

**STOPPING AS SUCCESS:
TRANSITIONING TO LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT**

CASE STUDY: WINROCK INTERNATIONAL – CLIMATE RESILIENCE ECOSYSTEMS AND LIVELIHOODS (CREL) – BANGLADESH

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STOPPING AS SUCCESS

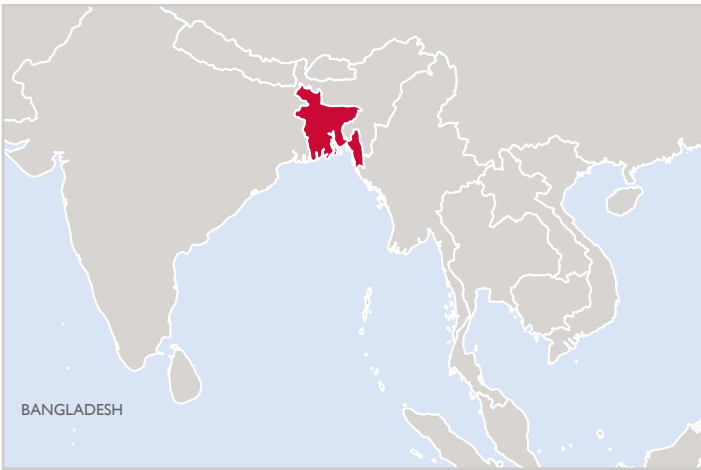
This case study was developed as part of Stopping As Success (SAS), implemented by a consortium consisting of Peace Direct, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, and Search for Common Ground, with support and funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). SAS is a collaborative learning project that aims to study the dynamics at play when ending a development program, and provide guidelines on how to ensure locally led development. In doing this, SAS looks beyond the technical aspects of a transition strategy to identify examples that demonstrate a transition toward locally led development. The case studies produced by the project highlight the past and present realities faced by international non-government organizations (INGOs), local civil society organizations, and local NGOs, focusing in particular on how partnerships evolve during transitions or devolvement to local entities.

I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Climate Resilience Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL), which ran from 2012 to 2018, was a USAID-funded project implemented in Bangladesh by a Winrock International-led consortium. This case study tells the story of CREL and the co-management organizations (CMOs) it helped develop in order to conserve different protected forests.

TYPE OF TRANSITION

CREL an example of a programmatic transition involving a transfer of ownership and responsibility from an international organization – in this case, Winrock International, and its national partner organizations, including CODEC – to a local government entity, in this case the Bangladesh Forest Department. CREL adopted a co-management approach throughout the program. This included setting up two types of entity at the local level – co-management committees and co-management organizations – which have been sustained since the program’s transition.



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ACRONYMS

AIGA	alternative income-generation activity
BFD	Bangladesh Forest Department
CMC	co-management committee
CMC	co-management organization
CPG	community patrolling group
CODEC	Community Development Centre
DFO	district forest officer
ECA	ecologically critical areas
INGO	international non-governmental organization
IPAC	Integrated Protected Area Co-management
IRG	International Resources Group
NACOM	Nature Conservation Management
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSP	Nishorgo Support Project
PA	protected area
SAS	Stopping As Success
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCF	village conservation forum

In-country research, which took place in January to February 2019, involved key informant interviews with case study stakeholders, including Winrock International, its national partner Community Development Centre (CODEC),¹ the BFD, and members of two CMOs. It also included focus group discussions with communities at two project sites, with participants sharing their perceptions of CREL project activities and their own efforts at maintaining the work started under CREL. Both the interviews and focus group discussions were supported and facilitated by a Bangladeshi consultant. Access to the CMOs was enabled through Winrock and CODEC, and could not otherwise have taken place. Due to the remoteness of the different project locations, research was only possible in the Chittagong Division at two wildlife sanctuaries – Hazarikhil and Chunati – which had been under the remit of CODEC. The research team utilized additional primary and secondary sources to compensate for this.

To add context, Peace Direct conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with members of the development community in Bangladesh: leaders and program officers of national NGOs, INGOs, two donors, as well as academics teaching development studies. Peace Direct also conducted a learning exchange in Dhaka with a similar array of participants. Viewpoints on transitions and locally led development from this workshop have also informed the report.

2. CONTEXT

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with its near 164 million residents spread across 147,600 square kilometers. This density puts a strain on natural resources, and creates challenges around forming a consensus on how best to manage them. Over the last decade the country has witnessed significant economic growth, raising it into the lower middle-income bracket, and it is likely to ascend into the upper middle-income tier in the coming years.² The Bangladeshi government made a concerted effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and is putting significant resources into meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, including those focused on environmental issues. Despite these efforts, unmet development challenges remain, which are exacerbated by the country's vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather patterns (mostly

cyclones). In Bangladesh, these problems tend to intersect, with poverty reduction being addressed both through governance and climate-related programming.

According to interviewees for this case study, Bangladeshis possess an ethos of volunteerism, philanthropy, and communal work, manifested through self-help groups at the grassroots level, and numerous NGOs steeped in the ethos of community-led development. As a result, the NGO landscape in Bangladesh is incredibly diverse and complicated, with different organizations specializing in a variety of activities, ranging from cultural programs to rescue operations. According to the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, as of 2013 there were 2,209 NGOs registered with the Bangladeshi NGO Affairs Bureau, with Bangladeshi organizations accounting for between 75 percent to 80 percent of these. However, there are also a significant number of grassroots-level organizations, which in the Bangladeshi context tend to be identified as local NGOs, in contrast to national NGOs. The former register with the Department of Social Services at a local level, rather than with the NGO Affairs Bureau in Dhaka.³ Crucially, any organization – whether that is a local or a national NGO – has to register with the NGO Affairs Bureau in order to receive foreign funding.⁴ INGOs have been present in Bangladesh for decades, having arrived to address various humanitarian crises and help with the country's development needs.

NGO FINANCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

A key trend impacting the Bangladesh NGO landscape has been a recent decline in funding. From the vantage point of donors, there has been a gradual shift in priorities away from traditional poverty reduction programming to issues such as climate change adaptation or humanitarian crises. This has left NGOs searching for new ways to implement projects,⁵ with not all NGOs able to change their programmatic focus in response to this situation. Moreover, for various political reasons, donors have been tending to go through the government more than they had in previous years, meaning the process by which NGOs access project funds has been restructured. Additionally, donors have tended to fund organizations that can work at scale because, in their view, this results in better efficiencies. The perception is often that smaller national NGOs cannot adequately operate at scale, which excludes them from certain projects.⁶

Microfinance has also offered a key funding source for national NGOs. Often labeled “economic empowerment,” microfinance has long been identified with Bangladesh,⁸ and there is considerable innovation around its use as a development tool.⁹ Programmatic focus aside, microfinance is a key organizational tool for many Bangladeshi NGOs. The Microfinance Regulatory Authority allows NGOs to allocate 10 percent of the profits they receive from their microfinance operations toward development work within communities. Microfinance is therefore a means for NGOs to self-finance. However, for some organizations heavily invested in microfinance – such as social enterprises – development projects can often appear a secondary concern rather than a core focus. Some within the sector dub these NGOs “corporate” or “capitalist,” accusing them of having adopted a “money-making mission” in the name of sustainability. They perceive the shift to microcredit as a turn away from the “pro-poor” ethos NGOs are supposed to embody.

