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Final Report

**Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor
A Review**

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Acronyms

BELA	Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association
CBFM	Community Based Fisheries Management
CCC	Central Co-management Committee
CNRS	Centre for Natural Resource Studies – A local partner NGO
DC	Deputy Commissioner
ECAs	Ecologically Critical Areas
ERA	Efforts for Rural Advancement – A local partner NGO
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HHBP	Household Business Plans
IC	Inter-Cooperation
IGA	Income Generation Activity
IUCN-B	International Union for Conservation of Nature, Bangladesh Country Office
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
MACH	Management of Aquatic Ecosystems through Community Husbandry
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PSMU	Programme Support and Management Unit
PRMP	Participatory Resource Management Planning
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
SCM	Social Capital Management
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TH	Tanguar Haor
THMC	Tanguar Haor Management Committee
UCC	Union Co-management Committee
UC	Union Council
UP	Upazilla Parishad
VCC	Village Co-management Committee
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding

Executive Summary

A review of the project “Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor” was undertaken during the month of June 2011 to consolidate the learnings of the present stage and recommend the major thrusts for the next phase. Major objective of the review were to assess the achievements of present phase, deliver elements for decision making towards a possible future phase(s), and make recommendations for the strategic orientations as well as for planning.

Overall the project has achieved considerable success, establishing a strong institutional base for community to participate in the co-management of Tanguar Haor (TH) resource, especially since it started from scratch. Social Capital Management has strengthened the community financially besides quickly paving a way forward for micro-enterprises and meeting the consumption credit needs of the community, and for establishing a corpus. The project has boldly begun experimenting with legal fish harvesting, with active support of the government and its law enforcement machinery, through a variety of modalities including benefit sharing formula, fishing in designated perennial beels, legal licenses and permits to individual fishers, and establishing fish and bird sanctuaries. This is despite local elites actively encouraging of local people to poach rather than seek license. Local elite include fish traders and ex lease holders, some of whom have got elected in the local government.

Concerns remain with respect to the following. Law enforcement machinery has to be strengthened, acceptance rate of legal permit has to go up, modalities have to be continuously evolved in a learning by doing approach so as to protect the ecological resources and to counter the forces, linkages have to be established with the Union Council and Upazilla Parishads, and wider network has to be established with other such projects, and one would expect even greater support from the nodal Ministry for this project, as to see a way forward to institutionalization and formalization in the long run.

Elements for future design, taking into account other co-management models, and aiming for establishing sustainability and then an exit strategy, would be:

- Deepen people’s institutions and processes so as to engage community members in multiple activities beyond savings and credit, especially in resource management.
- Continuously evolve fishing and other natural resource harvest modalities in order to reach higher levels of acceptance in the community, and based on this field practice, develop framework for Co-Management including fish harvesting modalities, access rights, legal enforcement, etc. Resource management modalities should be extended to other resources especially reeds and swamp forests.
- Work more intensively on alternate non-farm livelihoods and on value chains of agriculture and fisheries - Hands-on market linked livelihoods promotion assisting the community in value chain of one or two selected sectors.

- Generate adequate revenues for the TH management organization and enhance financial sustainability.
- Build management capacity at all levels so that it is equipped to make decisions regarding the balance between economy and environment and regarding moving the community from dependence to interdependence.
- Ensure much greater engagement with the government, in setting up a government structure with staffing at district and UC levels;

1. Project Context and Concept

Tanguar Haor is one of the 12 officially declared ecologically critical areas (ECAs) which include one other haor, Hakaluki. This is a place for migratory birds and a habitat for mother fish (they lay eggs here), as well as it is part of a larger haor basin across which the mother fish travel. This also serves as a retention system to prevent floods (however, due to siltation, this is threatened).

Until 2000 when Tanguar Haor was declared a Ramsar Site, fish was harvested here under the leasing system as is the case with the other haors in the country. It is commonly argued that one should move away from the over exploitative leasing system (which encourages “catch the last fish” practice) towards a community based management system where people could earn their livelihoods and at the same time they become responsible fishers and protectors of the haor eco-system. However, the local community dependent on it for its livelihood has to face local elites including fish traders and ex-lease holders who work toward maximising profit. National government, represented by MoEF, is committed to Ramsar convention and is looking to develop a management model based on wise use principles. SDC is keen to support an effort that would preserve the environment and support livelihoods of vulnerable and poor population of Tanguar Haor (TH), in alignment with its country policy.

Vision goal of the project is the following. “A co-management system is established and functional for conservation, stabilisation and sustainable use of the natural resources of Tanguar Haor that generates opportunities for significant improvements in the livelihoods of rural communities and contributes to the costs incurred by management.”

2. Objectives and Methodology of the Review

A review was undertaken during the month of June 2011 with a major objective to assess the achievements of present phase, deliver elements for decision making towards a possible future phase(s), and make recommendations for the strategic orientations as well as for planning. It was a short visit, allowing the consultant about four days of interaction with TH community, local government and district administration (from the noon of 21st June to noon of 24th). He met with all the partners, SDC officials, bilateral and multilateral agencies and the Ministry officials. However there were some constraints. The area was flooded and consultant moved by and stayed on the speedboat. The consultant couldn't meet any local government representative from Union Council or Upazilla Parishad as everyone was engaged in an election campaign (except having had a rushed meeting with one person, it lasted 20 minutes). In the debriefing meeting, he could only meet with IUCN, IC and BELA, as heads of CNRS and ERA couldn't be present.

3. Assessment of Achievements of the Present Phase

There are 12 key issues that need to be looked into. We will take each of them in turn.

Assessment of Project Delivery

An assessment of the project outputs is given below covering salient points. Please find a more detailed review of the outputs in Annexure 3.

Output 1.1: Communities are mobilised, organised and are willing towards participating in co-management of TH resources.

The strategy to organize people around saving and credit has largely been successful inasmuch as it mobilized a majority of poor population, including women; gave them voice; strengthened empowering processes through transparency of records; and built representational tiers above successively¹. One adult member of the household comes in as a member in a professional group of his or her choice, which is led and managed by a secretary. Rarely both husband and wife join a group. Nine people, five professional secretaries and four other office bearers, President, Secretary, Office Secretary and Treasurer, are elected to VCC (Village Co-Management Committee), for a year. They are aggregated at union level (Union Co-Management Committee), and then into a single apex body for the entire wetland area covered by Tanguar Haor (Central Co-Management Committee).

Of these, UCC is the real decision making body, where all applications for loan as well as for fishing license and permit, for example, are processed. It appears that the system at the VCC and UCC levels is well established. Interaction with staff revealed that meetings are held regularly, records are maintained including the passbook, and staff meetings are held weekly².

All indicators for mobilization, including women's participation in leadership and village level social capital target, are achieved, most in fact overachieved, except those of village and household coverage which are marginally below the target set for December 2011 (76 against 88 villages, 58 percent as opposed to 60 percent HH coverage). This strategy has resulted in building up community's own financial resource pool from which loans are given for livelihoods, etc., and is setting up a base for financial sustainability. The institutions have begun paying the remuneration of the CFs and are earning revenue through other means as well, such as community's share in the fish sale revenue and income from community boats rented to the magistrate. This is interesting and unique as micro-capital grants are common in other co-management models (say, UNDP).

Output-1.2: Selected communities are involved with different livelihood options and IGAs.

Lending from corpus (accumulated at CCC level) is a major strategy to promote income generation activities. Credit is helping them take up skill or asset based income generation in a whole host of

¹ Ostensibly they were organized under the banner of professions (*pesha* in Bengali). Five professions are chosen – fisheries, agriculture, livestock, small business, and handicrafts. However, there were some 40% households (2282 out of 5332) that haven't yet chosen any profession!

² During the village visits one saw the chart clearly stating every individual's saving, subscription, and loan outstanding.

micro-enterprises such as boat repair, petty shops, beef fattening, and buying a boat to ply people or commodities. The resulting average daily income from micro-enterprises is far higher than what a person would make in fishing (Tk 300 to Tk 900 in comparison to Tk 80 in Daitya and Tk 150 in Lar Borshi), making these an economically attractive proposition. Promoting micro-enterprises will instill a sense of confidence among the community that is used to the lower end of a value chain and lower margins.

There are many other ways that project is adopting to enhance incomes such as training, agriculture extension (improved practices and better rice variety), and getting rice seed through a dealership (from agriculture department to CCC). IC conducted a value chain study on fisheries and 48 mandays of ToT were logged. Yet, consultant got the impression that perhaps not enough is being done to enhance productivity or profitability in various livelihoods.

Output 2.1: An interim governance mechanism for co-management of TH agreed and formed

Project Steering Committee at the national level provides the enabling policy environment. It is under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to MoEF, the nodal ministry for the Ramsar secretariat and Ecologically Critical Areas. PSC has representatives from various ministries (agriculture, fisheries, flood and disaster management, revenue). DC of Sunamganj has recently joined as a member. Data regarding its frequency since the beginning of the project is awaited from IUCN but an analysis of the last three meetings (since August, 2010) reveals there are many positives with regard to increasing availability of law enforcement machinery at TH, availability of VGF during the fishing ban period to poor fisher families, and periodic visits of NPD to TH. There are however concerns regarding slow responses from other ministries and departments. Ministry of Home has to allocate funds for better vigilance of the law enforcing authority, for example. There is a delay in getting TH boundary delineation approved from Land Ministry, as there are delays from Ministry of Finance. These are not unusual, though, in Bangladesh bureaucracy. MoEF's commitment to Ramsar convention is intact and they are happy with the project's progress, as revealed in several of consultant's interactions with them, and they wish to support it in future too. They have requested IUCN to provide technical support in developing a framework for co-management of natural resources in the country, based on its TH experience. Please see annexure 5 for more details on PSC decisions.

THMC headed by Deputy Commissioner is the most crucial management structure that has been promoting co-management of Tanguar Haor resource. There are district level officers including those representing law enforcement machinery. Recently Upazilla officers too have been inducted. Local government (Upazilla and Union Council) and community institutions are represented. Frequency of THMC meeting has been very high and a quick review of the decisions made (sample of the last four meeting) reveals great degree of work in the following areas: (i) law enforcement, issuing orders for functioning of magistrate-ansar system; (ii) establishing a license regime for regulated fishing and overseeing the process of bidding; (iii) allocating resources from existing schemes of various government departments for the purposes of poverty alleviation, ecosystem restoration, and prevention of disaster and so on. Some of the other notable features are: (i) Lower

level machinery such as UNO's are involved in project activities such as issuing of licenses; (ii) magistrates hold meetings with UCC leaders within TH. Many other decisions are reflected in other sections of the report. A follow up is often necessary, and is undertaken by PSMU of IUCN and local NGO partners. Role of local government has not emerged as significant as yet. An important point to note is that the leadership of THMC is in the hands of the DC. S/he is charged with multifarious responsibilities drawing him to number of directions. And as is true in south Asian bureaucracy, often his or her own personality and interest in a subject on the one hand, and official priority on the other would dictate the pro-action or inaction in bodies such as THMC. Given this, induction of DC in national PSC would to an extent provide a buffer. Please see Annexure 6 for a matrix on various THMC decisions.

