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CREL Mangrove Plantation Shows Improvement in Biophysical Conditions



The afforestation and reforestation work begun by USAID's Climate Resilient Ecosystem and Livelihood (CREL) project in Dakshin para, Koyra, has started to produce visible impacts. Afforestation work started in September 2014 on 13 hectares with 10,000 mangrove seedlings consisting of native species such as Kankra, Keora, Bain, Golpata and Sundori. To protect the seedlings, the area was fenced in with a bamboo structure covered with fishing nets, with all the work completed by village conservation fund (VCF) members. After only 19 months, cranes, spotted doves and weaver birds have started nesting

and breeding there. Two beehives have also been spotted and VCF members have extracted honey from those combs.

CREL has planted around 150,000 seedlings of Sundori, Keora, Bain, Gewa, Kankra, Golpata, Pashur, Dhundal and Khalisha covering more than 200 hectares in southwest region of Bangladesh.



Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on Developing Lawachara Protected Area Management Plan

In April 2016, USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) project supported a multi-stakeholder consultation workshop in Kamalgonj, Moulvibazar, to share the draft Lawachara National Park (LNP) management plan. Mr. Mihir Kumar Dey, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Wildlife and Nature Conservation Division, Moulvi Bazar, was the chair and Mr. Abdul Latif Mia, Project Director (Forest part), CREL project and Conservator of Forests (CF) Chittagong, was the chief guest. In this workshop, speakers discussed the importance of the draft Lawachara management plan and various threats to the park. Five groups were formed with key LNP stakeholders including the Forest Department (FD); co-management committees (CMC); eco-tour guides/eco-cottage owners; tea estate owners; and expert groups in wildlife and birds. The groups presented what they consider major threats and problems in the protected Area, how these threats and problems

can be resolved or reduced, and who should take the responsibility to deal these issues.

One speaker, Mr. Enam Ul Haque, a renowned bird expert, said that Lawchara is a wildlife dominated national park and should be protected from all kind of disturbances. He also suggested that relevant experts should be consulted before any kind of development takes place. Another speaker, Mr. Md. Imtiaz Ahmed Bulbul, LNP CMC president, highlighted the praiseworthy achievements of the co-management process in conventional forest management. The findings and recommendations by the groups were prioritized based on the severity of threats and will be incorporated into the draft management plan. In his closing speech, the CREL Project Director emphasized the need to bring the entire protected area under the Wildlife and Nature Conservation Division in Moulvibazar.

USAID and Ministry of Land Explore Wetlands Management Collaboration

In an April 2016 meeting at the Bangladesh Secretariat, USAID's CREL project facilitated a discussion between USAID and the Ministry of Land to review the achievements, successes and challenges of USAID's interventions in wetland co-management in Bangladesh. USAID and the ministry discussed potential further natural resource management cooperation in wetlands throughout the country.

CREL and MoEF Work on Approval of Protected Area Management and ECA Rules

Representatives from USAID's CREL project recently met with Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Honorable Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) at the Bangladesh Secretariat to discuss protected area (PA) and ecologically critical area (ECA) rules. CREL had requested the Honorable Secretary to facilitate an inter-ministerial consultation to move forward on the draft of the PA rules which has been submitted to the MoEF. Meeting participants also discussed an update on the ECA rules, which will give ECA-based co-management organizations legal recognition. A major outcome from the meeting was the plan for an orientation workshop on PA and ECA rules for mid-level government officials at the Ministry of Law and Department of Finance in mid-July.

Biophysical Development Activities through Fish Sanctuary Establishment

A fish sanctuary is a demarcated protected area, used to establish and maintain a shelter to protect fish and encourage natural propagation. The establishment of an aquatic sanctuary is one of the most effective tools for conserving fish stocks, protecting biodiversity and increasing fish production. In the Halda River basin, USAID's CREL project is working on two new fish sanctuaries spread over five hectares that will be established adjacent to the Barighona and Akota Motso Samitti village conservation groups (VCG). The work in the Halda River was recently begun by placing bamboo piling and then confined with nylon rope within the boundary line where unauthorized fishing is prohibited. The area is then surrounded with 150 bushes on the edge of the sanctuary so the fish will not be disturbed or captured. The sanctuary is expected to cost around BDT 300,000 and once the sanctuaries are completed, they will be handed over to the VCGs and Department of Fisheries.



Kudum Cave Promoted as Eco-Tourism Attraction

Representatives from co-management committees and local villagers joined Mr. Ali Kabir, DFO in Cox's Bazar South Forest Division, and USAID's CREL project on a visit to Kudum Cave in Whykong, a historical tourist spot. Kudum Cave, formed by clay and sandy soils, is 38m deep and to access the cave, tourists have to hike through beautiful natural forests.



Kudum Cave is also known locally as 'bat cave' because of the large number of bats living there. CREL is assisting the Teknaf co-management committee to develop Kudum Cave as a financially sustainable eco-tourism attraction to ensure the protection of surrounding forests.

Khadimnagar National Park CMC Participates in Agro Technology Fair

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Sylhet recently organized an Agro Technology Fair with Mr. Krishno Chandra Hor, Additional Director of DAE, Sylhet, and Mr. Mir Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, UNO, Sylhet Sadar, Sylhet, as guests. Projects implemented by different NGOs presented their activities and achievements in the agriculture sector, and the Khadimnagar co-management committee (CMC) presented their achievements in new agro technology promoted by USAID's CREL project for the beneficiaries of 22 village conservation forums (VCF) in the national park. CMC members presented different technology solutions, including poultry rearing with improved technology, vegetable production by the IPM method, monosex tilapia fish culture and orange sweet potato cultivation during the fair. DAE awarded Mr. Torun Patro, one of the beneficiaries of the Faringura VCF in Khadimnagar National Park, for his development of a hand spray machine.