Two other underdeveloped avenues of funding are fundraising and corporate social responsibility. Most interviewees argued that corporations are not interested in supporting development work through NGOs, while fundraising is seen as unlikely to yield enough income. However, one NGO executive from Chittagong, having anticipated this decline in funding, explained how he had adjusted his partnerships approach¹⁰ while expanding the organization’s programmatic focus.¹¹ Additionally, he was exploring crowdsourcing funding both internally¹² and externally, among the Bangladeshi diaspora.

LOCALIZATION AND THE QUESTION OF CAPACITY

The question of how localization is being enacted within Bangladesh’s NGO sector is important as it highlights the power dynamics at play between donors, INGOs, and national NGOs. The issue of organizational capacity exemplifies this debate. As previously noted, donors prefer to work with larger organizations that have cost recovery, scale of delivery, operational effectiveness, and a sophisticated ability to measure impact.

Two INGO country directors argued that the central issue is the role competitive global calls for proposals currently play. This, they believe, turns national and local NGOs into contractors, pursuing donor funding opportunities and shifting organizational structures

and capabilities in response to donor priorities, rather than the needs of local communities. As a result, NGO accountability has shifted toward international donors rather than the communities being served. An interviewee, who manages two organizations – a local advocacy NGO and an INGO – described USAID projects as being “... implemented by primes [contractors], and they take subs [local sub-contractors], and subs and slaves are no different. Subs work at the pleasure of the prime. And the prime takes most of the resources.” An INGO country director argued that the contractual paradigm was the problem, rather than INGOs. Several INGOs with a long history in Bangladesh and an established commitment to local communities understand that achieving genuine change means being present for a decade, if not more. This, the interviewee claimed, was not the case with international contractors, who implement projects and promptly leave without a trace. At the same time, to highlight that the asymmetry does not always favor INGOs, the country director argued that some national NGOs with ample capacity are able to pick and choose which projects and INGOs they want to partner with: “So they will calculate pros and cons, probably, prospects and then they will decide which consortium they will go.” Another INGO country director had started a proactive localization approach involving consortiums, whereby local or national organizations lead and the INGO provides its convening power and technical abilities. This INGO negotiates with donors on behalf of national NGOs, arguing: “... if you [the donor] believe local NGOs don’t have the capacity to take up the larger strategic work, then it is our [INGOs] responsibility and your responsibility [as donors] to build their capacities.” To date, while this country director has had some success, it is nowhere near what they consider necessary.

National NGOs were more concerned about this asymmetry, seeing it as heavily favoring foreign donors and INGOs. An interviewee explained that when his organization partnered with some INGOs, they treated his NGO as a subordinate: “Many INGOs have this tendency ... although it is called partnership, but it is not. Sometimes it is a hegemonic attitude.” In his opinion, the underlying problem is the “project model.” When funds run out and a project ends, the INGO no longer treats the national NGO as a partner: “... if [the relationship] continued without a project or not, that would have been a real partnership in the true sense.” Both INGOs and NGOs agreed that it takes decades to

achieve genuine lasting change, not a three-year project cycle. This emphasizes the importance of developing the capacity of national NGOs in order that they can follow through after an INGO has exited. Another interviewee argued that while some INGOs have dedicated time and effort incorporating NGO capacity building into programs, ensuring abilities remain after projects end, this has rarely been the norm. Though certain donors – he cited the example of GIZ, the German development agency – have actively provided capacity building and consulted NGOs on what they need, in the majority of situations capacity building has been doled out top-down, with national NGOs did being given the opportunity to select what they need.

Furthermore, an interviewee argued that internationals had certain standards that are difficult for most national partners – aside from large organizations – to attain. This creates a burden for national NGOs, which become focused “... on maintaining the standard, not on implementing [sic] the programs.” National NGOs want to get on with addressing problems, rather than getting bogged down in standards and formats. The interviewee, as a proponent of localization, wanted to see a genuine long-term commitment from international organizations toward national and local NGOs. This would involve skills being transferred to Bangladeshi staff and the leadership of local and national organizations being developed, ensuring the sustainability of programs after the INGO or international organization left. The reality, in his experience, was that after three to six months of partnership, the international organization would come for a “... monitoring visit and they said it has not happened, it is not done, so mark is nil, and partnership is lost. But if I ask how much you invest for your partner: zero, nothing.” He argued that change needs to be enacted across the board to ensure: the government should mandate capacity development as a prerequisite;¹³ donors should proactively instigate change; and national organizations should demand that capacity building be incorporated into partnership agreements.

Others, however, were not as bleak in their assessment. A director of advocacy at a large national NGO felt that, as a result of years of interacting with the local communities, INGOs had a good understanding of Bangladesh.¹⁴ However, when asked whether this was the right moment to implement localization, he argued that it was, especially given INGOs and NGOs had been interacting for some 50 years, during which time

the latter had acquired extensive skills and capacities. This proved to be a commonly expressed view, with several interviewees arguing there are already qualified organizations and ample capacity in the country.

In the case of CREL, a key focus was the capacity development of CMOs in order to ensure their sustainability beyond the life of the project. Additionally, the relationships between the INGO – Winrock International – and the national NGOs were built on significant trust and capacity development.

3. CREL: IF THE FOREST SURVIVES, WE SURVIVE

BACKGROUND

Funded by USAID, CREL was a six-year project (2012–18) led by Winrock International along with a consortium of partners: the Center for Natural Resource Studies; CODEC; Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies; Nature Conservation Management (NACOM); TetraTech; and WorldFish. From the Bangladesh government side, the project also included the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; the Department of Environment; the BFD; the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock; the Department of Fisheries; and the Ministry of Land.

CREL sought to strengthen biodiversity protection and conservation in four regions of Bangladesh,¹⁵ including areas designated by the government as either ecologically critical areas (ECA) or protected areas (PAs).¹⁶ To accomplish this, CREL implemented a co-management model, and promoted viable alternative livelihoods within communities in order to decouple their income from natural resource extraction in the forests. It also advocated for public policies at the national level, resulting in a change in the legal regime surrounding forests, as well as the bureaucratic culture of BFD.

CREL followed on from the work of two preceding USAID-funded initiatives:

- Nishorgo Support Project (NSP), which ran 2003–08
- Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC) project, which ran 2008–12.

The NSP was established in response to a challenging environmental situation, as the project documentation explained: “The forest resources of Bangladesh have been disappearing at an alarming rate. The rate of deforestation was about 8,000 ha per year during the 1970s, which later increased to about 37,600 ha per year in the 1980s.”¹⁷

The co-management and alternative livelihood ideas were developed during NSP. Here, ECAs and PAs were the focus, but unlike CREL it was implemented in only five sites.¹⁸ IPAC, the second program, continued with the co-management and alternative livelihoods focus, and was implemented in seven sites. These included the five from NSP, along with Hail Haor in Sylhet and Kaptai National Park in Chittagong division.

