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## DRAFT Final Report

Mid-Term Review of the preparatory phase of the project  
Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor

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## Abbreviations

BELA	Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association
CBFM	Community Based Fisheries Management
CNRS	Centre for Natural Resources Studies
DC	Deputy Commissioner
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GUS	Gonounnayan Sangstha (local NGO)
HHBP	Household Business Plan
IC	InterCooperation
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LEAF	Livelihood, Empowerment and Agroforestry
MACH	Management of Aquatic ecosystems through Community Husbandry
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forest
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PSMU	Programme Support Management Unit (IUCN)
PRMP	Participatory Resource Management Plans
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
TH	Tanguar Haor
THMC	Tanguar Haor Management Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TATA	Technological Assistance for Rural Advancement
THMC	Tanguar Haor Management Committee
THMA	Tanguar Haor Management Authority
UAC	Union ad hoc Committee
Upazilla	Literally “sub-district”, administrative unit below the District level

## Executive summary

The review of the preparatory phase of the project “Community Based Management of Tanguar Haor” took place in early 2008. Its purpose was to *to assess the real possibilities of the project*

- *in achieving relevant results* in an effective and efficient way within the projected time frame
- *to deliver elements for the decision making of the involved partners on the future orientation* of the joint endeavour.

The consultant spent 3 days in Tanguar Haor and 5 days in Dhaka discussing and observing with community, government, and implementing agency stakeholders.

Overall progress against plans as outlined in the project document, PIP and logical framework is good. The process of planning, mobilisation, training, information gathering and conceptualisation of project approaches is very well documented by the project. The project extended its awareness raising activities from 25 to 88 villages and livelihood support from 200 to 600 beneficiaries.

Negotiations concerning the definition and establishment of a co-management system have progressed well at local, district and central levels. Union ad hoc Committees formed by Tanguar haor communities have the potential to be co-management partners for the Tanguar Haor Management Committee established by government at the District level. The capacity for dialogue and decision will be tested through the pilot harvesting of fish to be organised before end of April 2008.

The development of income generating activities based on resource harvesting should begin in the next months and should be monitored closely both to ensure that the benefits flow as agreed and that the harvest remains well within pre-established rules (size of catch, nets, timing etc.).

The project has clear potential to provide substantial benefits to poor people and communities as well as to government. The co-management processes to be tested in Tanguar Haor could be transferable to many other water bodies in Bangladesh. These water bodies are currently under the Ministry of Lands and exploited through the leasehold system – which generally excludes the poor.

It is recommended that SDC support should continue, and a next phase designed that takes account of the following recommendations:

- **Main Objectives:** SDC assistance should focus on 2 major objectives: a) Elaboration and consolidation of Co-management model including the operationalization of the concept of cost-recovery / benefits sharing, and b) consolidation of community self-help and consensual representation mechanisms. IUCN should take a lead, in consultation with Government and other partners, in securing additional interest in the region to address additional questions requiring substantial additional resources. Such questions include: improving access to health and education services; managing siltation and pollution from external sources; development of tourism; etc.

- **Hurry slowly:** The formalisation of Co-Management arrangements – encompassing definition of the representational modalities, attributes, scope of work and rules of procedure of the Co-Management body, cost recovery / benefits sharing modalities for different resources and eventual regulations concerning zoning (sanctuaries for example), sustainable yields – should proceed methodically and be closely linked to practice. The formal establishment of a Co-Management Body should be a two to three year target. At the same time, there need to be milestones established and concrete benefits should be flowing to the stakeholders and measured from the first months.
- **Co-Management Body:** The establishment of the Union ad hoc Committees is a rational way to organise a community-based counterpart to the District based Tanguar Haor Management Committee. The four UACs will need some way of coalescing to formulate a coherent representation towards the THMC. Careful consideration should be given to formulating an adequate mechanism for this. It is not clear that a structure, at least in the short term is needed. Rather a process / procedure is required that will allow UACs to convene and consult in preparation for discussions with THMC. The process for elaborating community positions would be the basis upon which to decide, in due course, on community representation in a “Tanguar Haor Management Authority”. In this connection a mechanism for ensuring coordination with and involvement of Union Parishad and Upazilla officials in the Management Authority will also be required.
- **TH Boundaries:** The boundaries of TH, from a Ramsar point of view, from a socio-economic point of view and from the point of view of ecological and hydrological dynamics need to be considered and materialised – on the ground in the case of the Ramsar site and in management terms for socio-economic and ecological parameters.
- **Scientific Advisory Group:** Establish a scientific advisory committee to advise decision-makers at Project Steering Committee level and at Co-Management Body level on scientific and technical matters. A workplan and operational modalities should be for this group should be established during the preparatory phase.
- **Conflict resolution:** Conflicts within and between communities will arise as the practice of granting access to resources is expanded. Conflict resolution training should be offered to partner NGO, project field staff and probably also to Village Committee members and Union ad hoc Committee members. More substantial and more complex conflicts are also likely to arise as TH management begins to address questions such as the competing requirements in terms of water management between agriculture and fisheries, issues of external pollution (sulphur) sources etc. For these major conflicts, external conflict resolution skills / advice may be useful.
- **Management:** The quantity and intensity of the management, coordination and supervision effort required will be greater even in an eventual development phase. IUCN should ensure that adequate resources, both at field level and at Dhaka level, are allocated to coordination, supervision and management. The effort needed to elaborate the full scale of regulations to make the co-management process work for the benefit of the communities while ensuring a flow of revenue to government and guaranteeing sustainability of ecological processes and resources will be substantial.

## Introduction

Tanguar Haor, located in the district of Sunamganj in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh, is a unique wetland ecosystem of national and international importance covering about 10,500 hectares. It provides subsistence and livelihoods to about 56,000 people living in 88 villages situated within the Tanguar Haor Ramsar site and in its periphery. The Tanguar Haor plays an important role in fish production locally and nationally as it functions as a 'mother fishery' for the country.

In 1999, the Government of Bangladesh, recognising the ecological importance of the area and the over-exploitation of resources declared the Tanguar Haor an “Ecologically Critical Area”. In 2002 the Tanguar Haor was listed as the country’s second RAMSAR site – wetland of international importance. The management of the haor was transferred from the Ministry of Land to the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2001.

The MoEF, under the National Conservation Strategy Implementation project, sponsored a number of studies to determine the potential in natural resources of Tanguar Haor and to identify the causes of observed resource depletion. These studies identified lack of income and employment opportunities for the people of the basin (who live isolated on islands during the entire rainy season) as a major cause of resource depletion. The swamp forests have diminished as local people harvest wood for use as fuel, reed beds have depleted due to unsustainable harvesting practices and the fish stocks had been seriously diminished due to over-exploitation by leaseholders. The lack of any system for recognising customary rights of use and related management schemes has alienated the haor residents and precluded the emergence of management schemes that could ensure that exploitation levels are sustainable.

With these observations, the Government of Bangladesh took three important steps:

1. It terminated the allocation of fishing rights to the highest bidding leaseholder, and suspended all fishing except for small scale fishing in the immediate vicinity of haor villages for subsistence purposes. This suspension continues to this day, and surveys by the Sunamganj divisional fisheries officer would indicate that fish stocks are beginning to recover.
2. It prepared a comprehensive management plan for Tanguar Haor, introducing the concept of “wise-use” of wetland resources based on the wise-use principles of the RAMSAR convention.
3. In 2003, put in place with its own resources and under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner, Sunamganj District, a protection force consisting of District Magistrates, Police Officers and Border patrol officers, to enforce a moratorium on the exploitation of Tanguar Haor natural resources.

Subsequently, the MoEF, together with the World Conservation Union IUCN Bangladesh office, developed a project proposal titled “Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor” and approached different development partners.

SDC considers Sunamganj as one of its priority working area because of its special poverty and vulnerability, with already some ongoing projects. When IUCN and MoEF approached SDC for funding, SDC responded by supporting an independent and international expert to review and recommend strategic options. Based on the report of the consultant, three stages project were foreseen:

- Preparatory stage (18 months)
- Development stage (36 to 60 months)
- Consolidation stage (36 months)

The preparatory stage would gather both social and scientific information on the area and pilot co-management processes as well as livelihood options. Based on that, a detailed action strategy proposal would be prepared, which would be implemented during the development stage. The consolidation phase will ensure a sustainable mechanism for protection and wise use of Tanguar Haor and also influence policy. Based on the review recommendations, SDC decided to support the Preparatory stage and accordingly, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the MoEF and SDC as well as between SDC and IUCN during December 2006 – January 2007. The preparatory phase is being implemented by IUCN Bangladesh Country Office. Inter-cooperation (IC) is providing backstopping support for livelihood issues, local NGOs CNRS and GUS are field level implementers, while BELA is providing support on policy and legal issues and CNRS and TARA have conducted technical studies.

