UNDP Bangladesh

Minutes of the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) Meeting

Date:	18 July 2023 (Time: 3.00-5.30 pm)
Location:	UNDP Office, IDB Bhaban (18 fl), Agargaon, Dhaka
Project Title:	Community-based Management of Tanguar Haor Wetland in Bangladesh
Project Document presented by:	Arif M. Faisal, Programme Specialist (Environment Sustainability & Energy), UNDP Bangladesh
Chair:	Ms. Van Nguyen, Deputy Representative, UNDP Bangladesh

Summary of LPAC members' comments:

At the very outset, the chair of the LAPC, Ms. Van Nguyen, Deputy Representative, UNDP welcomed all participants from the relevant ministries and line agencies and requested all to introduce themselves. She explained the purpose of this meeting and invited Mr. Arif Faisal, Programme Specialist, UNDP, to present the project. In his presentation, Mr. Arif Faisal briefly shared Tanguar Hoar's significance in floral and faunal diversity, key threats to the ecosystem, project goal and objective, theory of change, project's component-wise key deliverables, project organization structure, implementation modality and summary of the budget. Detail presentation is attached. After completing the presentation, Solaiman Haider, Director Department of Environment, opened the floor for questions and comments based on the presentation.

Ms. Mohsina Akter Banu, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) noted a difference in the total project budget figure written in the presentation and the project brief; and suggested correcting the budget figure. Besides, she enquired about the purpose of this Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) meeting. She also proposed organizing a local inception workshop in Tanguar Haor with all the local stakeholders, considering gender and disability in the project implementation and implementation of the Ecosystem Management Fund under ECA Rules. She also asked whether GEF is directly involved in this project implementation. In response, Ms. Van mentioned that GEF is providing grants and UNDP is acting as an implementing entity of the GEF fund.

Mr. Solaiman Haider, Director, Department of Environment, explained why the community-based management of the Tanguar Haor project is very important for conserving wetland biodiversity and discussed the challenge of the lengthy process of project design, processing and approval of GEF funded project. Referring to the question on LPAC by Ms. Mohsina Akter Banu, he explained that it is an internal mechanism of UNDP to ensure the quality and inform the key stakeholders about the project progress. He also informed to Ms. Mohsina that GEF support in conducting Mid-Term and Terminal evaluation of the project.

Mr. Haider, Director of the Department of Environment, also reiterated the challenge of wetland management where land is managed by the Ministry of Land and local administration but aquatic resources by the Department of Fisheries. In this connection, he reminded us that GEF allocation depends on the share of GDP for biodiversity conservation. Finally, he emphasized the importance of working together and called for collaboration among the Ministry of Land, Local Administration, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Haor, and the Wetland Development Department.

Mr. AKM Rafiqul Islam, Deputy Director DoE, proposed that Tanguar Haor is already declared as Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) by implementing ECA rules to ensure the justified access and benefit sharing of community into wetlands. Besides, he suggested including the following activities based on the learning from the previous project:

- Plantation of swamp forest with native species and prepare a map for locating plantation areas
- Practically, 73 Village Conservation Groups for 88 villages are not manageable. Therefore 3-4 villages can be brought under one Village Conservation Group.
- Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction can be integrated.

Ms. Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP, informed that everything was not detailed during the project preparation. So, there is scope to improve the project activities and targets. In addition, she suggested to include Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (National Tourism Board) in this project to make coordination while implementing ecotourism activities and engaging private tour operators. She also responded by referring to the proposition of Ms. Mohsina on ‘Gender & Disability’ by explaining that it is GEN 2 category project, meaning that it makes significant contributions to gender equality.

Mr. Mahmud Ilias from Bangladesh Water Development Board shared that they have a two-tier community-based wetland management system consisting of the Wetland Management

Association on top of the Wetland Management Group. Noting that the project has no livelihood component, he suggested including tailoring, duck rearing, and modern rice farming as income-generating options. He also focuses on the savings of Village Conservation Group to carry out their conservation activities even after the completion of the project in a sustainable manner. Mr. Faisal mentioned that rearing of domestic duck in Tanguar Haor may create an ecological disaster and epidemiological scenario where mixing of wild ducks (migratory birds) with the domestic ducks can exchange pathogens like avian influenza viruses. Therefore, duck rearing will not be allowed in the Tanguar Haor area.