Output 2.2 Tanguar Haor ecosystem integrity improved.

The Management Plan of the TH ecosystem³, although not termed as such, consists of the following, *inter alia*, (i) Regulated Fishing: Commercial and Non-Commercial; (ii) Controlling Illegal Fishing, and (iii) Eco System Restoration.

Regulated Fishing. Benefit sharing formula has been notified in a central government gazette⁴. Commercial fishing harvest (CFH) was taken up in 14 perennial *beels* by fishermen groups led by respective VCC leaders. Fishermen earned 34 per cent share of the revenue (as opposed to 40 per cent). Per fisher income in the month of March was Tk 1000. Total 8,759 person-days fishermen took part in the CFH and caught fishes weighing 44,591 kg with traditional gears. There has been a good income for fishers as well as for the community organization. Similarly the license and permit fee or charges are established for a range of fishing gears for non-commercial fishing. Most significant is the beel based *chai*. It was taken up on 25 spots (18 non-commercial). Average individual income per season was Tk 23,000 and per day Tk 790. Our assessment is that this is a great start and we saw in the community that acceptance is building up, even if gradually.

Controlling Illegal Fishing. Establishment of a magistrate and ansar system has gone through its ups and downs, but is becoming stronger slowly. There are several positive movements. Magistrate holds a weekly meeting with UCC and CCC leaders at LGED guesthouse within the TH rather than at a far off place from TH (Takerghat Guesthouse). Ansars jointly patrol with community guards, legitimizing the latter. They rent a boat given by UCC. Magistrate can get seized boats destroyed. To facilitate telephonic communication with UNOs, Ansar Adjutant and police officers, five cell phones have been given to the Magistrate and PCs⁵. All these decisions were taken at THMC. However the current arrangements are far from sufficient given TH's open access and vast area,

³ Apparently there is a management plan with IUCN, developed with NORAD's support way back in year 2000.

⁴ Benefit sharing formulae for fisheries is 40Fisher:36 Organisation: 24 Government; and for forest, it is 60 Beneficiary:25, Organisation:15, Government.

⁵ 21st THMC meeting held on 27th Feb 2011.

and the hold of ex-leaseholders on the population and the latter's economic dependence on the former. There continues to be an issue of inadequate infrastructure with the magistrate demanding a speed boat for swift movement over the large area of TH. Ministry is inclined to request SDC for additional funds, while it might agree to put up the cost of petrol and maintenance. So far there hasn't been much discussion on involving local government (UC, and UP) in controlling illegal fishing.

There are several activities undertaken for *Eco System Restoration*, including establishment of five fish and two bird sanctuaries; fish nurseries; plantation of large number of Hizal and Karach saplings; and restoration of reed land through plantation of 35,000 traditional reeds locally known as 'Nol'. However the impact of these activities is not known nor detailed out in reports. In absence of a master plan of some sort, it is hard to estimate what might have to be done more. It would be important to push the delineation of TH boundary with the Ministry of Land.

Output-2.3: Community based participatory monitoring and evaluation system developed.

This output requires that community developed its own capacity to monitor and evaluate the performance of the project. PRMP and HHBP are the first tools that community is being taught for planning its activities. The tools are being used, in consultant's judgment, to collect data for credit needs assessment for specific professions, and to an extent for making fish re-stocking and management plans (see tables 3 and 4 in PRMP). It is early to say though that the community has taken decisions on the basis of these plans. This data when compiled could be a good information base for UCC and CCC to plan, and they could also share it with the UC and UP representatives for better resource management.

A performance-based monitoring and evaluation tool for VCCs being field tested. It is good to see the biodiversity related impact in the results of the wildlife survey, although a comparison with a baseline would have been more useful. This has focused on migratory birds, status of habitat etc. of a total of 12 *beels* with aquatic and terrestrial area (*kanda* and village area).

Output-3.1: Knowledge Management System is working but could be better used. The knowledge management system is being developed so that we could record data and best practices for future use. From personal experience, consultant would aver that data, information or reports were made readily available whether the queries pertained to social capital, manuals of training, or GIS based data on land etc. Data is accessed by the staff (esp. SCM data and leadership training material). GIS data could be used for better and more detailed resource planning by staff. Documentation of good practices is being done in operational reports, but it is not in a shape that could be shared with other donors or government for policy formulation.

Output 3.2 National and regional platforms established to support Co-management of TH.

SPO has made a large number of presentations at national and international forums. A fair amount of work has been done to spread awareness of the project among civil society of Sunamganj and

apparently in Dhaka. In fact, consultant couldn't meet any NGOs active in conservation space at the national level to make an assessment. But there was a distinct hint that people in the NGO sector didn't really know what was going on in TH, although they have visited the area⁶. What exactly is the thrust of the IUCN or SDC's current work wasn't apparent. A formal platform may not be necessary or possible, except by the government, but there could be a greater and more pro-active effort to share the experiences of TH co-management with other stakeholders, including civil society and bilateral and multilateral agencies, in collaboration with MoEF.

Enhancement in Community's Capacity to Take Part in Sustainable Co-Management

The institution building work is quite remarkable, especially given the fact that it started from scratch, and that it is being done among a migrant community vulnerable due to flash floods, and in a remote area with little public facilities.

An important concern is that the lower and middle cadres of the local partner organizations are mostly busy with SCM due to heavy data and record management load. It leaves them little time for other activities. Please see annexure 2.1 on roles and responsibilities.

Under this strategy, the institutional structures are built for a single purpose, namely, social capital management (as it appeared to the consultant during his short visit). This is not to say that the leaders haven't developed capacity. There is evidence, for example, of CCC President articulating a demand, at a THMC meeting, a coordinated effort by police, ansars, community members and magistrate on duty⁷. Question is to what extent were the institutions and leaders involved in driving the Co-Management System that the project developed? Features of the system

Co-Management System especially the fish harvesting modalities includes the following.

- (i) Closed season: April 15 to June 15;
- (ii) Closed area: Fishing restriction around Fishery sanctuary (60%);
- (iii) Gear restriction: Monofilament gill net;
- (iv) Habitat restoration: Fish, swamp forest;
- (v) Sanctuary Approaches: Fish sanctuary, bird sanctuaries;
- (vi) Commercial Fish Harvest Modality: (a) Collective fishing in x number of perennial *beels* (led by fishermen leaders of respective VCCs), x=14 during 2010-11; (b) Allocation of x perennial *beels* to traditional fishermen of y villages for commercial *katha* fishing, x=7, y=5 during 2010-11; and
- (vii) Non-Commercial Fish Harvest Modality: One, Beel based Chai that fishermen leaders bid and win. Fishing is done by a large group (average size 8). 33 spots were chosen although bidding money was deposited only for 25 beel spots. And Two, license and permit system for different fishing gear such as Lar and Daitta that individuals or small groups undertake. These are given in different seasons of the year with different lengths of time. Besides, there are time restrictions, often the nighttime fishing is not allowed. Those with permit have to carry it on their persons while fishing and show to the ansar or community guards, when asked.

⁶ As Pariboran district Head told us.

⁷ THMC meeting (21st) held on 27 February 2011. Minutes translated and compiled by IUCN, sent to Consultant.

are given in the text and below we present it in form of a table for enhancing clarity to the reader.

1.Closed season	2.Closed area	3.Gear restriction	4.Habitat restoration	5.Sanctuary Approaches
April 15 to June 15	Fishing restriction around Fishery sanctuary (60%)	Monofilament gill net	Fish, swamp forest	Fish sanctuary, bird sanctuaries
6.Commercial Fish Harvest Modality in Dry Season		7.Non-Commercial Fish Harvest Modality		
Collective fishing in perennial beels	Commercial katha fishing in beels by traditional fishermen	License and permit system for different fishing gear such as Lar and Daitta in wet and dry seasons of the year	Beel based Chai that fishermen leaders bid and win	

The consultant didn't hear any evidence that these institutions (VCC or UCC) are being used as forums for discussing issues related to license and permit, or poaching. Nor could he infer from discussions that any office bearer of the VCC or a professional group's secretary was charged with this responsibility⁸. It appears that the decisions, such as rates of permits, have been handed down from top and UCC leaders don't have sufficient arguments to convince the people who are protesting against some of these decisions⁹. Perhaps it is too early to expect the process to be so democratic as to evolve the decisions bottom up.

In a data supplied in operational report IV, a fisherman got mere Tk 1000 for a month of fishing. A study needs to be conducted to assess the incomes that illegal fishers make in order to know the economic incentives for poaching in comparison with those who buy a license and legally fish. The project doesn't have this data currently. Based on this, recommendations must be made to the MoEF and THMC with regard to the rates for license and permit as well as benefit sharing formula.

Lastly, the VCCs and UCCs are being promoted in isolation, without any apparent horizontal linkage with the local government structures such as Union Council (UC) and Upazilla Parishad (UP), even as chairmen of the four Union Councils are members of the THMC^{10, 11}. Absence of a direct

⁸ The secretaries in the professional groups are charged with the responsibility to recover the loan.

⁹ A meeting of UCC leaders with several villagers, mostly youth, in south Sreepur Union.

¹⁰ Operational Report III, May – October 2010. Page 18. IUCN

collaborative and negotiating process or a structural link between the two makes for an inherent weakness and un-sustainability that must be looked into.

In sum, while the institutions are built on a strong foundation, they ought to become multi-purpose organizations, should evolve processes for conflict resolution around resource harvesting, and must build links with local government.

Before we end this section, we must commend the efforts of the project partners in re-activating interest and enthusiasm among the leaders after the unfortunate attack on the magistrate and subsequent demoralizing arrest of some 25 people including the CCC and UCC leaders.

How inclusive are the local institutions of the Poor?

Among several strengths in the strategy of institution building, we note that - (i) there has been high inclusion (68 per cent coverage which needs to go up); (ii) there has been a high degree of transparency and accountability vis-à-vis sharing of data; and (iii) a good leadership has come up at UCC and CCC levels (example: Monir of Uttar Sripur).

A specific example of how SCM helps the poor is in order here. Availability of small loan of Taka 3000 to almost everyone helps in two ways: (i) family can meet consumption needs; and (ii) repayment of smaller loan qualifies a borrower to apply for a larger one¹². Almost two third of members have received financial assistance in this manner (64% according to 4th Operational Report). Most of those who haven't are new members.

There are, however, some concerns regarding financial inequity. The skewed credit pattern of a few people borrowing large amounts and a large number of people small amounts¹³, may have the potential of creating some disaffection among the members, and possibly eroding the moral authority of the institution to impose wise use of the resource? This may be investigated and if found true, corrective steps must be taken.

Has the project identified alternative income generation activities and enhanced livelihoods options for the TH Community?