SDC decided that another review led by the same international consultant would be undertaken around January/February 2008. The decision for SDC to support the project further beyond the preparatory phase would be based on this second review.

This is the report of the second review.

### ***Timing and Schedule***

The review took place between February 24 and March 4, 2008. It is noted that this coincides with month 12 of an 18 month preparatory / inception phase (3 month delay in start up from December 2006 to March 2007 and 3 month extension from May to August 2008) and that all project activities have not been completed.

After an initial review of documentation<sup>1</sup> and briefing with the SDC Cooperation Office and a preliminary meeting with IUCN and InterCooperation management in Dhaka (24 February), the consultant proceeded to Sunamganj. During three days in the field (February 25 – 27) the consultant met<sup>2</sup> with communities concerned with the use and management of TH natural resources, elected community group leaders, District and Upazilla Administrators, project and partner organisation staff. Returning to Dhaka, the consultant met with senior Ministry of Environment and Water staff, IUCN and IC management, partner organisations and SDC officers to share and validate views and impressions. A draft report was produced during the final two days and main findings and recommendations presented verbally to the Ministry of Environment and Waters, IUCN, IC, and SDC senior staff in a meeting hosted at the SDC office on 4 March.

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<sup>1</sup> See list of documents consulted in Annex 1

<sup>2</sup> See list of persons met in Annex 2

The final report was produced by the consultant after the de-briefing. It presents his views and recommendations.

## Objectives of the review and structure of the report

The Terms of Reference (see Annex 4 for full TOR) for the review were drafted in consultation with the main project partners (MoEF, IUCN and IC). The two main objectives of the review 2008 were *to assess the real possibilities of the project*

- *in achieving relevant results* in an effective and efficient way within the projected time frame
- *to deliver elements for the decision making of the involved partners on the future orientation* of the joint endeavour.

In conducting this assessment, the consultant was asked to consider 14 key questions. Initial findings / observations of the review are presented below according to these key questions<sup>3</sup>. Following a presentation of the observations / findings on activities of the current phase, analytical elements and recommendations are synthesised and presented according to the headings of the TOR.

## Observations and findings

### Is project delivery satisfactory?

Overall progress against plans as outlined in the project document, PIP and logical framework is good. The project period is not yet over (also taking into account delayed start up and 3 month extension of project period to September 2008) and work as planned has therefore not been entirely completed. It is also worthy of note that the process of planning, mobilisation, training, information gathering and conceptualisation of project approaches is very well documented<sup>4</sup> by the project.

It has also been noted by the mission – expressed by IUCN – that the volume of work for the IUCN Dhaka Office, in terms of coordination, planning, ongoing monitoring and assessment, and reporting has been underestimated by IUCN. The pressure on field level staff was also increased due to the decision (well founded) of the project to extend its awareness raising activities from 25 to 88 villages and livelihood support from 200 to 600 beneficiaries. Workload at field level was thus also greater than planned for.

A brief review of progress Output by Output is given in Annex 3.

The following general remarks concerning progress to date and work remaining can be made:

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<sup>3</sup> See TOR in Annex 4 for full text of questions

<sup>4</sup> see list of documents consulted in Annex 1



## **Objective 1: Selected Communities of Tanguar Haor have capacity and organisation to participate in pilot co-management activities**

Early project experience, and particularly intensive period of discussion and study visits to other community-based projects involving PSMU, IC, field NGOs (GUS, CNRS), and local communities led to two major adjustments in the project. Both these adjustments appear well justified. These are:

- Extending sensitization and explanation efforts (explanation of the project and its intentions) to encompass all 88 villages directly or indirectly depending on TH resources. Originally sensitization was planned in 25 villages. The communities argued that if sensitization was not conducted for the entire TH conflicts were bound to arise between “included” and “not included” communities. The project decided to extend its work, even though this represented a considerable added workload. The sensitisation efforts seem to have been successful if the enthusiasm of the communities met during the mission is any measure. (This enthusiasm is also confirmed by UNO Tahirpur and Deputy Commissioner.)
- Original project design had planned to approach livelihood and pilot resource use actions on a village-by-village basis. Villagers pointed out that resource use patterns in TH could not be broken down and delineated by village. The resource mapping (see Resource Mobility Use Maps) exercise confirmed the complex web of relationships between communities and resources. It was thus agreed that the project would consider the entire TH as a single ecological unit and that resource management and use discussions would need to be conducted at the level of TH as a whole.

PSMU, with support from IC LEAF, defined an approach and offered training for preparation of Participatory Resource Management Plans (PRMP). Consisting of Community Plans (CP - concerning villages as a whole) and Household Business Plans (HHBP), it is foreseen that these PRMPs will be discussed and coordinated at Union ad hoc Committee level. A strategy permitting comprehensive implementation of these CPs and HHBPs is still needed.

Also unforeseen at the beginning of the project is the creation of savings groups. Called Self-Help Groups by the project, these were initiated by the communities following their visits to the MACH and CBFM projects. The project has assisted these groups in setting up a system to manage and account for savings. Ideas for the use of these savings (HHBPs; compensation for fishing ban – see below) are currently being discussed, though it is likely that wishes will exceed capabilities. Could these savings be used in conjunction with resource harvest generated revenues, in the context of co-financing joint initiatives?

## **Objective 2: Institutional system is negotiated and piloted to support the development of a fully operational co-management system**

Negotiations concerning the definition and establishment of a co-management system have progressed well at local, district and central levels.

At local level, communities have taken the initiative to organise themselves with methodological support (notably concerning elections) from the project. 30 villages were assisted in establishing village groups and in electing representative committees. In the last month, 5 additional villages have begun to organise along similar lines, this time with the support of the Union ad hoc Committees (see below).

As a consequence of the decision to manage TH as a single unit, communities have established, within the territory of each of the four Unions concerned by TH, a consultative body called Union ad hoc Committee. These Committees are composed of one representative

per village. This form of organisation appears as reasonable way to establish a mechanism to represent the communities in the context of co-management discussions with the Tanguar Haor Management Committee established by government at the District level.

Discussions concerning the form and attributes of a Co-Management Body bringing together community and government representatives are ongoing. These consultations should include an experimental period where practice can develop and inform final choices on form. The upcoming discussions between the THMC and the UACs on the question of organising the first community operated fish harvest in TH will be a first step in this direction.

At the national level, MoEF – through the Project Steering Committee (PSC) but also on a day-to-day basis - is attentive to the process and emphatically committed to seeing co-management modalities developed and formalised. The temptation to go too fast should be resisted, taking the necessary time to build capacity of the players, elaborate mechanisms for scientific studies to inform the co-management players, and to allow a certain number of concrete examples of co-management (such as the fish harvest, but also including, for example, issues such as identification of zones for re-forestation, reed harvesting etc.) to take place to ensure that whatever arrangements are codified are indeed realistic, understood and efficient.

BELA is studying options for additional laws and regulations that may be required in the context of TH management. Is there a need for a Wetlands Law? What would this do? Is there a need to codify in law what a fish sanctuary is and what the conditions for its establishment and management are? These are issues that are and will continue to be considered in the context of PSC and other discussions. Along with the formalisation of Co-Management provisions, resolution of such questions should not be rushed.

### **Objective 3: Knowledge on TH is organised to provide necessary input for the development phase.**

The knowledge base concerning TH is being built up during the phase. A database concerning social and economic information is being established, GIS based resource and use mapping studies have been completed (for the initially planned 56 villages – still needed for remaining 32 villages), a baseline survey of TH fisheries resources has been completed and a compendium of existing information / literature established. A web portal ([www.iucnbd.org](http://www.iucnbd.org)) has been set up to facilitate access to this information.

In connection with the establishment of a scientific advisory body (next phase) a knowledge management concept is needed to transform information into knowledge useful to decision makers (Co-Management Body) and to integrate new information and studies as these are conducted.

