

Indus Forever

A quarterly newsletter of the Indus For All Programme, WWF - Pakistan

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The Indus Ecoregion Conservation Journey Begins...

This is the first issue of "Forever Indus". This quarterly newsletter will keep you updated with activities, events, and progress of WWF-Pakistan's "Indus for All Programme".

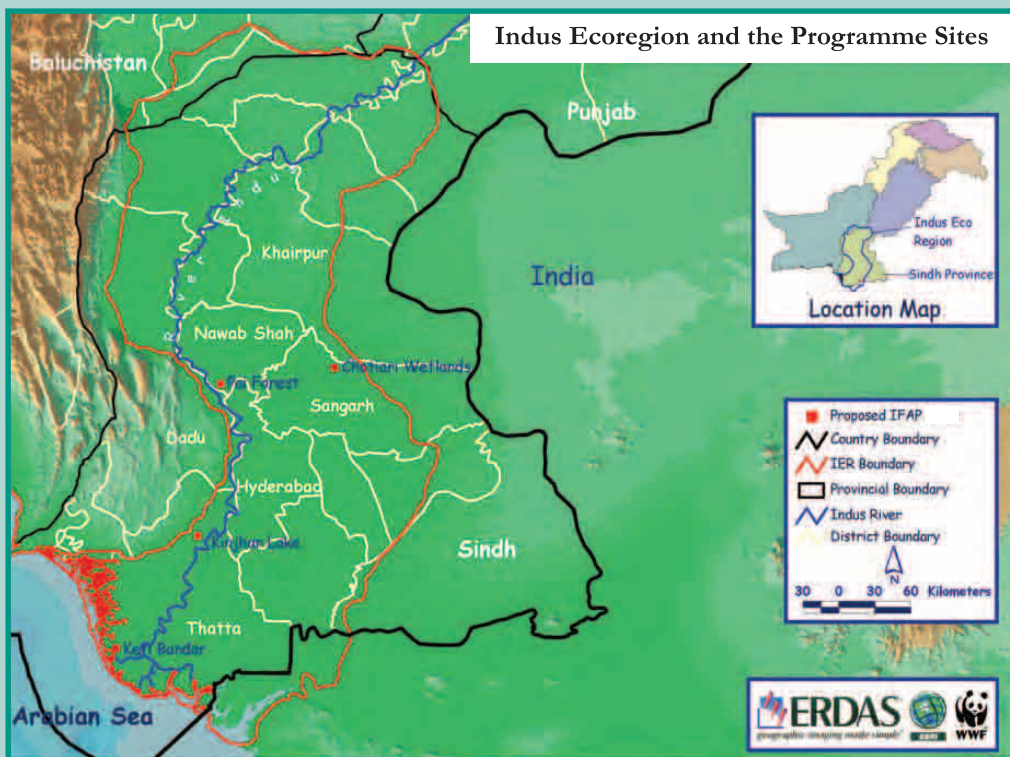
The Indus for All Programme is the first 5-year implementation phase of the 50 years vision of the Indus Ecoregion Conservation Programme. The first implementation phase (April 2007-March 2012) follows the completion of a 9- month inception phase (July 2006-March 2007).

The Programme aims to conserve the rich biological diversity of the Indus ecoregion through livelihoods improvement of the local communities. The Indus Ecoregion partly of fully covers 18 districts of Sindh Province. Four critical ecosystems in three districts (Thatta, Nawabshah and Sanghar) have been initially selected for the Indus For All Programme's Interventions. These include coastal ecosystem (Keti Bunder), inland forest ecosystem (Pai forest), freshwater wetlands ecosystem (Kinjhar Lake) and desert-wetlands ecosystem (Chotiari reservoir).

The programme is being implemented through site specific field implementation units supported by a Programme Management Unit based in Karachi.

At apex level, the Programme is supported by the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee, established under the chairmanship of Additional Chief Secretary (Development) P&D Department, Government of Sindh. This committee is mandated to provide institutional and strategic support in the implementation of the Indus Ecoregion Conservation Plan.

The programme wishes to acknowledge gratefully the generous financial support of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Pakistan.