Credit is helping people take up skill or asset based income generation in a whole host of micro-enterprises such as boat repair, petty shops (paddy, beetle, groceries), beef fattening, and

¹¹ A bidder, who happened to be an existing Union Council Chairman, told us bluntly that *government's benefit sharing formula is an open invitation for poaching*, for it gives merely 40 per cent to the fisherman. If a fish trader or water lord buys from him, the poacher might get much more than that.

¹² An evidence of this I saw in Bhoraghat village; Nyoti Burman borrowed Tk 10000 to invest Tk 5000 each in a boat and hooks.

¹³ A few large borrowers, numbering 318, borrow up to Tk 63,000 (some of them office bearers, as seen in Joyshree village) while a large number (4485) have borrowed nothing or small amounts.

purchasing a boat to ply people or commodities. The resulting average daily income from micro-enterprises is far higher than what a person would make in fishing, making these an economically attractive proposition ((Tk 300 to Tk 900 versus Tk 80 in Daitya and Tk 150 in Lar Borshi).

Project has intervened in agriculture extension but this apparently is not leading to substantial increase in farm margins. If a livelihoods strategy has to aim at creating an alternate substantial source of income for the vulnerable households of TH, reducing their dependence on the resource therein, it cannot mainly be credit driven. It could include value chains and think of non-farm activities such as handicrafts (but more needs to be explored).

How are local power relations and conflicts managed?

Several modalities of fish harvest have been designed for commercial and non-commercial harvesting, approved by the government. Acceptance is low, even though one can say there is much opposition from local elite. We cite a case of only 20 percent of the users of a specific gear opting to buy a license and majority not choosing to say. Question to consider is whether the *license fee is proving to be a high entry barrier and benefit share too low (actually 34% not 40%) for those legitimately wanting to fish with license, and about the efficacy of the law enforcement of machinery.* Please see annexure 3 (under output 2.2). We aren't sure whether UCC leaders are able to share the rules of the game and convince the people. IUCN and partners have to collect data and understand the patterns (if they have it, consultant didn't have access). They need to find out how many fisher HHs are using which type of gear, and against this, how many actually bought the license. This will give them ratio of "converts." This data if collected village wise, could be profitably used by VCC and UCC leaders to refine their strategies to target and mobilize specific households in favour of new modalities. In addition there are issues with imposing license fee even for the fishing gear used for subsistence fishing such as *Tana Jaal*.

On the other hand, making the VCC leaders participate in the bid process for commercial harvesting has created new stakeholders in the responsible use of the resource. It does in a way blunt the edge of those not interested in sustainable management. Yet, by not bringing in UC and UP representatives in any of the community forums, the project is losing a potential instrument to manage the opposing forces better.

It would be useful to train local staff and VCC and UCC leaders in stakeholder mapping, conflict resolution and consensus building techniques. In future conflict between agriculture and fisheries is bound to arise too.

Role, Commitment and Ownership of GoB as a Major Stakeholder

GoB, through the mechanisms of PSC and THMC, have pushed many operational decisions and have made fish harvesting modalities, legal enforcement, and such other things a reality. It is possible therefore today to think that we can go forward and further evolve and deepen these processes and mechanisms, and work toward institutionalization.

As analysed earlier, deputy commissioner led THMC is playing three specific management functions: (i) Law Enforcement; (ii) Designing the rules of the game for regulated resource use; and (iii) Allocating additional resources for poverty alleviation, etc. The decisions of THMC are carried out by other departments such as forest and land, by police, and by UNO and other officers.

As a counterpart in co-management the community institutions have begun playing the following roles: (i) Law Enforcement related -- selection and deployment of community guards, weekly coordination meetings with magistrate; (ii) execution of the decisions related to regulated resource use (license and permit distribution); (iii) Local management of government aid such as the VGF programme. Local government is however missing in much of direct action.

One concern is that the rest of the departments such as fisheries haven't played an active role. The subcommittee of THMC consisting of representatives of forests, fisheries and agriculture extension hadn't submitted its report¹⁴. In fact what we heard in passing was that fisheries department officials felt they aren't being consulted enough. Would it be useful for IUCN to bring them in for technical consultation? At the central government level too, lack of active involvement of some other departments and ministries is a worry (although the consultant didn't meet them, one can see the pattern in the delays in their response, as recorded in the PSC minutes).

The partners have to ensure the interim mechanisms (THMC, PSC) become long lasting, policy enabled, and structurally embedded in the government.

GoB Policy and Practice of Haor Management vis-à-vis Ramsar

According to wise use principles, the GoB policy is to promote conservation on the one hand, and to ensure that the people earn their livelihoods on the other without hurting the environment.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the national nodal ministry, the MoEF has shown exemplary commitment to Ramsar convention by providing support to this project, they are happy with the results and are keen to build on its lessons to develop a framework for Co-management of Natural Resources for the whole country. Yet, it should initiative measures to allocate greater resources and staffing, and set up a separate institution to promote co-management. Government ought to set up a forum where all relevant donors and government agencies pool their experience and develop a policy framework for co-management of natural resources, with an emphasis on ecologically critical areas (Tanguar Haor being one of them).

Coordination among the partners of the project

Partners' Roles and Orientation. IUCN has played its part in project integration and leadership. It has established a strong network and liaison with a range of stakeholders including civil society and media in Sunamganj. It has put in a huge energy on resource management and governance. Community level implementation is handled by CNRS and ERA, both of whom have a strong field

¹⁴ Operational Report IV, November 2010 – May 2011. Page 19. IUCN.

presence and a committed, hardworking staff. CNRS is known for pioneering work in community based natural resource management and its field staff have pushed establishment of fish harvest modalities. ERA team has a strong field orientation and works closely with all levels of village institutions and leadership. These agencies have spent considerable staff time on social capital management. IC has assisted in training in technical aspects and in carrying out a study of value chain and in assisting with planning and coordination of events. BELA has provided crucial legal support in defining sanctuaries and khas lands. All agencies must be complemented for working in this remote area and harsh conditions. Perhaps because of this, staff turnover seems to be a major issue. All organizations have lost staff on continual basis.

Coordination among partners: The project management is based on partnership. Even though the roles are well defined, pressure of special situation brought some partners especially IUCN into a leadership role to rescue village leaders. IUCN also enjoys close relationship with the ministry, due to its skills, but also due to their international watchdog role on Ramsar convention. There is however some expectation regarding who should have played the lead role or how could it have been shared among partners. This needs to be clarified during the next phase.

Financial adequacy. As a lead implementation organization, the leadership of IUCN feels that financial support (namely, institutional overheads) isn't concomitant with the effort being put in by the organization, especially in the area of resource management and law enforcement. In fact it is rather inadequate. The consultant feels that the project is not able to use the leadership resources available with the partner organizations, namely CNRS, BELA and IC. This however may not be the function only of financial support to the respective organizations. The consultant's guess is that mismatch in roles and/or expectations played its part too.

Next Phase(s): When could the stakeholders take complete responsibility for the interventions?

Whereas some of the co-management issues are getting resolved, one notices many initiatives are in an experimentation mode and solutions need to be further nuanced. As we look into the future, many design issues come to the mind. What would be the fish harvest modalities and benefit sharing ratios so that license buying rate reaches desirable levels and poaching percentage is down, and yet revenues to the community institutions are substantial? Which processes would enable existing community institutions to become an arbiter in resource management conflicts? How to educate or how much to compensate the community for adopting ecological restoration or conservation measures in the TH? If the alternate income generation activities are taken up for the poor and vulnerable community, how does one elicit government's interest in it, for this will most certainly require substantial investment? How to scientifically decide what is going to be a sustainable yield of fish population? Should one or should one not initiate eco-tourism activities in partnership with private sector, and of what kind so it doesn't become another St Martin case? Finally, when does one formalize the institutional structure, staffing and the processes and procedures? Institution such as this must have adequate representation of the local community

dependent on TH, as well as of the government, while it should also have representation of the local government, so as to fully take along the local forces for or against sustainable development. Another question would be whether to have two organizations or one? A community organization such as the one referred to in an IUCN document, TH Development Organization, is important to give voice to the poor. Simultaneously, a management body with enough teeth, say a TH Conservation and Development Authority, must be established. Would the cost of running such institutions be funded out of the revenue from the resource harvest or would there be a need for government to continuously subsidize it¹⁵? How to monitor social, economic and ecological aspects to ensure that sustainability limits are understood and respected?

It appears that there is an absolute need to have a next phase, with duration of three years. Main components of this phase could be the following¹⁶:

- Evolve resource management modalities, having begun with fish, include other resources (use partners' experience)
- Support communities in organizing restoration of degraded areas or increasing supply of natural resources critical for income generation of conservation. Develop modalities for compensating communities and individuals for resource management measures (such as VGF during the two months when fish are breeding)
- Intensify the livelihoods programme to reduce dependency and enhance resilience of the local community (use partners' experience)
- Develop revenue generation plans (or business plans) to work towards financial sustainability while ensuring transparency and accountability in financial transactions (sale of fish, procurement of bamboo, etc.)
- Concomitantly evolve institutions with the capacity to plan, co-manage, and monitor resources, both on the community side, as well as on the government side.
- Codify and develop laws and procedures to institutionalize the current processes, and get them formalized into government guidelines and procedures, these would include resource modalities, zoning, law enforcement and eco-restoration measures (use partners' experience).
- Explore similar initiatives in Bangladesh – that would be able to provide ideas, models and examples of approaches to be taken, institutional and legal arrangements (names of donors is given elsewhere in the report).

¹⁶ some of the Peter Hilaire's suggestions are acknowledged here, since we find them relevant.

- Bring government line agencies and government services to the region, especially by reaching out to and interesting a broad range of donors in promoting the well being of TH communities previously isolated (didn't happen adequately so far in this phase).
- Starting from the existing network of interested institutions and scientists, build a monitoring and knowledge management system able to provide technical and scientific advice to MOEF and TH management on matters relevant to the maintenance of ecological processes and critical habitats. While IUCN is a repository for information in the first phase, a permanent home for both the information and the advisory body should be sought (this hasn't happened so far in this phase).

Factors affecting sustainability in the medium and long term

Sustainability in financial terms would be critical to establish, hence it is important to start looking at a revenue model. Projections, made by some people, of the revenue from fish production are high (in crores of BDT) but realization has to happen¹⁷. Institutional sustainability would have to come in with government formalizing the interim governance structure and establishing and notifying in the gazette a body that could be named as TH Management Authority, while also simultaneously recognizing a community institution a TH Development Organisation, with both being able to co-opt local governments at Union and Upazilla level. A third would be economic sustainability which would require government investments in infrastructure (such as embankment and roads) and livelihoods, thereby reducing community's vulnerability and dependence on TH resources, and making them truly a stakeholder in its restoration.

Ensuring transparency and accountability of co-management mechanism

Currently the financial transactions are small in harvesting and selling fish but are likely to become big. Indications from the way SCM is being done, it appears a solid foundation is being laid and community will demand transparency in management.