### **Objective 4: Cost recovery mechanism developed**

A Cost-recovery mechanism is being developed. This is called a “cost-recovery mechanism” by government, though communities would call it a “benefit sharing mechanism”.

This mechanism is closely linked to the concept of giving communities access to the natural resources in a planned way, allowing the communities to harvest and sell selected resources at selected times, and then sharing the revenues generated by the sale of the resources according to an agreed ratio.

Community based discussions arrived at a suggested ratio for distribution of benefits as follows:

- 40% for the persons doing the harvest (in the case of fish, the fishermen)
- 26 % for the Union Parishad, with the intention that these sums should be reinvested in initiatives for the benefit of TH
- 34% to government, to compensate for the loss of income due to the ending of the leasehold system.

This ratio has now been discussed and approved by the THMC and the PSC. The first experimental harvest (fish) is currently being planned. In the week of March 10, the THMC will meet with UAC representatives to discuss the precise modalities of the first fish harvest, which should be organised as soon as feasible thereafter. While it should not be expected that these modalities would be final and perfect from the start, they should be sufficient a) to allow the first harvest to take place without threatening the ecology of TH and b) to ensure that all the income from the sale of the harvest is accounted for and allocated according to the agreed ratio.

This first experiment will serve then to guide both communities and THMC in considering other harvests from the first instance, but also, in due course, active resource management initiatives (for example extending the area devoted to reed production).

### ***Are conditions for co-management in place?***

While it would be exaggerated to say that conditions for co-management are fully in place, community organisations and community networks – Union ad hoc Committees (UACs) – have not only been established but have demonstrated real capacity to organise and negotiate common positions and initiatives. It should be noted that this process of organisation has taken place in a context of enthusiasm over the promised access to the resources of TH. It is likely that in due course, as management discussions move from a focus on single resources (fish for the moment) to considering the resources and productive potential of TH as a whole, that conflicts – for example between fishing and agriculture – will arise. Conflict resolution techniques will be needed at community level, and no doubt will also be required in the context of deliberations of the Co-Management Body.

The decision to establish 4 UACs, as distinct from Union Parishads (UP) or Upazillas, appears justified in the sense that a community based counterpart to the THMC is required in the context of co-management of the RAMSAR site. It could be argued that this community based counterpart could be established through existing UPs or Upazillas, however this would most likely create competing demands on the (not unlimited) resources of TH and pit TH communities against those not directly concerned by the management and use of TH resources. It is noted that the UNOs participated in the conceptualisation and formation of the UACs. The UAC approach – in part due to the density of representation (1 representative per village as opposed to 1 per 9 villages at UP level) - permits the elaboration of community positions and initiatives not only on benefits sharing, but also on resources management, and social and economic development. It could be that, in the long run and because of the priority right of local communities to use and benefit from the natural resources of TH, that a development differential will appear with surrounding communities. This would have to be managed as it evolves, possibly through extending the principle of priority community access to resources to regions outside of the TH Ramsar site.

That being said, discussions concerning the further development of UACs and the prospective Co-Management Body are considering ways by which UP and Upazilla officials can participate in and contribute to deliberations. The revenue sharing ratio already mentioned includes a contribution to UPs and a requirement that these contributions be used “in the

interest of TH”. This will provide a basis for the implication of UPs in the process and will contribute, over time, to the TH Ramsar site finding its place in the broader District and regional context.

In this respect it is also noted that the precise demarcation of TH on the ground is not fully worked out. The administrative boundaries of TH, as per the gazetting of the Ramsar site would need materialising, but the hydrological and ecological dynamics that extend beyond these administrative boundaries would need to be understood.

### ***Inclusiveness of poor and vulnerable of local institutional mechanisms and coherence with existing systems***

It was not possible in the short time of the mission to explore in depth the extent to which the mechanisms described above (Community groups, UACs) are inclusive of the poor and vulnerable populations. This question has been the subject of considerable debate and discussions between IUCN PSMU and management and IC LEAF and management staff.

The following did appear to the mission:

In the particular context of TH, characterised by extreme “remoteness” in terms of accessibility and access to services and support, one can accurately surmise that while some of the population may be less poor, the entire communities are extremely vulnerable, both economically and in terms of exposure to the elements.

The socio-economic census shows that some 60% of the population of TH is landless (some 25% actually having no land at all, the remaining 35% disposing of less than 50 decimals). By this definition, 60% of the population would qualify as “poorest”.

The same census shows that 19% families are dependent on fishing as their primary occupation while a further 54% list fishing as a secondary occupation. Fishermen come from the marginalised (low caste) groups and thus constitute a vulnerable category. The willingness of the communities and UACs to envisage a benefits sharing ration giving 40% of the (fish) harvest value to the harvesters can be taken as a symptom of the willingness of the communities to include the poor and most vulnerable. In addition, the community meetings witnessed during the mission included a number of fishermen seemingly expressing themselves without hesitation.

Concerning women, and gender equity, the situation seems less clear. While there was some participation by women in community level discussions, only 1 woman has been elected to a UAC position. At the insistence of the PSMU, at least three women have been included in each village group. Overall, 14% of the elected village committees are women (1232 men; 174 women). In the development of HHBPs the project has given preference to working with women in developing small business plans, and has worked exclusively with women in developing handicraft, livestock and poultry plans. An observation by the PSMU would indicate that women are even more enthusiastic participants than men.

Coherence between TH proposed mechanisms and existing local systems and mechanisms is discussed above insofar as the UACs relation to UPs and Upazillas is concerned. Community level organisation in TH is a new phenomenon, except in those few villages previously touched by the LEAF project.

### ***Potential for alternative income generating activities for the poor, including women, and the coherence of these with wise use***

The principal, obvious potential for income generation for the poor is the potential to harvest natural resources from TH and to benefit from proceeds of sale according to the agreed ratio as described above. That potential has been described and estimated already in the report of the exploratory mission of 2005.

Concerning alternative income generation opportunities, these have to some extent been explored by the project. The project found that communities are principally interested in economic activities in the five following areas: agriculture, livestock, handicrafts, poultry and small business. There would exist a small local market for some products, but significant income would only be realised through access to more remote markets. More work is needed to establish to what extent autonomous economic activity can be promoted and what might be the significance, in economic terms, of these activities.

It would appear that the combination of income generation through resource harvesting and capacity building and facilitation of market access would result in income gains. The option of the project to favour women – and the interest and mobilisation of women - in the economic sectors mentioned in the previous section would indicate that a potential exists. The key question though – as yet unanswered – is the adequacy of local production in terms of market demand and the factors conditioning access to markets (remoteness, seasonal access, and cost of transport notably).

Tourism was mentioned several times as having potential in the region, within TH and along the Indian border where the landscape – seasonally – offers particular attractions.

### ***Management of local power relations and conflicts***

The first condition for managing power relationships and potential conflicts is the willingness of the parties to seek common, consensual solutions to issues that may arise. There are signs that this willingness is present in many of the key players, including government and communities. Certainly the project has contributed in a significant way to establishing a dialogue between the key players and within TH communities.

However, it can also be assumed that the generally positive climate is linked, during this phase, to the promise and the potential that is seen by TH communities. There are objective divergent interests, for example concerning water management between agriculture and fisheries, which have not yet become the subject of management discussions. When this happens, which is inevitable in the context of overall management of TH, important differences will appear. This will not only pit one production system against another, but no doubt have other dimensions such as poor vs. less poor, local people vs. absentee owners to name but two.

The mission is not in a position to determine whether local conflict resolution instruments exist that might be appropriate to these challenges. One (external observer after a short visit) might assume that “traditional” decision making mechanisms would be found wanting in terms of equity, in terms of giving a voice to the most vulnerable and poorest. For this reason the project should consider conflict resolution measures based on a) principles rooted in the equal right of various groups and communities to participate in the making of decisions concerning the management and use of TH natural resources and b) a concern for the sustainability of the natural systems and characteristics justifying the establishment of the RAMSAR site and consequently its “special” status giving priority access to local communities.

It has been noted that project staff with better facilitation skills have been more successful in obtaining the participation of women in community discussions. It would follow that strong facilitation skills would also favour conflict resolution. Distinction needs also to be made between minor conflicts and major conflicts. The project should consider both increasing the competence levels within staff, and possibly envisage recourse to professional conflict resolution skills for predictable, major conflicts such as those concerning the purpose and finality of water management (agriculture vs. fisheries) where a more sophisticated technical dialogue is likely to be necessary.

