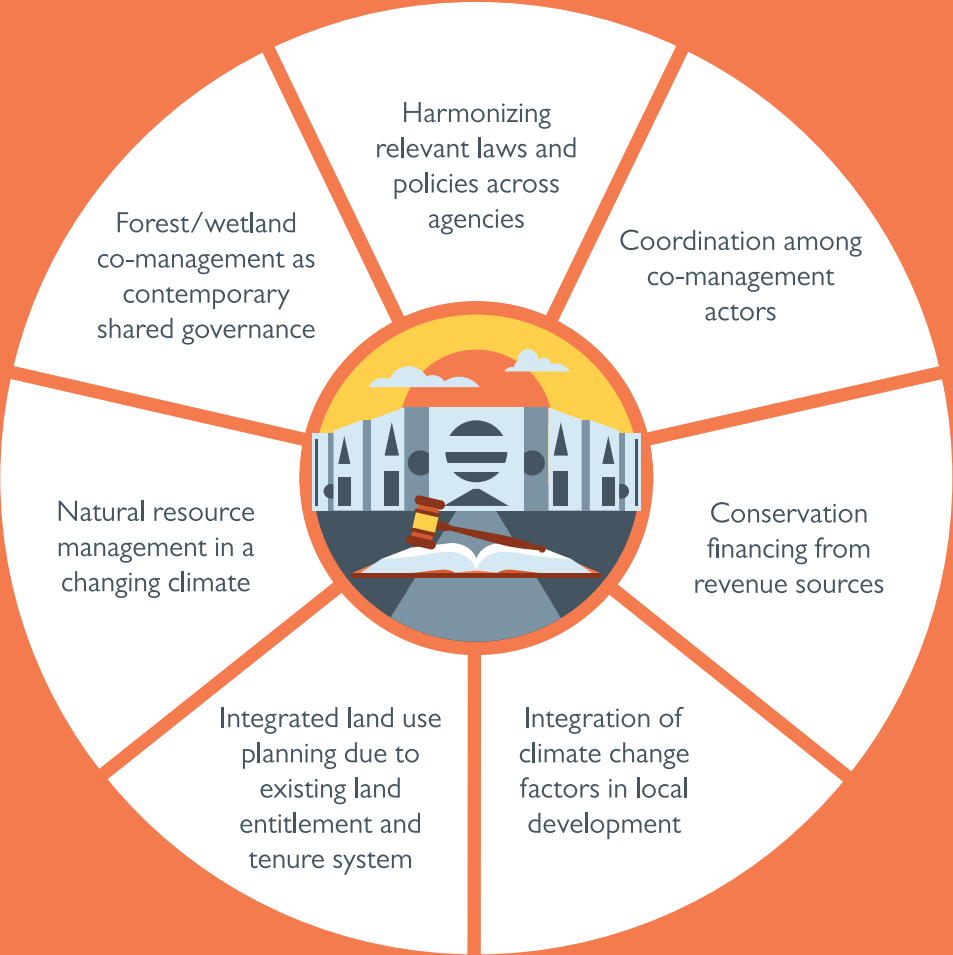


POLICY REFORM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



In the face of climate change, the integration of policies and collaborating partnerships for better land use and improved natural resources management for protected areas is necessary. This calls for stakeholders and other actors to be engaged at multiple levels through improved shared governance.

TESTIMONIALS

“There needs to be a balance between development activities and conserving natural wealth. CMCs could not only help in the process of identifying and curbing problems, but also in protecting biodiversity in forests and in turn facilitating adaptation to climate change.”

Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed
Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests

“To protect the biodiversity rich wetlands of Bangladesh, wetlands like Hakaluki and Hail Haor should be recognized as internationally important waterbodies that are conserved by local people.”

Dr. Mesbah UI Alam
Secretary, Ministry of Land

“Co-management has been exemplary in involving forest dependent communities to sustain resources. Innovative funding mechanisms and training have to be introduced to ensure sustainability.”

Md. Yunus Ali
Chief Conservator of Forests, Bangladesh

“Environmental improvement in ECAs is difficult if the suffering of poor inhabitants is overlooked by decision-makers. ECA communities should be a high priority for projects to help people make connections to markets, develop skills, and make wise use of natural resources.”