CREL then scaled up the model and expanded the portfolio of implementation sites. Although a different INGO (International Resources Group (IRG)) acted as lead for NSP and IPAC, the same local partners (CODEC and NACOM) worked on all three projects. Consequently, their perspectives predate the start of CREL. In response to a question about the difference between the three projects, a member of CODEC’s senior management noted: “In IPAC and Nishorgo we are experiencing too many things. Initially the frustration, the forest, the administration system of BFD ... you know BFD is one of the oldest departments in our country and there are lots of orthodox laws and policies with the BFD. In Nishorgo we struggled with all these policies. We try to establish faith with the BFD department people. They did not have any faith in the general people. So, we had to establish that relationship ... After IPAC period, was a bit easier to work with the BFD along with the local community [the forest user]. In IPAC period, we also struggled with working with the CMC [co-management committee], BFD, and the forest users ... We had to convince [the surrounding population] that if you destroy your forest it backfires on you, so, the next generation will be in trouble.”

Therefore, during IPAC, an understanding was established with local communities, which resulted in various institutions being established: co-management committees (CMCs), village conservation forums (VCFs), and community patrolling groups (CPGs). These earlier projects paved the way for the larger work conducted as part of CREL.

CO-MANAGEMENT

Similar to NSP and IPAC, CREL looked to create a balance between communities and the local and national government, which would enable the sustainable management of natural resources.¹⁹ The BFD had long implemented “... an exclusionary state-run approach”²⁰ to preserving the forests, leaving local communities out of decision-making processes.²¹ For generations, communities residing in the vicinity had seen the forests as their source of livelihood. However, the BFD perceived such resource extraction as a transgression. Thus, despite the intricate economic relationship communities had with the forest, their interests were viewed as incompatible with the BFD’s goal of conservation. As well as policing the forest against over-exploitation, the BFD would take local communities to court in order to deter them from further transgressions. The senior leadership at CODEC described the historic relationship between the BFD and the communities as “... so difficult in nature that the people who were living around the forest, they feared the BFD. And the relationship was always very harsh.”

The centralized approach not only disregarded the economic realities of local communities, but also Bangladesh’s demographic situation, whereby pressure on forests invariably follows from increasing population density. Moreover, it was unsuccessful in actually preventing over-exploitation. Indeed, the BFD, according to academic analysis, lacks the ability to implement policy for a number of reasons, one of which is “... the lack of field-level law enforcement.”²² This is something that USAID personnel in Bangladesh also highlighted, with one saying: “The government of Bangladesh has very limited resources in terms of manpower, in terms of budget. We have now 180 million population. Almost 7 to 8 percent forest coverage, which should be 25 percent. So, you see, the context is a lot of people with very limited resources with a weak government. The government will not be able to protect these common pool resources, natural resources, by themselves.”

In 2008, the BFD formally adopted a co-management approach to managing PAs, further expanded this through the IPAC and CREL projects.²³ Under the co-management model: “... two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee among themselves a fair sharing of the

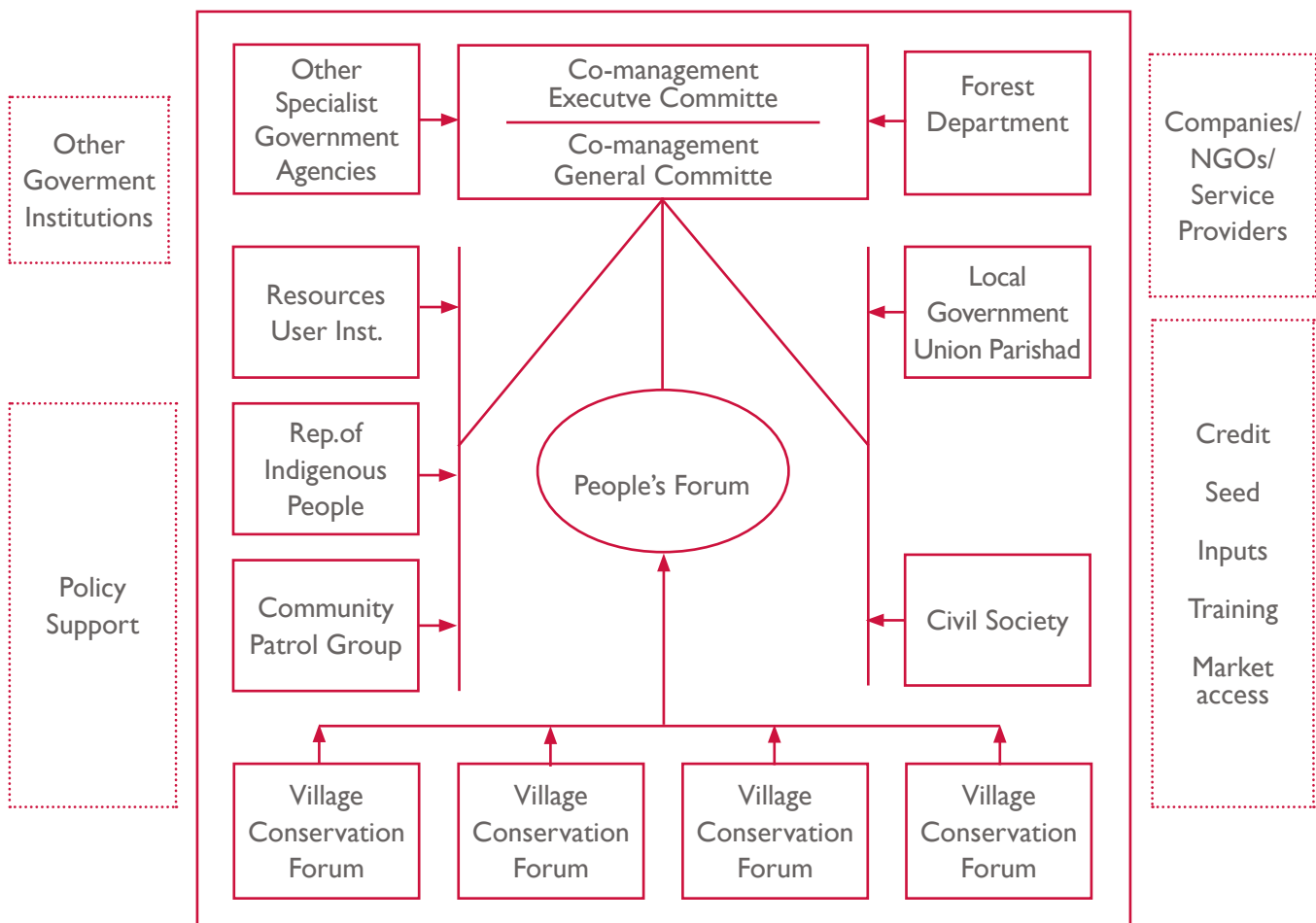
management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources.”²⁴

In the case of Bangladesh, co-management moved the BFD away from its previous approach – which was both alienating and ineffective – toward a participatory structure involving collaboration with communities. For USAID, co-management was a win-win for all involved. It would solve the BFD’s limited resources and manpower, while communities would receive training in alternative livelihoods that would limit their need to extract resources from the forest. Furthermore, in exchange for their cooperation in protecting the forest, communities would be entitled to receive a portion of the funds generated from tourist activities.