### ***Role, commitment, ownership and interest of Government of Bangladesh (GoB)***

Government plays an active role in the management of the project through the Project Steering Committee (PSC - Chaired by the Secretary, MoEF) and the leadership provided by the National Project Director. The PSC has met twice formally and IUCN Country Representative interacts regularly with the Secretary MoEF and the National Project Director whenever project matters so require. Additionally, at District level (Sunamganj) the THMC, Chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, meets on a monthly basis (nine meetings to date) and approves both a monthly report and activity plan for the coming month. In this way the District Administration provides coordination and leadership. The IUCN PM acts as Member Secretary to the THMC.

The interest and commitment of government to establishing a functioning co-management system for TH with local communities was confirmed to the mission at local (UP; UNO), District (meetings with Deputy Commissioner and THMC) and Central (meetings with National Project Director and Secretary MoEF) levels. The commitment is strongest at Central and local levels, and possibly the temptation would be to go too fast, or at least faster than the support mechanisms (project + local government resources) can keep up.

The Secretary MoEF and the National Project Director (Joint Secretary MoEF) both expressed to the mission their vision of the TH Co-management initiative as a model to be applied to other wetlands in Bangladesh. Conversations with the Ministry of Lands concerning the hand-over to MoEF of selected wetlands have taken place, and the ability of TH to generate and realise revenues for the government (according to the agree ratios) is being watched carefully.

Government has also demonstrated, since 2003, its commitment to the management and protection of TH resources through the uninterrupted placement of 4 magistrates in TH to enforce protection and access rules.

Recently (February 2008) a substantial governmental delegation – led by the National project Director – inaugurated the first of the community proposed fish sanctuaries.

At the District and local levels, the examination of means and approaches to reinforce the capacity of District, Upazilla and UP officials to participate in and contribute to TH co-management is underway. Line agencies (through District and THMC) would certainly have a contribution to make both in supporting communities and in assessing ecological and economic sustainability factors. UP and Upazilla officials would also have a key role in supporting TH developments and possibly in the context of conflict resolution.

The efforts of the project to organise civil society networks have been emphasised less in this phase due to the emergency. That being said, the awareness campaigns led by PSMU and NGO partners have raised awareness of TH and of co-management concept it seems quite

successfully if the Focus Group Discussion held during the mission is a reflection of general awareness.

The true test of government commitment will come when the Co-Management Body is established and consensual decisions with communities elaborated and then materialised in the field. While this can be expected to raise complex issues, there is no reason to suppose that the willingness to resolve them would not be there.

### ***Effectiveness of coordination amongst project partners***

On the whole, coordination has evidently been effective. IUCN has made efforts to ensure that understanding of project intentions and concepts are shared among project players, and has adopted a suitable posture – leading from behind; conceding leadership to national and local bodies – while assisting with introducing natural resource management concepts and tools (wise use) and working with District and local government and partner NGOs to ensure a coherence of approach and practice.

The respective roles of government, centrally and locally, partner NGOs involved in social mobilisation and / or conducting technical studies, seem to be well understood and accepted by all. Project partners have been given well defined tasks and responsibilities and there does not appear to be any confusion concerning what is expected or where the respective roles begin and end.

The one area where perhaps there would be room for improvement would be with respect to horizontal communication between the partners. Not to get everyone involved in everything, but simply to periodically update all partners as to project progress, issues arising and offering an informal opportunity to think together.

Coordination / cooperation between IUCN and IC has evidently run into some problems, ostensibly due to differences of approach / concepts. The mission has not attempted to resolve these, indeed it seems that they are being resolved through dialogue. In terms of the approach to the communities and authorities however it seems important that the project maintain a coherent and consistent attitude. In this sense one of the two – IUCN or IC – should be responsible for the overall intervention framework, with the other making its technical and advisory input within that framework. Because TH is a protected area and because of IUCN's close relationship with government at all levels, it would be advisable that IUCN be the lead implementing agency.

In addition to a clarification of the “lead” role of IUCN, it would seem that an appropriate forum to explore and bridge differences in concepts / approaches (if they actually exist) and to build on possible synergies between various SDC supported initiatives in the field would be the Sunamganj Coordination Initiative. In particular, the consequences for management and participation of the “Protected Area” nature of TH could be the subject of a focus of the Sunamganj Coordination Initiative. It is fair to say that the promise of IUCN / IC synergies in reaching conservation and livelihood goals has not been realised in this phase. The potential of realising these in the future remains.

### ***Coherence with the SDC Cooperation Strategy Bangladesh 2008 - 2012***

The objectives of the project – which can be summarised as seeking to increase economic and social opportunities through the establishment of co-management mechanisms (government – citizens) – are clearly in line with the SDC Cooperation Strategy's objective of improved

well-being, social and political participation, enhancing incomes and improving access to decision-making processes.

Project results will contribute to the two thematic areas of “employment and income” and “local governance”. In addition the project has a strong “replicability” potential both in the dimension of wetland (Haor) management and in terms of co-management and benefits sharing.

The project, by virtue of the social stratification of vocations and of the option to ensure the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable, will contribute to promoting employment opportunities, exploring market linkages and – through the consolidation of the ending of the leasehold system – improve local economic framework conditions in a way favourable to the poorest.

From a livelihoods perspective this project would benefit from the exploitation of potential synergies with other SDC projects in Sunamganj. From a governance perspective, although governance forms will be different in TH on account of the special Ramsar status, certainly there would be benefits to exchanges with other SDC supported projects on such issues as: facilitating local governance processes; building capacities of local governance structures, including for conflict management; supporting community structures through training and awareness raising of rights issues.

### ***Possible follow up phases (or exit strategy for SDC)***

Certainly it would be a mistake to envisage ending SDC support at this time. The preparatory phase is on course towards confirming the interest of government and communities to collaborate in managing the global biodiversity values of TH and in doing so in such a way that generates significant income for individuals and communities.

The phase has allowed the information base to be expanded, community structures to be developed, a THMC to operate. The remaining months will see a modest but symbolically very important first harvest of natural resources take place with a sharing of the income derived from this harvest.

At the same time, the phase will have turned up a series of new questions that will need to be understood before one would be in a position to declare that the co-management processes and attitudes are firmly rooted. These questions include:

- What would a Tanguar Haor Co-Management Body look like? How would community representation be organised and legitimised. How would the variety of economic or livelihood interests be adequately represented and defended? How will decisions be made – how will the respective points of view of government and communities be formulated and weighted into decisions? What exactly would be the form and level of representation of UP and Upazilla officials in the context of the Co-Management Body?
- Is the ratio for benefits sharing adequate? Are the mechanisms in place for organising the sale and managing the income adequate? Would differentiated mechanisms be required for different resources? For example, what would be the best way to organise and account for resources used for subsistence purposes? Would the procedures for reeds be the same as for fish?
- What are the sustainable yields for commercial fish species? What is the impact of favouring or hampering the exploitation of commercial fish on other species? What is the biology of the concerned species and what management measures are necessary to



maintaining productivity? What impact does water flow, volume and periodicity have on fish species?

- What other economic activities are compatible with maintaining the ecological processes and values of TH?
- What other economic activities are feasible?
- What kind of monitoring, social, economic and ecological, would be necessary to ensure that sustainability limits are understood and respected?
- How to address siltation and pollution issues?

The list could go on.

The conclusion is that there is a need for a development phase. The development phase should be used to explore all of these myriad questions that will be coming to the surface as communities, individuals and government address the question of balancing economic and livelihood benefits derived from the management and use of natural resources with the imperative to maintain sustainable ecosystem processes and critical habitats.

Given the complexity of the issues involved, a five-year phase would seem to be indicated.