Md. Raisul Alam Mondal
Director General, Department of Environment

For more information, please contact:

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Crafting Effective Natural Resources Management Policy

Foundations for Tomorrow's Decision Makers



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



Introduction

Natural resources policy should provide a science-based and socially acceptable roadmap to guide rational decision-making that results in the sustainable and equitable management of Bangladesh's biodiversity heritage. USAID's CREL Project policy focus assists the ministries and agencies of the Government of Bangladesh in developing appropriate policy instruments and translating existing policies into legislation, rules, guidelines and merit-based decisions. CREL supports government efforts to ensure natural resource management policies articulate sound principles to provide clear guidance on linking climate-resilient natural resource conservation approaches to sustainable livelihoods, ensuring local communities are able to share responsibilities for ecosystem conservation efforts with government.

Stakeholders

- Ministry of Environment and Forests
- Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
- Ministry of Land
- Forest Department
- Department of Environment
- Department of Fisheries
- Union Parishads
- District Administrations
- Co-management organizations
- Community-based wetland organizations
- Ecologically critical area committees

Forest Protected Areas

Historical Legacy

- Co-management for conservation piloted in 1997 by Government of Bangladesh for natural resource governance partnerships between government and communities
- Social Forestry Rules '04, Forest Co-Management Order '09, 50% revenue sharing guidelines from eco-tourism entry fee served as basis of co-management
- Forest Department established co-management organizations in 25 protected areas

Project Achievements

- Supporting development of Protected Area Management Rules 2016 under Wildlife Conservation and Security Act '12.
- Draft rules 2016 is a comprehensive framework for benefit sharing between government and communities from parking fees, non-timber forest products, donations, potential payments for ecosystem services, compensation for community-based patrol services

- Proposed improved operations of protected area revenue collection for natural resource management
- Proposing legal basis for revenue sharing from the Sundarbans and co-management membership of traditional resource groups

Future Pathways

- Complete endorsement of the Rules '16 from relevant ministries including Finance and Law
- Increase capacity of co-management bodies to sustain activities through payments for ecosystem services and other financing mechanisms
- Detailed guidance of public-private partnership policy for co-management organizations in support of conservation financing

Ecologically Critical Areas

Historical Legacy

- Ministry of Environment and Forests and Department of Environment endeavor to protect biodiversity habitats, restore degraded ecosystems and promote climate adaptation in ecologically critical areas under Environmental Conservation and Security Act '95 and Rules '97
- Government of Bangladesh focuses on project-based conservation and resource user livelihood development in selected areas
- Government recognized requirement for legal instrument to operationalize groups for better coordination with stakeholders

Project Achievements

- Facilitating Department of Environment's efforts to approve the draft ECA Rules 2016 to apply to all ecologically critical areas (ECA)
- Providing a legal institutional basis to operationalize effective ECAs
- Strengthening local government's interest in ECAs

Future Pathways

- Establish ECA Management Coordination Committee to strengthen ECA framework under the ECA Rules '16
- Ensuring rights of village conservation groups to conserve biodiversity and play a role in decisions



Wetlands

Historical Legacy

- Wetland management has a long history of local successes, lessons in community-based conservation and use of aquatic resources including fisheries
- Many national projects recognize the need to move away from traditional wetland leasing practices towards conservation-focused endeavors
- Legislative reform envisaged primarily with Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Project Achievements

- Preparing inclusive framework for wetland leasing and management to build ecosystem resilience
- Taking a multi-pronged approach to reform relevant policies that draw on historical lessons and challenges
- Supporting multi-agency efforts for the recognition and expansion of permanent wetland sanctuaries and establishing long-term local use rights to water bodies

Future Pathways

- Expand guiding and legal frameworks for wetland co-management and permanent sanctuaries
- Establish a secured system of governance with reservation of critical wetlands as permanent sanctuaries and for sustainable use by community organizations
- Harmonizing land, fisheries and environmental policies

Local Government Institutions

Historical Legacy

- Local government institutions, known as Union Parishads, are institutional basis for democratic demand-led local development and service provision
- Government of Bangladesh decentralization and devolution reflected in forming Upazila and Union Council Standing Committees, established information service centers and creation of Disaster Management Information Centers

Project Achievements

- Facilitating role of local governments in co-management of biologically significant areas and in addressing climate change-adapted community development
- Facilitating local vulnerability and adaptation analyses, planning and use of climate change information in local plans
- Assisting with implementation and adoption of provision for inclusion of community bodies into local government standing committees
- Increasing awareness on climate resilience and enforcement of environmental regulations

Future Pathways

- Enhancing interaction and understanding between local administration and co-management bodies including community organizations
- Enlistment of co-management members into climate change and climate variability response networks
- Regular allocation and implementation of climate sensitive local plans