

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

There are a wide range of opportunities for the private sector to engage in and support communities working with the Forest Department for biodiversity conservation and associated activities



TESTIMONIALS

“The Private sector can play a significant role to address environmental challenges and reduce pressure on natural resources management in Bangladesh.”

Mohiuddin Helal

CEO, CBT Bangladesh

(Community Based Tourism in Bangladesh)

"We are proud to work with resource dependent people who can be engaged in the conservation of our natural resources. Plantations of fruit trees in the buffer zones of the forest areas will not only have a positive impact on natural resource conservation, but also provide income for these households."

Ayesha Haque

Head of CSR

IDLC Finance Limited

“We believe in creating markets for the poor that sustain natural resources management. Bridging the private sector and empowering communities is a model for private sector engagement”

Golam Morshed

Chairman

Hathay Bunano p.s.

(Pebblehcild)

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Investing in a Green Future

Public Private Partnerships for Forest Ecosystems



USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project



USAID's Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project

is Bangladesh's most comprehensive and integrated forest and wetland conservation project. It supports the equitable co-management of the country's unique and diverse biodiversity and fragile ecosystems in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, national and international NGOs, the private sector and communities adjacent to and dependent upon the successful stewardship of these areas in the context of a changing climate.

Community-Based Eco-Tourism

Community-based eco-tourism has considerable scope for expansion near or in protected forests and aquatic ecosystems. With increasing numbers of domestic tourists visiting Bangladesh's unique nature preserves, opportunities in eco-tourism continue to increase. High-end,

middle-income and young Bangladeshi tourists on a budget are increasingly interested in non-traditional vacations in national parks and scenic areas and can be targeted. There are potential services and products that provide substantial income potential for local communities dependent on and living near national parks and protected areas. Eco-tourism is an excellent way to educate tourists on the importance of biodiversity protection, increase support to solve environmental issues and provide local communities with income.

Where: There are significant tourist opportunities in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in Bangladesh.

Who: Community groups who live near the protected areas and whose livelihoods are

directly associated with these areas and supportive entrepreneurs who can play a role in eco-tourism.

How to help:

Option A: There is growing scope for high quality locally produced products for sale to tourists. It is important to strengthen local entrepreneurs to produce and sell to tourists and products with locally produced raw ingredients will be an added bonus to communities.

Option B: Improved park and natural area facilitates increase the positive experience of tourists in protected areas. This includes trail development, toilet facilities, picnic areas, fishing parks, rest areas and interpretive sign boards.

Enhancing Domestic Wood Supplies

Rural households are challenged to collect adequate wood and other biomass for daily cooking and income. The poor, especially women, are particularly vulnerable and rely on wood supplies from sensitive forest ecosystems for cooking and as a source of income. Wood resources can be enhanced through afforestation efforts on public lands, such as forests and institutional compounds, and via short rotation and fast-growing fuel wood trees in homesteads and farms. Another effective strategy is to decrease wood demand with energy efficient stoves to reduce the amount of fuel for cooking. Improved cook stoves combined with tree cultivation together reduce the pressure on protected forests.

Where: Communities adjacent or in close proximity to forest protected areas with significant fuel wood extraction and where opportunities for fuel wood substitution exist.

Who: Most homes use fuel wood for cooking, therefore a broad focus that includes all community members is recommended.

How to help: Support for tree planting efforts and fuel efficient stoves is important. Stove support may include small subsidies to buyers or stove builders or the establishment of a system for low monthly payments to reduce barriers to entry.



Biodiversity Conservation Efforts

With the institutional adoption of co-management approaches for natural resources management, the Government of Bangladesh has welcomed support from communities surrounding 22 forest protected areas. To date, 1600 members comprising 75 community patrol groups (CPG) regularly participate in joint patrols of protected areas with forest guards. Dedicated CPG members provide critical support to limited government resources even though they expose themselves to risk from attack from elephants, tigers and poachers while undertaking their duties. CREL has supported these groups with training, uniforms and modest monetary

compensation for their time. Your valuable contributions to the CPG system will enable them to continue their biodiversity conservation efforts.

Where: 18 protected areas with unique biological significance and scenic beauty.

Who: Women's and men's groups, with the potential to focus on women's groups only or all groups.

How to help: Ensure long term sustainability via compensation, supplies and equipment, training, achievement awards and opportunities for income generating activities.

Forest Ecosystem Restoration

Unique ecosystems in Bangladesh are under increasing pressure from multiple natural and man-made pressures. Reducing pressure from and restoration of protected areas takes a multi-pronged approach, including afforestation of degraded forests, wetlands and marginal lands. Bangladesh has a successful history of social forestry programs that includes benefit-sharing agreements with communities. Community protection of forest areas allows native trees to naturally re-seed damaged ecosystems with indigenous tree species. The Government appreciates co-financing of forest restoration efforts through co-management organizations to ensure communities have ownership and commitment to the initiatives.

Where: Protected areas and social forestry landscapes, assisted natural regeneration areas, fodder plantations and afforestation on private land, roadsides, field borders and embankments and within compounds and institutional boundaries.

Who: Groups who support conservation efforts include CPGs, co-management committees (CMC), village conservation forums (VCF), and farmers with land to be utilized to grow trees that might be involved in illegal or destructive natural resource extraction.

How to help: Afforestation, assisted natural regeneration and fodder development requires a combination of linked actions which include tree nurseries, planting of tree seedlings or grasses, management, agreements on benefit sharing and links to conservation efforts on public and private lands.



Alternative Livelihoods

Diverse and economically viable alternative livelihoods for people who are dependent on the extraction of diminishing natural resources are important to realize biodiversity conservation and livelihoods goals. A number of win-win private sector initiatives have successfully engaged natural resources dependent families as producers and service providers that also contribute to the success of the core business of the companies involved. These initiatives provide rural community members with a range of attractive off-farm employment opportunities that have not existed in the past. The link between biodiversity conservation efforts and the private sector in Bangladesh is a win-win model that has almost unlimited scope for expansion.

Where: Areas adjacent to national parks, wildlife preserves and other protected areas with biodiversity importance.

Who: Communities near protected areas whose livelihoods are directly associated with these areas, focused on individuals or organizations such as VCFs, CPGs and savings & loan groups.

How to help: Support win-win models to provide opportunities for a business to expand or be successful while contributing to resource substitution. Activities should engage community members, especially women, in financially attractive opportunities to generate income consistent with community values and connect to messaging and activities supporting natural resources conservation.

Co-Management Organization Support

Under a Government order from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, 27 co-management committees (CMC) have been established to support the Forest Department's people-centered conservation initiatives over the last decade. This co-management apex body includes villagers, local government authorities, central government representatives and local elites as members. These organizations are key to coordinating local efforts to conserve forest ecosystems, yet they do not have a reliable source of funding. They receive funds from international development projects and revenue sharing of entrance fees to a small number of parks.



Where: Protected ecosystems, parks and adjacent areas.

Who: 27 CMCs and the communities they represent which are associated with protected ecosystems and parks.

How to help: CMCs seek sponsorship to ensure long-term sustainability, including supplies and equipment, training, conservation campaigns, conservation message signs, social forestry efforts, tourism facilities, and revenue-generating activities.