The main components of this phase could be formulated in the following way:

- Starting from ad hoc arrangements – such as that to formulate the experimental fish harvest during the preparatory phase – progressively develop the terms of reference, scope of responsibility, rules of procedure and funding modalities for a Tanguar Haor Management Authority. This TH Management Authority should at least be in a position to determine sustainable forms and levels of natural resource use and authorise access; be able to make decisions and take initiatives to maintain ecological processes and critical habitats; formulate and oversee protection and enforcement of TH management decisions; seek and approve additional major investments needed to maintain ecological processes and critical habitats.
- Starting with ad hoc arrangements, progressively include additional resources in the “harvest” concept, allowing regulated access by communities to natural resources and spaces (government lands, forests) up to limits determined by sustainability considerations.
- Explore similar initiatives in Bangladesh and abroad that would be able to provide ideas, models and examples of approaches, institutional and legal arrangements, and provide training to community and government personnel to ensure that management roles and prerogatives can effectively be assumed.
- Establish a transparent revenue management scheme and identify the actual costs of operating and maintaining the TH Management Authority.
- Based on practice and agreed management needs, develop such laws and regulations (law on fish sanctuaries?) as would be needed to consolidate management authority or desirable zoning concepts.
- Building on the experience of the partners involved in the preparatory phase, develop and consolidate diverse livelihood and income generating activities. Work to bring government line agencies and government services to the region, especially by reaching out to and interesting a broad range of donors in promoting well being of TH communities previously isolated.

- Support communities in organising 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 the suggested three-month fishing ban).
- 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 to the TH Management Authority on matters relevant to the maintenance of ecological processes and critical habitats. This would probably involve the creation of a scientific advisory group. While IUCN may be the repository of this information in a first phase, a permanent home for both the information and the advisory body should be sought.

If the above measures were to be developed and implemented, with appropriate training and other capacity building or support measures in place, and adequate revenue streams generated and managed, it should be possible for complete responsibility to be handed over progressively after a five-year period.

### ***Cost recovery system to allow sustainability***

The cost recovery system (for communities the “benefit sharing system”) proposed by the communities and approved by government seems to be a good starting point. Ultimately the adequacy of this cost recovery system for ensuring sustainability of management mechanisms will depend on the following factors:

- The quantity of resources that can be harvested and sold in an organised fashion under the authority of the THMC and communities and later the THMA, and the price that can be obtained for these resources.
- The ability to devote income thus generated to TH management or whether this income (60% portion going to local and central government) is used for other purposes.
- Alternative income sources that can be developed, such as tourism, and entry or visitor fees that could be envisaged.
- The ability of government to invest additional resources (beyond cost recovery) in the protection and management of TH resources.
- The willingness and ability of communities to share protection and management responsibilities with government.

It could be expected that in addition to the 40% share going directly to the persons participating in the harvest, some share of the income could go back to the communities to support their management initiatives. It could also be envisaged that some portion of UP income (24%) could be used to finance the cost of community participation in the Co-Management Body.

This aspect will need to be followed closely by the PSC and the MoEF.

### ***Ensuring transparency and accountability***

Accountability and transparency would need to be ensured through a number of steps.

Ensuring that decisions concerning resource harvesting (timing, quantity and participation) are well discussed and understood both by communities and local government. This is a task primarily of the THMC and of the UACs in the first instance, and later of the THMA as a

whole. Project implementers (IUCN, IC, GUS, CNRS) and local government representatives (UNOs, Magistrates, UP and Upazilla representatives) also have a key role to play in this context during the development phase.

The methodology for conducting the harvests needs to be carefully considered, and steps particularly at the level of the actual selling and cash accounting of the proceeds carefully thought through. These steps need to be carefully documented and witnessed by representatives of the communities, of government and of the facilitating organisation (in this case IUCN and possibly others amongst the implementing partners). It is imperative that there be no room for doubt that a) only authorised resources are harvested b) all the resources harvested are effectively sold and c) that receipts from the sale are carefully accounted, recorded and distributed to authorised and legitimate recipients.

It was stated to the mission that once the harvesting system is functioning, and communities are effectively deriving benefits from the harvest and sale of natural resources, causes for corruption, at least at the local level in gaining access to resources illegally, would disappear.

### ***Attracting other development partners and harmonising with other projects***

The mission was not in a position (due to time constraints) to directly verify the potential for interesting other development partners for investing in this project. That being said, it would seem that this project, with the important potential that it holds in breaking new ground in Bangladesh in the domain of co-management and the transfer of benefits from the management and use of natural resources to communities, would generate interest on the part of development partners.

It would be the suggestion of the mission that SDC support in an eventual further phase (development phase) should concentrate on facilitating the knowledge and co-management systems and arrangements on the one hand, and community based livelihood initiatives on the other. There are other needs. Extension of services in this remote and under-served area, with a priority to health and education; pollution and siltation control measures to be implemented within TH and in the surrounding areas – these dimensions are important both for health reasons and for conservation of ecological processes and critical habitats; development of tourism options, infrastructure and related skills. The presence of the project in the region, the capacity being developed at District level (THMC) and through the participating local NGO would provide a platform that would make investments by other donors easier to contemplate. Major works that might be required could well be the subject of a GEF project.

Concerning harmonisation with other projects, the wisdom of strengthening coherence and cooperation in the framework of the SDC Sunamganj Coordination Initiative has already been mentioned. IUCN and its implementing partners are also closely linked with other projects in Bangladesh (MARCH, CBFM) touching similar issues. The MoEF is interested in ensuring that the TH experience should serve as a basis for exploring Haor management in Bangladesh as a whole. In this context, this project might consider facilitating, or contributing towards the functioning of a knowledge network on Haor use and management. This could possibly be linked to the idea of a scientific advisory body.

### ***Technical backstopping requirements in future phases***

It is not clear to the mission that technical backstopping is required in further phases, at least not from outside of the concerned institutions<sup>5</sup>. Both IUCN and IC are strong institutions with

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<sup>5</sup> The one exception would be in the area of conflict resolution (see Conditions for co-management, Pg 9 above)

world-leading capacities in protected area management, sustainable management of natural resources and critical habitats, community mobilisation and livelihood improvements. A consultancy budget should be made available to allow the institutions to bring this global expertise to bear with the PSMU when and as needed.

The project design in the preparatory phase also includes working with competent local technical resources (TARA, BELA, CNRS) and this approach should continue.

The scientific advisory group that has been suggested above would complement the technical skills of the implementing and partner organisations.

The combination of these technical skills should be sufficient to ensure quality and effectiveness of project interventions and monitor these adequately.

Should SDC give a green light to proceed, IUCN will be bringing in a consultant to assist in the detailed planning of the next phase.

It would probably be useful to envisage an evaluation (possibly internal self-evaluation) after 18 – 24 months, with a view to taking stock, making adjustments, and more generally taking time out to reflect on the approaches adopted, the initial results appearing and the relevance of the means engaged.

## Summary of recommendations

This section recapitulates the main recommendations formulated in the previous sections, for the remainder of the current phase and for a subsequent phase.

### *For the remainder of the Preparatory Phase*

- **Follow up on PRMPs:** It is unclear how the Participatory Resource Management Plans, consisting of Community Plans and Household Business Plans, are going to be capitalised and followed up. The mechanism for generating resources to support this is not clear. The Self-help group savings are one option, but the amounts involved are relatively limited and there are other calls on this money (compensating for fishing ban). IC and IUCN could jointly consider follow up options, lest the momentum at community level be lost or slowed.
- **Pilot harvest:** The pilot fish harvest planned for the near future is of the highest importance. It is essential that this harvest take place, and that the necessary management and procedural measures are in place to ensure that a) only authorised resources are harvested b) all the resources harvested are effectively sold and c) that receipts from the sale are carefully accounted, recorded and distributed to authorised and legitimate recipients.
- **Completing studies:** Resource use studies and mapping should be completed for the full 88 villages.
- **Consensus building/information sharing:** Organise a workshop with local actors (government and non-government partners, UAC representatives) to present and discuss the content and meaning of the socio-economic and ecological studies conducted during the phase. Explore how to capitalise on technical information as decision preparation assistance to local actors.

## ***For the remainder of the preparatory Phase and for a Development Phase***

Clarify the lead implementing agency (IUCN or IC)

- **Sunamganj Coordination Initiative:** Use the Sunamganj Coordination Initiative of SDC to organise discussions at the field level to promote the identification of synergies amongst SDC projects in the region. Discussions could usefully be held to clarify understanding of approaches in terms of sensitivity to the needs of the poorest and marginalised groups including women, the content and implications of Protected Area management for co-management processes and institutions.

