

Dialogue with Young Water Professionals:
Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and
its Application in Water Management in the
Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM)
River Basin

27 August 2020 (Wednesday) 2:00 PM Delhi/2:15PM Kathmandu/
2:30 PM Dhaka Time

Presenters				Moderators	
					
Mr. Vishwa Ranjan Sinha Programme Officer, Water and Wetlands, IUCN Asia	Ms Nuzhat Nueary Project Officer, Transboundary Rivers of South Asia, Oxfam, Bangladesh	Mr Kishan Khadka Project Officer, National Environment and Equity Development Society (NEEDS) Nepal	Ms. Kavya Arora Manager, Policy and Planning, Development Alternatives (India)	Dr. Khalid Hossain Programme Coordinator, IUCN Bangladesh	Ms Archana Chatterjee Senior Programme Coordinator, IUCN India
NbS Global Standard	NbS for Flood and Erosion Control - Bangladesh	NbS for Flood and Erosion Control - Nepal	NbS for Agriscap Management	Opening Remarks	Synthesis and Closing Remarks







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Sharing Nature-based Solutions from Bundelkhand for Regenerating Natural Resources

A dialogue was organised with Young Water Professionals on 'Nature-based Solutions and its Application in Water Management in the GBM river basin' jointly hosted by IUCN, BRIDGE, Sweden Sverige, OXFAM, and TROSA. Kavya Arora, Senior Manager, Development Alternatives shared a narrative of DA's Bundelkhand work through the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) lens - highlighting its Natural Resource Management and Participatory Governance aspects and assessing its synergy with the NbS criteria defined by IUCN in 2020.

Under Natural Resource Management she shed light on three possible solutions. Firstly, the creation of water and soil conservation structures, such as check dams, gabions, field bunds, and plantation on public lands that maintains soil moisture, promotes green growth, increases groundwater level (reduce run-off), and reduces the drudgery of women. Secondly, the Wadi model of agro-forestry which includes fruit trees, seasonal crops, local fuel/ forestry/ timber species, which enhances farmer incomes and thus wellbeing, reduces climate vulnerability, and reduces pressure on forests. Thirdly, better farming practices, such as seasonal intercropping, vermi-composting, crop rotation with legumes, and revival of millets which increases yield, diversifies crops and food sources, and reduces crop failure due to weather extremities.

She further highlighted the role of Participatory Governance to enhance livelihood security and sustainable agricultural practices:

- Formation of Watershed Committee and Panchayat-level planning – ensures local governance, inclusion and community ownership capacity building of farmers and creating farmers' collectives - financial empowerment and community strengthening
- Involving women in empowerment programmes by tapping the government's programmes on building community institutions such as SHGs – gender inclusion and financial empowerment
- Leveraging government schemes and initiatives (such as IWMP by Dept. of Science and Technology, NABARD, State govt.) - ensure the viability of the initiative
- Watershed Development Fund and a revolving fund for microcredit services – community ownership for maintenance of the structure, support the local economy

She concluded the Bundelkhand case study by assessing it on the IUCN developed **Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions**. The Global Standard has been developed to be used by governments, businesses, investors, communities, and NGOs, and ensure that Nature-based Solutions (NbS) reach their potential to address societal challenges. The Standard consists of 8 Criteria and 28 Indicators. Below list assesses the Bundelkhand case study against the IUCN criterion: -

Addressing societal challenges (criteria 1): Water and food security, climate change resilience, socio-economic betterment of farmers (contribution to SDGs)

Informed by scale (criteria 2): Landscape-level watershed management suitable for the entire semi-arid region of Bundelkhand

Benefits to biodiversity (criteria 3): Reviving wastelands in the region by replanting local indigenous species thus sequestering carbon and reducing pressure on forests

Long-term economic viability (criteria 4): Financially viable for farmers as income from agriculture increases

Inclusive interventions and governance (criteria 5): Focussed on tribal, marginalised and vulnerable communities and directly including farmers and women

Balancing trade-offs (criteria 6): Trade-offs informed by stakeholders' choices, benefit-sharing from common resources

Managed adaptively (criteria 7): Outcome understood, continuously monitored/evaluated and intervention informed by evidence

Mainstreaming (criteria 8): Active communication and policy advocacy based on learning with Networks (RRAN) and local bodies

Two other participants from Bangladesh and Nepal shared similar examples from their respective countries. The discussion panel gave feedback on all three presentations and shared in the conclusion that many successful NbS approaches have been demonstrated by communities in various pockets across the world. The idea is to now mainstream them into policies and decision-making at the national and global levels.