Institutionally, co-management for CREL entailed setting up two entities at the local level: co-management

committees (CMCs) and co-management organizations (CMOs). The first is an oversight entity, consisting of 65 members, while the CMO is a subset of the CMC (29 individuals) and has executive responsibilities. These bodies bring together as many relevant stakeholders as possible, including the chairman of the local Union Parishad,²⁵ the local BFD officer (for example, a range officer), as well as members from local VCFs. The utility of a CMC²⁶ and CMO as a political forum with government buy-in factors into the structure’s sustainability. It functions as a means to resolve conflicts between the community and the BFD, while also serving as a management body that has responsibility for protecting the forest through CPGs. These CPGs, along with the CMC accountant, are the only paid members of a CMC. CREL, accordingly, aimed to set up 45 CMOs²⁷ in 29 PAs (including the seven from IPAC), and to develop their capacity in several different functional areas.²⁸

FIGURE 1. CO-MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE IN THE BANGLADESHI FORESTRY SECTOR, CREL EVALUATION REPORT



Local communities saw CMOs as an opportunity to overcome the hostile relationship they had with the BFD, and to influence the way the BFD worked. In the case of Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary, the CMO felt the commitment shown by the BFD's local personnel helped facilitate local buy-in. In the case of Chunati, it was the tireless efforts of range officer Mahmoud Rahman that helped the CMO win the UNDP Equator Prize Award 2012.²⁹ Similarly, both CMOs had political buy-in from their locally elected Union Parishad chairmen.³⁰

Co-management does have flaws, in that it turns individuals who were previously poachers or loggers into CPG members. However, this must be assessed against the manpower requirements of the BFD and the overall benefits of conservation. Additionally, as interviewees noted, Bangladesh's population density means that there will always be pressure on forest resources, and this pressure has only increased due to the recent Rohingya refugee crisis. As a result, a viable solution was urgently needed, especially as the previous approach adopted by the BFD was clearly not working. It should also be noted that co-management is ineffective in the face of corruption from "... highly organized and influential forest exploiters."³¹ CMOs, though, are not meant to address the issue of corruption, and can only contain it to some extent.

Academic research into the concept points out that, despite difficulties (for example, financial difficulties and local corruption), co-management is "a worthy pursuit,"³² which has reduced distrust between the BFD and local communities, and helped with environmental conservation.³³

WINROCK INTERNATIONAL AND CODEC

The relationship Winrock developed with its national implementing partners was a key enabler of the project. Senior management at both Winrock and CODEC confirmed that the former trusted the latter. Flowing from this was a degree of flexibility regarding program implementation. It also meant that Winrock and CODEC continuously communicated, with CODEC regularly contributing to program design. As a member of Winrock's senior management noted: "It was a partnership ... So, it was one team, they just had different employers. But all of the sustainability program was developed with local partners because they are really the ones [who know the localities] ... Winrock could not have done that by themselves."

A member of CODEC's senior management articulated the situation thus: "One thing I must say is that CREL was much more democratic in nature. When they developed several papers and briefs, they always had a discussion with us. Much more, they want to hear from us ... When they tried to consolidate these [CMOs], then they tried to hear more from the field about how it will be ... It is my own perception is that CREL was much more friendly in nature to hear from the grassroots level."

Furthermore, Bangladeshi Winrock staff maintained relationships with national NGOs after the end of the project. This was confirmed by a USAID staff member, who explained: "So Firras, who is now the Washington counterpart of mine for CREL, is based in Winrock US. He is still in touch with those three local NGOs. And Firras told me that he is working with NACOM, the Cox's Bazaar based NGO, to submit a proposal for a funding opportunity for US\$50,000. So, they are still maintaining that liaison and that relationship and that momentum to keep those local NGOs running ... That was a new thing to me. That an INGO is still supporting local NGOs."

Some of the personnel who had been hired by Winrock International from IRG had close working relationships with individuals from CODEC going back several years. These individuals were not merely project staff, but had personally invested considerable time and effort in implementing the idea of co-management with one another. Over the years, CODEC had run six projects in tandem with IRG, with the former's management appreciating the latter's approach: "They really think that we are not contractors. We are the partners. That is the main important thing here. I am not blaming other donors. Some donors thought that we are contractors in nature. They are giving the task and we have to do that. That is the pitiful part of it. But some of organizations are working as a partnership relationship. IRG was one of them"

A respondent from CODEC's leadership explained that his relationship with Winrock's Chief of Party for CREL went back more than three decades. For him, this personal relationship was far more valuable than anything contractual stemming from a project. As he put it: "... [these] sorts of people they have a root in Bangladesh, because most of them their lifetime they spent here." There was a mutual respect between the two organizations, and this ethos and practice continued – according to interviews – with Winrock International. When queried about whether the freedom they were granted came from USAID or



Winrock, CODEC's senior management understood it to having come from Winrock, while emphasizing that "... it depends on the leadership. It is always the person. It is not the institution." Indeed, the relationship was described by a CODEC staff member – who had been involved in managing the CREL project across different sites in both Chittagong and Khulna – as "... facilitation, not administration."

The result was national NGOs buying into a project that they then felt they had ownership of. Furthermore, communities regarded Winrock as a secondary actor, highlighting the light-touch approach adopted by the organization, as well as the considerable trust granted to CODEC by Winrock's leadership.

On the issue of capacity, CODEC personnel gained technical expertise in biodiversity from IRG, which

they then passed on to Winrock, which was now implementing another program related to aquafarming. There was a symbiotic relationship between the international entity and the national NGO. In this case, a two-tier process of capacity development can be observed – the INGO passes on knowledge and expertise to the national NGO, in return receiving technical knowledge, albeit informally, that is highly context-specific, as well as knowledge about the culture and localities. Furthermore, as an offshoot of the CREL project, Winrock implemented the USAID Transition Grant Program Forward, which was focused on developing the capacity of national NGOs. CODEC was one of the finalists in this program and received training from Winrock.³⁴ Thus, as part of its programmatic work with CMOs, which obviously entailed capacity building, Winrock also helped develop the capacity of CODEC.

4. OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF THE TRANSITION

This section presents findings on a range of outcomes and emerging impacts of the transition from CREL to Bangladeshi entities, grouped into four key areas:

SUSTAINABILITY OF INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES BEYOND THE END OF THE PROGRAMME

CHANGING THE LEGAL REGIME AROUND FORESTS

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

OWNERSHIP OF CMOs BY COMMUNITIES

SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND THE PROJECT

According CREL's leadership, the head of the BFD – the Chief Conservator of Forests – initially expressed skepticism project about the CMOs' ability to plan and manage the funds that would eventually be allocated to them. Although the previous two projects had run for several years, the sustainability of the CMOs remained a critical question.³⁵ As a consequence, Winrock's leadership put in extensive efforts to define the concept of sustainability during the early phases of CREL.³⁶ As an interviewee from Winrock put it: "And I asked a simple question: sustainable to what? You cannot make an organization sustainable until you know what you are trying to do. What is the target? What is the outcome? How do you define sustainability?"

