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Signature: 



Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

A Mid-term Evaluation Report

on

**Supporting Community Based Sustainable Forest Management and
Economic Empowerment of Women in Central Region of Nepal
[Project ID: 2013P4-NPL]**

by

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Abbreviation and acronyms

AAC	Annual Allowable Cut
APFNet:	Asia Pacific Network for Sustainable forest management and Rehabilitation
AWP	Annual Working Plan
CF:	Community Forest
CFUG:	Community Forest User Group
COFSUN:	Community based Forestry Supporter's Network Nepal
CRMC:	Community Resource Management Center
DDC:	District Development Committee
DFSC:	District Forest and Soil Conservation office
DFCC:	District Forest Coordination Committee
DFO:	District Forest Office
DOF:	Department of Forest
FECOFUN:	Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal
GoN:	Government of Nepal
HIMAWANTI-Nepal:	Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association Nepal
IA:	Implementing Agency
ICS	Improve Cooking Stove
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organization
MoFSC:	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
NFP:	National Forest Plan
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM:	Natural Resource Management
OP	Operational Plan
PA:	Project Agreement
RD:	Regional Director
SFM:	Sustainable Forest Management

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Executive summary

This project is to support community based sustainable forest management and economic empowerment of women in the Central Region of Nepal. Given the facts that community forestry is perhaps the most important part of forest sector development, that women are not often afforded with regular job opportunities in rural communities, and that there needs to search for good models of best practices in community forest management in Nepal, this project is timely, well designed, and well received by the 13 CFUG involved. Based on desk review, field visits, and meetings with stakeholders, we find that the IA have conceived, implemented, and managed the project in a satisfactory manner. We give a grade of 80-85% for project implementation and management in our mid-term evaluation and conclude that this project is likely to be completed in time and under/on budget. As some important activities still need to be carried out in the second half of this project, we recommend the IA

- (1) to strengthen its marketing efforts for products made from CF mini-enterprises,
- (2) to conduct benefit-cost analysis of SFM activities (both supply-side activities and demand-side activities) and make plans for implementing/expanding effective SFM activities to the whole forests managed by the 13 CFUG,
- (3) to coordinate among the three NGOs and collaborate with DOF to conceptualize/present a good model of best practices in community forestry management mechanism based on the experience of this project, and
- (4) to seek endorsement from the GoN and work with the GoN to publicize/promote the model of best practices in community forestry management in Nepal.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background information

In 2014, APFNet approved an application for grant from three NGOs—HIMAWANTI Nepal, Ashmita Nepal, and CRMC as the IA—to support this community forest project in Nepal. The title of the project is “Supporting Community Based Sustainable Forest Management and Economic Empowerment of Women in Central Region of Nepal (APFNet Project ID No. 2013P4-NPL-CSC-01). The project was originally designed for three years between October 2014 and September 2017. Due to the severe earthquake in May 2015, the project has been extended to December 2017. APFNet has granted USD 303,068 among the total budget of USD 412,238, to support the project.

The objectives of the project are:

- To demonstrate sustainable forest management practices and promote alternative energy to reduce pressure on forests and carbon emission
- To promote development of community forest based mini-enterprises to improve wise use of forest resources and livelihood of marginalized communities
- To draw good models of best approaches in which communities are empowered to manage and use forest resources in a sustainable way

Specifically, there are five components/outputs under the project:

- (1) Sustainable forest management practices demonstrated and the local communities’ capacity on SFM built or improved (i.e., demonstration and capacity building);
- (2) The income generated from community forests increased obviously through development of community forest-based mini-enterprises (income generation via min-enterprises);
- (3) Alternative energy is promoted and pressure on forests and carbon emission are reduced (alternative energy);
- (4) Community forest management mechanism improved, including decision-making, financial management, benefit-sharing, forest management planning and so forth (improving community forest management mechanism); and
- (5) Good models of best practices of community-based sustainable forest management disseminated to policy makers and practitioners (gaining acceptance).

Logically, the first and third components/outcomes are for achieving the first objective of this project. The second component/outcome is to meet the second objective. And the fourth and fifth components are intended to meet the third objective.

The project was at its half way at the end of June 2016. Most of the first three components/outcomes have been completed or nearly completed. The IA has reported all activities implemented in the first half of this project to APFNet. Additional activities between June and September of 2016 have not yet been reported in writing, although the IA presented to us orally during our mid-term evaluation visit to Nepal between September 27 and October 3, 2016.

