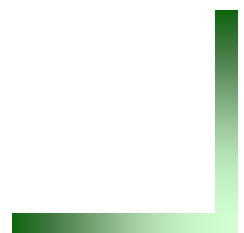


SITE STRATEGY FOR REMA KALENGA WILD LIFE SANTUARY



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Prepared For:
International Resources Group (IRG)

Prepared by
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With Partners: CODEC, NACOM, RDRS & IUCN



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1. Environment Scanning

Location

- Rema Kelenga wild life sanctuary is a part of Tarap Hill Reserve Forest. It was established as a sanctuary through gazette notification first in 1981 with a total area of 1095 ha but later expanded to 1795 ha in 1996.
- It is located about 130 km east-north east of Dhaka and about 80 km south south-west of Sylhet city. It covers Kalenga, Chonbari and Rema Beats.
- Sanctuary encompasses several hills criss-crossed by three main channels with numerous tributaries called “chara”. There are two shallow wetlands, locally called jheels. Agriculture occupies some areas in the north which is not more than 5% of the forest.

Forest Cover

- The forest is mixed evergreen. 76% of the forest still is in natural condition, plantation covers only 9% of the area of the forest.
- Forest cover declined by 15-20% since liberation. Thickness and abundance of tall trees have declined by 40%. Maximum damage has occurred to wild life which has declined by 60%.
- Tree felling has increased significantly since liberation. It slowed down during the 80s and early 90s, but has increased in the late 90s and has continued till today.
- Fuel wood collection has increased by 80% although bamboo collection has decreased by 40%, primarily due to decline in bamboo stock.
- Hunting has decreased by more than 80%. This is primarily due to drastic shrinkage of wild life population.

Settlements

22 villages having varied degree of stakes surrounds the sanctuary. These villages belong to 4 unions of Chunarughat and Srimangal Upazila.

- There is one forest village inhabited by Tipra tribe located inside the forest, another 9 forest villages are located at the boundary of the Wildlife sanctuary (WS) and the reserve forest; the remaining 12 villages are located at a distance of 2-5 kms.
- The 10 villages that are in and adjacent have the highest stake. 8 of these villages are habited by tribal people. Of the outside villages, 2 have medium stake, remaining villages have medium to minor stake.
- Majority fuel wood collectors come from Jamburachara, Krishnanagar, Kabilashpur, Alinagar, Basulla, Himalia and Harinmara village

- Illegal fellers come from Alinagar, Ranigoan, Basulla, Kabilashpiur, Himalia, Harinmara, Jamburqachara.

Most HHs in and adjacent villages depend on the WS for their fuel wood, building materials, fruits and vegetables, etc. Some are also involved in illegal felling.

Social Stratification

- There are 286 households (HHs) in the 10 forest villages. Out of this figure, ethnic community has 167 HHs
- All forest villages have settled after enacting an agreement with the forest department according to which each HH is obligated to guard the forest and plant trees at their own cost in exchange of usufruct right granted on 6-9 acres of forest land for cultivation. Each forest village has to plant 1200 saplings at their own cost every year, a system not in existence in other areas.
- Another interesting feature is that the HH number can not exceed the number registered with the FD. Most forest villagers lease out their land on a short term basis at Tk. 500/bigha per year. The process also leads to eventual land grabbing once the leaser is unable to pay back.
- 80% of adults in forest villages are illiterate. This is primarily because educational institutions are far way from the forest and the road communication is not developed. In outside villages, literacy rate is around 30-35%, of those 80-85% have primary education, 10-15% have High school education and 3-5% have college education.

Stakeholders

According to PRA report, there are 12 primary stakeholders who are involved with direct extraction of forest resources. Key stakeholders are:

- Fuel wood collectors/Bamboo collectors/ House building material collectors
- Illegal timber fellers
- Vegetable collectors
- Agr. Farmers
- Fruit collectors/ Bark collectors
- Honey collectors
- Medicinal plants collectors
- Hunters/trappers
- Sun grass collectors
- Sawmill owners
- Fuel wood traders
- Furniture shop owners
- Laborers from tea estates
- Sawmill owners

- Timber traders
- There are 12-15 timber traders at Gazipur, Nalmuk Bazaar, Sindurkhan and Chunarughat bazaar. Most have no trade license for timber trading. They generally receive sawed timber from saw mills and trade locally. There are also 1 sawmill in Gazipur, 2 in Sindurkhan and 12 at Chunarughat.
- There are 2-3 fuel wood traders in Gazipur Bazaar, 2-3 in Sindurkhan and 5-6 at Chunarughat.
- There are 20-30 furniture shops mostly in Chunarughat.

