

Interview Series Newsletter Issue 12

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How does IWMI's SoLAR project contribute to your organization's mission?

Being a learning national rights-based, networking and service delivery organization, NGO Forum for Public Health utilizes its proven experiences of working with other development partners and strives to establish an enabling inclusive healthy society by complementing the implementation of all required national and international policies. The SoLAR project contributes to the NGO Forum's mission of achieving the organizational goals – 'Reducing climate vulnerability by focusing on climate adaptation strategies and disaster risk reduction'. Considering the growing concerns of environmental degradation, climate change, sustainability of groundwater and use of groundwater for irrigation, the NGO Forum for Public Health emphasizes on climate resilient technological innovation and actions, and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). This project offers a major scope for us to concentrate on various issues of climate change.

What lessons has the NGO Forum drawn from this project and how?

The NGO Forum is committed to embrace the innovative research opportunities in a collaborative approach with renowned research organizations and development partners. In line with this view, we have partnered with IWMI to support the climate-compatible development of energy and water systems in rural South Asia for resilient livelihoods.

The NGO Forum is keen to widen its horizon, focusing on ongoing and future challenges using climate resilient technological innovations, IWRM, environmental hazards, etc. Promoting sustainable environment in adaptation to climate change is one of the main goals of our organization.

While working on this project, we have learnt about the pressing issues related to the use of renewable energy for green environment, adaptation with climate change and scopes of climate actions, and as such, we have become competent in policy level advocacy to feed these outcomes through our collaborations with policy makers, and which we have been doing for the last four decades.

How are you implementing the lessons for your country?

The NGO Forum for Public Health is a national rights-based, networking and service delivery organization and maintains a nation-wide working structure to facilitate support in a decentralized manner. NGO Forum has partnered with IWMI to mainstream solar irrigation in Bangladesh and support climate-

compatible development of energy and water systems in rural South Asia for resilient livelihoods, which is a big step-forward to address different programmatic strategic issues (in present and future activities) aligning it with the organizational core values of “Green Environment, Networking & Partnership and Learning for Adaptability.” This will facilitate the use of renewable energy, groundwater management for irrigation and mitigating local environmental risks by enhancing informal risk-sharing and private initiatives and other relevant issues.

Which aspects of the project interests you the most personally?

The SoLAR project has been implemented to increase national and global knowledge, and enhance capacity for developing gender-equitable, socially inclusive, and groundwater-responsive solar irrigation policies and practices. This area of capacity building and creating a knowledge repository is what is most attractive to us. The peer reviewed articles, policy briefs and communications material that has been produced in this project will help others to consult, utilize and ensure climate justice.

Which key policy relevant questions are you looking at in this project?

I like the aspect of the project that responds to government commitments to transition to clean energy pathways in agriculture. All countries in this project have National Determined Contributions (NDC) commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and SIPs can play a significant role in reducing emissions in agriculture.

Bangladesh has the NDC to reduce its GHG emissions by 89.47 MtCO₂ e or 21.85% below BAU in 2030. To achieve this, the government called for support from all stakeholders, especially the non-government organizations. We have been seeking to contribute to the government’s mandate and must think of relevant issues related to climate actions that will help us to brainstorm and incorporate within our program about how to help the country to achieve its goal.

The political will for this transition is evident in the Prime Minister’s instruction to officers in June 2023 to take steps to power all diesel irrigation pumps in the country with solar energy.

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