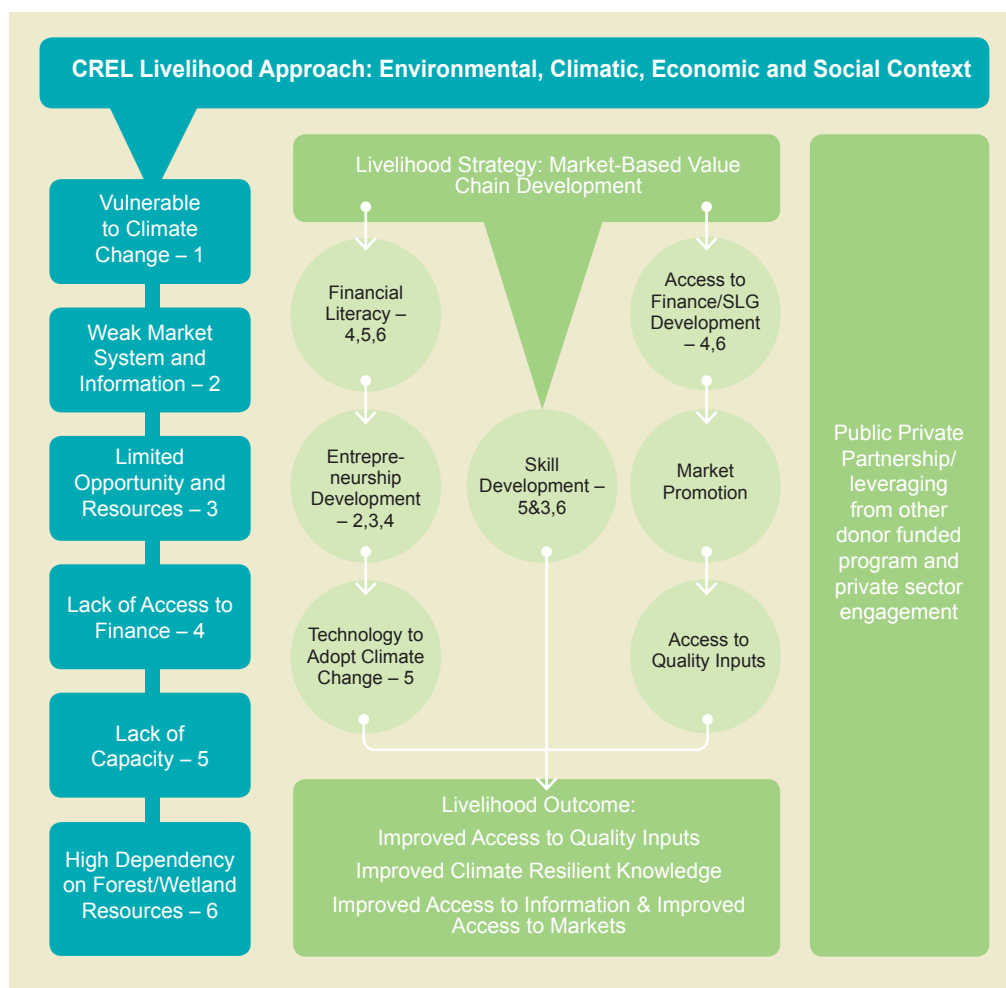


Climate-Resilient Livelihoods and Enterprises: CREL increases Household Incomes and reduces Dependence on Natural Resources

Background

CREL livelihood activities increase incomes for resource-dependent households living in or near forest and wetland protected areas (PAs) by identifying alternative income-generating opportunities that are climate resilient as well as environmentally sustainable. The project works with the poorest and most vulnerable to provide alternatives to unsustainable extraction practices and incentives for improving the protection and management of natural resources.

CREL aims to achieve viable, diversified, and climate-resilient livelihoods for 500,000 people as beneficiaries by the end of the project (in 2017). This will increase incomes and options for marginalized resource-dependent families living in or near targeted landscapes in the four regions where natural resources are most abundant and threatened. Connecting these resource-dependent households and communities with the private sector and government resources will not only help to reduce poverty and increase economic growth, it will also alleviate pressures that are eroding Bangladesh's natural resource base.



