



Defining, Measuring and Verifying CMO Sustainability

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USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project



For a CMO to be sustainable ultimately it has to continue to deliver some minimum level of valued services or benefits – in the case of CREL protecting and sustaining biologically significant eco-system units and improving the lives of people dependent on those areas. CREL assessed CMOs using a large number of *indicators*, all of which are important. They can be grouped in different ways. In Table 1 below, 17 key indicators are grouped under five key *criteria*, all of which are necessary for a CMO to be sustainable, i.e., to deliver these services or benefits. Development of all these capacities and conditions can and should progress together, but to some extent these five criteria form a sequence of development. The term “*measure*” defines the point or level of performance of the correlated indicator is judged to be sustainable, i.e., the level of services and benefits minimally sufficient, based on CREL’s experience of assessing the performance of CMOs and past history of CBOs and CMOs in Bangladesh.

Table 1: CMO sustainability indicators and measures

Indicator	Measure
Criterion 1: Legitimacy – recognized responsibilities and linkages. Necessary enabling requirements are:	
<i>Indicator 1.1.</i> Government formally recognizes CMO	CMO is formally recognized by government (registration – CBO or gazette notification – co-management body)
<i>Indicator 1.2</i> Community organizations/groups represented in co-management body	For CBO, it has a representative in a co-management body; OR For co-management body, at least 33% of members come from local community groups/organizations
<i>Indicator 1.3.</i> Local councils and opinion leaders accept the value of co-management and cooperate with CMOs.	In last year Union Parishad supported CMO (e.g. in endorsing a request to higher government level, acting to meet need identified by CMO, solving conflict, etc.)
Criterion 2: Organizational functioning - transparency and efficiency in organizational operations. This includes:	
<i>Indicator 2.1.</i> Self-organized timely meetings	For Forest CM Councils: meeting organized by CM Committee and held within last 8 months OR For all other CMOs and CBOs: AGM organized by executive committee and held not more than 12 months ago
<i>Indicator 2.2.</i> Effective and useful general record keeping and follow ups	CMO keeps minutes and records of its decisions by itself such that all agenda items in last meeting written up with solutions/ decisions
<i>Indicator 2.3.</i> Sound financial management processes and practices	Accounts book and records well maintained
<i>Indicator 2.4.</i> Auditing (both finances and procedures)	External audit held within last 12 months and gave feedback to CMO
Criterion 3: Governance and inclusiveness - accountability and responsiveness to the needs of NRM users and especially those who are disadvantaged. This includes:	
<i>Indicator 3.1.</i> Processes for electing and changing leaders	Office bearers/EC election last held within 3 months of schedule as per constitution
<i>Indicator 3.2.</i> Women are actively involved in consultations and decision making in the CMO	At least one women is an office bearer or chairs a sub-committee (not women's affairs)
<i>Indicator 3.3.</i> Poor are actively involved in consultations and decision making in the CMO	At least one poor person (own <50 decimals and sells labor or actively fishes) is an office bearer or chairs a sub-committee (not poor's affairs)
<i>Indicator 3.4.</i> Fair access to resources	CMO sets and follows rules and processes that allocate use

Indicator	Measure
for poor, disadvantaged and minorities	of NR that it has influence/control over to favor the poor, women, and ethnic minorities, and they consider this to be fair
Criterion 4: Adaptive participatory management - planning and learning – effective climate resilient NRM must be based on adaptive management processes that adjust to a changing context and to experience. Required capacities include:	
<i>Indicator 4.1.</i> Ability in participatory management plan preparation and reviewing/revising plans	For co-management bodies: one annual management plan jointly prepared by co-management stakeholders including GOB; OR For CBOs: annual management plan prepared by CBO with full member participation and informed/ endorsed by Government with record of GOB advice or endorsement
<i>Indicator 4.2.</i> Understanding and taking account of climate hazards and trends	Current management plan explicitly includes contingency plans or considers what would happen if hazard or trend occurred in planning activities to be adaptive
<i>Indicator 4.3.</i> Ability to resolve conflicts and mediate between stakeholders	CMO leaders skilled in resolving conflicts and perceived to be just
<i>Indicator 4.4.</i> Monitoring activities and ecosystem conditions	CMO regularly discusses monitoring results and uses this in decisions, and this is documented in its minutes
Criterion 5: Resource mobilization (finances) - sufficient funds and in-kind support need to be ensured for a CMO to implement planned NRM, cover the costs of any protection measures such as guards, and for the CMO itself to function. Under this come:	
<i>Indicator 5.1.</i> Resource mobilization capacity (including proposal writing)	CMO has a realistic written "business plan" (income and expenditure plan including how to raise funds) designed to cover its functioning and planned actions.
<i>Indicator 5.2.</i> Securing regular fund/in-kind sources (as diverse as entry fees, endowments, fishing fees, payments for ecosystem services, and use rights in other public lands)	CMO has sufficient regular funding to meet its needs for functioning and delivering planned actions