Attracting other Development Partners and Harmonising with other projects

Most donors, particularly UNDP, Netherlands Embassy, USAID, and IFAD with whom consultant spent some time echoed that co-management is the way forward and features in their models are more or less present in SDC supported TH co-management project too. Degrees of emphasis change, though. Specifically, eco-tourism, eco awareness, and eco monitoring components, and the ties of community institutions with local government, it appeared to the consultant, are strong in the UNDP Coastal and Wetlands Biodiversity Management Project. USAID's MACH project established independent community organizations and got them registered. Netherlands Embassy's water management projects under National Water Policy seem to assign a strong role to people's institutions and government even signs leases agreements and MoUs with them.

¹⁷ Courtesy, Mr Jafar Siddiqui, former DC, Sunamganj, currently NPD, UNDP project, when he attended the briefing to the mission on 19th June 2011.

Broad Lessons from Other Co-Management Projects. Lessons useful for the Swiss TH project are: (i) Collaboration with the ministries and departments that would ensure support for anti-poverty measures, with the Land Ministry (Haors are under it), besides those that it is working with; (ii) Register the institutions; (iii) Empower the community economically with livelihood support; (iv) Examine a closer geographical management model (a more decentralized one) such as the BUG (Beel User Group) in the IFAD's Sunamganj project; (v) Community based organizations work with Union and Upazilla level bodies within ECA Coordination Committees.

4. Recommendations Regarding Elements of a Long Term Programme

Resource use has begun to be reversed only recently, from leasehold system to community control, and there is very stiff resistance. There must be a next phase in which government support is absolutely critical.

Let us once again give an analysis of the context. Given Bangladesh's special situation of severe poverty, environmental precariousness (floods and cyclones) and a potential disaster waiting to happen due to climate change (rising sea levels in this delta region), most aid agencies have adopted a framework of sustainable environmental and natural resource management coupled with poverty alleviation. Donors that seem to have taken lead in establishing co-management model, giving significant role to people, include UNDP, Netherlands Embassy, USAID, IFAD, and DfID (couldn't meet them). Government is aware of the situation. Prime Minister released the country's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in 2009. Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), the nodal ministry, has identified 12 ecologically critical areas (ECAs) where special effort is being made to protect environment, maintain biodiversity and so on. This includes TH, which is the only second RAMSAR site. While Ministry of Land is the nodal agency for management of all haors, TH management is with MoEF. They intend to develop a framework, moving forward from implementing projects. Below we present recommendations for the remaining period of the current phase and then for the next phase.

For the remainder of the current phase

- Strengthen resource management or governance.
 - Keep reviewing the modalities, license and permit fee, benefit sharing formula, etc., adopting *learning-by-doing* approach.
 - Work with government to ensure heavier deterrents against poaching, by providing gear for community guards; powers to impose fines on the spot; training to community guards; and strong logistical support for facilitating movement of ansars and magistrate.
 - Document and codify good practices ("what works") such as modalities, law enforcement procedures, roles and managerial functions, and the entitlements (especially this with

- regard to the community institutions) in a policy note followed by an operational manual to the MoEF.
- Establish a National Scientific body
 - Institution building.
 - Software data entry. IUCN needs to explore a database management system so that community people can also establish access this database in the remainder part of this phase, failing which, this could be done in the next phase.
 - Role of the government and local government.
 - A much stronger support from the government must come in the area of law enforcement both in the form of staff and equipment where donors are also expected to provide infrastructure to begin with (perhaps on cost sharing basis).
 - Local government – two possible ideas may be considered– (i) Co-option of UC and UP representatives into UCC and CCC respectively (with caveats); (ii) lobby for a sub-committee on sustainable management of TH in UC as well as UP's. Even though not much time is left in the current phase, it would be useful to approach them, since new members have just been returned in the recent elections.
 - Alternative livelihoods.
 - Explore value chain in fisheries and sale in remote markets (although there are at least eight local markets), acting further on IC's recommendations.
 - Partners' roles.
 - Use CNRS's experience in other co-management projects, if not already done.

For the Next Phase

SDC may consider the following recommendations.

- **Strengthen the Co-Management Plan**
 - Develop a Long Term Resource Management Plan that takes into account estimates of sustainable yield, potential of resource harvesting, and rationalizes the use through various modalities (here use experiences of other haor projects). The Plan could look into the following, *inter alia*, (i) Total mapping of potential fishing areas for different modalities (commercial and non-commercial) and linking these with potential users; (ii) Allocation for a longer period than one year, since a longer stake would incentivize measures that would sustain fish population; (iii) add other resources (forest and reeds) once there is comfort in working on fish harvesting modalities; (iv) measures to deal with siltation.

- Ensure that local Government has a stake in legalizing fish harvesting. Certain percent share (say 20%) of the revenue should be kept for Upazila Parishad and Union Council. This would enable village institutions to place their demands. For example, TH management sub-committee could be formed at these bodies, and it could have a representation of CCC and UCC. Local government can also allocate funds from their schemes. It should lead to better management of conflicts.
- Enhance interest of the private sector and urban youth through Eco-Tourism since the environment constituency needs some visible outcome; yet provide a limited access according to the carrying capacity of TH, so as to avoid the mistakes committed in St Martin Island¹⁸.
- Multipurpose Buildings to serve the community. TH is isolated in flood times and suffers from a lack of connectivity. It is in general poorly served by services. Multiple purpose building are the structures built on stilts, thus could survive the flood season, aimed to be places for coordination meetings between UCC and local government and other government officials, health care, community hall. These must be built on a cost sharing basis by government and SDC, and maintained by community institutions.

• **Deepening People’s Institutions for Sustainable Co-Management**

How the institutions could be strengthened and be made more sustainable?

- Review the experiences of the current phase and evolve new institutional modalities. Project could consider: (i) Community institutions become multi-purpose rather than a single purpose saving and credit institutions; (ii) Smaller groups be developed around professions or affinity, so that members could exercise mutual control. Group size to depend on complexity of activity or affinity; (iii) Promote separate women’s groups, as that would give them voice and allow them to raise demands for a different set of activities (such as drinking water, sanitation, schools, women’s employment); It would actually reinforce the foundation of the community organization rather than weaken; (iv) Separately identify the credit needs of Ultra Poor (given that this is a substantial number of landless).
- Community needs to be better informed. Sharing with the local community the rationale for allocation of beels, fishing spots, etc for various modalities and processes, in an open forum discussion in the community would greatly empower them and become stakeholders in change.

¹⁸ In a discussion on private sector participation in the project, with USAID, we learn that a potential “carrot” could be carbon market (CDM?) but the benefits were small. Another one could be eco-tourism, quoting Lava Chora National Park, Simanpol which recovers highest revenue, as much as Taka 3 million on Eid day. He also said a lower entry fee can endanger the ecologically critical areas. He quoted the entry fee to Sundarbans – which was as low as Taka 20, only recently revised upwards to Taka 50, as an example. Ministry shared that St Martin experienced surge in eco-tourists, teeming with as many as 10000 tourists a day, as opposed to carrying capacity of 800 to 1200 (their estimate).

- Bottom Up Decision making. A bottom up consultation process to resolve conflicts, in particular for resource use, would be greatly useful to gain greater community acceptance, and win over some more sections that are susceptible to the propaganda or influence. It is best done at the village level. A strong VCC taking ownership over the decisions would become a solid foundation to build the community institutional structure on.
 - Cooption of the representatives of Union Councils and Upazila Parishads. It would be important to bring in as co-opted members the representatives of the Union Councils into the UCCs. It would need to be a carefully designed process and the UC member have to be a non-voting member and number of such members cannot be allowed to have a majority.
 - Registration of the institutions. Co-management committees must be one registered body. If they are registered as cooperatives, they could sign MoUs with government or with the private sector. Experience in MACH project and that in water management projects supported by Dutch embassy supports this¹⁹. However whether they could continue to act as savings and credit institutions has to be checked out (perhaps BELA can).
- **Pro-active role of the government towards formalizing and establishing THMA and Policies Supporting Ramsar Convention**
 - Government should be lobbied to set up a Tanguar Haor Management Agency. To begin with it must depute its staff which is fully dedicated to the project, at the district level. At the least there should be a separate desk at Sunamganj for TH Management²⁰. SDC (Donor) could consider giving additional incentives for the officers (including the magistrate) who work in the project. Yet to avoid people joining the project for “wrong reasons,” one would recommend a proper selection procedure.
 - A layer of co-management mechanism would be useful at the Upazila level.
 - Government needs to be assisted in preparing a co-management framework for natural resources.
 - **Market Linked Alternative livelihoods while conserving the TH resource**

In future we recommend a much greater and stronger component on livelihoods, with the following specifics:

¹⁹ 16 registered wetland Resource Management Organizations (RMO) established as independent organizations, with in addition a number of local riparian tree, roadside tree and daha (depression) or Kum (scour hole) sub-committees. 13 “Federations of Resource User Groups” established many of which are now independent . MACH Project. USAID Bangladesh website http://www.usaid.gov/bd/programs/envIRON_successes.html

²⁰ This suggestion is based on a verbal discussion with the Ministry that kind of said okayed it, and with IUCN. This is regularly done in south Asian bureaucracies but one must check the practice in Bangladesh.

- Hands on Technical Assistance. In addition to training, staff must provide handholding support for the community till the benefits are realized. One could attempt Community School or Farmer Field School Model being adopted by IFAD and UNDP projects.
- Focus largely on one or two sectors. These two sectors could be fisheries and agriculture, livestock being the third. There is a large amount of agriculture land in private control, besides fallow land. For women, there would be scope also in value chain for fisheries, where they could be profitably employed in sorting, grading and packing. Fish could be marketed in upper class sections, since agriculture here doesn't use much chemical. We recommend a subsector study be conducted to determine it. Consultant would be happy to write a ToR for the same.
- Integrate with other departments to alleviate poverty and to create infrastructure. For example, embankments, a major demand, may be built by BWDB. Similarly roads and drinking water, and health care services are the other major demands in this impoverished community. Perhaps a holistic model of development may be looked at to integrate with health and education ministries, a key to which is strong community institutions that would make demand on the government. There is a caveat here. Integrating with several departments and focusing on too many sectors may mean too many goals and it may be important to ask the question as to what is the capacity of implementing partners to ensure outcomes in this remote inaccessible area where staff turnover has been high.
- Seek partnership and network with institutions and donors that have done livelihoods work.

• **Partners' Roles and Coordination**

Recommendations regarding partnership are as follows.

