

*Minutes*  
*Partners Work Planning Session on IPAC*  
*30 June 2008, Nishorgo / IPAC, Banani Office*

**Purpose and Participants**

A meeting was held on June 30, 2008 at the Nishorgo / IPAC project office in Banani, to convene the principal implementing partners of the IPAC project with the following objectives:

1. to familiarize implementing partners with key results to be achieved in the first year of IPAC and to agree on priority tasks to be implemented with the support of the IPAC team
2. to discuss targets for illustrative performance indicators for IPAC, with a focus on the targets for 2009
3. to exchange information on modalities for staffing and mobilization
4. to agree on additional actions needed to prepare the first annual work plan, by July 15

**Introductory comments**

Bob Winterbottom, COP and Ram Sharma, DCOP welcomed the participants. Partners were encouraged to consult the minutes prepared following the first informational meeting held on June 17, and to refer to the one page summary description of IPAC as well as the updated work planning schedule (copies distributed in advance and at the meeting). The partners were also advised about the latest developments on:

- consultation with stakeholders: the core team has made good progress in meeting with key government stakeholders and technical services, including Forest Dept, Dept of Fisheries and will soon meet with Dept of Environment; brainstorming and planning workshops have been scheduled with DOF on July 6 and with FD on July 12.
- Subcontracts: a template will soon be circulated, and then updated scopes of work and budgets for each partner incorporated, with a view towards finalizing and submitting the subcontracts for review by USAID in mid July
- recruitment of key field personnel (including Site Coordinators for each Cluster): new job descriptions have been drafted and are being circulated for review and comment; the details of the job description and timetable for the recruitment process are being discussed with the concerned partners managing each Cluster

**Update on plans for extension period of Nishorgo Support Project.**

Ram Sharma outlined the key activities that are underway and planned during the extension period of NSP support to the Nishorgo Program, including continuing activities in the 5 Nishorgo pilot sites in the Northeast and Southeast Clusters, and assistance around Modhupur and in the Sundarbans, for the period June – November 2008. Annual development planning (ADP) sessions are scheduled July 10-11 in Cox's Bazar and July 16 in Srimongal with a national meeting in Dhaka to follow. Additional training for Forest Guards is being organized, along with training for AIG from bamboo products. Cross visits are being organized with participants from Modopur to Cox's Bazar and

Srimongal. Grants made available to Co-management Committees (CMC) through the Landscape Development Fund are being closed out. The project continues to work towards the collection and sharing of park entry fees. The launch of the Lawachara National Park Interpretive Center is being planned in August. A national workshop is planned to review efforts related to cyclone recovery and to follow through on the planning and design of facilities development in the Sundarbans.

Questions and discussions arose related to the sustainability of bamboo production; it was agreed that the support for value chain analysis and the processing and marketing of bamboo products would be carried out in tandem with continued analysis of the condition of bamboo resources, the sustainability of production, and activities designed to ensure conservation, increased productivity and regeneration of bamboo resources.

**Presentations on planned activities by IPAC partners:**

Community Development Centre - CODEC. In advance of the meeting, CODEC provided a summary of their institutional capabilities, listing of key staff that can be mobilized, and a brief description of their relevant experience for IPAC. Following presentations and discussions by Dr. Khurshid Alam, Executive Director and Goutam Biswas NSP Senior Manager, CODEC is responsible for supporting IPAC activities in two Clusters: Southeast and Sundarbans. This support includes management of financial and logistical support to field staff working in the sites in these Clusters; provision of continued technical support to MACH and Nishorgo sites in the Clusters especially for components 2 and 3. This would include baseline assessments, social mobilization and other program support to other sites for the extension and scaling up of co-management in other targeted areas; achievement of targeted results related to community organization, outreach, training, PA co-management, AIG, monitoring and other tasks including leveraging of micro-finance. Following a general discussion of the main areas of responsibility and key activities to be included in the first annual work plan, it was agreed that more detailed inputs for the work plan would be submitted by July 5.