1.2 Objective/Purpose of the evaluation

This mid-term evaluation is to assess the progress made since the inception of the project until September 2016. Specifically, we want to document the progress and accomplishments during the report period in reference to the original and revised project proposals and the annual working plans for the first two years, to identify the strength and weakness of the project design and implementation process, to assess the impact of the project to date and the likelihood of it achieving its goals by the end of the project. At the end of this report, we also make some recommendations.

2. Evaluation design and implementation

2.1 Evaluation scope

This is a mid-term evaluation. Through desk review and a 6-day field visit, we investigated the progress made during the report period, the likelihood of achieving the objectives of this project, and future impacts of the completed activities. We have also identified initial lessons learned. Finally, we make some suggestions for improving the future implementation of this project and/or other similar projects.

Appendix 1 presents our evaluation agenda. Appendix 5 presents questions we had prepared before we stated our field visit in Nepal on September 27, 2016.

2.2 Evaluation methods

Our evaluation methods include desk review, multiple visits to various project sites, randomized interviews with members of the 13 CFUG, and meetings with the IA and other stakeholders. These methods allow us to gather all information needed for conducting a comprehensive mid-term evaluation of this project.

This evaluation takes several steps. **First**, we reviewed all of the project documents provided by the IA, including, Project Document (PD), Annual Work Plan 1&2 (AWP1&2), Progress Reports, photos, and other relevant project materials.

Second, we developed a mid-term evaluation approach. This is an evidence-based approach, in which we try to demonstrate the implementation and the impacts of the project by comparing and contrasting evidence “before/after” and “with/without”. We had also developed a detailed timeline and work plan, proposed a list of key interview questions and the sampling framework of the beneficiaries, and presented a list of stakeholders to be consulted to the IA before we went to Nepal.

Third, we conducted a week-long multiple-destination field visit to the three project districts in the Central Region of Nepal between September 27 and October 3, 2016. We talked to the IA, Project Director, Project Financial Director, district project coordinators, and LRP, CFUG (including 7 chairpersons, 7-10 secretaries/treasurers, and 100-120 other members of these 13 CFUG), and other stakeholders such as MoFSC and its subordinate agencies DOF, DFSC, DFO. We visited four nurseries, the ecotourism site in Kathmandu, the wooden handicraft-making shop in Makawanpur, and three aromatic herb plantation sites in Sarlahi. We saw and talked to multiple households where alternative energy treatments were implemented in all three districts.

Based on the materials provided to us and our multiple destination field visits, we analyze and present our finding in this report.

2.3 Stakeholders involved

DOF (Director-General)

MoFSC

Community Forest Development officer, DOF

DFO from Kathmandu, Makawanpur, and Sarlahi districts

DECOFUN, Nepal

HIMAWANTI, NEPAL

Ashimita Nepal

CRMC Nepal

The 13 CFUG (including 7 chairpersons, 7-10 secretaries/treasurers, and 100-120 other members of these 13 CFUG)

3. Analysis and findings

Community forestry is an integral part of forestry in Nepal (Dahl and Chapagain 2008) and many other economies. Currently there are over 18,000 CFUG in Nepal, which collectively manage some 1.8 million hectares or nearly 50% of forests in the economy (DOF 2016). Community forestry is very important for timber production, biodiversity conservation, and climate mitigation and is perhaps the most dynamic part of forestry in Nepal. Furthermore, as women in rural Nepal are often responsible for collecting fuelwood and taking care of their families but are not afforded a job opportunity in rural Nepal, well-developed community forestry programs empower underprivileged women in marginalized communities.

3.1 Project design

We found that the conceptualization and design of this project and the selection of participating CFUG are outstanding. This project focuses on community forestry and the economic empowerment of women, each being important in its own right. The designed project activities tackle the sustainability of community forests from both supply and demand sides. The project has a critical component in establishing income-generating enterprises, which links economic empowerment of women in rural communities and community forest management. In other words, the design of project activities meet the specific objectives of this project.

All the CFUG selected were self-motivated and prepared for this project, and the members of CFUG we visited were enthused about the project. They were also appreciative of APFNet for providing funding for the project and of the IA for bringing the project to their communities. The local DFO were all supportive as well.