## ***For a Development Phase***

- **Main Objectives:** SDC assistance should focus on 2 major objectives: Elaboration and consolidation of Co-management model including the operationalization of the concept of cost-recovery / benefits sharing, and consolidation of community self-help and consensual representation mechanisms. IUCN should take a lead, in consultation with Government and other partners, in securing additional interest in the region to address additional questions requiring substantial additional resources. Such questions include: improving access to health and education services; managing siltation and pollution from external sources; development of tourism; etc.
- **Hurry slowly:** The formalisation of Co-Management arrangements – encompassing definition of the representational modalities, attributes, scope of work and rules of procedure of the Co-Management body, cost recovery / benefits sharing modalities for different resources and eventual regulations concerning zoning (sanctuaries for example), sustainable yields – should proceed methodically and be closely linked to practice. The formal establishment of a Co-Management Body should be a two to three year target. At the same time, there need to be milestones established and concrete benefits should be flowing to the stakeholders and measured from the first months.
- **Co-Management Body:** The establishment of the Union ad hoc Committees is a rational way to organise a community-based counterpart to the District based Tanguar Haor Management Committee. The four UACs will need some way of coalescing to formulate a coherent representation towards the THMC. Careful consideration should be given to formulating an adequate mechanism for this. It is not clear that a structure, at least in the short term is needed. Rather a process / procedure is required that will allow UACs to convene and consult in preparation for discussions with THMC. The process for elaborating community positions would be the basis upon which to decide, in due course, on community representation in a Tanguar Haor Management Authority. In this connection a mechanism for ensuring coordination with and involvement of Union Parishad and Upazilla officials in the Management Authority will also be required.
- **TH Boundaries:** The boundaries of TH, from a Ramsar point of view, from a socio-economic point of view and from the point of view of ecological and hydrological

dynamics need to be considered and materialised – on the ground in the case of the Ramsar site and in management terms for socio-economic and ecological parameters.

- **Scientific Advisory Group:** Establish a scientific advisory committee to advise decision-makers at Project Steering Committee level and at Co-Management Body level on scientific and technical matters. A workplan and operational modalities should be for this group should be established during the preparatory phase.
- **Conflict resolution:** Conflicts within and between communities will arise as the practice of granting access to resources is expanded. Conflict resolution training should be offered to partner NGO, project field staff and probably also to Village Committee members and Union ad hoc Committee members. More substantial and more complex conflicts are also likely to arise as TH management begins to address questions such as the competing requirements in terms of water management between agriculture and fisheries, issues of external pollution (sulphur) sources etc. For these major conflicts, external conflict resolution skills / advice may be useful.
- **Management:** The quantity and intensity of the management, coordination and supervision effort required will be greater even in an eventual development phase. IUCN should ensure that adequate resources, both at field level and at Dhaka level, are allocated to coordination, supervision and management. The effort needed to elaborate the full scale of regulations to make the co-management process work for the benefit of the communities while ensuring a flow of revenue to government and guaranteeing sustainability of ecological processes and resources will be substantial.

## ***Annexe 1 – List of documentation consulted***

1. Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor Programme, Annual Report, IUCN, December 2006 –November 2007
2. Annual Report Annex on Awareness Campaign, IUCN, November 2007
3. Annual Report Annex on Organisation Formation, IUCN, November 2007
4. Annual Report Annex on Participatory Resource Management Planning, IUCN, November 2007
5. Annual Report Annex on Project Management, IUCN, November 2007
6. Annual Report Annex on Process, IUCN, November 2007
7. Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor Programme, Progress Report, IUCN, December 2006 – May 2007
8. Cooperation Strategy Bangladesh 2008 – 2012, SDC January 2008
9. Minutes of the Meeting on the Review Mission, IUCN 12 February 2008
10. Concept on fish harvesting (draft note) IUCN, February 2008
11. Credit proposal, Tanguar Haor Community Management, October 2006
12. National Fisheries Policy, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 1998
13. Report of a short-term consultancy to develop a strategic proposal on community based management of Tanguar Haor, Peter Hilaire, December 2005
14. National Water Policy: Bangladesh, Ministry of Water Resources, undated copy
15. Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Switzerland and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh concerning the Community Based Management of Tanguar Haor Project, Inception Phase: December 2006 to May 2008.
16. Fisheries Resources of Tanguar Haor, Baseline, TARA, February 2008
17. Tanguar Haor resources, Status Report, Resource Maps, CNRS, December 2007
18. Tanguar Haor resources, Status Report, Resource Use Mobility Maps, CNRS, December 2007
19. First draft Report on Census, wetland Inventory, Assessment, Resource Mapping and Community Profile, CNRS, February 2008

## **Annex 2 - List of persons met**

In Dhaka:

Mr Joseph Guntern, Head of Cooperation, SDC Bangladesh  
 Mr Imran Md Bhuiyan, Senior Programme Officer, SDC Bangladesh  
 Mr A H M Rezaul Kabir, NDC, Secretary, MoEF  
 Mr Rabindranath Roy Chowdhury, Joint Secretary, MoEF  
 Mrs Begum Dilruba Yasmin, Deputy Chief, MoEF  
 Mr Mohammad Qamar Munir, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest  
 Mr Alain Cuvelier, Head of Delegation, InterCooperation, Bangladesh  
 ATM Azmul Huda, Programme Officer, InterCooperation  
 Dr Ainum Nishat, Country Representative, IUCN Bangladesh  
 Mr Raquibul Amin, Programme Coordinator, IUCN Country Programme, Bangladesh  
 Mrs Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Director (Programmes), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association  
 Mr Mokhelsur Rahman, Executive Director, Centre for Natural Resource Studies

In Sunamganj:

Village Communities, Union ad Hoc Committee members from villages of Patabuka, Joypur, Nababpur

AFM Rezaul Karim,	Tanguar Haor Project Manager, IUCN
Mr. Dhruva Kanta Kundu,	Program Officer (NRM), IUCN
Mr. Md. Mostafa Rahman,	Program Officer (Livelihood), IUCN
Akikur Reza,	Executive Director, GUS
Dhananjoy Talukder,	Field Supervisor, GUS
Abdur Rashid,	Field Supervisor, GUS
Abu Nasar Md. Nurul Bari,	Project Coordinator, GUS
Md. Kayes Mian,	Community Teacher, GUS
Md. Yahiya Sazzad,	Project Coordinator, CNRS
Mr. Md. Fuad Hassan,	Field Supervisor, CNRS

**Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Venue: Rest House, Takerghat, Tahirpur Date: 26/02/2008**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Nurul Amin	Secretary	Sonir Haor, Committee
Aminul Islam	Correspondent	The Daily Shomokal
Babrul Hasan Bablu	Correspondent	The Daily Jay Jay Din
Ahed Ali	Secretary	Daxin Bangshikunda, UAC
Moti Lal Talukder	President	Daxin Bangshikunda UAC
Nuraja Begum	UP Member	Daxin Bangshikunda UP
Joy Kumar Sarker	Secretary	Uttar Bangshikunda UAC
Md. Babul Mian	President	Uttar Bangshikunda UAC
Md. Abdul Rezve	Teacher	Uttar Bangshikunda



Nasima Aktar	Women leader	Uttar Bangshikunda
Ali Ahmed	Member	Uttar Sreepur UAC
Md. Bajlur Rahman	Vice-President	Daxin Sreepur
Noresh Sarker	Village Doctor	Daxin Bangshikunda
Golam Nur	President	Daxin Sreepur
Borhan Uddin	Sr. Assistant Agriculture Officer	Uttar Sreepur
Amir Ali	Chairman	Uttar Sreepur
Nurul Amin	Local Leader	Tahirpur
Md. Mokhtar Ahmed	Upazilla Nirbahi Officer	Tahirpur
Nadira Begum	Vice President	Uttar Sreepur UAC
Azijur Rahman	Local Leader	
Akil Das	Secretary	Uttar Sreepur, UAC

8<sup>th</sup> Tanguar Haor Management Committee Meeting Venue: Conference Room, DC Office  
Sunamgonj Date: 27 February 2008.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Mr. Md. Saber Hossain	Chairperson and Deputy Commissioner	District Administration
Mr. Kongkham Nilmoni Singha	ADC (Rev.)	District Administration
Mr. Md. Moshir Rahman	RDC	District Administration
Mr. Md. Moktar Ahmed	UNO, Tahirpur	Upazila Administration
Mr. Md. Iqbal Hossain	Assistant Commissioner	District Administration
Mr. Sheik Md. Mesbahul Hoque	Senior Upazila Fishary Officer	Department of Fishery
Mr. Khondakar Azizul Islam	Senior Assistant Secretary	Establishment Ministry
Mr. Md. Motlubur Rahman	Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF)	Department of Forestry
Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid	Naeb Subedar	17, Rifle Batelian, Bangladesh Rifles

### ***Annexe 3 - Output by Output: Brief review of progress***

Objective 1 : Selected Communities of Tanguar Haor have capacity and organisation to participate in pilot co-management activities

Over all assessment: Clearly capacity of the communities has developed as a result of project activities. The ability of communities to engage in pilot co-management activities is currently being built and tested. Though the phase is not completed, it can be expected that by the end of the phase community consultation and decision structures would be in place. Capacity building and consolidation would have to continue.