- We need to outline the roles required to be played in the next phase. Technical Support and Policy Advocacy are important roles to be played. On the other hand, implementation roles are equally critical, if not more.
- Implementation areas are resource co-management, livelihoods promotion, eco-restoration and conservation, microcredit, etc. Some of these areas are elaborated below.
- Microcredit. A usual approach to microcredit may not work here. The cost of providing the service would prove to be too high for this remote, inaccessible geography, and relatively poor community. Given that a strong local community institution is being established, we recommend engaging a specialist agency that could either lend in bulk or work closely with the savings and lending arm of the institution. This is already being done by an organization in Faridpur district and one can approach PKSF.
- Livelihoods. It would be useful to find an agency that can establish backward and forward linkages for a specific livelihoods or commodity.
- Legal advice and natural resource economics skill would be useful to have at hand, former in defining registration of institutions and in working out legal framework for resource harvest modalities.

- Partners' selection must be done in a manner that role requirements are matched with capacity. It might not be a bad idea to open up the selection process.

- **Vision of establishing an overall governance and management institution.**

Finally, given the consideration of exit strategy, the next phase should have a vision to formalize an organization structure with staffing. It may be called THMA, Tanguar Haor Management Authority. If we were to define the organogram of such an institution it would have staff to manage the following functions: Ecological Conservation Measures, Law and Order or Policing (against illegal fishing), Comprehensive Resource Management Planning, Sustainable livelihoods including sustainable agriculture, sustainable fishing, etc.; Monitoring, evaluation, and learning, supported by a MIS; Knowledge Management. Initially it might not need such a heavy staffing structure, though. Our effort is to outline the possible functions. Setting up of such an institution could be triggered by a successful demonstration of a range of actions that are recommended above.

5. Laying out the Design of the future Project

Design of the project is given below in brief, in line with the recommendations.

- As we think of an exit strategy, the next phase should focus on the following objectives:
 - Resource management modalities, extended to other resources especially reeds and swamp forests;
 - Work much more intensively on alternate non-farm livelihoods and on value chains of agriculture and fisheries;
 - Generating adequate revenues for the TH management organization and enhance financial sustainability.

All these are not of equal importance, and SDC and partners need to rank in terms of priority the three objectives, namely, protection of ecological resources, revenue generation for meeting TH management costs, and poverty alleviation.

- Project strategy and approach. Detailed recommendations have been given in the previous chapter. It will be critical to build management capacity at all levels to make decisions regarding the balance between “economy and environment”, and moving the community from dependence to interdependence. Without this there cannot be a transition to a more permanent organization (THMA). My suggestion would be that the lead organization and partners should closely mimic the future organizational form. It is possible to imagine then, that some of this organization merges into the ultimate one. Second and concomitant aspect of the approach would be to engage more closely with government and work towards setting up a government structure with staffing at district and lower levels.

- Phasing. There is likely to be a sequence of three relatively distinct sub-phases, (i) work on the fisheries modalities and law enforcement; (ii) livelihoods promotion and eco-restoration; and (iii) formalising organizational structure and working towards financial sustainability.
- Funding. There was an agreement on basic elements of co-management across donor agencies. UNDP and IFAD have projects in haor areas, latter in Sunamganj itself. It is possible to have a consortium to support this programme in future, given a huge interest and agreement. Ministry is keen to approach certain Scandinavian countries. Perhaps Ministry has to push the ball.

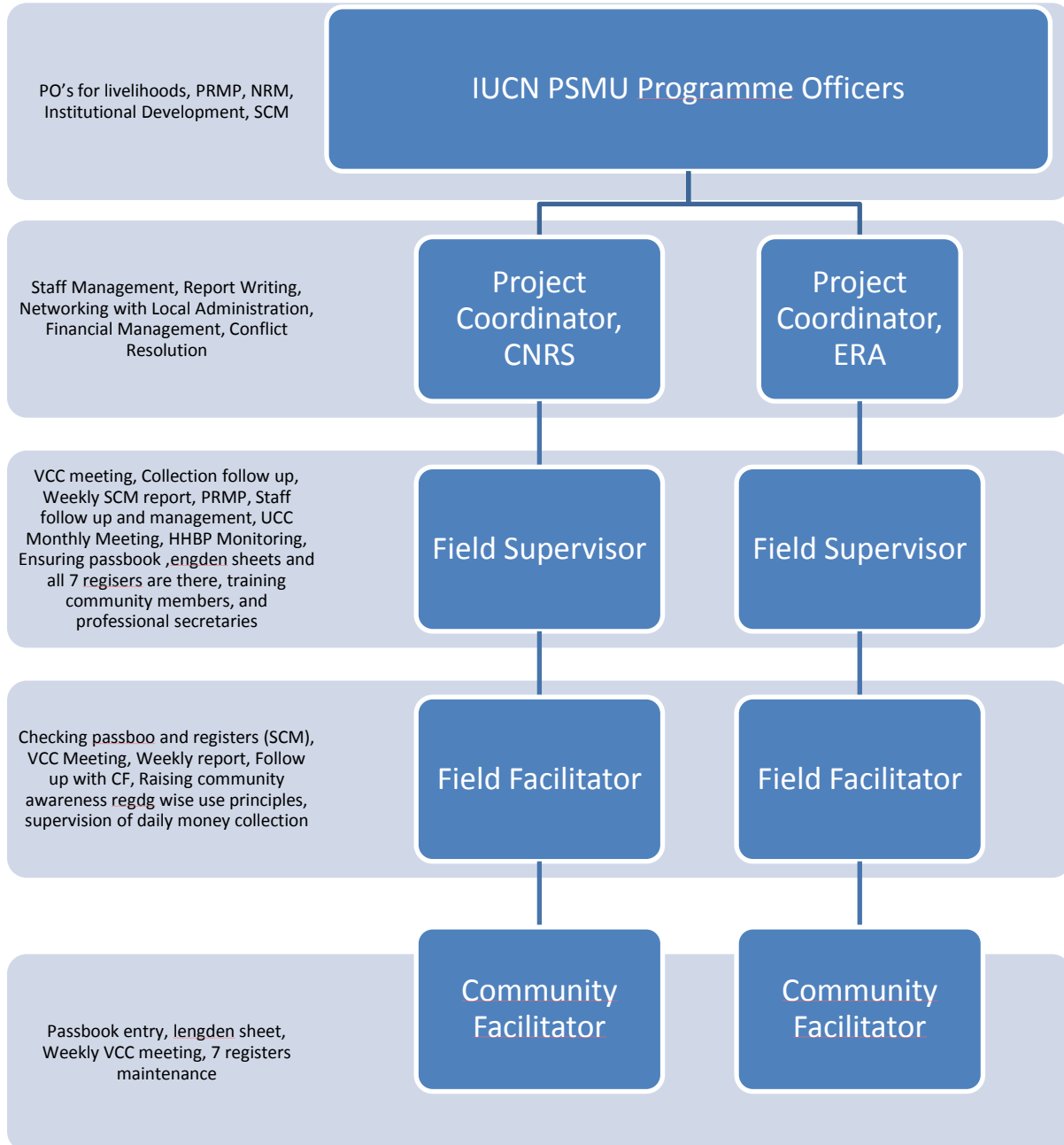
Annexures

Annexure 1. List of Documents Referred

1. Project Document
2. Project Implementation Plan
3. MoU between SDC and the Ministry of Environment & Forestry
4. Credit Proposal
5. Baseline study (Summary Report)
6. Progress Report (Operational Reports I to IV)
7. Govt policy documents related to climate change, haor/wetland.
8. Draft Final Report of Mid Term Review of the Preparatory Phase, Peter Hilaire, March 2008
9. Minutes of the meetings of TH Management Committee, and Project Steering Committee, translated into English, IUCN

Annexure 2. Roles and Responsibilities, Achievements and Difficulties as Stated by Staff (Bhabanipur Meeting)

Annexure 2.1 Organisational Chart and Roles and Responsibilities



Annexure 2.2. Achievements and Difficulties in the Project as Stated by Staff (Bhabanipur Meeting)		
<i>Staff designation</i>	<i>Achievements</i>	<i>Difficulties</i>
Community Facilitator, Field Facilitator, and Field Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular meetings - Regular preparatory meetings - Passbook, lengthened sheet and registers filled - UCC monthly meeting - weekly staff meeting - monthly license - Establishment of alternative income sources – boat, beef fattening and paddy business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulty in filling and carrying the lengden sheet - Maintenance of registers at CF level - Professional secretary not collecting - Looking for volunteers who can give time for VCC - Can't operate computers - Leaders not aware of their roles and responsibilities - Leaders not capable of accounting - Poor attendance at VCC - Failed to include all members
Project Coordinator (Implementation Partner – ERA/CNRS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff and office management - (regular) Meetings with community and staff - Networking with service providers and GO-NGO coordination - Finalization of resource benefit sharing - Community guards system set up - Organization established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report writing (English) - Data collection, analysis and documentation - Ownership of communities - Poaching of fish, plants and birds - Responsibility handover to the organization
IUCN Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization structure profession based - Fish harvest management modalities - Benefit sharing of commercial fishing - 73 VCCs as democratic institutions - 5 fish and 2 bird sanctuaries established - Specialized AIG loan modality - Model village concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fish poaching - Ownership (lack of) - Negative propaganda by socio-political forces - Real or skilled leaders not found - Lack of awareness among poor (training is construed as an attempt to convert them) - Low capacity of women leaders - Yet to fulfill the training requirement in AIG - Civil Society forum - National Scientific body - Registration of community institutions including the proposed THDO yet to happen

Annexure 3. Brief Review of the Outputs

In this annexure, an attempt is made to critically appraise the current phase and validate the strategies and approaches. We will assess delivery of each outcome in turn and the outputs contributing to that.

Outcome 1: Communities have capacity to negotiate, manage and use the natural resources for better livelihood.

Output 1.1: Communities in all villages are mobilised, organised and are willing towards participating in co-management of TH resources.

Going by sheer numbers, mobilization has been hugely successful. All indicators for mobilization, including women’s participation in leadership and village level social capital target, are achieved, most in fact overachieved, except those of village and household coverage which are marginally

below the target for December 2011 (76 against 88 villages, 58 percent as opposed to 60 percent HH coverage).

Profession-wise Break up of Members (male, female)					
	Female		Male		Total
Agriculture	221	23%	748	77%	969
Fishing	13	1%	1384	99%	1397
Handicrafts	100	96%	4	4%	104
Livestock	126	52%	115	48%	241
Small Business	279	82%	60	18%	339
Yet not chosen	308	14%	1974	86%	2282
Total TH	1047	20%	4285	80%	5332

The project adopted a strategy to organize households under the banner of professions (*pesha* in Bengali). Five professions are chosen – fisheries, agriculture, livestock, small business, and

handicrafts. One adult member of the household comes in as a member in a professional group of his or her choice, which is led and managed by a secretary. Rarely both husband and wife join a group. Nine people, five professional secretaries and four other office bearers, President, Secretary, Office Secretary and Treasurer, are elected to VCC (Village Co-Management Committee), for a year. They are aggregated at union level (Union Co-Management Committee), and then into a single apex body for the entire wetland area covered by Tanguar Haor (Central Co-Management Committee).

There is no organic linkage established with UC and UP. These local administration bodies are linked upstairs at the THMC not with the local community whose elected represented they are.

