

LANDWATER PROJECT

Locally Led Actions Sustainable Water & Land Management

Facilitated by Uttaran | Under the Reversing the Flow (RtF) Programme | Funded by RVO

About the Project

The Locally Led Actions Sustainable Water and Land Management-LANDWATER Project is a locally led adaptation initiative designed to strengthen the capacity of climate-vulnerable communities, referred to as “landscapes”in the southwest coastal region of Bangladesh to address climate and environmental challenges. Operating in Satkhira and Khulna districts, the project guide the communities to identify their own problems, priorities, plan solutions, develop budgets, and implement activities that respond to their unique ecological, social, and economic realities.

By shifting decision-making power and financial control to local people, LANDWATER promotes ownership, accountability, and long-term sustainability. Communities lead interventions related to water and land management, climate resilience, ecological restoration, and inclusive development, while Uttaran plays a facilitative role, providing technical guidance and ensuring alignment with locally led adaptation principles.

The project places strong emphasis on equity and inclusion, ensuring the meaningful participation of women, marginalized groups, and those most affected by climate risks. Through community-led baselines, participatory planning, and adaptive monitoring, LANDWATER enables communities to track their progress and learn from their own experiences.

By grounding climate action in local knowledge and leadership, the LANDWATER Project strengthens resilience, restores ecological balance, and supports communities to shape their own sustainable futures.

Context of the Southwest Coast?

The coastal districts of Satkhira and Khulna face severe challenges:

- Cyclones and tidal surges
- Waterlogging
- Salinity intrusion
- Deteriorating rivers and mangroves

These forces disrupt livelihoods, isolate villages, and threaten survival. LANDWATER responds by placing communities at the center of solutions.

Uttaran's Approach: Locally Led Adaptation (LLA)

LANDWATER follows a grassroots ecosystem based approach that is fully Community-led development model intending to include bottom-up components and intergration of locally led structures, where people decide:

- What matters most
- What solutions and approach they want
- How discussion, planning and budgets should be used
- How to implement these planing
- How to monitor their own progress

Uttaran acts as a facilitator, not a service provider ensuring the process remains community-driven and inclusive.

Key Steps of the LANDWATER Model

1. Landscape Selection

52 landscapes were assessed based on 47 parameters; 8 were selected based on climate vulnerability, social inclusion, and community readiness.

2. Community Listening & Inception

Women, men, widows, Dalits, youth, PWDs, elderly groups all shared their lived experiences and priorities.

3. Community-Led Baseline

People mapped their problems, impacts, and solutions using participatory tools:

- Landscape mapping
- Problem ranking
- Seasonal calendars
- Community storytelling

4. Planning & Budgeting

Communities shaped their own development plans and allocated budgets transparently.

5. Implementation by Communities

Landscapes executed their solutions themselveshiring local volunteers, managing funds, and supervising progress.

6. Monitoring & Accountability

Community-led monitoring ensures transparency, learning, and adaptation.



What Communities Have Achieved



Hajrakhali
- Used innovation and repaired community bamboo bridge improving access to mainland
- Reclaimed elite capture and Leased a canal to generate collective income
- Repaired important landscape roads

Puijala
- Used a market based safe drinking water service (RO) for the Landscape and neighboring areas.
- Community people provide voluntary service and dug a sweet-water pond for households and livestock
- Repaired important landscape roads

Godaibeel
- Constructed their long-awaited road to overcome isolation from nearby city area
- Initiated some community-based income generating activities.

Soladana
- Applied local knowledge and repaired damaged embankments to protect homes and crops
- Used a market based safe drinking water service (RO) for the Landscape and neighboring areas.
- Discussed and elevated some land for using it as graveyard

Chakla
- Applied local knowledge and repaired damaged embankments to protect homes and crops
- Initiated some community relevant income generating activities.

Jugipota
- Discussed and Elevated school ground
- Repaired important landscape roads
- Initiated some community relevant income generating activities.

Zeyala
- Community people in advocacy with the local government repaired landscape canal
- Repaired important landscape roads by advocating with local government
- Installed drinking water Tube-well
- Initiated some community relevant income generating activities.

Bagerbeel
- Repaired important landscape roads
- Installed drinking water Tube-well
- Initiated some community relevant income generating activities.

Communities implemented, monitored, and maintained these solutions themselves.



What Makes LANDWATER Different?

- No sector restrictions- communities choose what they need
- Direct fund flow- from Uttaran Hub straight to the community
- Inclusive decision-making- women, youth, Dalits, PWDs, elderly all participate
- Local volunteer system- community-selected volunteers drive transparency
- Rooted in indigenous knowledge & nature-based solutions
- Flexible project completion timeline
- Reduce organizational operation costs
- Strengthens local governance linkages

Impact So Far

- 8 landscapes leading their own climate-adaptive development
- Over 3,000 people directly involved in decision-making
- Women holding leadership roles in LMC structure
- Community funds established for emergencies and adaptation
- The LLA encouraging other communities to desire to be a part of the landscape.



The Vision Ahead

In the first year of the implementation phase LAND-WATER has reflected some significant learnings. Communities tried to successfully complete priority projects, manage funds transparently, and monitor their own progress, leading to visible improvements in resilience, livelihoods, and local ecosystems.

Uttaran now aims to expand from 8 to 50 landscapes, scaling LLA across the southwest.

With support from partners and donors, we can grow this model to ensure:

- Reduce waterlogging
- Resilient livelihoods
- Secure freshwater
- Restored ecosystems
- Empowered communities
- Thriving landscapes



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