These internal deliberations not only influenced the project design, but determined what it was envisaged would be left behind once the project had been completed. As the Winrock interviewee said: "... sustainability exit[ing] is not just walking away. It is walking away leaving an agreed upon result, and an agreed upon level of self-performance and self-capacity that that is where you decided you were going to go. And if that is not there then you have got nothing."

Thus, CREL team members examined project operations in order to understand the role they and other implementing organizations were playing. For example, facilitating dialogue between local communities and the BFD – an essential project activity – was seen in a different light. CREL, with organizational sustainability in mind, asked itself who within the CMOs would take responsibility for facilitating conversations with the BFD when the project ended. This then prompted the question of whether the chosen individuals had the requisite skills and experiences, and what training would be necessary to help with this. In this way, achieving organizational sustainability and exiting became almost synonymous.

Eventually, Winrock arrived at the understanding that sustainability involved CMOs protecting and sustaining "... biologically significant ecosystem units" while "... improving the lives of people dependent on those areas."³⁷ It was also decided that, due to CMOs being voluntary organizations, a different set of sustainability indicators was needed. In the first iteration, CREL developed a set of 102 individual questions for assessment purposes. However, CREL deemed this unwieldy for regular monitoring, as it "... lacked intuitive appeal as a tool or output to be shared with co-management stakeholders in guiding their capacity development."³⁸ After a participatory process with communities and national NGOs; five sustainability criteria emerged, each with its own set of indicators: legitimacy (three indicators); organizational capacity (four indicators); governance and inclusiveness (four indicators); adaptive management (four indicators); and resource mobilization, i.e. finances (two indicators).³⁹ These concepts formed the basis of CREL programmatic and organizational capacity development training efforts with CMOs.

CHANGING THE LEGAL REGIME AROUND FORESTS

One report suggests that adaptation solutions to climate change have not been successful for several reasons, one of which is that “... such participatory, community-led actions are not sustainable unless they are supported by public policies, strategies and plans, and implemented.”⁴⁰ Other research asserts that “... [c]reating a favourable policy environment assists the emergence of functional co-management arrangements.”⁴¹ With these issues in mind, CREL advocated for changes in the legal regime surrounding forests.

While these efforts had begun during the NSP and IPAC periods, during the CREL period such advocacy and influencing processes increased exponentially. The result of these efforts was the passage of the 2017 Protected Area Management Rules and the 2016 Environmentally Critical Area Rules, which gave CMOs formal legal recognition. As noted by a representative from a national partner: “Then when the CREL period came the main objective was how this institutional formation – this coordination committee, CMC – can have state recognition. That is the time when we got the gazette, where the government recognizes them. It is a law now. You have to give some part of your earning, which is coming from some activities and 50 percent of that should go to the CMC so they can operate by themselves.”

CREL went about achieving this change in several ways. First, it assembled a government liaison team, which included senior personnel with extensive government experience, to advocate with the various departments about issues of policy. Although not an unusual practice in Bangladesh, USAID was impressed with Winrock’s recruitment approach and how the team managed to improve relations with the BFD. Winrock’s leadership recognized that the CMOs’ sustainability was contingent on CREL’s relationship with the government bureaucracy. In the case of the BFD, the relationship was initially strained, “... due to unmet promises and lapsed relationships from the last year of IPAC and during the design of CREL.”⁴² The senior leadership at Winrock nevertheless reminded the CREL team that, despite any frustrations that might arise from working with government departments, having them onboard ultimately meant “... life is going to be a lot easier.” Once CREL obtained government buy-in, it got “...

everybody into lockstep, working together in a very efficient and a very compatible manner.” This was not easy, with bureaucratic inertia within the BFD acting against the wholesale internalization of co-management and the devolution of power it embodies.⁴³

While CREL’s leadership accepted that passing the law on PAs was imperative, the legislation also needed to be internalized by various government departments, each of which had their own internal directives. As the CMOs are quasi-governmental organizations, in order to ensure their sustainability it was necessary to have input and continued involvement from various departments, most notably the BFD.⁴⁴ This made generating government buy-in to the CREL project vital. CREL, therefore, took the necessary time to develop formal agreements, while also conducting informal meetings to keep the various departments abreast of developments and garner their input to workplans. This ongoing dialogue about the rules and guidelines governing the co-management of PAs socialized the policy within the government even before it was officially submitted.⁴⁵ Importantly, though the CREL project was completed in the middle of 2018, the BFD department secretary has continued to lead internal conversations about the sustainability of CMOs, which has lent the initiative significant clout. Indeed, due to the success of the co-management model with PAs, the BFD has since chosen to apply it to Reserve Forests, which have special protection.

The second important component of the PA Rules pertains to a CMO’s financial well-being, specifically: “... a provision that the Government will allocate funds to CMCs based on revenues collected in the previous year.”⁴⁶ Each CMO will be entitled to charge a fee to tourists and other individuals visiting the site, with the funds raised given to the Ministry of Finance, which later allocates them back to the BFD. The BFD is, in turn, required to divide funds equally between itself and the various individual CMOs. The Chief Conservator of Forests signs off on the distribution with the district forest officers (DFOs), allocating each CMO its allotted portion of funding. DFOs must ensure that CMOs are spending their funds according to the guidelines developed by the BFD. Further assurance for the mechanism’s implementation comes through an audit of DFOs.⁴⁷ The benefit-sharing mechanisms and legal terms of

the PA Rules bind the different actors to one another through accountability mechanisms: the BFD can hold CMOs accountable through assessment and financial processes, while CMOs can hold the government to account in terms of the distribution of funds.

The financial mechanism alters a community's livelihood relationship with the forest from one of exploitation to one of preservation and entrepreneurship. This is a crucial source of revenue for a CMO, which it can use to pay the accountant and members of the CPG, and for reinvestment into various income-generating projects. Although it took 15 years for the law to be passed, it is a source of pride for the various organizations that worked on the project, and it also a reference point for communities – both groups continuously speak of it and can lean on its clauses to put pressure on the bureaucratic system. However, when the research visits took place in late January 2019, CMOs had yet to receive their funds from the previous year. This is because CMOs only receive their money after the Ministry of Finance, as the central clearing house for government revenue, has completed its budget. The upshot of the delay was that CMOs were somewhat in limbo.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

CREL put considerable effort into developing the CMOs' capacities in long- and medium-term planning, as well as in financial management. The first part of the process was training CMOs in how to plan for the long-term protection of the forest, and to help them develop – as mandated by the PA Rules – a ten-year plan of activities to be submitted to the BFD. The plans are then matched with the BFD's Protected Area Management plans. According to interviews at the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, this practice began with CREL, rather than with either NSP or IPAC. Additionally, CMOs are mandated to produce Annual Development Plans, which are "... the vehicle whereby CMCs propose activities and levels of funding."⁴⁸ Aside from the mandate, planning acts as an exercise in discipline, obliging CMOs to think ahead, consider various scenarios, and set goals. This serves as an energizing force.