Organizationally, VCCs are active in managing saving and lending operations, but it is UCC that is the real decision making body, close enough to the people and large enough to give it economies of scale and high quality leadership. All applications for loan as well as for fishing license and permit, for example, are processed at UCC.

It appears that the system at the VCC and UCC levels is well established. Interaction with staff revealed that meetings are held regularly, records are maintained including the passbook, and staff meetings are held weekly. During the village visits one saw the chart clearly stating every individual's saving, subscription, and loan outstanding.

Table: Chart in the Village Meeting Showing Individual Details (Figures in BDT)

Sl. No.	Name	Total Savings	Subs-cription	Principal	Interest	Amount disbursed	Insurance
1	Sunil Das	1710	342	11,000	1650	11,000	110
2	Anu Das	1670	332	6,100	450	7,000	70

This kind of transparent recording and sharing empowers. They get to regularly know about the decisions being made and what is at stake, which is a first step to learning about how to make decisions.

There are, however, some concerns regarding the women's meek voice²¹, inadequate support of professional secretaries in collecting on time repayment, and lack of CF's ability to maintain registers.

About the community's willingness to co-manage TH resources, we will comment in more detail in the chapter on resource management. Suffice it to say here that the organizational units are playing an important role in legitimizing in the community the license and permit system for non-commercial fishing and tendering process for the commercial one, and in working with the magistrate to enforce law.

Output-1.2: Selected communities are involved with different livelihood options and IGAs.

Building of corpus is contributing towards financial sustainability of the institutions that have begun paying the remunerations of the CFs. There are other revenue earning efforts too such as community's share in the fish sale revenue and in bidding deposit, and renting of community boat to magistrate. This is very interesting and unique in comparison to some other co-management models where they give micro –capital grants (UNDP).

CCC is lending from this corpus to promote income generation activities as a major strategy.

²¹ The issues that agitate women – a road to take children to school, sanitation, drinking water -- are in sharp contrast to those that men worry about, as it came out in open in a "on the spot card based survey" that we conducted at Bakatala village of Uttar Bangshikunda union. Interestingly and sadly, though, women depend on their *swamis* (literally owners as they call their husbands) to address these ("what else are they for," they asked).

Credit is helping them take up skill or asset based income generation in a whole host of micro-enterprises such as boat repair, petty shops and (paddy, beetle, groceries), beef fattening, buying a boat to ply people or commodities. The resulting average daily income from micro-enterprises (Tk 300 to Tk 900) is far higher than what a person would make in fishing (Tk 80 in Daitya to Tk 150 in Lar Borshi), making these an economically attractive proposition. Promoting micro-enterprises will instill a sense of confidence among the community that is used to taking up activities at the low end of a value chain. At the same time availability of small loan of Taka 3000 to almost everyone helps in two ways: (i) family can meet consumption needs; and (ii) repayment of smaller loan qualifies a borrower to apply for a larger one (evidence of this I saw in Bhoraghat village; Nyoti Burman borrowed Tk 10000 to invest Tk 5000 each in a boat and hooks). Almost two third of members have received financial assistance in this manner (64% according to 4th Operational Report). Most of those who haven't seem to be new members, as evidenced in consultant's visits.

There is skewed credit pattern. A few large borrowers, numbering 318, borrow up to Tk 63,000 (some of them office bearers, as seen in Joyshree village) while a large number (4485) have borrowed nothing or small amounts. Is it creating some disaffection among the members, and possibly eroding the moral authority of the institution to impose wise use of the resource. Therefore this must be further investigated and if found to be true, corrective steps be taken.

Another concern is related to training. A total of 48 mandays of ToT indicates perhaps not enough is being done to enhance productivity or profitability in various livelihoods.

A third concern is related to mutual financial control within professional groups or village. Members could not recall accumulated savings of their own group or village. By extension, they wouldn't know the loans outstanding, I suppose. System of collection is such that the professional secretary is responsible and s/he hands it over to the VCC President (*sabhapati*). This doesn't seem to be working and CF has to go and recover the money from the individual borrower, several staff members expressed this concern at our interaction with implementation teams of the two partner NGOs at Bhabanipur. This needs a review that should lead to recommendations on strengthening of community processes.

A fourth concern is related to centralization of data input into the software at PSMU in Sunamganj while parallel maintenance of books at VCC and UCC level. While this is ok at this stage of the project, errors creep in since staff members have less opportunity to check and match village records with computer data.

Before we end this section, we must commend the efforts of the project partners in re-activating interest and enthusiasm among the leaders after the catastrophic incident of the unfortunate attack on the magistrate and subsequent arrest of some 25 people including the CCC and UCC leaders.

Outcome 2: A well functioning co-management body composed of the state, local government and communities manages the Tanguar Haor following the wise use principle of Ramsar

While assessing the deliverables of this outcome, we keep in mind the situation of water lords prevailing through the lease system before co-management was introduced.

Output 2.1: An interim governance mechanism for co-management of TH agreed and formed

Co-Management Structure and Roles Played by Stakeholders. THMC headed by Deputy Commissioner is the most crucial management structure that has been promoting co-management of Tanguar Haor resource. Members of the THMC give it heft since it includes law enforcing arms and agencies as well as revenue and other departments of the government, and representatives of the local government, backed as it is by the national government. Decisions fall in the following categories: These decisions give teeth to the co-management of TH.

Project Steering Committee at the national level provides the enabling policy environment. It is under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to MoEF, the nodal ministry for the Ramsar secretariat and Ecologically Critical Areas. PSC has representatives from various ministries (forests, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, revenue). DC of Sunamganj has recently joined as a member.

Below the district level, there is no formal mechanism of co-management, except various instructions for Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) to support co-management.

Qualitatively, we have the following observations:

- (i) High frequency of THMC meetings indicates huge interest on the part of the district administration in the project while it reflects the effort put in by IUCN and its partner agencies.
- (ii) A claim of the system's support to TH project was tested when a magistrate was attacked by the community. The issue was successfully resolved and the community felt reassured.
- (iii) The Ministry of Flood and Disaster Management allocated Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) to 2,500 fishermen families during the two month fish ban period. Significantly the UCCs are given the responsibility for managing this.
- (iv) Project Steering Committee's decisions during the last year have reinforced the impression that it sees the TH project as a success and is serious about mainstreaming the lessons of this project to develop a "Framework for Co-management of Natural Resources for the whole country uniting all concerned stakeholders and experts from district to national level²²."

Output 2.2 Tanguar Haor ecosystem integrity improved.

Management Plan of the TH ecosystem, although not termed as such, consists of the following: (i) Eco System Restoration, (ii) Controlling Illegal Fishing, and (iii) Regulated Fishing: Commercial and Non-Commercial.

Ecosystem Restoration. The following activities are noticeable with regard to this component - (i) Plantation of large number of Hizal and Karach saplings that are placed in the beels for restoring

²² Project Steering Committee Meeting, May 2011.

fish's habitat; (ii) restoration of reed land through plantation of 35,000 traditional reeds locally known as 'Nol; and (iii) establishment of 5 fish and 2 bird sanctuaries.

Controlling Illegal Fishing. Establishment of magistrate and ansar system has gone through its ups and downs, but slowly becoming stronger. There are several positive movements – (i) Magistrate holding a weekly meeting with UCC and CCC leaders at LGED guesthouse within the TH rather than outside (Takerghat Guesthouse); (ii) joint patrolling by ansars and community guards; (iii) approval of building for UCC on Khas land; (iv) mobile court; (v) seized boats could be destroyed. Magistrate and ansars rent the community boat given by UCC. There continues to be an issue of inadequate infrastructure with the magistrate demanding a speed boat for swift movement over the large area of TH. To facilitate telephonic communication with the magistrate, UNOs, Ansar Adjutant and police officers 5 cell phones have been given to the Magistrate and PCs of 4 camps and a list of 20 community leaders has been given to the Deputy Commissioner²³. Further, community guards are callow youth new and untrained in the art of policing, perhaps not cutting much ice with the well entrenched interests.

Regulated Fishing: Commercial and Non-Commercial. Benefit sharing formulae for fisheries (40Fisher:36 Organisation: 24 Government) and forest (60 Beneficiary :25 Organisation:15 Government) have been, showing its clear commitment to co-management. In commercial fishing this has resulted in a real income for the fishers as well as for the community organization.

Commercial fishing harvest (CFH) was taken up in 14 perennial *beels* by fishermen groups led by respective VCC leaders. Fishermen earned 34 per cent share of the revenue (as opposed to 40 per cent). Per fisher income in the month of March was Tk 1000. Total 8,759 person-days fishermen took part in the CFH and caught fishes weighing 44,591 kg with limited mesh sized gears.

Similarly the license and permit fee or charges are established for a range of fishing gears for non-commercial fishing. For example, a fisher group can buy a Lar Borshi (1000 hooks)

Commercial fisheries in 5 beels in the month of March 2011						
Number of fishers	Fish caught	total catch (kg)	Revenue generated (Tk)	fishermen share (Tk)	community share (Tk)	GoB (Tk)
224	9,654	6,136	658,140	225,611	274,575	157,954
Share revenue per fisher	43		2,938	1,007	42%	24%

license for Tk 500 (June 15 to September 30) while paying Tk 100 as monthly permit fee. For Tana Jaal, it is 300 taka per period (15 July to 15 Sep), and 100 taka per month. Most significant is the beel based *chai* fishing where a bidder from the community is awarded a beel (depressed area or a

²³ 21st THMC meeting held on 27th Feb 2011.

Non-Commercial Fishing in Tanguar Haor		
Year	2010-11	2009-10
Number of fishers	478	643
Income in BDT	805,984	535,845
Lar Net	132,000	71,800
Daitta	31,500	44,950
Pushnet	-	350
Chai	642,484	418,745
Income per fisher	1686	833

lake) on the basis of highest price, and then he brings together other fishermen to take up chai fishing. It was taken up on 25 spots (18 non-commercial). Average individual income per season was Tk 23,000 and per day Tk 790. The data for non-commercial fishing is given in the table below.

Our assessment is that this is a great start and we saw in the community that gradually acceptance is building up. Yet we believe the scale is heavily tilted against the “converts” as yet. A quick analysis of those applying for Lar Borshi was done with IUCN staff and estimate was that only **20 percent** of the potential Lar Borshi users (104) had bothered to pay the license fee this season (June-September 2011), implying the rest (400 odd) going

scot free. Number of fishers in 2010-11 was 478 as opposed to 2500 fisher HHs registered in TH.

This raises serious questions about whether license fee is proving to be a high entry barrier and benefit share too low (actually 34% not 40%) for those legitimately wanting to fish with license, and about the efficacy of the law enforcement of machinery. In addition there are issues with imposing license fee even for the fishing gear used for subsistence fishing such as *Tana Jaal*. There are also issues about the community leaders at the village level not really feeling responsible and defending the THMC decision while they interact with the community. We will take up these questions in the following chapter.