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How the “Indus for All Programme” came into existence

The development of the Indus for All Programme is owed to an exhaustive process of consultations. In 1997, WWF-International embarked upon a global biodiversity conservation initiative guided by WWF's overall global strategy of six target-driven and thematic programmes (freshwater, forests, species, toxics, marine and climate change). With the assistance of UNEP and the National Geographic Society, 238 ecoregions were prioritized globally (commonly referred as G-200) to reflect their ecological significance and earth's biodiversity richness. The Indus Ecoregion is one of the five ecoregions situated fully or partly within Pakistan and one of the forty biologically most significant ecoregions in the world.

The Indus Ecoregion Conservation Programme was developed based on the study, “Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss in Mangrove Ecosystems” in 1999. This study highlighted the complex linkages that existed between biodiversity loss and the associated social, economic and policy drivers and emphasized the need for a more holistic approach to biodiversity conservation.

The study provided the basis for a stakeholders' workshop in December 2002 to assess the current situation of the Indus Ecoregion. Attended by over 60 experts from all walks of life, the workshop resulted in the following outcomes:

- Boundary of the Ecoregion defined;
- Existing information on IER ecological and socio-economic status reviewed;
- Threats, problems and issues identified/highlighted;
- Process for developing a common IER conservation strategy and action plan initiated;
- A platform created for continuing discussion, coordination and collaboration; and,
- Over 100 recommendations identified to address existing threats, problems and issues.

The 2002 workshop was followed by a 5-day “Biodiversity Visioning and Ecoregion Conservation Planning” workshop held from 12-16 July, 2004. Attended by over 50 stakeholders from line departments, civil society, academia and the private sector, the first two days resulted in a 50-year Biodiversity Vision for the IER which was then elaborated into an integrated Indus Ecoregion Conservation Plan (IECP). The workshop succeeded in developing a consensus on priority habitats and conservation targets for the next 10 - 20 years and identification of areas for institutional cooperation. These concerted and consultative efforts finally culminated in the development of the Indus for All Programme.

Indus For All Programme's Approach (3M)

Recent programmes of WWF and partners highlight the need for supportive policies and institutional frameworks for environmental protection and poverty reduction. Lapses in the past approaches of not addressing field-policy dynamics necessitated the development of the 3M approach. Developed by WWF's Macroeconomic Programme Office, the 3M approach links changes at the local level (micro) with changes at the sub-national (meso) and national levels (macro) in an effort to synchronise field-scale lessons and community aspirations with policy-level decisions. Development in Pakistan is staggered due to conflicting perceptions and interests of a diverse range of stakeholders. The 3M approach helps tackle this complexity and minimizes the political, economic and institutional disconnects that exist between the micro, meso and macro levels. WWF-Pakistan has customised the 3M approach according to the local context for implementation of the Indus for All Programme. At micro level the programme intends to address stakeholders at village and union council level; at meso the stakeholders at district and provincial level and at macro the stakeholders at national and international level.

Inception Phase Outcomes

At the end of the inception phase, the following outcomes have been materialized:

- The programme management structure is now in place with the induction of a programme team and a programme support unit, establishment of field offices, purchase of operational equipment, and establishment of Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee.
- The Programme has finalized operational guidelines and procedures, developed monitoring protocols and an overall implementation strategy for Natural Resource Management, Livelihoods improvement and Social Mobilization.
- The preliminary environmental and socio-economic assessments have been completed for the four sites.
- A capacity building framework has been prepared as a living document that specifies tools and techniques for capacity building and pre-requisites for smooth execution of capacity-building programmes.
- A Communications and Awareness Strategy has been designed for environmental education and awareness among all stakeholders using the 3M approach.
- A detailed institutional analysis of over 150 potential partner organizations to ascertain their role in implementation of the Indus for All Programme has been completed.
- The Programme's Partnership Fund implementing framework has been completed. Fund is expected to be operational by July 2007 and grants will be awarded bi-annually until 2012 (end of phase 1).