We saw that the ecotourism site in Kathmandu district is within 1 hour of drive to the center of Kathmandu metropolitan, which has some 4 million people. Initially we were wondering why the IA proposes a green trail for ecotourism in a mountain, because Nepal has plenty of mountains. Further reading and the field visit to the site have convinced us that the site is well chosen and that an ecotourism operation there is potentially viable or highly viable. This is because a private company has already built a cable, carrying tourists from the bottom of an adjacent mountain to its top. At the top of the mountain, there is a famous temple. The 10-km green trail is connected to the temple, thus allowing tourists to climb up and reach the temple through the green trail or to walk down the green trail if they choose to use the cable first. Before this project started, the 6 CFUG had thought about building this green trail for some time. This project allows them to complete the green trail, possibly a few years ahead of their original plan. With follow-up and targeted marketing efforts, the green trail could be a good source of income for the 6 involved CFUG in the Kathmandu District.

Similarly, the three CFUG in Sarlahi had learned the income-generating capability of aromatic herbs from other communities and had intended to grow them on their own. This project speeded up this process. Without this project, it would take at least several more years for these communities to assemble resources on their own and develop these min-enterprises.

The original project proposal was revised once. None of the revisions is major.

3.2 Project implementation and management

In order to present our findings on the implementation and management of this project succinctly, we would like to align the three objectives and five activities in a more logic way.

The first objective is SFM, which includes forest inventory surveys, forest management plan revisions, nursery establishments, demonstration of silvicultural treatments, training activities, capacity building, and distribution of silvicultural and timber-harvesting tools on the supply side as well as promoting alternative energy (solar panel, biogas, and ICS) to reduce pressure on forests and carbon emission on the demand side.

We found that most of these activities have been successfully implemented to the specification of the revised proposal. They were done on time and within budget. SFM is demonstrated, capacity

for carrying out SFM is enhanced, and alternative energy instruments are purchased and distributed to needed households.

However, we are less certain if the 13 CFUG would have not done at least some of the works on their own and without this project because these communities seem to have some resources and knew what they wanted to do. Furthermore, we were less certain about magnitude of the impacts of some of the activities in this project. For example, we saw the silvicultural /harvesting tools were not well utilized. If they are not needed, why buy and distribute them in the beginning? Finally, we are not sure if the community forests will be managed sustainably after the completion of this project because the 135 households trained only represent about 3% of the total number of households in the 13 CFUG and because there is no plan to implement the “best silvicultural practices/treatments” (if they are known) to the whole community forests in anyone of the 13 CFUG.

We are impressed with the benefit-sharing plans of several CFUG that allow some 35% of its net income to be used in helping the poor and less fortunate families. In general, another 25% of the 13 CFUG’s net income is used for forest management, and the remaining 40% is used for community development. But, it is unclear if the 25% allocated to forest management could achieve forest sustainability. We saw that some of the alternative energy instruments especially solar panel and ICS were indeed installed in poor households.

Note that the justification used for changing the nursery from 1 hectare to 0.359 hectare was that it was difficult to find three 1-hectare plots. This is not true. The real reason seems to be that there is no need to have such a big nursery in the Kathmandu and Makawanpur sites. In both places, we saw that even the smaller nurseries are not currently being fully utilized, indicating lack of demand for tree seedlings in the CFUG in these districts. In contrast, there are two aromatic herb nurseries in the 3 CFUG in Sarlahi District, which are about 1 hectare together. These two nurseries are both funded from this project (APFNet and matching fund), and they are full of aromatic herb seedlings in both sites. This indicates that the demand for aromatic herb seedlings is high in the 3 CFUG in Sarlahi District.

There was a modification for the number of solar panel purchased. The modification is not a problem. What is important is whether there is a convincing benefit-cost analysis of alternative

energy for the 13 CFUG and whether there is a plan to expand the alternative energy component to all needed members of the 13 CFUG. More on this point later.

The second objective is income generation. Ecotourism, wooden handicraft-making, and aromatic herb plantation are for income generation and empowerment of women in rural communities. Income generation is important as forest sustainability requires economic sustainability first. What is more important is the income-generation opportunity afforded to women, especially women in marginalized rural communities. We found that the activities related to this objective have been implemented satisfactorily according to the original and revised project proposals, although a large marketing effort is required for the wooden handicraft-making business to succeed as an enterprise in Makawanpur District and for the ecotourism business to make a large and noticeable profit for the 6 CFUG in Kathmandu District.