World Fish Center. Dr. Giasuddin Khan, Senior Fisheries Scientist and principal contact for IPAC, provided contextual background information on trends related to the extent and condition of wetlands and fisheries in Bangladesh, and went on to present the proposed support to be provided through WFC to achieve results for components 1,2 and 3. WFC will contribute to policy reviews and analysis of lessons learned, and to training and capacity building, and to site specific implementation of co-management, particularly applied research and monitoring, with a focus on aquatic ecosystems (see table listing planned activities). As detailed in handouts provided at the meeting, WFC will provide five main types of program support:

1. Management support
2. Participatory action monitoring and evaluation (PAME) research
3. Policy and institutional and technical advice, guidance and direction for fisheries and wetlands related co-management strategy development
4. Capacity building to put integrated PA co-management in place
5. Communication and networking

Questions and discussions followed with respect to integration between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. IPAC will aim to assess both types of ecosystems, including their condition, pressures causing degradation, access and use of resources, with a view towards identifying and supporting actions leading to organization and empowerment of local user groups, capacity building for more sustainable use, improved governance and promotion of equitable access and sharing of benefits, and habitat restoration and adoption of practices designed to increase resource productivity. Regarding the role of WFC staff assigned to work in each Cluster, it was agreed that they would have an important role in supporting training, action research, monitoring (both wetlands and other PAs including forests and ECAs), networking and in management of grants for applied research.

**Oasis Transformation Ltd.** Christopher Bijoy Sarker, principal contact for IPAC, briefed the partners on the completed and ongoing activities supported by Oasis for the bamboo value chain in Bangladesh, in the context of their global family of enterprises and organizations supporting fair trade, a reduction in human trafficking, value chain development, investment in value-added processing facilities, and development of pro-poor business strategies. He went on to describe in more detail the specific activities that they propose to support in the first year of IPAC, including:

- Organization of feasibility studies for sustainable bamboo production in each Cluster (sequentially, over a period of four months), to examine key varieties, ownership rights, availability of raw materials and labor
- Work with community organizations interested in bamboo production
- Assessment of social issues and infrastructure
- Market research
- Organization of pilot training activities, with a focus on training of trainers (so the Cluster staff can extend and replicate the training with additional user groups)

Discussion followed on the status of Oasis work in northern Bangladesh where they are moving ahead with the development of a bamboo processing facility. So as to take maximum advantage of what is already known and research already done on bamboo, discussions also addressed their current contacts and planned linkages with bamboo specialists in China and elsewhere in the region. Discussion also noted the opportunity to brand bamboo products with some type of certification related to sustainable production in association with biodiversity conservation, as well as Fair Trade and other labels.

**Asiatic Marketing Communications Ltd.** Aly Zaker, Managing Director and CEO introduced the Asiatic team and presented information to the partners on their mission, corporate capabilities, business linkages and experiences. Asiatic is affiliated with J Walter Thompson (JWT), an international renowned communications firm, and is allied with a network of companies having expertise in communications, media campaigns, advertising, strategic planning, events organization, audio-video production, social marketing, market research, product testing and other capabilities enabling them to provide world class client oriented communication solutions.

The principal contact for IPAC and Director of Operations, Rakesh Chakravorty then outlined their ideas for specific interventions to support the implementation of IPAC. In the first year of IPAC, Asiatic will have a leading role in the assessment of current knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) related to integrated PA co-management of wetlands, fisheries, forests and other natural resources. They will also lead the program in the development of the IPAC communication strategy. This strategy will include advice on how best to:

- Organize market research to identify key stakeholders of IPAC
- Assess current beliefs and attitudes with a view towards creating broader awareness and addressing the major constraints to integrated PA co-management
- Further popularization of the achievements, impacts and lessons learned from the experiences of MACH and Nishorgo
- Proposals for repositioning the Nishorgo brand, to keep the word but to shift the brand recognition to include both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems
- Generation of ideas to adjust the Nishorgo logo to embrace fisheries, wetlands and the full range of natural resources
- Preparation of quarterly newsletters, to disseminate information contributed by the implementing partners on program activities, results and impacts
- Development of useful information, communication and education (ICE) materials, to prompt targeted behavior changes and to increase benefits from the implementation of the IPAC strategy
- Organization of TV talk shows with co-management specialists
- Collaboration with Sesame Street program, Scouts and others to leverage outreach to youth
- Support for expansion of networks in support of IPAC, including federations of user groups, environmental advocates, technical specialists, conservation community, journalists and others
- Guidance and technical support to the IPAC partners to ensure compliance with the USAID mandated marking and branding plan