Ecological baselines survey, Kinjhar, 2006

Other important outcomes of the inception phase are:

- A detailed work plan with activities and tasks has been prepared for the first year and an overall work plan has been prepared for all five years. These work planes were approved by the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee in its meeting held on 12th April 2007.
- Budget development, following the Output-based Billing System (OBS), is also complete.
- The Programme's 5-year Logical Framework Analysis and its indicators were reviewed and further refined.
- The 50-year Logical Framework Analysis was reviewed by Indus for All staff and senior members of WWF - Pakistan's Sindh Conservation Programme.
- In its meeting held on April 12, 2007 the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee approved the formation of a Sub-Committee of the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee for Indus for All that will review and recommend approval of the 5 and 50-year Logical Framework Analysis with indicators and risks in its first meeting scheduled in July 2007.

Networking and Partnerships

During the Inception Phase, the Programme organized a series of consultative and confidence-building meetings with the key stakeholders including Sindh P&D Department, Coastal Development Authority, Sindh Environmental Protection Agency, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority, Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Sindh Forest Department, Sindh Wildlife Department, and UNDP GEF/SGP.

The meetings resulted in identification of mutual areas of collaboration for signing of partnership agreements/MoUs with various partners for smooth implementation of various programme interventions.

Presentation to the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Environment

A presentation was made to the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Environment by the Team Leader of the Programme on "threats and issues of Pai Forest". Extensive discussions between representatives from the Federal Government, the Government of Sindh and WWF - Pakistan took place on the problems related to irrigation and water supply to Pai Forest and other management options. The committee agreed that WWF would facilitate a trip to Pai Forest for representatives from the committee to observe the issues first-hand. The observations of the committee representatives would become a basis for prioritizing solutions to effective management of the Pai Forest.

Special Session of the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee

A Special Session of the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee was held on 22 January 2007 in Karachi. The members were briefed about the progress of the inception phase. The members were also briefed about the institutional assessments being conducted for identifying potential implementation partners. The first session of the meeting was chaired by the senior Secretaries of Government of Sindh and the concluding session by the Additional Chief Secretary (Development), Planning and Development Department, Government of Sindh. The meeting was attended by 46 participants representing 19 institutions and departments.



Special Session of the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee, January 2007

WWF Network's Officials Facilitate a Risk Management Exercise for the Indus for All Programme

As part of WWF International's support to the Indus for All Programme, two WWF officials, Dr. Ghana Shyam Gurung, Conservation Programme Director, WWF - Nepal and Ms. Céline Beaulieu, Operations Manager, Government Aid Agency Relations, WWF International, visited Pakistan. The delegation shared lessons from project implementation in other Ecoregions with the programme team. Dr. Gurung and Ms. Beaulieu conducted a day-long exercise with programme staff on Risk Management

that enabled the team to identify and categorize risks associated with delivery of the outputs. Both the programme staff and WWF network officials agreed that a formal mechanism must be established to ensure continued technical support to the programme from the WWF Network.



Risk Management Exercise, 13 March 2007.

Indus for All Programme Takes Part in International Maritime Conference

WWF Pakistan participated in the 1st International Maritime Conference organised by the National Centre of Maritime Policy Research, Bahria University Karachi, from 4 to 6 March 2007. Dr. Ghulam Akbar, Team Leader, Indus for All Programme, presented a paper at the event on "Coastal Biodiversity; Associated Threats and Opportunities". Indus for All Programme under the Communication and Awareness Component placed a stall at the workshop venue and introduced the programme to the workshop participants.

Royal Netherlands Embassy official visits the Programme's Field Sites

Mr. Fred Smiet, First Secretary, Royal Netherlands Embassy, visited two of the four sites of the Indus for All Programme along with the programme team led by Dr. Ghulam Akbar. During the visit to Chotiari Reservoir he met with the local communities in a village near the reservoir and listened to their concerns about their livelihoods and the natural resources of the area. He also had meetings with District Nazim and the District Coordination Officer (DCO) Sanghar and discussed the role of the District Government in the Indus for All Programme.

