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Formation of Project Implementation Committee of CREL, Forest Part

The Forest Department's Project Implementation Committee (PIC) for the CREL project has been formed. The key role of the PIC is to regularly monitor project implementation and provide necessary guidance, and advise the Project Director and project implementation unit in every three months. The Committee is headed by the Honorable Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) of Bangladesh Forest Department and the Project Director of CREL, Mr. Abdul Latif Mia, Conservator of Forest (CF), Chittagong Circle has been assigned as member secretary. The PIC has an eight member committee including the Director of USAID, the CREL Chief of Party and representatives of the Bangladesh Forest Department. The 1st Project Implementation Committee (PIC) meeting was held on February 4, 2015 where a range of current issues related to project implementation were discussed.

Best Community Patrol Group (CPG) Award, 2016

Bangladesh Forest Department and the Fashiakhali and Medhakachapia CMCs have jointly organized a "Best Community Patrol Group (CPG) Award, 2016" for the 91 members of Community Patrol Groups (CPG) of Fashiakhali, Medhakachapia and Dulahazra CMC to acknowledge their outstanding performance. This event, supported by CREL, was held in Fashiakhali CMC office on February 17, 2016. 15 CPG members were awarded. Ayesha Begum of Medhakachapia CPG was the only women member. She received this award for her outstanding performance and support to conservation. UNO Chakaria, Mohammad Mr. Shahedul Islam was the Chief Guest and DFO Cox's Bazar North Forest Division, Karamat Ali Mallik presided over the ceremony.



Formation of Project Steering Committee of CREL, Fisheries part

The Department of Fisheries Steering Committee for the CREL Project has been formed. The objective of the Project Steering Committee is to provide guidance to the Project Implementation Committee (PIC), advice for implementation of the CREL Project, approve annual work plans and budgets, and monitor project activities and progress. The first Project Steering Committee meeting was held on November 02, 2015. The Honorable Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) chairs the committee and Dr. Md. Abdul Quaiyyum, CREL Project Director for DoF has been assigned as the member secretary. The other members of this eleven member Project Steering Committee (PSC) are representatives of other ministries, departments and USAID.

Deputy Chief of Ministry of Environment and Forests visits CREL activities



Mr. Samsur Rahaman Khan, Honorable Deputy Chief of Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) visited CREL activities at Chunati WS in Chittagong on 19 February and Medhakachapia and Chakaria in Cox's Bazar on February 21, 2016. During his Chunati trip he visited a tree nursery owned and maintained by a VCF member. Mr. Samsur Rahaman also visited social forestry plantations in the Hafezia Madrasha and the Hafezia graveyard. He attended a sharing meeting with the representatives of Forest Department officials and CMC representatives. Mr. Samsur Rahman Khan also visited livelihoods and NRM activities at Medakachapia National Park at Chakaria in Cox's Bazar.

Pebble Child supports renovation of Chunati Nature Interpretation Center

Hathay Bunano, better known as “Pebble Child”, contributed BDT 250,000 for the renovation of Nature Interpretation Center in Chunati, Chittagong. A check was handed over to “Module Architects” to undertake the renovation work on 25th of February 2016 at the CREL office. The renovation will result in better support for visitors.

Hathay Bunano has established a long-term partnership with CREL in support of alternative livelihoods for forest and natural resource dependent people living near Bangladesh’s protected forest and wetland areas. Together, CREL and Hathay Bunano have already engaged over 2,000 women to produce high quality export-oriented toys resulting in considerable income generation for the women and their families. Hathay Bunano has also supported the development of pre-school facilities for the children of the Pebble Child producers.

Project Director (Forest Part) visits SW Region



Mr. Abdul Latif Mia, Conservator of Forest (CF), Chittagong Circle and Project Director (Forest Part) for the CREL Project visited CMC activities in Southwest Khulna region during 14-16 February 2016. There he visited mangrove restoration work, mangrove nursery, pond excavation, homestead farming activities, institutional tree plantations. He met with Co-Management Committees of Sathkhira, Dacope-Koyra, Chadpai and Sarankhola. During his visit Mr. Abdul Latif Mia was accompanied by Mr. Zaheer Uddin Ahmed, Conservator of Forest, Khulna Circle, Mr. Md. Sydul Islam Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Sundarbans East Division, Chief of Party of CREL Project and other officials of FD and CREL.

The visit ended with a meeting with the Conservator of Forest (CF), Khulna Circle. In the meeting provision of Community Patrol Group (CPG), honorarium, endowment fund, ecotourism development and the importance of enactment of co-management protocols were emphasized.

Enhanced Water Security for a Tripura Community



USAID’s CREL Project has created access to clean water for Tripura residents near the Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary (RKWS) through grants support. A 125 cubic foot concrete water reservoir with 4 outlets was built to better harness and protect water from an artesian aquifer (locally called “Auto Kall”) in Mongoliabari Village. Mongoliabari Village is situated in the Kalenga Forest Beat under Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary. The artesian aquifer has been the main water source for the 65 families living in this village. The major problem associated with the water source was wastage of water, absence of a sanitary reservoir and lack of a platform around the outlet for people to collect water. The later resulted in a high level of difficulty, especially during the rainy season, to collect water or take bath due to the muddy and slippery surface. Now that these problems are resolved, adjacent households as well as at least 100 others from further distances have started receiving benefit from the improved water source. Women and children, in particular, are receiving the most benefits, as they are the major users of the water.

Sundarbans Day, 2016 was celebrated in Khulna



USAID’s CREL Project celebrated Sundarbans Day 2016 on February 14 in Khulna in association with Bangladesh Forest Department, local communities, international and national organizations. The main events of the day included a rally, art competition, pot songs and joint discussion on topics related to protection of the Sundarbans ecosystem and biodiversity. The purpose of this event was to raise awareness among the local communities as well as the urban population of Khulna city of the importance and their roles in the conservation of Sundarbans. A total of 900 people participated in this event in which half were women and children. International and national organizations who participated in this event included Winrock International, CODEC, CNRS, GIZ, Concern World Wide, Relief International, Wild Team, the European Union, Rupantor, Sundarban Academy and the Khulna Press Club.