Government Steering Committee advances the cause of improved PA management by the FD:
3. A national network of co-management practitioners exists and serves as a platform for knowledge improvements:
4. White papers on select priority issues are developed and vetted:

Component #4: Laying the Foundation for a Conservation Constituency in Bangladesh

Proposed Five-year Forest Department Program Targets:
1. Ten-fold increase in the number of paying visitors to target Pas by Bangladeshis within 1 year of co-management agreement formalization:
2. Evidence of increased advocacy by civil society for PA conservation
3. Bangladesh PA efforts and lessons learned are communicated at international meetings on protected area management and forestry
4. Citizens living in and around target PAs implement conservation actions
5. The perception of the FD as a trustworthy and capable manager of Protected Areas is enhanced amongst naturalists

Proposed Five-Year USAID/IRG Support Project Results:

1. A communications strategy is developed and implemented for the FD's PA management program
2. A communications strategy is developed and implemented for the PA Support Project
3. Informational and educational resources concerning the PA network are made widely and readily available
4. The FD and its partners prepares multiple research and programmatic contributions for presentation at regional and international conferences on PA management
5. A communications program targeting key high-level decision-makers is implemented

6. The number and quality of press clippings concerning the PA system increase
7. A program is established to expose young urban students to the PA network
8. A program is developed and established to engage landscape-level stakeholders in PA conservation actions

Component #5: Ensuring Institutionalization of Co-Management

Proposed Five-year Forest Department Program Targets:

1. Independently-reviewed management performance scores improve at no less than 5 of 7 targeted PAs
2. Working conditions for members of the Wildlife Circle improve relative to other FD employees
3. On issues critical to PA management, GOB ministries collaborate to resolve obstacles
4. The Wildlife Circle – responsible for PA management and oversight – enjoys a clear mandate and operational independence within the FD
5. Professional training institutions for PA management are more capable of responding to PA management needs:
6. Complementary investment in FD PAs of at least $1m is made by national and international donors
7. Local co-management authorities/committees pass financial management transparency audits

Proposed Five-Year USAID/IRG Support Project Results:
1. Understand and where possible quantify the economic costs and benefits of PA
2. Develop and implement a strategy for the long-term sustainable financing of PAs
3. Identify and pursue co-financing opportunities with national and international donors
4. Assess the existing and needed capacity of the FD and local stakeholders to co-manage PAs
5. Implement a capacity building program for FD PA managers and key local PA stakeholders
6. Identify phase-out plan and exit strategy
7. Network with other Asian PA managers and learn from best practices for PA management in other countries

Cross-cutting Support Project Results

1. A project management monitoring system is established and functioning
2. The Support Project team works closely with, and is trusted by, the FD PA management Wildlife Circle
3. Management systems for the support project are functioning
4. Forest co-management activities under the Project are complementary to and supportive of efforts of the Arannayk Foundation
5. Women are integrated as central actors at all levels of project implementation
6. The project actively engages the full range of PA partners in public and private sector
7. The Project benefits from synergies with other USAID projects

ANNEX 2: Sample Weekly Technical Progress Status Matrix

A sample from January of the matrix used for reporting is shown on the following pages.