Additionally, each CMO is meant to manage an annual self-assessment process using the 17 sustainability indicators co-developed by the implementing

consortium and communities. A member of CREL's leadership explained the need for self-assessment: "Are you still sustainable according to the definition to which your capacity was developed? Are you still sustainable? Are you slipping? Are you making progress? Unless that is assessed, we do not know."

Should a CMO determine it is lacking in any one indicator, members can deliberate on how to improve their performance. Moreover, the BFD is mandated to monitor whether CMOs are following up on this. Indeed, the PA Rules require that CMOs submit their assessments to the BFD, which publishes the results and rewards the best CMOs. This creates an added financial and competitive incentive for CMOs to excel. It is therefore not merely a box-ticking exercise, but rather a means for a CMO to reflect on its current status, especially in relation to its long-term plan and goals.

CREL also sought to develop CMOs' financial management capacities. Specifically, as a member of Winrock's senior management reported, they had "... three rounds of small grants to the CMOs and those ranged anywhere from US\$5,000 to about US\$24,999 ... And those grants were to help them implement elements of their annual development plan, as well as build their capacity toward those 17 sustainability indicators. So the grants program was directed at helping them achieve a passing score in those 17 indicators categories that we had defined, and, secondly, to give them experience in managing money, and, thirdly, those grants helped them develop income-generating activities."

In this way, and through various planning and financial exercises, CREL addressed the Chief Conservator of Forests' concerns about the sustainability of the CMOs.

OWNERSHIP OF CMOs BY COMMUNITIES

Aside from technical skills, the CREL project fostered a sense of ownership of the forest among communities empowered by CMOs, making them feel that "... the forests around them are by the community and for the community."⁴⁹ This mindset aids the sustainability of CMOs. During interviews in Hazarikhil, it was stated that, prior to CREL, villagers lacked this sense of responsibility toward the forest – they did not think of it as "theirs." As far as they were

concerned, it was government land and therefore the government's responsibility. Previously, for example, if villagers saw somebody cutting down a tree, they would not attempt to stop them. Given the forest was not considered village property, even if someone had objected, their opinion would have been deemed void. Following CREL's intervention, however, communities gained a sense of social status, legacy, and pride in their mission. As a result, communities now felt willing and able to summon the police (a member of whom is part of the CMC) and, with the support of the BFD, bring court cases against illegal loggers and poachers.

Additionally, while recognizing that the funding came from USAID, CMOs even so felt ownership of the project and its accomplishments, with the source of the money deemed secondary to the fact that the work was theirs. Asked whether they were waiting for a follow-up project to begin, a member of the CMO in Chunati said: "Projects will come, projects will go; we cannot wait for them. Whatever we need to do we will do." A major challenge facing the CMO of Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary is the planned Chittagong-Cox's Bazaar railway line. Despite the likely damage the trainline will do to the forest ecosystem, the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary CMO is prepared to continue with its work and has not lost hope.

Another method utilized by CREL to ensure the sustainability of CMOs was to raise awareness about the environment among CMO members and surrounding villages. CODEC and the other national partners conducted a series of training sessions on the environment for VCF members. These bodies, as mandated by the PA Rules, are meant to spread this awareness within their respective communities. When interviewed, the leadership of the CMO in Hazarikhil pointed out that for a long time people had relied on the forest's resources for their livelihoods, and despite Hazarikhil being declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 2010, the local community had no notion that they needed to conserve the forest. CREL taught them about the environmental impact of logging and the importance of conservation, helping foster an awareness embodied in their oft-repeated expression: "If the forest survives, we survive." A similar sentiment could be seen in Chunati, confirmed by survey research conducted in 2015,⁵⁰ though the origins of this understanding could be traced

back further to the efforts of NSP and IPAC, which were then continued under CREL. One individual, for example, tied environmental conservation to a religious ethic.⁵¹

Other research, conducted in Khulna and other sites, reinforces this point about the impact of raised community awareness regarding conservation, with one participant asserting: "Due to the CREL project we have been able to understand the necessity and importance of protecting Sundarban [a mangrove area in the Bay of Bengal]. CREL has taught us that Sundarban rescues us from natural calamities like cyclones and floods. So we have to stop cutting down trees in Sundarban."⁵² Another participant in Nijhum Dwip added: "CREL has trained us with a complete knowledge about how trees provide us with oxygen and why it is very important for us."⁵³

Environmental knowledge, once internalized within local societies, fosters support for the continued existence of CMOs as a means to manage and conserve the forest. While this is undoubtedly a long-term process, it is anticipated that this knowledge will translate into a set of environmental norms, which will in turn become environmental practice – in this case, political practice manifested through support for the conservation activities of the CMOs. This is, of course, contingent on their economic sustainability, which highlights the importance of funding from the BFD, and the alternative income-generation activities (AIGAs) CREL helped establish.

CREL put extensive efforts into these AIGAs, aimed at villagers who had previously depended on the forest for their livelihood.⁵⁴ Non-extractive livelihoods were taught, including aquaculture, cow rearing, vegetable cultivation, handicrafts, and other enterprises. All of these activities are climate resilient and are meant to decouple community livelihoods from exploiting forest resources. According to CODEC personnel, there was no hard and fast rule about training, and overall they provided 22 types of training. However, as was pointed out during interviews, they did not impose training packages on individuals. Rather, through consultations with CMOs, as well as asking individuals what professions they would like to develop, they determined different areas of expertise within villages and sought to amplify them.⁵⁵ The Vice President of the Hazarikhil CMO saw this

dual effort as key to the CREL project's success. The consultative process, and the resultant training opportunities, ensured that the AIGAs would be part of the fabric of their lives. Collectively, these activities ease the pressure on the forest, while also making the protection work of CMOs easier.

Overall, the story of CREL's development of CMOs is one in which sustainability went hand in hand with Winrock International's programmatic transition. The financial, political, and legal elements augmented and reinforced one another, creating a sustainable initiative that represented a win for all the stakeholders involved.

5. KEY LESSONS

For INGOs thinking about transitions to locally led development, the overarching lesson to take away from the CREL project is that significant efforts must be put into thinking very early on about the organizational sustainability of local entities in their own context.

Organizational sustainability should be understood within the context of the social, financial, political, and legal system in which it exists. Organizations exist in a constantly changing social, bureaucratic, financial, and political context, which makes influencing that system a crucial element in cementing a project's structures. Power mapping is important for INGOs to understand entry points in local systems, and specifically, in the Bangladesh CREL case, the concept and implementation of the co-management model. The co-management approach recognizes that empowering local organizations and sustainability go hand in hand.

Changes, instigated by CREL, that helped create an enabling environment for CMOs, include: raised awareness at the community level about environmental concerns, meaning that CMOs have become a key vehicle for remedying environmental and social issues; the transformation of existing power structures, both official and unofficial, into a coherent whole, turning CMOs into forums where stakeholders have a platform to translate their preferences into outcomes; an improvement in the bureaucratic system in which CMOs operate, through policy socialization work with the BFD that changed the internal cultural toward one of co-management rather than top-down decision-making; and the passing into legislation, aided by advocacy efforts in Dhaka, of the PA Rules, which recognized CMOs and codified the financial redistribution of the income they earned from managing the forest.