The third objective is to generate a good model of the best practices for participatory community forest management which is recognized by the government and the public. Under this model, community forests are managed sustainably, decision-making is made in a participatory and transparent fashion, and special attention is paid to the economic wellbeing of women and the poor. Most activities related to this objective are in year three of this project. We saw that some CFUG have been practicing good participatory community forestry management and that women are promoted to leadership positions in CFUG as executive members, treasurers, chairpersons, or secretaries in the 13 CFUG. Nonetheless, a lot needs to be done in year three in order for a good community forestry management model to emerge from this project and to be promoted across the economy.

We saw that, up to August 2016, some 80% of the planned activities for the second year had been completed. Yet, the expenses only covered about 30% of the budget in the same time period. The Project Financial Director explained to us that this was because most of the account payable was due by the end of September 2016.

Appendix 2 presents the evaluator's detailed evaluation results and rating of all activities implemented in the reporting period.

3.3 Project impacts

At individual household level, we are impressed with some of the trainees with SFM and mini-enterprise (wooden handcraft-making and aromatic herb) activities are women who came from poor families. All of the trainees received a daily compensation that roughly equals to the average daily salary of local farmers, which helps them economically. We are equally impressed and pleased with due diligence of the 13 CFUG that had located and distributed solar panels, ICS, and biogas to mostly underprivileged households. The alternative energy component of this project helps these poor households economically and socially as well as help achieve environmental sustainability. The direct beneficiaries of this project welcome it wholeheartedly.

This project made the 13 CFUG implement some SFM activities and establish their mini-enterprises way ahead of their schedule and possibly beyond their own financial capabilities. These communities experienced and learned from SFM and enterprise-building activities. Undoubtedly, this project has an impact on improving the social stability, economic progress, and environmental sustainability of these communities, but this impact is not quantified.

At this moment, this impact of this project on local governments and more broadly on community forest management in Nepal is uncertain. It all hinges on whether a good model of best community forest management practices would emerge from this project and whether this model is actively promoted by the local and national governments of Nepal.

3.4 Project sustainability and duplicability

This project is potentially sustainable in the sense that it can be carried out in the 13 CFUG after the project is completed. To make this potential a reality, these community leaders must (1) know the best SFM activities on both the supply and demand sides and implement them to their whole community forests, (2) make their min-enterprise profitable, (3) possibly invest some more income generated from their mini-enterprises in forest management, and (4) as noted earlier, train more members of CFUG and make good forest practices a community-wide rule.

As for project duplicability, we believe it is duplicable with some well-prepared communities in Nepal. Again, the key is to have a good model of best community forest management practices recognized and promoted by the GoN to the whole economy.

4. Evaluation results and conclusions

We find that the conceptualization, design, and implementation of this project to date are satisfactory and give it an 80-85% rating. The project has been implemented in a good manner, and IA has done most of the activities based on the original and revised proposals and the first two annual working plans. Some underprivileged households and women in these communities are now having an opportunity to make additional income through business activities created by this project.

Some impacts of this project, especially the distribution of solar panel and ICS to needed members of involved CFUG and the economic impact of aromatic herbs, are apparent and promising. We are pleased to know that the aromatic herbs business is more profitable than without it (status quo) even if the price of aromatic herbs is cut in half. Although the degree of forest sustainability in the future and income generation capability of mini-enterprises established under this project are not completely known at this moment, there is evidence that this project has steered these CFUG on the right track.

We believe that this project will be successfully completed in a good manner, on time, and within budget in the end.

As shown in Appendix 3, we give a satisfactory rating to the overall implementation and management of this project in the reporting period.

5. Recommendations and lessons learned

Although we have rated this project to date as satisfactory, some issues need to be solved in the second half of this project in order for the project to have a bigger impact.