Livelihood

- Primary occupations of people living both inside and outside villages are agriculture, followed by wage labour.
- Primary occupations among Tipras are, apart from agriculture, wage labour, handicraft business and fuel wood collection.
- Major occupations of Bengalees are farming (70-75%), wage labour (15-20%), fuel wood/bamboo collection and timber felling (5-7%) and small business (1-2%) .
- One interesting trend is that agriculture has declined significantly since 1971 while proportion of people involved in fuel wood collection and illegal logging has more than doubled since 1971.
- In the forest villages, there is no rich people, 4-5% of the people are middle class, 70-80% of people are poor and 15-20% are very poor.
- In outside villages: 2- 5% of the population are rich, 10-15% are middle class, 60-70% are poor, and 15-20% are extremely poor.
- Unemployment is high in forest villages. People remain unemployed during the dry season since most of the activities related to agriculture take place during the wet season. In outside villages 5-8% of the population remains unemployed round the year.

Power Structure and the Local Governance

There are in total 27 influential people who have control over the community people and even over local administration. Most influential persons include; The MP of Cunarughat and Madhabpur. Haji Samir Hossain, Md. Abdul Jabbar, Dorbesh Mia, Abdul Jalil Miah and Abdul Gafur have very close links with the MP. Other influential people are: Faruk Ahmed, UPC-Ranigao, Hossain Md. Abdullah, UPC-Sindurkhan, Srimangal Upazila, Jahangir Khan, UPC-Gazipur, Abu Taher, UPC-Jamburachara, Ayub Ali, Ex UP Chairman of Lalkher,

NGOs and Credit Providers

- The major NGOs that offer credit to local people are: BRAC, ASA, BRDB, Grameen Bank and PASA.

- NGOs concentrate on health, education and alternative income generation. Most of them have credit programme mostly targeted to women.

2. What Makes Rema Kalenga Unique?

- The WS is significantly larger than Lawachara and Satchuri National Park. A large proportion of the sanctuary, nearly two thirds, still has true natural forest.
- The Sanctuary also has large tracts of planted teak gardens, which are under heavy pressure from illegal tree fellers from surrounding villages and tea gardens.
- It was once rich in bio-diversity, but large animals have moved away or have become extinct due to human invasion and illegal felling.
- The forest has large number bird species and could serve as excellent place for bird watching.
- The Sanctuary has 10 tribal communities inside the forest or adjacent to it with unique cultural heritage. The Tipra communities have close links with communities living on the Indian side, and their movement across the boarder is quite common and frequent.
- Given the close proximity to the boarder, the sanctuary offers an ideal place for insurgents from Tripura, which makes the area unsafe for free movements for tourists.
- Illegal tree feller-gangs frequently raid teak gardens which lead to gun battles between the forest guards (assisted by the villagers) and the gangs often resulting in serious casualties on both sides.

3. Key Problem Areas Needing Strategic Intervention

- FD's inability to protect the forest from illegal feller gangs
- Poor image of the Forest Department
- Poverty generated by high level of unemployment and lack of income opportunities among villagers and tea garden workers.
- Influence or involvement of local elite in forest resource extraction

4. Objective

Motivate and mobilize different stakeholders and poor people of the community within the defined landscape and, in collaboration with the Forest Department, take collective actions to reduce resource extraction so as to ensure regeneration of green cover and restoration of bio-diversity. Also promote alternative income opportunities for poor people to reduce their dependent on the forest for their livelihoods.

5. Key Strategic Interventions

A. Social Mobilization and Improved Local Governance of PA

People's support, cooperation and participation are now considered imperative for protection who conservation of forest and biodiversity. NSP is trying to mediate and forge partnership between the community people and the Forest Department (FD) through Collaborative Management, involving participation of various sections of the community having stake on the forest in some form or other and sharing with Forest Department authority, responsibility and decision making related to forest and bio-diversity conservation. Co-management also demands community empowerment. NSP is also undertaking various awareness raising and social mobilization interventions using various tools to make people understand and realize the short-term and long-term disastrous environmental impact of indiscrete resource extraction on their lives and livelihoods and other life forms and roles they need to play to avoid such disaster.

B. Enhanced Esteem, Importance and Performance of Forest Department

For the Collaborative Management to take root and function on a sustainable basis, it is essential for the FD to break its isolation and be proactive in interacting with and involving community people to protect forest and conserve biodiversity. NSP is trying to forge this through joint activities and other supportive interventions. This will not only dispel the negative image of the FD but will also bear long term impact on forest protection and bio-diversity conservation.