Output-2.3: Community based participatory monitoring and evaluation system developed.

This output requires that community developed its own capacity to monitor and evaluate the performance of the project including social capital management, co-management of the TH resource, and ecosystem restoration. PRMP and HHBP are the first tools that community is being taught for planning its activities. Although initial PRMP process took two and a half months, it appears that this capacity is being developed in all VCCs.

A performance-based monitoring and evaluation tool for VCCs being field tested. While grades are given, but the criteria to award these grades is missing in the table 2.3 of operational report IV.

It is good to see the biodiversity related impact in the results of the wildlife survey, although a comparison with a baseline would have been more useful. This has focused on migratory birds, status of habitat etc. of a total of 12 *beels* with aquatic and terrestrial area (*kanda* and village area).

Outcome 3 - Political and policy support continued at the national, regional and local level for up-scaling and ensuring long-term sustainability of the -management system for Tanguar Haor

Output-3.1: Knowledge Management System is working. The knowledge management system is being developed so that we could record data and best practices for future use. From personal experience, consultant would aver that data, information or reports were made readily available whether the queries pertained to social capital, manuals of training, or GIS based data on land etc. It appears that the project has developed a good knowledge management system. Only comment that one has is regarding the more decentralized data entry and management for social capital.

Output 3.2 National and regional platforms established to support Co-management of TH.

A fair amount of work has been done to spread awareness of the project among civil society of Sunamganj and apparently in Dhaka. Formalised platform may not be necessary as of now but it appears that the SPO has made a large number of presentations at national and international forums. Whenever there is no platform, formal or informal, for cross-learning at the MoEF level for projects managing wetlands, ecologically critically areas (ECAs), or protected areas (forests). There is a tremendous opportunity.

Annexure 4: Summary of Other Co-Management Models

UNDP model is quite similar in management plan as the Swiss TH project, except that they seem to have gone further in conservation (monitoring), alternative livelihoods and local eco-tourism. In Hakaluki Haor, the community is local not migrants. In USAID's MACH project, there was no licensing, CBO (it is called Resource Management Organisation, RMO) paid upfront then all fish belonged to them. RMOs were successful and in fact, are much more powerful than those they find in the forest areas. Perhaps because the benefits are direct and come in short term.

The Dutch projects that work with water project, seem to be based on a belief that community must own and manage resources. National Water Policy of Bangladesh talks about handover to people and is establishing an institutional structure beginning with water management group at the bottom, to provide O&M of embankment, canals and sluice gates.

The IFAD's Sunamganj Community Based Resource Management Project supports Beel User Group (BUG) concept where members fish as individuals as well as collectively. In 2009-10, 138 beels with 3367 acre area were under BUG management. Revenue of Tk 17 million was earned from the sale of fish from 110 beels. Over 1600 BUG members were employed and wages paid was Tk 2600 per member.

The two USAID projects, MACH and NSP, have successfully demonstrated the value of conservation with benefits reaching the poorest groups in the target areas. The co-management approach piloted through these projects has also equipped poor men and women to resist pressure from the powerful and therefore deterred elite capture of natural resources for personal benefit in project areas.

Specifically, NSP focused on: (1) development of a co-management planning and implementation model for selected Protected Areas (National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary and Game Reserve); (2) interventions and investments for improved ecosystems management; (3) encouragement of a positive policy environment for co-management; (4) creation of a conservation constituency in Bangladesh; and, (5) institutionalizing the process.

Annexure 5: Decisions Made and Follow up at Project Steering Committee

	Decision Made	Action Taken (as reported by IUCN: email 8th Aug 2011)
1	The Deputy Commissioner or his representative has been co-opted in the Steering Committee as a member.	He will be invited to attend the next meeting.
2	The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to co-opt Upazilla Agriculture Officer, Upazilla Livestock Officer and Upazilla Fisheries Officer of both Tahirpur and Dharampasha Upazillas as member of the THMC.	Yes all of them were co-opted as thmc member.
3	Policy support has been given to deployment of Community Guards in place of Ansar to protect TH resources and maintain law and order situation there. MoEF and District Administration of sunamganj will do the needful in this regard.	At present MoEF is paying salaries for ansar, and will pay community guards, when they replace ansars. Such arrangement requires approval from the ministry of finance. This is under process.
4	Recommended to deploy Battalion Ansar in place of present embodied Ansars for at least two or three months before processing the deployment of Community Guards. MoEF, Ministry of Home and respective department will assist in doing so.	Not yet. We are thinking to do it during the next dry season. In the mean time community guard will develop some skill and experience so that they would be able to accompany battalion ansar and taking responsibility after the departure of ansar.
5	To establish full control of the community over entire Tanguar Haor region including fish passes, the Ministry of Land and the district administration have been requested to notify 14774 hectares of land as the area of Tanguar Haor determined by a survey in association with the district administration of Sunamganj.	It is being under process. We hope it will require more 2 weeks or so to reach to the moef from district administration.
6	In order to reinforce the security in Tanguar Haor, resist fish poaching and support the TH management the donor, SDC will be requested to provide the local administration with at least two speed boats and fund for construction of four multipurpose buildings each of which will consist of an observation tower. Did this letter go to SDC? Was a budget prepared for this proposal and shared with them? What justification was given?	It was discussed in the 3rd and 4th coordination meeting with sdc. We have an understanding that sdc will allow us to incorporate these costs in the next phase.
7	Decisions of inter-ministerial meetings held in the MoEF on 12.08.2010 and 10.01.2011.	
8	The Director General of Ansar and DVP has been requested to provide the community guards with proper training and uniform. Action Taken?	Yes. At least 10 people received training from ansar
9	MoEF has requested the Department of Family Welfare to give special attention to ensure planned family of the community. Action Taken?	Yes request has been sent. Now need follow up
10	The Ministry of Home has been requested to increase allocation of fund for better vigilance of the law enforcing authority in the Tanguar Haor.	Yet to. Needs regular follow up.

11	Proposed a Joint Feasibility Mission to visit and conduct a study for investment and building infrastructure in the Tanguar Haor in order to enhance the livelihood of the community.	Not yet. Needs follow up.
12	Respective Ministries (Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and Disaster Management and Relief Division) has been requested to provide the poor fisherman with VGF assistance during ban period (April 14-June 15) for fishing.	Yes we have successfully distributed 200mt rice to 2500 families.
13	MoEF will request the Ministry of Home to deploy Battalion Ansar for few months in Tanguar Haor to create a deterrent against fish poachers in Tanguar Haor.	Will be done during the next dry season
14	MoEF has requested the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the government for a midterm evaluation of the project.	Getting prepared.
15	MoEF has decided to build a Framework for Co-management of Natural Resources for the whole country uniting all concerned stakeholders and experts from district to national level based on the established model of co-management in Tanguar Haor and requested IUCN to provide with technical support to the ministry.	Responsibility is given to IUCN. To be done soon.
16	MoEF will supply the video clips made on the activities accomplished under the project to the Ministry of Information with a request to use those for nationwide publicity.	Supplied but publicity not yet done. Needs follow up action by IUCN

Annexure 6: Decisions Made and Follow up at THMC (last four meetings)

	Decisions Made	Actions Taken according to IUCN
1	Completion of guest house construction in Golabari.	Done
2	Weekly coordination meeting among all parties chaired by acting learned magistrate at 10am, every Friday, at Tekerghat rest house. Progress made?	Yes it is working on every friday.
3	District administration will rent patrol boats from the community organization to be effective from 01 May 2011.	Done. They have procured community boats (four for the four Ansar camps and one for the learned magistrate) for patrolling in Tanguar Hoar. CCC has supplied these boats at a rate of BDT 14,000 per month, which is far lower than the actual cost. Actual cost to operate these five boats along with the salary of the boatman and regular maintenance would be more than BDT 75,000 per month.
4	Assigned magistrates will attend in different project activities and events in Tanguar Hoar villages in cooperation with the project staffs	NOT YET
5	All boats seized by the magistrate's will be destroyed in lieu present practice of auction.	Yes followed by the magistrates.
6	A civil society forum will be formed through a stakeholder workshop, lead by the district commissioner, Sunamganj.	TWO MEETINGS ORGANISED.
7	District administration has allocated 3 government khas lands at three unions of Tanguar Hoar to construct union offices.	UCCs have got possession of these khas lands.
8	Another application for khas land to construct the fourth union office is under consideration.	Allocation has been made.
9	Construction of three union offices is expected to be completed by this year.	Going on and will be completed by april 2012.
10	All Ansar members from the four camps will be accommodated in the union offices instead of present locations at schools.	Will be done soon after the completion of union office.
11	Seven perennial beels of Tanguar Hoar will be allocated to five traditional fishermen villages to conduct commercial Katha fishing.	Done.
12	Project to deliver five mobile phones with allocated amount of bill to establish effective communication system with the project staffs and community leaders during the patrol.	YES
13	BADC seed dealership to the CCC.	Got dealership, community gets rice seeds every year. In 2009 received 6mt, and in 2010 08mt
14	Conducting mobile court against illegal fishing nets.	Not yet

15	Submission of project activity schedule to all concerned UNOs and Tanguar Hoar Cell, so that local administration supports project.	Uno discuss these issues in the upazila coordination meeting.
16	Appointment of a 'Peshkar' to assist the assigned magistrates during mobile court.	Not yet due to shortage.
17	Subcommittees. What is the status of the sub-committee on the present status of afforestation ?	Done. The investigation done. Report not received
18	Local administration has been active ²⁴ .	They are always busy but supportive to us in most cases.

²⁴ Local administration represented by UNOs of Tahirpur and Dharmapasha played active role in conducting various project activities. UNO, Tahirpur was the chairman of the tender committee for beel based chai and commercial fish harvest. He has also played active role in mitigating field level conflicts among different fishermen groups. Both the UNOs provided spontaneous support in conducting investigation and reporting on the allocated government Khas lands for the construction of UCC offices. A permanent senior sub-inspector was assigned by Police Super of Sunamganj for dealing Tanguar Hoar issues following the decision of the THMC. Upaliza Fisheries Officer (UFO), DoF participated on the occasion of Rotenone application in Rangamatia beel to eradicate all predators from the water body and establishing it as a safe home for rare fish species under habitat restoration program.