Continuous consultations with national partners and local communities is imperative.

For INGOs contemplating transitioning to community-led initiatives, iterative consultations with both communities and national implementing partners should be placed front and center. Such "feedback loops" allow for constant communication from both sides, without which a project runs the risk of becoming a side activity set apart from the everyday lives of the local community, rather than embedded within its social fabric. For example, through consultations with national partners and local communities, the CREL team worked to understand what precisely sustainability meant in the context of the CMOs. Rather than imposing a collection of sustainability metrics, CREL recognized that the CMOs were unique in their role and requirements, and instead developed fit-for-purpose indicators in close coordination with local actors.

Similarly, capacity development activities were devised through a consultative process with the communities, making it far more likely they would be internalized and put to use. Whether

regarding AIGAs or individual capacities, there was a concerted effort to help those within CMOs develop skills they deemed useful. Moreover, training increased the technical capacities CMOs in terms of planning and financial management acumen, while also creating social capital within communities. Members of CMOs interviewed for this case study felt empowered as representatives of their communities, and by the role that they now played in conserving the forest.

It is better to work with available local instruments, such as co-management, rather than imposing external ones. CREL sought to remedy a longstanding problem in Bangladesh, namely, conflicts between the BFD and local communities over the use of forest resources. In this case, a foreign solution was not modified to fit a local context. Rather, the concept of co-management had a history going back decades in Bangladesh, had been developed by Bangladeshis, and – though not being ingrained in the bureaucratic culture – had been formally been adopted by the BFD as its approach to the management of forest PAs. Co-management arrangements, under the name “social forestry,” had already been implemented on government land, which communities had long relied on a source of livelihood. The fact that the BFD and the government were not only familiar with the co-management concept but had developed and implemented it themselves, meant that CREL did not need to attempt to impose a novel concept. Rather, it worked with what was already available and focused on facilitating bureaucratic change within the BFD. Co-management, easily recognizable to the BFD and taught in its colleges, was therefore a more viable model for translating policy into actual practice.

Thus, understanding policy and social mechanisms already available in-country, and building on these as part of an intervention, is more likely to generate buy-in than a foreign construct that may provoke bureaucratic push-back. Similar thinking by INGOs about the intellectual policy environment they encounter in different countries can aid transitions to locally led development, and the longevity of interventions after a project’s closure.

Equal partnerships should be created with national NGOs in order to gain both trust and buy-in. Bangladeshi NGO personnel interviewed for the case study frequently argued that there was ample capacity in the country, and that all they needed was funding to push ahead with the work. They did not want to be micro-managed by a foreign NGO, an approach that only serves to heighten existing power dynamics and imbalances. In contrast, the CREL project stands as an example of a healthy relationship between international and national NGOs. In this case, Winrock International recognized that it was better served focusing on advocacy activities in Dhaka, trusting CODEC – which already had ample expertise in biodiversity and strong ties to local communities – to focus on implementation at site locations. As a result, CODEC staff felt empowered to do the work they were good at. Such mutual trust is not easy to come by – efforts to develop relationships with national NGOs not only have considerable utility in the short and long run, but serve as the foundation for cultural and behavioral changes that require years to achieve. Such relationships also serve as psychosocial support for communities after a project has ended.

The key lesson for INGOs working with national partners is that, where possible, efforts should be exerted to nurture organizational relationships beyond the duration of a project. Such relationship management fosters trust and respect, acknowledging the potential pitfalls of a project ending without the national NGO having been provided with the necessary information or capacity to continue its community-led work. Moreover, the case of CODEC demonstrates that learning is not a one-sided process: national NGOs can be in possession of knowledge that is simply unavailable to INGOs. Empowering national NGOs to act on such knowledge and demonstrating trust in their agency can foster more productive projects, serving as a basis for locally led development.

ENDNOTES

1. CODEC was the national partner working in the Chittagong and Khulna regions.
2. World Bank, “The World Bank in Bangladesh.” www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview
3. International Centre for Not-For-Profit Law, “Civic Freedom Monitor: Bangladesh.” www.icnl.org/research/monitor/bangladesh.html
4. Banks prohibit the opening of an account by any organization not in possession of a valid registration, and will not disburse foreign funds without prior approval from the NGO Affairs Bureau and a letter of intent from the donor. To register with the NGO Affairs Bureau, the organization must submit – in addition to an application – particulars of their bank account, a letter of intent from the donor, a copy of an annual activity report, and a copy of a financial audit report. International Centre for Not-For-Profit Law (2019). International Centre for Not-For-Profit Law, “Civic Freedom Monitor: Bangladesh.” www.icnl.org/research/monitor/bangladesh.html
5. The realities of declining funding were evident, according to some interviewees, in the number of NGOs presently functional compared to the equivalent number from a decade ago. Given NGOs need to declare any foreign funding they receive, and that the number of declarations has decreased substantially, it is likely that a large portion of NGOs are sitting idle.
6. Asian Development Bank, “Overview of NGOs and Civil Society: Bangladesh,” Civil Society Briefs, 2008, p. 7. Of course, these larger organizations are not without issues.
7. Whether this was due to political connections or not is something to be considered, especially given how opaque government selection processes often are. One interviewee noted that this was often the case, while another said they tried to avoid government work due to both the bureaucratic process and its political aspects.
8. One of the initiators of the concept, who institutionalized it, was Bangladeshi professor Muhammed Younis, of the University of Chittagong.
9. Microfinance, however, is not without its controversies. See David Lewis, Bangladesh: Politics, Economy and Civil Society, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 123.
10. He identified what he called “good corporates” (companies willing to support development activities and consider long-term partnerships with NGOs) and created partnerships with local steel companies, multinational banks, online ecommerce companies, as well as energy companies.
11. For example, having developed the organization’s common vulnerabilities and exposure (CVE) capacities, he several years later won a global competition for funding from an international organization.
12. He cited the Jaago Foundation as an example of an organization that had been successful at internal fundraising. See Jaago Foundation homepage. <https://jaago.com.bd/>
13. He used the example of the refugee crisis, with the government mandating that 25 percent of project funding from international organizations be diverted to host communities in the Cox’s Bazaar areas.
14. Of course, he recognized that philosophical differences as well as strategic priorities played a part in the decision-making of INGOs and, accordingly, community demands were not always met.
15. The north-east Haors and forests (based in Srimongol and Sylhet); the south-west, focused on the Sundarbans (based in Khulna); and the south-east forests and coastal wetlands (based in Chattogram and Cox’s Bazar). It also engaged in limited activity in Modhupur, in the central regions of Bangladesh.
16. Some – for example, Hazarikhil and Chunati – had been designated Wildlife Sanctuaries, while others are national parks or game reserves.
17. Nasim Aziz, “Protocol for Work Plan Monitoring – Nishorgo Support Project, Bangladesh,” Nature Conservation Management (NACOM), 2004, p. 1.
18. Lawachhara National Park, Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Satchari Reserve Forest, Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, and Teknaf Game Reserve.
19. Winrock International, “Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) – Final Performance Report 2012–2018,” 2018, p. 8