NSP is also trying to enhance the knowledge and social skills of field level staff-members of FD through need-based training, exposure visits and workshops.

C. Economic Alternatives for Local Households

Mere motivational efforts are not likely to make much impact on the behavior of people living in and around PAs and are fully or partially dependent on forest for their livelihoods unless alternative income generating opportunities are created. In all sites, NSP is trying to expand income opportunities for poor people who are mostly dependent on forest for their livelihoods through providing grant money on different trades. To enhance income opportunities for the larger section of the community NSP is trying to promote eco-tourism, which, with increased flow of tourists, will create demands for different products and services, that people around could provide and earn income.

Demand for fuel wood both for consumption in households and enterprises prompts hundreds of people to go inside the PAs to collect fuel wood that they can easily sell and earn income. The demand is likely to increase in the future due to demographic dynamics and increased developmental needs. One of the major areas that NSP has particularly focused on is promotion of alternative energy both for households and enterprises particularly in brickfields.

D. Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core

Once the community is empowered and catalyzed protection of the PA is less likely to be a problem since the members of the Co-management Council/ Committee are likely to, by themselves, evolve modalities to perform the task. Until such community empowerment takes place some mechanisms have to be evolved to protect the forest. One of the mechanisms that NSP and FD have initiated is paid patrolling by selected community people in one of the PAs and has earned significant success in arresting tree felling. NSP and FD are now trying to promote volunteer patrolling through the initiatives of the Co-management Council/Committee. They are also trying to motivate the beneficiaries of the buffer zone plantation to organize patrol groups to protect the Core Area.

E. Local Participation in Monitoring Impact

There is need for local people to get actively involved in monitoring of actual progress made in the protection of PAs. Apart from observation by NSP and FD staff during their regular field visits, council members will be motivated to initiate

6. Programmatic Interventions

A. *Social Mobilization and Improved Local Governance of PA*

1. Develop Collaborative Management Structure

- 1.1 Hold Co-management Council meetings
- 1.2 Form Co-management Committees
- 1.3 Hold Co-management Committee meetings
- 1.4 Organize orientation on eco-tourism and income flows and organizational development for Council members
- 1.5 Organize training for Co-management Committee members on organizational development and management(2 batches)
- 1.6 Share the Constitution with Council members
- 1.7 Share site strategy with the Committee members
- 1.8 Finalize the constitution incorporating suggestions from the FD and Council members
- 1.9 Post minutes of the Council / Committee meetings (Bangle) in NSP and FD offices

2. Promote Broad-Based Social Mobilization, Including Women and Ethnic Minorities

- 2.1. Hold workshops with imams & teachers

- 2.2. Conduct hiking with Council members
- 2.3. Hold rally with School students
- 2.4. Organize events to observe Important National Days (26th March, 16th December, 21th February)
- 2.5. Display PT&FS of whole community of Basulla, Kalenga, Alinagar
- 2.6. Organize Video shows to raise public awareness
- 2.7. Form users groups (Basulla, Balumara, Alinagar, Kabilaspur Grainger.)
- 2.8. Establish CDS in 12 villages
- 2.9. Select Council members for exposure visit to West Bengal
- 2.10. Prepare and submit monthly progress report

B. Enhanced Esteem, Importance and Performance of Forest Department

3. Develop Strong Collaboration Between the Forest Department and NSP

- 3.1 Discuss six monthly Work Plan with FD staff and post it in the Range Offices
- 3.2 Make regular Visit to FD Local offices.
- 3.3 Hold coordination meeting with FD Officials every month

4. Build Capacity of Staff Members of the Forest Department

- 4.1 Help provide training to FD staff RO/ Dy. RO/BO's)
- 4.2 Help arrange exposure visits of ROs to West Bengal
- 4.3 Help provide training to Forest Guards

5. Develop Positive Image of the Forest Department

- 5.1 Organize periodic meetings among NSP staff, vital Council members and FD staff
- 5.2 Hold awareness raising meetings in collaboration with the Forest Department staff
- 5.3 Postering, distribute leaflets and do wall paintings with messages to raise public awareness by the name of Forest Department
- 5.4 Discuss PA code of conduct with Local FD Staff

C. Economic Alternatives for Local Stakeholders

6. Promote Alternative Income Generation (AIGA) for Poor Households

- 6.1 Provide training and grant money on Nursery development (three villages)
- 6.2 Provide training grant money on Home grading to 15 households (four villages)
- 6.3 Provide training and grant money on Beef fattening/Milk cow rearing (Five villages)
- 6.4 Provide training and grant money on small Trades (5 villages)
- 6.5 Provide training and grant money on fish culture (two villages)
- 6.6 Networking with FSP users groups
- 6.7 Provide training and grant money on poultry rearing (Five villages)

7. Support Tree Planting, Forest Regeneration and Social Forestry

- 7.1 Assist in buffer Zone plantation on over 50 ha
- 7.2 Assist in core zone plantation for regeneration
- 7.3 Distribute seedlings for homestead Plantation in surrounding villages.