During the discussion, it was emphasized that Asiatic would play a vital role in supporting outreach and communication as a cross-cutting element of all three components, and that all partners would need to collaborate with the communications team led by Asiatic. Drawing on the experience of Nishorgo (as both a program and a USAID funded support project), the team also recognized the need to develop and promote a sense of ownership by a broad range of stakeholders in a national IPAC program including GOB technical services, local government representatives, co-management structures, community-based organizations and user groups, local communities, civil society, students / youth and private sector interests.

Adivasi Unnayan Kendra – Centre for Indigenous Peoples’ Development. The Chief Executive of CIPD, Janalal Chakma noted some of the required permissions and anticipated obstacles or difficulties to working in the remote and less accessible areas of the CHT. We noted that communications and discussions between the government and USAID should help the team to overcome these obstacles and in combination with a well publicized program launch, should help to raise awareness in the region of the aims and

anticipated benefits of IPAC. Questions were also raised about staffing, mobilization and initial work planning, and it was agreed that CIPD could take advantage of the experience gained by CODEC and RDRS with Nishorgo; cross visits will be organized and to the extent feasible, key staff of CIPD will observe the ADP being organized in July in Srimongal and Cox's Bazaar, and the central management team will work especially closely with CIPD on staff recruitment and work planning. CIPD will provide detailed inputs for the work plan by July 6.

International University of Bangladesh. Ms. Dil Rowshan, Assistant Professor at IUB, attended the meeting on behalf of Prof. Haroun Er Rashid and the IUB/JU team as they were fully occupied with other commitments, including finalization of Nishorgo publications and leadership in a seminar on disaster management. Discussions focused on the proposed length of certificate courses and targeted beneficiaries; it was agreed that the course might be longer for junior staff (8-10 weeks) and shorter for senior staff (6-8 weeks), and the course could be organized in Dhaka to facilitate the participation of key trainers, and IPAC could aim to make use of available public training centres to the extent feasible and advisable. As IPAC related training courses are developed, it was agreed that the target beneficiaries could be expanded to include more than representatives of government and NGOs, particularly once the courses were well established and if IUB/JU could offer them directly to students and business owners for nominal fees. The program will also aim to take advantage of the experience and capabilities of IUB/JU in supporting the development of ecotourism and tourism that benefits indigenous communities, through the organization of live-in stays and other means. It was agreed that IUB/JU would arrange to meet with IPAC management team in the next week to clarify details for the work plan.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association. The BELA representative outlined the principal activities to be supported by BELA in the first year of IPAC, including:

- Comprehensive review of policies and laws to identify loopholes
- Organization of a workshop to review the findings of the legal review
- Preparation of a position paper outlining strategies for environmental advocacy
- Provision of legal advice to CBOs and assistance in filing public interest environmental litigation
- Contribution to communications activities to promote needed policy reforms

During the discussion it was agreed that the legal review would take account of site level visits and consultations with communities with a view towards identifying gaps between the stated theory and intent of policies and laws, and actual practice. It was also noted that BELA has already been active in working with CBOs established through MACH, with a view towards establishing the rights of the poor to lease water bodies and to have access to fisheries resources, and that this would continue with IPAC support. BELA agreed to provide detailed inputs for the IPAC work plan by July 6.

Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services. Mr. Anthony D' Cruetz, Coordinator (Project Development) and Mr. Raihanul Islam Chowdhury, Field Coordinator, Nishorgo/Srimongal summarized work planning inputs from RDRS. As with the case of CODEC

and CIPD, RDRS will focus their support for the achievement of results related primarily to site level implementation (component 3) at the Cluster level, along with training, capacity building and outreach (component 2). Specific activities will build on the experience gained with Nishorgo in the areas of social mobilization and AIG, including a streamlined approach for site selection, and development of income generating activities such as ecotourism in the protected areas, eco-guides, eco-cottages, bamboo products, weaving and handicrafts, bee-keeping and other activities – with an emphasis on linkages between conservation, AIG and environmentally friendly job creation. IPAC will seek out opportunities to collaborate with the USAID funded PRICE project which is targeting fish and shrimp among other value chains.