20. Paul M. Thompson, Ruhul Mohaiman Chowdhury, Md. Shams Uddin, and Utpal Dutta, "Capacity and Sustainability of Co-management Organizations," CREL, 2018, p. 18.
21. A. H. M. R. Sarker and E. Røskaft, "Human Attitudes Towards the Conservation of Protected Areas: A Case Study From Four Protected Areas in BANGLADESH," *Oryx* (2011) 45(3):391–400, cited in T. K. Nath, M. Jashimuddin, and M Inoue, *Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) in Bangladesh*, Switzerland: Springer, 2016.
22. M. S. Rahman and L. Giessen, "The Power of Public Bureaucracies: Forest-Related Climate Change Policies in Bangladesh (1992–2014)," *Climate Policy* (2017) 17(7): 928.
23. Paul M. Thompson, Ruhul Mohaiman Chowdhury, Md. Shams Uddin, and Utpal Dutta, "Capacity and Sustainability of Co-management Organizations," CREL, 2018.
24. G. Borrini-Feyerabend, M. T. Farver, J. C. Nguingiri, and V. A. Ndangang, *Co-management of Natural Resources: Organising, Negotiating and Learning-by-Doing*, Heidelberg: Kasperek Verlag, 2000, p. 1.
25. Union Parishad are the smallest rural administrative and local government units in Bangladesh.
26. The co-management committee, for example, would include the chairman of the local Union Parishad and a female member, and members from the Department of Agricultural Extension, Department of Fisheries, Department of Livestock, Department of Environment, Department of Youth Development member, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Co-operatives, and Department of Primary Education.
27. In some cases, the size of the PA meant that two, or even three, CMOs were necessary to manage the forest.
28. The vision is for CMOs to eventually become local implementing partners for both the government of Bangladesh and donor programs. Winrock International, "Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) – Final Performance Report 2012–2018," 2018, p. 10.
29. The Equator prize is given for outstanding local initiatives that work to advance sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. Equator Initiative, "About the Equator Initiative and the Equator Prize." <https://prize.equatorinitiative.org/about-the-prize/>
30. Additionally, the Union Parishad is meant to provide two members from the local administration to the CMO.
31. P. Sultana and P. Thompson, "Natural Resource Conflicts and Community Organizations in Bangladesh," in *International Workshop on Collective Action, Property Rights, and Conflict in Natural Resources Management*, Siem Reap, Cambodia, June (Vol. 28), 2010.
32. S. B. Muzaffar, M. A. Islam, D. S. Kabir, M. H. Khan, F. U. Ahmed, G. W. Chowdhury, M. A. Aziz, S. Chakma, I. Jahan, "The Endangered Forests of Bangladesh: Why the Process of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity is Not Working," *Biodiversity and Conservation* (2011) 20(7):1595.
33. T. K. Nath, M. Jashimuddin, and M Inoue, *Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) in Bangladesh*, Switzerland: Springer, 2016.
34. Winrock International, "Final Report on CREL Transition Grant Program, Dhaka, Bangladesh: Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL)," 2015.
35. S. B. Muzaffar, M. A. Islam, D. S. Kabir, M. H. Khan, F. U. Ahmed, G. W. Chowdhury, M. A. Aziz, S. Chakma, I. Jahan, "The Endangered Forests of Bangladesh: Why the Process of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity is Not Working," *Biodiversity and Conservation* (2011) 20(7):1595.
36. Winrock International (2014) *Defining, Measuring and Validating CMO Sustainability*, Dhaka, Bangladesh: Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL).
37. Paul M. Thompson, Ruhul Mohaiman Chowdhury, Md. Shams Uddin, and Utpal Dutta, "Capacity and Sustainability of Co-management Organizations," CREL, 2018, p. 20.
38. Paul M. Thompson, Ruhul Mohaiman Chowdhury, Md. Shams Uddin, and Utpal Dutta, "Capacity and Sustainability of Co-management Organizations," CREL, 2018, p. 20.
39. For further descriptions of each of these, see Paul M. Thompson, Ruhul Mohaiman Chowdhury, Md. Shams Uddin, and Utpal Dutta, "Capacity and Sustainability of Co-management Organizations," CREL, 2018, p. 20.
40. Samiya A. Selim, Ayesha Khanom, Joy Bhowmik, and Mubashshira Rahman, "Evidence of Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Bangladesh," CREL, 2018, p. 6.

41. F. Berkes, "Evolution of Co-management: Role of Knowledge Generation, Bridging Organizations and Social Learning," *Journal of Environmental Management* (2009) 90(5):1693.
42. Winrock International, "Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) – Final Performance Report 2012–2018," 2018, p. 25.
43. Winrock International, "Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) – Final Performance Report 2012–2018," 2018, p. 9.
44. CODEC was able to introduce Peace Direct to the Conservator of Forests of the Chittagong division. He had been involved with IPAC from 2010 onwards, rising to his current position from being a local officer. Consequently, while he admitted there were challenges with respect to PAs, he was fully committed to the concept of co-management. When Peace Direct visited him, his very first comment was how grateful he was for the efforts of USAID, which were crucial in passing the 2017 Protected Area Management Rules, the legal basis for CMOs.
45. Winrock International, "Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) – Final Performance Report 2012–2018," 2018, p. 17.
46. Winrock International, "Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) – Final Performance Report 2012–2018," 2018, p. 23
47. According to one CREL interviewee, DFOs pushed back against this prospect but were overruled.
48. Collectively, these are supposed to provide "... a comprehensive and interconnected set of milestones that lay out the long-term strategy for conservation and NRM through co-management in these PAs." Winrock International, "Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) – Final Performance Report 2012–2018," 2018, p. 9.
49. While it was published in 2016, the data and analyses predate that, and therefore the work of CREL is not included in its entirety. T. K. Nath, M. Jashimuddin, and M Inoue, *Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) in Bangladesh*, Switzerland: Springer, 2016.
50. T. K. Nath, M. Jashimuddin, and M Inoue, *Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) in Bangladesh*, Switzerland: Springer, 2016.
51. The Vice President of the Chunati CMO thinks that saving trees is the "sawab" (right) thing to do – Allah is pleased when one saves trees. This was initial motivation for wanting to join the CMC.
52. Samiya A. Selim, Ayesha Khanom, Joy Bhowmik, and Mubashshira Rahman, "Evidence of Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Bangladesh," CREL, 2018, p. 19.
53. Samiya A. Selim, Ayesha Khanom, Joy Bhowmik, and Mubashshira Rahman, "Evidence of Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Bangladesh," CREL, 2018, p. 20.
54. For further discussion of their financial situation, see Paul M. Thompson, Ruhul Mohaiman Chowdhury, Md. Shams Uddin, and Utpal Dutta, "Capacity and Sustainability of Co-management Organizations," CREL, 2018, p. 45.
55. For example, those with expertise in net-making were given further training in that skill, while those wanting to keep cows were given that opportunity. Communities received the training in the areas they felt most comfortable in. This point is further confirmed by Samiya A. Selim, Ayesha Khanom, Joy Bhowmik, and Mubashshira Rahman, "Evidence of Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Bangladesh," CREL, 2018.