Annexure 7. List of People Met

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Organisation
	Government of Bangladesh		
1	Mesbah ul Alam	Secretary in Charge	MoEF
2	Dr M. Nasiruddin	Joint Secretary and NPT, TH Project	MoEF
3	Quzi Munirul Islam	Deputy Chief	MoEF
4	Yameen Ahmed	Deputy Commissioner	GoB
5	Jafar Siddiqui	NPD (UNDP project)	
6	Mr Wadud	Commandant in Charge	BGB
	Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies		
1	Tommaso Tabet	Asst Coordinator, Local Governance	SDC
2	Farid Hasan Ahmed	Senior PO	SDC
3	M. Aminul Islam	Asst Country Director, Disaster Management	UNDP
4	ATM Khaleduzzaman	Advisor, Water Management (IWRM)	Netherlands Embassy
5	Alamgir Hossain	Environment and Climate Change Specialist, Economic Growth Office	USAID
	IUCN and other partner Staff		
1	Niaz Ahmed Khan	CR	IUCN
2	ATM Rezaul Karim	SPO	IUCN
3	Md Aminur Rahman	PM/SPO	IUCN
4	Dhruba Kanta Kundu	PO	IUCN
5	Shahad Mahbub Chowdhury	PO	IUCN
6	Md Abul Kalam Azad	PO	IUCN
	all PSMU staff		
1	Felix Bachmann	IC Delegate	IC
2	Shamim Ahamed	PO	IC
3	M. Mokhleshur Rahman	ED	CNRS
4	Md. Serajul Islam	ED	ERA
5	Ms Rizwana Hasan Syeda	ED	BELA
	Civil Society at Sunamganj		
1	Praful Kanti Dey	President, Sunamganj chapter	TI
2	Md Shafiqul Alam	Advocate and Member of Envir NGO	Poribesh Andolan
	Local Government		
1	Shamin	Union Parishad Chairman	Tahirpur
	Media		
1	khalil rehman		pratham Alo
2	Shakir Hossain		n TV
3	Emranul Chowdhury		The Daily Janakantha

Annexure 8. Terms of Reference

Review Mission Member/s

Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor

Background

Tanguar Haor is a globally significant wetland located in the north-eastern corner of Sunamganj district extending for about 10,000 hectares close to the Indian border in the Meghalaya hill region. This complex ecosystem, known for its many species of fish and as a staging area for at least half a million migratory birds, is the only source of living for over 56,000 people located in villages around its periphery. The environmental importance of Tanguar Haor was first promoted by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bangladesh Country office in the 1990s. The Government took keen interest in taking initiative for protecting Tanguar Haor. The first ever conservation project undertaken by the Government in Tanguar Haor was the National Conservation Strategy Implementation Project (NCS IP) in the 1990s where IUCNB worked as a technical partner. With relentless advocacy of IUCNB for the conservation of Tanguar Haor, the Government eventually took the bold decision to declare it as an Ecologically Critical Area in 1999 and a Ramsar site in 2000. Simultaneously, the ownership of Tanguar haor was also transferred from the Ministry of Land (MoL) to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF).

All these have been historic milestones achieved towards bringing about a new management paradigm for Tanguar Haor and conservation of its rich biodiversity and wetland resources. Government officially requested IUCNB to seek funds from donors to support the government initiative of replacing the “traditional leasing” system with a community based management system adhering to the Ramsar principles. SDC found the government initiative very innovative and in line with their Country Strategy and signed a contract with GoB to provide necessary financial support²⁵. Accordingly, MoEF nominated IUCN Bangladesh to implement the project on behalf of the government.

The first phase of the project started in December 2006. In March 2008, an independent evaluator was nominated again to undertake a thorough assessment of the project achievements against the suggestions put forward in the mission document of 2006 and the project proposal. The mission found the progress satisfactory and suggested to extend the positive achievements in the 2nd phase.

SDC has also agreed that experimentations done in preparatory stage should be continued further before solid outcomes are reached and upscaled in the development stage. Therefore, another MOU was signed for the next three years (May 2009 – April 2012) extending the preparatory stage as recommended by the review mission.

The primary goal of this project was to develop a resource governance system for Tanguar Haor as a Protected Area of the Government of Bangladesh. For the governance system, the project was prioritised by the Government

²⁵ To help SDC in making decision on funding the project, it engaged an international independent evaluator. The evaluator recommended that Tanguar haor project would have very good opportunity in raising peoples' right through initiating a co-management system which would eventually address poverty in that area. He proposed the project should be done in three stages: suggested by Peter Hilaire in his mission report in 2006), the project will have three stages: Preparatory stage (18 months); Development stage (36 to 60 months); and Consolidation stage (36 months).

intended to establish a co-management system where the local community is supported to develop organizations and capacity to negotiate “access right” to Haor for livelihoods improvement. On the other hand the government is also supportive and has instruments to recognize and realize this right of the Tanguar Haor community. Hence, the co-management model will enable the communities the ability to participate equally with the government in processes related to resource conservation, regeneration, responsible management, harvesting and selling, and finally on sharing of the benefits and costs among the stakeholders.

All these require long and sustained efforts of negotiation, coaching and capacity building of community as well as the government authorities. The Preparatory phase successfully initiated the process by developing modalities for co-management through comprehensive consultations with stakeholders at different tiers, and obtaining necessary policy support to pilot resource harvesting on a limited scale involving the community. It also supported livelihoods needs of the communities in select villages. The current phase of this project (as an extension of the Preparatory phase) will involve the progression of the success of the Preparatory phase and up scaling to the entire Tanguar Haor system.

Rationale and Objectives of the review

Based on the decisions of the 3rd Coordination Meeting held on 13 January 2011, an independent international consultant will undertake a comprehensive review during May-June 2011 to consolidate the learnings of the present stage and recommend the major thrusts for the next phase. On the basis of these recommendations, IUCN can elaborate a Prodoc. After assessing the Prodoc, SDC may confirm the commitment of funding with in February 2012 towards signing a new MoU between IUCN and GoB by April 2012 and start the next phase in May 2012.

The international consultant will do an independent review of the activities undertaken in the current phase and recommend an outline for the next phase for sustainable management of the Tanguar Haor.

The objectives of the review work are

- Assessment of achievements of present phase of the project
- Deliver elements for decision making towards a possible future phase or more phases
- Recommendations for the strategic orientations as well as for planning

Key Issues & Questions

The following issues and questions could be addressed during the upcoming review of Tanguar *haor* project?

1. How far the **project delivery** is satisfactory as compared with the project document, PIP, logical framework etc.? Were the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and attainment of its objectives?
2. Are the community based organisations and their clusters/networks being built to a reasonable capacity so that they have potential to take part in the **sustainable co-management** of the resources (water, fisheries, forest and reed beds) of Tanguar Haor? Are the local administrations including Upazilla and local government proactive to establish a co-management mechanism/modality for the Tanguar Haor Ramsar site involving the communities around Tanguar Haor?
3. How inclusive are the **local institutional mechanisms of the poor and vulnerable population** groups for addressing a sustainable co-management (including voice raising and participation in decision making)? Do the mechanisms address the needs of the poor and vulnerable? Do the mechanisms address the needs of women?

How far does the Tanguar Haor institutional mechanism support or contradict existing local systems and mechanisms?

4. Are there available ***promising alternative income generation activities*** for the poor including women allowing them to maintain wise use of Tanguar Haor resources? How has the project enhanced the livelihood options of the community in the project area?
5. How to ***manage local power relations and conflicts*** in implementing a co-management system? Are conflict resolution instruments available? Are the traditional instruments if any, applicable? What changes are necessary? Is a training process built in for conflict resolution?
6. What ***role GoB plays in the project management*** as a major stakeholder? What kind of Government ***commitment and ownership*** is in place? Are the available means and approaches reinforcing local administrations including Upazilla, civil society networks, local elites, and local government in their capacity to support the concept of co-management of the Tanguar Haor involving the communities around it?
7. How far ***GoB policy decisions, practices and/or steps*** on Haor/water bodies, Ramsar helping or affecting? Does the GoB have special strategy on the project, particularly on co-management?
8. How well is the ***coordination among the partners of the project*** functioning? Are the roles and responsibilities of the partners (MoEF, IUCN, IC and the local partners) rightly defined for effective management of the project?
9. What could be the ***next phase*** for the project? When, in order for the local and central government, the district administration and representative of community take complete responsibility for the project interventions? Which phases towards such scenarios are to be envisaged?
10. What are the factors that may influence ***sustainability*** in the medium and long term? Is the co-management mechanism established will sustain beyond the project period?
11. What is the strategy to be put in place to ***ensure transparency and accountability***?
12. Are the lessons learnt ***attracting other development partners*** and relevant ministries/departments of GoB for investing in such initiative? Is the project harmonised with other projects by other development partners and relevant ministries/departments of GoB?

Methodology

The methodology of the review work will include the following steps:

- Review of agreements among SDC-Government-IUCN, the project logical framework, project implementation plan, annual work plans, and project reports.
- Meetings with key government officials to develop understanding about the government view's on the overall protected area management plan of the Government of Bangladesh in the context of the Ramsar site management and the respective role the of Tanguar Haor project (this would include an assessment of the Government's commitment and the steps taken towards institutional arrangements at local, regional and central levels for supporting the project).
- Meetings with the project partners (IUCN, IC and local partners), relevant actors and developing a matrix of performance, understanding and capacity in the context of Ramsar site management, in general and wetland management co-management in particular, as well as capacity to support improving livelihood conditions for the very poor and vulnerable.
- Undertaking a reconnaissance visit to the Tanguar Haor area to understand the community perceptions on the issues in the area vis-à-vis biodiversity conservation and livelihoods.

- Facilitation of a workshop with stakeholders in Sunamganj and Dhaka to identify key issues and challenges of the ongoing project in view to orient the future joint endeavour.
- Critical appraisal of the current phase and validation of the strategies and approaches as a crucial input that shall enable SDC to make a decision to orient and if possible start a next phase.
- Elaboration of recommendations for facing future challenges based on the good practices and failures observed during the field visit and activities undertaken so far, partners mix and roles (mainly IC, IUCN and GoB), including policy issues, strategies and approaches, co-management set up, cost recovery system.
- Facilitation (act as resource person) of a meeting or workshop with representatives of the project partners to share and verify recommendations and views on future direction of the project.
- Presentation of the key findings and recommendations (including related to decision making on the future orientation of the project) to SCO-B, IUCN and IC on a final debriefing session (at SCO-B premises).
- Lay out a proposal with any further comments made by the SDC, Government and other actors.

Output

A review report with guidelines and recommendations for the next phase (approximately within 20 pages, including an executive summary, plus annexes). The report and recommendations shall enable SDC to make a decision to move towards next phase. The report should scope out possible objectives, results, and detail out time-bound activities for next phase/phases.

Timeframe

16.5 days in May/June 2011, including debriefing in Bern.

Responsibilities

SDC has the lead for operational and administrative follow up of the review.

The consultant will have the overall responsibility of taking lead in doing an independent review and develop a report on the programmatic interventions to be undertaken in the next phase.

IUCN would facilitate the logistic arrangements and other support in consultation with GoB(National Project Director and Tanguar Haor Management Committee-THMC).

Contact persons

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Budget

The consultant will be contracted to SDC and his fees will be defined as per SDC's procedures, norms and criteria.

Reference Documents

1. Project Document
2. Project Implementation Plan
3. MoU between SDC and the Ministry of Environment & Forestry
4. Credit Proposal
5. Baseline study (Summary Report)
6. Progress Report
7. Govt policy documents related to climate change, haor/wetland.