Output 1.1 : Selected communities are mobilised towards participating in pilot co-management activities

This is happening through the designation of fish sanctuaries (5 identified by the UACs and approved by the Tanguar Haor Management Committee (THMC), one materialised to date by communities in Uttar Shripur Union and inaugurated by government) and will, in the next months, be further tested through the organisation, implementation and management, with District Administration authorities, of the first – pilot – fish harvest since the cancellation of the leasehold system. The proposal for distribution of the benefits (cash income) of the fish harvest generated by the Communities (through the Union ad hoc Committees – see below) has been approved by the Project Steering Committee and signed off on by the Secretary MoEF. The proposal is: 40% of the sale receipts go to the fishermen having conducted the harvest (note that the fishermen also constitute, for the most part – the poorest group); 34% would go to 4 concerned Union Parishads for re-investment in TH; while the remaining 24% would go to government in compensation for its role in managing and protecting TH resources, and to compensate for the loss of income due to the cancellation of the leasehold system in TH.

Communities – through the UACs - have further proposed that the harvest idea be accompanied by a number of measures to be imposed by the communities themselves: guarding against poaching; preventing the hunting of birds; restricting the use of harmful fishing gear; 3 month ban on fishing during breeding period (April to June).

Although the initial project plans foresaw conducting sensitization and community organisation in 25 villages, Project management Unit (Sunamganj based) and communities agreed that sensitization would need to be extended to include, from the outset, all 88 villages concerned by the use and management of TH resources. This has substantially increased the workload of PSMU and partner NGO field staff, but has nonetheless been successfully carried out.

Also, while it was initially envisaged to organise pilot activities through selected villages using selected resources, discussions with communities revealed that, due to the intricate web of relationships of communities to resources, working at the level of a single village would not be realistic. It was therefore proposed by the PSMU that the entire Haor be considered as a single management unit. This was endorsed by the PSC. Decisions concerning access to and use of resources would have to be taken for TH as a whole. This fact justifies the approach taken by the project to facilitate community initiatives aiming at the constitution of a TH – wide representative body. This body is still in development stages, but will build upon the Union ad hoc Committees established – within the boundaries of TH – for the respective territory of the four concerned Unions.

The organisation of communities at the village level is proceeding in 30 (up from initially planned 25) pilot villages. The project has facilitated the formation of Union ad hoc Committees bringing together one representative from each village in the concerned Union (of which there are four).

The organisation of the pilot fish harvesting will offer the first concrete opportunity for the community representatives to interact, negotiate and co-manage access and benefits sharing of common property resources with government.

**Output 1.2:** Selected communities trained for different livelihood options and IGAs initiated

Progress under this output has been unexpected. The project plan foresaw that IC would take the lead under this Output. However, due to perceived differences in approach, after conducting market extension trainings, IC chose to withhold its collaboration. The PSMU then proceeded with the elaboration of Participatory Resource Management Plans (PRMP) in the 30 pilot villages. These PRMPs consist of two parts. One the one hand the “Community Plans” and on the other “House hold Business Plans” (HHBP). The Community Plans are being brought together and analysed at the level of the UACs. They would be the subject of possible investments by the “Community Fund” (see below).

Some 550 HHBPs in the 30 villages have been prepared. This is considerably higher than the original project target of 200 persons (to be given IGA training) and reflects the high level of interest within TH communities. The idea is that these HHBPs would be financed by the Self-help group (SHG) savings. In Jaypur village, where some Taka 4720 has been collected from 41 SHG members, villagers are currently discussing using SHG savings to compensate fishermen for not fishing during breeding season.

**Objective 2:** Institutional system is negotiated and piloted to support the development of a fully operational co-management system

**Output 2.1:** Modalities for accessing and harvesting of natural resources developed and tested

PSMU and IUCN Country Office Dhaka have facilitated extensive discussions with communities and government at Union, Upazilla, District and Central levels to explore appropriate modalities for accessing and harvesting natural resources. Suggestions have been made by the communities concerning both fish harvesting modalities and the distribution of benefits from the sale of harvested fish. The suggestions concerning the distribution of benefits have been adopted and approved by both the THMC and the Project Steering Committee. Suggestions concerning the modalities and organisation of the harvests are currently being developed.

**Output 2.2** National and Regional platforms established to support co-management of TH

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) has been established. Members are SDC Head of Cooperation and the Secretary, MoEF. The PSC has met 2 times and is keeping itself abreast of and providing leadership on the key issues (co-management; revenue sharing; institutional and legal arrangements). The Tanguar Haor Management Committee (THMC) is established at the Sunamganj District level. The THMC brings together the principal line departments, revenue, and security. The Project Manager acts as Secretary to the THMC. THMC provides advice and leadership to PSMU and ensures coordination of project initiatives with local initiatives and authorities. THMC has key role in the context of harvesting and ensuring the transparent allocation of benefits as per the agreed allocation scheme.

Output 2.3 Basic understanding of and consensus on principles of co-management of TH developed by primary and secondary stakeholders at regional and national level.

Intensive discussions in the early months of the project – with communities and local authorities – established a basic consensus on a number of points. This consensus appears to be not only holding but also consolidated in early 2008. The consensus is around the following points:

#### Co-management

- A single organisation, representative of all the communities of TH, should be formed to enable these to speak with a united voice towards government and policy and decision makers.
- Revenue generated from the access to and use of TH resources that goes to government should be considered as coming from the TH communities as a whole.
- Revenue generated from the access to and use of TH resources that goes to Union Parishads should be reinvested in the development of TH
- All projects in TH should be coordinated through a single body

#### Nature Conservation

- All 52 beels should be treated and managed as a single wetland. Sub-dividing this according to groups or villages would create conflicts ultimately detrimental to the preservation of the ecosystem.
- Production potential of beels is unequal, so it would not be wise to allocate a particular beel to a particular group/village.
- Five fish sanctuaries have been identified as important for the maintenance of the fish stock in TH
- Five sanctuaries for migratory birds were proposed to reduce disturbances to local and migratory birds.
- Rules are needed for reed collection, particularly as concerns *chaila* and *bontulshi*. Once defined at UAC level, these rules should be promulgated by the THMC.

This represents only a beginning, and consensus building will need to continue into the future and in due course become one of the main functions of the UACs.

Objective 3: Knowledge on TH is organised to provide necessary input for the development phase.

#### Output 3.1 Knowledge management system developed

PSMU has developed a database within which to capture and store information generated by the project. Identification numbers link information to households and to members of the village committees. This information will be useful in ensuring that services and trainings reach out broadly into the community.

On the natural resources side a GIS based database can serve as a foundation upon which to build a broad based resource tracking and monitoring system.

A compendium of available literature on TH has been established and a web portal developed to make this information widely available.

### Output 3.2 Knowledge on resource system of TH improved

Additional information acquired during the phase includes:

- Bird census carried out in February 2007
- Census of TH villages (88)
- Resource inventory and mapping
- GIS based maps showing resources and mobility of village users

Socio-economic and fisheries surveys are ongoing.

### Output 3.3 Comprehensive long-term plan (development phase) based on lessons learned during the preparatory phase produced

To be completed in the context of preparing a development phase plan.

### Objective 4: Cost recovery mechanism developed

#### Output 4.1: Consensus developed on cost recovery system

A consensus has been developed and the proposal has been approved by the THMC and the Project Steering Committee.

### Objective 5: Project Management

Regular review meetings are held. At Dhaka level, PM meets with IUCM Management to review progress every two months. PM meets with partner staff in the field every month and holds PSMU meetings on a weekly basis. A total of 373 person days of training has been organised by the PSMU for partner staff and community members.