8. Identify Alternative Energy Sources for Brickfields and Households

- 8.1 Introduction of improved chulas for economic energy consumption
- 8.2 Promotion of charcoal sticks for cooking

Facilitate Development of Eco-tourism development

- 8.3 Establish Bill Boards and prepare publicity materials

D. Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core

9 Establish Systems to Ensure that Protected Area is Respected and Conserved

- 9.1 Community patrolling at Basulla, Alinagar, Gazinager consist of 20 no Members
- 9.2 Zone wise community meeting will be held 20 no (Kalenga, Ranigaon, Rema – balumara, Jamburachara, Basulla, Chaganager, Kabilaspur, Debrabari, Chanbari
- 9.3 Organize meeting with FSP group on Core Protection Area
- 9.4 Assist FD in PA boundary Survey, Mapping and Demarcation

E. Local Participation in Monitoring Impact

10 Engage Local Stakeholders in Monitoring Impact of Project

- 10.1 Orient/Train co-management committee members and group members in AIGA tracking
- 10.2 Select participants for monitoring data collection and involve them in implementation
- 10.3 Conduct bird survey, photo –monitoring and other participatory monitoring

7. Six Monthly Programme Implementation Plan and Staff Responsibilities

	Activities or Milestone	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	SF (132)	(FOs) (132x_05)=660	RC (-30)	FD staff	Other NSP
A.	<i>Social Mobilization and Council /Committee Formation</i>											
1.	<i>Develop Collaborative Management Structure</i>											
1.1	Hold Co-management Council meetings	X		X		X		04	15	03	ACF,SDFO,R O,BO,	LGCBS,
1.2	Form Co- management committees			X				01	2	01	ACF,SDFO,R O,BO,	LGCBS,COP
1.3	Hold Co- management committee meetings					X	X	04	08	03	ACF,SDFO,R O,BO,	LGCBS,COP
1.4	Organize orientation on eco-tourism and income flows and organizational development					X	X	02	02	02	SDFO,	AIGAO,TC,P AMS,LGCB
1.5	Organize training for Co-management committee members on organizational development and management(2 batches)				X	X		02	02	02		TC/LGCBS/P AMS
1.6	Sharing of Council Constitutions with members	X	X					01	02		RO,BO,	COO, CS
1.7	Sharing of site strategy with the committee members			X				01	04	01		
1.8	Finalization of the constitution incorporating suggestions from the FD and members		X								ACF	LGCBS/
1.9	Posting of minutes of the Council / Committee meetings (Bangle) in			X				01	04	01		9

3.2	NSP and visit to FD Local office.	X	X	X	X	X	X	04	55	01		
3.3	Hold coordination meeting with FD Officials every month.	X	X	X	X	X	X	06	30	00	SDFO/RO	COO, AIGAO, TC,PAMS
4.	Promote Broad Based Social Mobilization including Women Build capacity of staff members and Ethnic Minorities.											
2.1	Workshops with imams & teachers			X				01	08	00	RO,BO,	COO,CS
4.1	Help provide training to FD staff	X						02	00	01	SDFO,RO	COO
2.2	Conduct ROBO with Council			X				01	04	01	RO,BO,	COO,CS
4.2	Help arrange exposure visits of ROs			X				03		01	SDFO,RO	PAMS, TSPC
2.3	Rawal Begum School students	X						02	04	01	RO,BO,	COO,MF&G O,CS,
4.3	Help provide training to Forest Guards	X		X	X			03	08	01	RO,BO,	COO,MF&G O,CS,AAIGA
2.4	Day observation (26 th March, 16 th December, 21 th February)											O
5.	Develop positive image of FD											
2.5	Display PT&FS of whole community of Basulla, Kalenga, Almagar		X	X	X	X		04	08	01	RO,BO,	COO,CS
5.1	Organize periodic meetings among NSP staff, vital Council members and FD staff		X		X		X	3	12	2	BO, RO, Staff	
2.6	Organize Video shows to raise public awareness		X	X	X			04	08	01	RO,BO,FG	COO,MF&G O,AIGAO
5.2	Public awareness raising meetings in Form user group (Basulla, halumara, Dinagar, Jabilasur Grainger.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	3	24	2	BO, staff	
2.7	Form user group with the Forest Department	X	X	X	X	X	X	04	21	01	SDFO,RO,B O,FG	COO,MF&G O,AIGAO
3.3	Establish GDS in 12 groups in 12 villages, distribute calendars and wall paintings with messages	X	X	X	X	X	X	04	14	01	RO, BO	COO,MF&G O,AIGAO
2.9	Exposure visit of Council members to West Bengal Department			X				02	06	01	ACF,SDFO,R O,BO,	COO,MF&G O,AIGAO
3.40	Monthly Progress reporting with FD Staff.	X	X	X	X	X	X	04	10	01	---	---
6.	Economic Alternatives for Invol Stakeholder Performance											
	Promote AICep for NSP User											
6.	Develop strong Collaboration between FD and NSP											
6.1	Provide training and grant money on Nursery development (three villages)	X						02	15	00	SDFO,RO	COO,AIGAO TC
3.1	Six Monthly Work Plan discussed with FD staff and posted in Range Offices.		X					02		01		
6.2	Provide training grant money on	X						02	15	00	SDFO,RO	CM,AIGAO, TC