Solutions need to be found to address the pressures and threats generated by brickfields. In addressing this issue and similar ones such as illegal logging, pollution of water bodies, the team will work to identify the major threats and their root causes; to mobilize and organize affected communities and user groups; to explore and support actions to address the threats and develop opportunities; and to strengthen the voices of the poor and to enhance their rights and well being through facilitation of dialogue with decision makers and advocacy of needed interventions.

Other partners. IRG will circulate a summary of proposed interventions by other US based partners, including IRG/W specialists and short term technical assistance from WWF, dTS, ELI, Epler Wood International and East West Center. Several US partners have offered to circulate available background studies that could be useful for work planning, and these will be made available to implementing partners. An initial visit by the IRG communications specialist, Joan Ablett is being planned for late July / early August to work with Asiatic and IPAC partners on the communications strategy, and by Megan Epler-Wood in September to assess the prospects for a community-based nature tourism development strategy with an initial focus on the Teknaf peninsula.

Staffing and Subcontracting. The central management team will work closely with the partners providing support to each Cluster in the development of job descriptions for Cluster level staffing and in the organization of advertising and interviews to recruit the site coordinators and other key positions. Opportunities to consolidate staff positions and to increase efficiency and teamwork while reducing staffing costs will be explored, particularly with respect to the potential for combining positions fielded by WFC and Cluster managers in the area of monitoring.

Partners were advised to consider the need for any revisions in proposed subcontract budgets in the next week, in keeping with the total budgets already agreed upon, and to submit any suggested adjustments before July 15.

Accordingly, the anticipated timetable for mobilization will include the following target dates and deadlines:

- July 6 – submission of additional inputs for work planning, including tables listing planned activities and associated results, by component and task, and details on proposed staffing

- July 6 and 12, consultation and brainstorming with DOF and FD on work planning
- July 15 – submission of finalized subcontractor budgets
- July 15 – submission of draft work plan to USAID
- July 15-31 – circulation of advertisements for recruitment of Site Coordinators and key field staff positions
- July 31 (or earlier if possible) – finalization of subcontracts and submission to USAID of request for consent to subcontract
- Aug 1-7 – short-listing and interview / testing of preferred candidates

Performance Monitoring. The IPAC monitoring coordinator, Nasim Aziz, distributed copies of the table on IPAC indicators and targets, along with indicator summary sheets for several indicators. The partners were informed that an additional indicator “Number of people in target areas with access to improved drinking water supply as a result of USG assistance” would be added to the set of nine common indicators. Discussion centered on the rationale for the common indicators and on the need and opportunity to develop a few additional custom indicators to report on progress and impacts in key areas, including behavior change, empowerment, increased security of rights, development of AIG opportunities, enhanced outreach and communication and strengthening of national training programs and institutions. It was also noted that data for several indicators reporting on numbers of people affected should be disaggregated by gender. The partners also discussed how to ensure that IPAC is targeting PA having the greatest “biological significance” as well as natural resources of important economic significance. The team will review the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to ensure that areas of greatest biological significance are targeted to the extent feasible. WFC and other partners will also examine available data from DOF, FD, Tourism and others to review data on the economic importance and contributions from these targeted natural resources and Protected Areas.

**Summary of follow up actions:**

1. prepare and circulate meeting minutes
2. circulate available background information from US partners and others
3. proceed with brainstorming and planning meetings with GOB stakeholders
4. proceed with one on one meetings as necessary to clarify questions related to scopes of work, planned activities and budgets for individual partners
5. encourage CIPD, CODEC, RDRS and WFC to participate in work planning sessions with DOF and FD, and in Cluster level ADP meetings.
6. partners to submit additional inputs needed for work planning as detailed above, to meet July 15 deadline.
7. finalize job descriptions and proceed with recruitment of key field staff positions