On the second day, Mr. Smiet along with the team members also visited Kinjhar Field Office in District Thatta where he met with local NGO representatives, including Kinjhar Fisherfolk Welfare Organisation, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF), Sindh Agriculture and Forestry Workers Cooperative Organisation (SAFWCO), Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS) and Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment (SCOPE). Subsequently, meetings were held with fisher folk communities. Mr. Smiet also met with Local Government representatives and officials of the Fisheries Department.



Fred Smiet's Meeting with Local NGO Representatives at Thatta, March 2007

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Chotiari Site Office Begins Social Mobilisation Process

The Social Mobilisation Unit of the Chotiari site office visited the villages situated around the Chotiari Reservoir to begin interactive sessions with the local communities. The villages included Mohammad Siddique Mallah, Somar Ji Miyani and village Ghulam Hussain Leghari.

According to the villagers, one of the main problems of the local communities is the rehabilitation of the people displaced after the construction of the reservoir. Moreover, the area is almost entirely cramped in the clutches of poverty and illiteracy with no infrastructure for health, education and transportation available. Gender imbalance is visible in almost every segment of the society including education, health and employment sectors. The women of the area are blessed with traditional skills such as embroidery, garment and mat making. The field staff observed the potential to improve livelihoods through skills development of women in design, preparation and marketing of products.

Programme Team at Chotiari Hosts Forestry Students from Peshawar

On 26 April 2007, the field team of Indus For All Programme Chotiari Site, hosted the B.Sc. students of Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) Peshawar, at District Council Hall, Sanghar, with a view to strengthen communication between field teams and academia. PFI trainees were briefed about the vision, goals and major objectives of the Indus for All Programme. They were also apprised of community involvement methodologies by the field team.

The visiting students were also briefed on the process of devising strategies—aimed at reducing poverty while focussing on biodiversity conservation—starting from research studies, to developing models and then application on the ground. Later on, the team visited the site, where they were briefed about the location, available natural resources, and communities and their dependence upon natural resources.



A presentation to Forestry students, April 2007

Pai Site Office Organises Introductory Meetings

The field team Nawabshah organised a series of orientation and introductory meetings with the local stakeholders including officials of the Forest, Wildlife, and Education Departments; Chairman Department of Civil Engineering, Quaid Awam University, Nawabshah; members from communities in the adjoining villages of Pai Forest and DCO, Nawabshah. These meetings were organised to promote partnership and understanding with the site level stakeholders for the collaborative implementation of the Indus For All Programme interventions.

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Indus for All Programme Team 2007

The Indus for All Programme team comprises of 37 members. There are 17 members under the Programme Management Unit (PMU) based in Karachi and 20 under Programme Implementation Units (PIUs) based in the four Field Offices. A total of 33 members were onboard while the position of Project Administrator and the three Partnership Fund Secretariat positions are expected to be filled by August 2007.

The inception phase provided sufficient time to carry out competitive recruitment process for the programme. With a fair gender ratio now the Programme caters a quality human resource comprising of experts in natural resource management; social mobilisation; environmental education; communication; livelihood improvement; policy/programme development; HR/ administration and financial management.

Apart from the recruitment process, the capacity building of the programme staff has already been carried out as per the requirement of the initial project document. Three site managers were sent for an exposure/training trip to Bangladesh to learn from successful experiences of community-based fisheries forestry management in the coastal, inland areas of Bangladesh.

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Programme Implementation Units (PIU)

Kinjhar Lake | House # B/112, Hashimabad Society Makli, District Thatta Sindh. Ph | 0298 772318, 772319

Keti Bunder | Keti Bunder Town, P.O. Keti Bunder via P.O. Mirpur Sakro, District Thatta, Sindh. Ph | 0298 607685, 620291

Pai Forest | House # A-3 M.U.C.E.T Employees Cooperative Housing Society, District Nawabshah, Sindh. Ph | 0244 366364, 366197 Fax | 0244 282496

Chotiari Reservoir | House # 129/2, Housing Society, Near Government Boys High School, Nawabshah Road, District Sanghar, Sindh. Ph | 0235 542837. Fax | 0235 542791

"We will never know the worth of water till the well is dry."
Dr. Thomas Fuller