CREL Strategy

CREL applies a value-chain and market-driven approach to diversifying livelihoods and increasing incomes. The idea is to integrate disadvantaged families and farmers into rapidly growing subsectors and value chains which will provide income and employment opportunities. Support for beneficiaries focuses on

increasing knowledge about marketing and production, access to appropriate technology and quality inputs, and links of smallholder producer groups to the private sector, value-chains, and credit as and where needed. Private sector markets and input supply-chains provide producer inputs as well as access to markets or

companies which buy the products. No subsidies are provided, and the concept of “fees for services” is applied in order to reduce dependencies. The emphasis on market-based solutions promotes self-sufficiency and helps to sustain inputs, production, marketing, and sales services that can continue well beyond CREL.

Livelihoods and Production Groups

Alternative livelihoods and income-generation options are based on market analyses of viable products, comparative advantages, and value-chain or marketing opportunities. These have generally divided into five agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, with different specialized subsector commodities, trades, or enterprises (see Table).

Aquaculture	Horticulture	Livestock	Handicrafts	Ecotourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tilapia• Carp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vegetables• Fruits• Capsicum• Strawberry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chickens• Ducks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embroidary• Cap Sewing• Tailoring• Handloom• Net making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eco-guide training• Eco-tourism enterprises

As noted, CREL's targeted beneficiary groups are "hard-core" resource-dependent households and smallholder producers with limited access to land, information, and capital. They are largely unfamiliar with (or not connected to) local markets and/or value chains. In order to compete commercially with established market actors and producers, they require training and mentoring in entrepreneurship and financial literacy as well as increased access to credit or start-up capital. CREL identifies subsectors with market potential. It then works with local people to form production groups, by selecting households and providing skill development training for disadvantaged youth and women to improve their agricultural production and entrepreneurial know-how. Training programs are tailored to the identified sub-sector and conducted locally to increase access and opportunity, especially for women whose time and mobility tends to be more limited.

Financial and Entrepreneurship Literacy Centers (FELC)

CREL's signature training is its FELC course, which aims to improve marketing, production, and enterprise development capabilities. The participants are mainly women who are functionally illiterate. They attend two hours per day and 6 days a week for 7 months. They are taught basic math, literacy, and how to start an enterprise. Also integrated into the curriculum is information about biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, climate change, and gender equality, as well as life skills, health and nutrition, revolving funds and micro-credit, and issues of gender-based violence. FELC courses have been conducted in over 183 locations, benefiting 3419 women and 185 men. CREL also helps to develop market links for FELC graduates who want to increase production and sales, and/or develop small-scale businesses or enterprises. To help address the lack of capital, the project also facilitates connections with micro-finance groups and provides information on ways to establish revolving funds/savings and loan groups (SLGs).

Local Service Providers

To better meet the needs of CREL's targeted beneficiaries, the project works with and through "Local Service Providers" (LSPs). Government extension workers are often overstretched and can only provide limited coverage to CREL's beneficiaries who tend to reside in remote locations that are in or near forests and wetlands. LSPs are local people with greater knowledge of agriculture and markets, and who tend to have stronger links to agribusiness and local agricultural extension offices. They are identified by the project and receive training in business development services. LSPs provide input-supply services, agricultural and technological knowledge, and market information to CREL beneficiaries and production/cluster groups as well as other local farmers. This service-oriented and fee-based model promotes a locally-available and longer-term resource for inputs and output marketing services for smallholder farmers and families.

CREL is facilitating private sector links to add value, negotiate fair market prices, and promote savings. One example are the cooperative or cluster groups formed to produce hand-knitted toys for export. Pebble Child-Hathay Bunano, a 100% export oriented company working with over 1000 CREL beneficiaries in 10 villages. The majority of these women had relied on the extraction of resources from PAs and lacked alternative livelihood options. Before CREL made this production and marketing link, these women made little or no income. Now they are earning a regular income working from their homes.



Private Sector Engagement

CREL is strengthening links between different value chain actors and institutions in each area and region. This includes private-sector businesses and service providers as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations. CREL is working with private businesses to set up buy-back guarantees for selected enterprises. It is also working with the private sector to promote nature-based tourism as well as to create high-quality vocational and skills training opportunities for youth that is leading to jobs and employment in the hotel industry and other trades.