Ms. Umme Kulsum Ferdousi, District Fisheries Officer, Department of Fisheries, proposed establishing fish sanctuaries in project areas, including the Department of Fisheries registered fishermen as project beneficiaries, and training them accordingly for their capacity building.

Dr. Mariam Akther, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Bangladesh Forest Department, said the project will restore 9,727 hectares of wetland. She questioned the mechanism of identifying this area for swamp plantations. She also asked for clarification on where the project is commissioning ecosystem valuation study or reviewing the value of the wetland ecosystem given in the project background information.

Mr Md. Akhtaruzzaman DG, Haor & Wetland Development Department gave examples of nature-based income generation practices of Sweden and Chicago of USA. He emphasized the coordination of different ministries (the Ministry of Land, the Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, etc.) and local administration for community-based wetland management. He suggested the execution of community-based tourism, aquaculture, and more effective livelihood options for achieving transformative results.

Mr. Solaiman Haider, Director Department of Environment, mentioned that cooperation with the Department of Fisheries is critical. However, the Department of Fisheries focuses on production, while the Department of Environment on Conservation. Therefore, the Department of Fisheries representative will be included in the Local Ecologically Critical Area Committee. Finally, he concluded that all points mentioned in this meeting are addressed in TAPP.

Ms. Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP, suggested competing for the TAPP by September, considering the impact of the National Election by the end of the year. She focusses more on bringing transformative changes through this project. Finally, she requested participants to provide more comments and feedback and share it with UNDP by 25 July 2023.

Meeting Recommendations:

1. Local inception workshop to be organized in Tanguar Haor with local stakeholders
2. ECA Rules can be applied in Tanguar Haor by designating it as Ecologically Critical Area to ensure the justified access of communities into the wetlands.
3. Eco Disaster Risk Reduction can be integrated.
4. Farm and off-firm livelihood activities should be included as income-generating options.
5. Number of Village Conservation Groups to be reduced (one Village Conservation Group for 3-4 villages) to manage it efficiently
6. Savings of Village Conservation Group to be encouraged to carry out their conservation activities even after the completion of project in a sustainable manner.
7. Representative of the Department of Fisheries to be included in the Local ECA Committee
8. Ecosystem Management Fund to be operationalized during the project implementation.
9. Disability perspective to be included in the project activities.
10. TAPP to be completed by September 2023, considering the impact of the project approval process by the national election.
11. Participants are requested to share their feedback by 25 July 2023

LPAC minutes approved by:

Signature: 

Name : Van Nguyen
Designation: Deputy Resident Representative
Date : 23 July 2023

Attachments:

1. Project Document with all Annexes
2. LPAC Presentation
3. List of participants

Participants:

Department of Bangladesh Haor and Wetland Development
1.Mr. Md. Akhtaruzzaman, Director General,

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2.Ms. Mohsina Akter Banu, Deputy Secretary

Bangladesh Forest Department
3.Dr. Mariam Akther, Deputy Conservator of Forest

Department of Environment
4.Mr. AKM Rafiqul Islam, Deputy Director,

Planning of the Department of Environment
5.Mr. Mohammed Solaiman Haider, Director

Bangladesh Water Development Board.
6.Mr. Engineer. Mahmud Ilias, SE/DPD Haor Flood Management and Livelihood Implement. Project,
7.Dr. Md Zahidul Islam, Deputy Chief Agriculture /DCEO

Department of Fisheries
8.Ms. Umme Kulsum Ferdousi, District Fisheries Officer

UNDP Bangladesh
9. Ms. Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative
10. Mr. Krishna Raj Adhikari, Senior Operations Manager, UNDP
11.Mr. Prasenjit Chakma, Assistant Resident Representative
12. Mr. Sarder M Asaduzzaman, Assistant Resident Representative
13.Mr. Arif Mohammad Faisal, Programme Specialist, UNDP
14. Mr. Sk Abdullah Jonayed, Project Manager, Climate Promise-2, UNDP
15. Ms. Shimul Barua, Programme Associate, UNDP
16. Ms. Kazi Nasreen Nahar, Programme Associate, UNDP
17.Ms. Fatematul Jannat, Programme Associate Partnership UNDP
18. Ms. Farhana Gaffar, Procurement Officer, UNDP

Presentation

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