## **Annexe 4 - Terms of Reference**

for the Review 2088 of the project  
“Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor”

### **1. Background**

Tanguar Haor, located in the district of Sunamganj in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh, is a unique wetland ecosystem of national and international importance covering about 10,500 hectares. It provides subsistence and livelihoods to about 56,000 people living in 88 villages situated in its periphery. The Tanguar Haor plays an important role in fish production as it functions as a 'mother fishery' for the country. The Government has declared Tanguar Haor as an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) in 1999. In 2000, the Haor basin was also declared as the country's second Ramsar site as a wetland of international importance. With this declaration, the Government of Bangladesh committed to preserve its natural resources and the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) have taken several steps for protecting Tanguar Haor. The MoEF, together with the World Conservation Union IUCN Bangladesh office, also developed a project proposal titled “Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor” and approached different development partners.

SDC considers Sunamganj as one of its priority working area because of its special poverty and vulnerability, with already some ongoing projects. When IUCN and MoEF approached SDC for funding, SDC responded by supporting an independent and international expert to review and recommend strategic options. Based on this review, three stages of the presently ongoing project were developed:

- Preparatory stage (18 months)
- Development stage (36 to 60 months)
- Consolidation stage (36 months)

The preparatory stage would gather both social and scientific information on the area and pilot co-management processes as well as livelihood options. Based on that, a detailed action strategy proposal would be prepared, which would be implemented during the development stage. The consolidation phase will ensure a sustainable mechanism for protection and wise use of Tanguar Haor and also influence policy. Based on the review recommendations, SDC decided to support the Preparatory stage and accordingly, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the MoEF and SDC as well as between SDC and IUCN during December 2006 – January 2007. SDC decided that another review cum planning led by the same international consultant if possible, would be undertaken around January/February 2008. ***The decision for SDC to support the project further beyond the preparatory phase would be based on this second review.***

The preparatory phase is being implemented by IUCN Bangladesh Country Office. Inter-cooperation (IC) is providing backstopping support for livelihood issues, local NGOs CNRS and GUS are field level implementers and BELA is providing support on policy and legal issues. See Annex I for further on IUCN and IC in Bangladesh. As there was delay in the 1<sup>st</sup> three of the project due to political problem prevailing in December 2006 and January 2007,

the project was later on principle agreed to be extended for three months and now will end in August 2008.

## **Goal and Objectives of the Preparatory Phase**

### ***Goal***

Initiate and test a pilot co-management system for Tanguar Haor and obtain necessary policy, administrative and community support to commence a comprehensive co-management system for Tanguar Haor in future.

### ***Objectives***

1. Selected communities of Tanguar Haor have the capacity and the organization to participate in pilot co-management activities.
2. An institutional system is negotiated and piloted to support towards development of a fully operational co-management system for Tanguar Haor.
3. The knowledge on Tanguar Haor is organised to provide necessary inputs for the development phase.
4. A cost recovery mechanism is developed and put in function.

## **2. Review 2008 of the Project**

### **Rationale & Objective of the Review**

The current review would assess how far the recommendations of the earlier review have been implemented and the objectives of the preparatory stage had been achieved. The preparatory stage is expected to generate some concrete experiences on developing the organisational structure of the community, modalities of resource harvest, smooth functioning of co-management, identification of potential IGAs and livelihood development mechanism for and in Tanguar Haor.

### **The objectives of the review:**

The main objective of the review 2008 is *to assess the real possibilities of the project in achieving relevant results* in an effective and efficient way within the projected time frame as well as *to deliver elements for the decision making of the involved partners on the future orientation* of the joint endeavour.

The review is expected to provide analytical facts and recommendations on:

1. The project's focus, strategy and approaches to achieve it's objectives in the particular context of Tanguar Haor.
2. The relevance and the functionality of the project's institutional setup; specially the choice of partners to implement this kind of project.
3. The project's progress to date against its plans and agreements, reports, strategy papers and policy notes.
4. The relevance and effectiveness of the project's interventions in relation to the environmental and human livelihood vulnerabilities of Tanguar Haor.

5. The Institutional and Government steps in place or to be in place to ensure the sustainable development of the Tanguar Haor project (including clear development options for the poor, vulnerable population of this area).
6. The project's possibility of harmonisation and alignment with other actors that are working in similar fields of expertise (networking).
7. The coordination and management of the project with a specific view on its inter-institutional set up at both the decision making and steering level (mainly with the involved governmental partners and the local stakeholders) as well as the implementation and coordination level (mainly the cooperation between IUCN, IC and local stakeholders).

### **Key Issues & Questions**

In order to make a decision to fully or jointly (with other development partners) provide SDC support to the Tanguar Haor project in the future, the following issues and questions need to be clarified:

1. How far the ***project delivery*** is satisfactory as compared with the project document, PIP, logical framework etc.?
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? Do we have the right strategy to address the co-management? 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?
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 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 and/or steps*** on Haor/water bodies, Ramsar helping or affecting? Does the GoB really has any interest on the project, particularly in co-management?
8. How well is the ***coordination among the partners of the project*** functioning? Are the roles and responsibilities of the partners (MoEF, UICN, IC and the local partners rightly defined to avoid dual management and conflict? How well are specially the organizational



strengths/approaches of IUCN and IC creating synergies for reaching conservation and livelihood improvement objectives/goal?

9. How far is the project *in line with SDC Cooperation Strategy* (including its conceptual settings for E&I and Local Governance)? What kind of linkages and synergies this project has or should have in relation to other SDC projects in line with the new Cooperation Strategy (e.g. the Sunamganj Coordination Initiative)?
10. What could be the *follow up phases* (or exit strategy for SDC) 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?
11. What kind of *cost recovery system* would work for sustainability of the project (within the scenarios, proposed under point 9)?
12. What is the strategy to be put in place to *ensure transparency and accountability* (and to avoid corruption)?
13. Are the lessons learnt *attracting other development partners* for investing in such initiative? Is the project harmonised (or is there a scope to harmonise) with other projects by other development partners?
14. Is there a need for *technical backstopping in future phases*? What kind of support would be required?

## Methodology

The detailed methodology, further specific key questions and a detailed programme of the review will be prepared and finalised by SDC (lead for the review) in consultation with the consultant and IUCN.

The following steps are to be included in that programme:

- Review of agreements among SDC-Government-IUCN, the project logical framework, project implementation plan, annual work plans, 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) 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 to identify key issues and challenges of the ongoing project in view to orient the future joint endeavour.

- Critical appraisal of the pilot 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, e.g. development 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).

## **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 start next phase, e.g. development phase. The report should scope out possible objectives, results, and detail out time-bound activities for a development phase; projections on further phases (long term view) can be elaborated as well.

## **Timeframe**

16,5 days from 22 February to 10 March, 2008, 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 development stage. He will detail out the methodology and finalise based on feedback from IUCN and SDC.

IUCN would facilitate the logistic arrangements.

## **Contact persons**

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## **Budget**

The consultant will be contracted to SDC and his fees will be defined as per SDC's 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 (upto Dec 2007)
7. Minutes of Review meetings
8. Govt policy documents related to climate change, haor/wetland.

## ***Annex 5 - Implementing agencies***

As a partner organization of SDC, Bangladesh Country office of the World Conservation Union (IUCNB) has been assigned by the Ministry of Environment and Forest as the coordinating organization. IUCNB has the overall coordination role and is in charge of technical aspects of the project. It will work together with Inter-cooperation. Intercooperation will put emphasis on its efforts on the livelihoods component of the project. It will organize and mobilize the community to implement its livelihoods component with partners. Other partners involved include local NGOs, civil society network and national think tanks.

### **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

The World Conservation Union is the world largest and most important conservation network. It supports and develops cuttingedge conservation science; links both research and results to local, national, regional and global policy by convening dialogues between governments, civil society and the private sector. In its projects, the Union applies sound ecosystem management to conserve biodiversity and builds sustainable livelihoods for those directly dependent on natural resources. SDC began partnership with IUCN Bangladesh in 2006. IUCN works on wetlands and waterbodies, Chittagong Hill Tracts and coastal and marine issues.

### **Intercooperation**

Intercooperation is a Swiss foundation specialised in international development cooperation. Its principal working domains are: natural resource management, rural economy, and local governance ad civil society. Intercooperation has projects in more than 20 countries, including Bangladesh. SDC has been working with Intercooperation since 2000.