	Home grading to 15 households (four villages)											
6.3	Provide training and grant money on Beef fattening/Milk cow rearing (Five villages)	X	X					04	15	00	SDFO,RO	CM, AIGAO, TC.
6.4	Provide training and grant money on small Trades (5 villages).			X	X	X		04	15	00	SDFO ,RO	CM,AIGAO, TC,PMO
6.5	Provide training and grant money on fish culture (two villages)			X	X			04	15	00	SDFO,RO	CM, AIGAO, TC.PMO.
6.6	Networking with FSP users groups				X	X	X	04	20	01	SDFO,RO,B O	CM, AIGAO,
6.7	Provide training and grant money on poultry rearing (Five villages)						X	02	05	01	SDFO,RO,B O	CM, AIGAO, TC.EDO
7.	<i>Support Tree Planting, Forest Regeneration and Social Forestry</i>											
7.1	Buffer Zone plantation on over 50 ha						X	05	47	01	SDFO,RO,B O	CM, AIGAO, TC.
7.2	Core zone regeneration			X	X	X	X	02	06	01	SDFO,RO,B O	AIGAO,
7.3	Homestead Plantation : Seedling distribution to villages surrounding PA.						X	05	50	01		
8.	Identify Alternative Energy Sources for Brickfields and Households											
8.1	Establish Bill Boards and prepare publicity materials	X	X	X	X	X	X	01	05	01	SDFO,RO, BO	CM, AIGAO, TC. CS,EDO
8.2	Promotion of charcoal sticks for cooking		X	X				02	05			
	Facilitate Development of Eco – tourism											
8.3	Establish Bill Boards and prepare			X		X		03	12	01		

	publicity materials											
IV	<i>Protection of landscape, especially the PA core</i>											
9.	<i>Establish Systems to ensure that PA is respected and conserved</i>											
9.1	Community patrolling at Basulla, Alinagar, Gazinager consist of 20 no Members				X	X	X	04	25	01	SDFO,RO,BO	CM, AIGAO, MF&GO, PAMS/LGCBS,
9.2	Zone wise community meeting will be held 20 no (Kalenga, Ranigaon, Rema –balumara, Jamburachara, Basulla, Chaganager, Kabilaspur, Deb rabari, Chanbari)	X	X	X	X	X	X	06	40	01	SDFO,RO,BO	CM, AIGAO, MF&GO,
9.3	Organize meeting with FSP group on Core Protection Area.	X	X	X	X	X	X	05	12	01	RO,BO,AO	CM, AIGAO, MF&GO
9.4	Assist FD in PA boundary Survey, Mapping and Demarcation.		X			X		01	12	01	RO,BO,AO	CM, AIGAO, MF&GO
V	<i>Local participation in monitoring impacts</i>											
10	<i>Engage Local Stakeholders in Monitoring Impacts of NSPI interventions.</i>											
10.1	Orient/Train co-management committee members and group members in AIGA tracking.			X				02	15	1	RO,BO,AO	TC,ESMS
10.2	Select participates for monitoring data collection and involve them in implementation.	X	X					02	20	00		TC,ESMS
10.3	Conduct bird survey, photo – monitoring and other participatory monitoring.		X	X	X	X	X		02	00		TC,ESMS
	Total							133	623	43		

