

WHV – Enhancing Community Participation in Sundarbans Forest Management

The Sundarbans, Bangladesh

Natural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (1997)

PROJECT DATES

01-30 November 2025

THE SITE - The Sundarbans mangrove forest, one of the largest such forests in the world (140,000 ha), lies on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal. It is adjacent to the border of India's Sundarbans World Heritage site inscribed in 1987. The site is intersected by a complex network of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands of salt-tolerant mangrove forests, and presents an excellent example of ongoing ecological processes. The area is known for its wide range of fauna, including 260 bird species, the Bengal tiger and other threatened species such as the estuarine crocodile and the Indian python.

OBJECTIVES - The project aims at expanding the understanding of the history of the Sundarbans by exploring the links with the Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat, a cultural World Heritage site in the country, which represents the vestiges of a medieval Muslim town in the northern peripheral land of the Sundarbans. Reclamation of land started already from the Gupta Dynasty (AD 320–415) and became stronger in the pre-Mughal era, from AD 1204 to 1575, mostly for wet rice cultivation to support the establishment of human settlements. The co-existence of forest and people can be understood in depth by integrating the study of the two cultural and natural World Heritage site together, with the original picturesque location and the natural setting interacting with the densely located religious and secular monuments along with the unique and intact medieval form and design of the city.

ACTIVITIES - The volunteers will explore the artistic rendering of the forest and its boundary in different periods through a literature review and will try to recognize and identify those places during site visits. They will also be involved in stakeholder mapping and awareness raising, managing and mobilizing local people for resource integration, promoting interaction and understanding of the local community such as Shitalpati weavers, Mouyal (Bee collectors), and Baowal(s) Fishermen.

PARTNERS - Bangladesh Forest Department; Department of Archaeology, IUCN; Sharankhola High School; Shitalpati Cooperative; Honey collectors; Shrimp Hatchery.

Perceive - Nagar Upakhyan

Ar. Fatiha Polin

nagar.upakhyan@gmail.com



<https://whc.unesco.org/en/whvolunteers>