A. There needs to be a big marketing effort to sell products from the mini-enterprises

Significant and urgent marketing plan and efforts are required before the ecotourism project in Kathmandu can attract a large number of tourists and can produce positive income to the 6 CFUG involved and before the cooperative on wooden handicraft-making in Makawanpur can make a profit. This is especially true for the wooden handicraft-making business/enterprise. We feel that a prototype enterprise has been built and some workers have been trained in wooden handicraft-making. There needs to be one or a few entrepreneurs to envision, market, and run the business. We were told that the timber used for wooden handicraft-making could be provided on a subsidized price. While we agree that subsidized timber may be necessary at the beginning of wooden handicraft-making business, a successful wooden handicraft business needs to pay a full price to the timber it uses. Otherwise, the principle of economic sustainability is violated.

B. The purpose and future use of the demonstration forests need to be identified and implemented

Let us use the demo site in Setidevi CFUG as an example. There are four treatments in the demo site: control (do nothing), cleaning (the dead, diseased, dying wood), heavy thinning, and light thinning. Obviously the number of trees and regeneration stems under each treatment are significantly different. What is the scientific basis for the four chosen treatments? During our field visit to this site, we were told that heavy thinning is the best option for regeneration. But, as there is not a benefit-cost analysis for each treatment, it is unclear which treatment is best, and there is not a plan to expand the “best treatment” to the whole community forest or other forests controlled by CFUG nearby. If a management regime is indeed the best, it should be carried out to the whole forest controlled by the CFUG.

C. The overall impact of alternative energy component needed to be studied and possibly expanded to the 13 CFUG and beyond

Similarly, it is unclear what the overall impact of alternative energy component on sustainable forestry management is. Surely biogas and ICS could reduce fuelwood from forests, and solar panel could help poor families with some 6 hours of electric lighting in the evening. We were told that ICS could reduce fuelwood demand by 50-67%. We also understand that solar panel is mostly a poverty-alleviation tool. On the other hand, ICS and

biogas could reduce pressure on forests and carbon emission while providing economic benefits to some members of CFUG. Has there be a calculation on the benefit and cost of ICS and biogas? If the saving of implementing ICS/biogas could bring benefit (to CFUG in terms of saving wood and individual members of CFUG in terms of time for collecting fuel wood) that is greater than the cost of an ICS/biogas, there must be an inherent incentive for the CFUG to provide ICS/biogas to all needed households on a cost-share basis. If so, these CFUG will be able to expand the alternative energy projects on these own (and to other communities) to ensure forest sustainability after this project is completed.

D. Make a good use of the tree nurseries, enhance forest productivity, and build up SFM capability and rules

There is an issue of sustainability in nursery. Two tree nurseries are currently not in full use, and the tree seedlings are provided to CF for free. Perhaps it is time to consider selling additional tree seedlings on market.

Some community forests are poorly managed in several aspects. For example, we saw some large opening in a couple of forests, indicating poor timber stocking and inadequate forest management. This means that the forest land is not utilized to its full capacity. We also saw some dead trees are left in the forests. Yet, we saw in one community that the silvicultural / harvesting tools distributed to the CFUG are sitting in a warehouse and collecting dust.

Giving the fact that all of the 135 trainees in project only represents 3% of all the households in the 13 CFUG involved, it will take additional efforts to build up the capacity of the remaining members of the 13 CFUG on SFM, wooden handicraft-making, and aromatic herb plantation business. We understand that these trained are supposed to train other community members. We do not believe all community members need to get involved in wooden handicraft-making or aromatic herb plantation business. But for SFM, there need to be a community-wide rule that implements and enforces the best forest management practices.

E. The need to be a coordinated effort in building a good community forest management model and promote it to other CFUG in the economy

There is a possibility for making the case that a good model for community forestry management in Nepal may emerge from this project. We sense that most of the community forest leaders involved have a clear idea about what they want, have a good benefit-sharing plan, and have already practiced participatory and transparent decision-making. We saw that members of the 13 CFUG especially women are motivated, actively participate in their community forest activities, and are eager to expand their businesses in ecotourism, wooden handicraft-making, and aromatic herbs respectively. We believe that the spider web used by various CFUG is a good assessment tool. With good publicity and support from the government, the spider web can be used by all CFUG in the economy. There must be a plan to promote the good model of community forest management from this project. The three NGOs as the IA should coordinate, and the GoN, especially its DOF, should lead this effort. Otherwise, the good things generated/learned from this project will likely to be limited to these 13 CFUG involved, rather than all CFUG in the economy.

F. Possibly make a higher allocation of CF income to forest management

While we appraise the allocation model of revenue distribution used by the 13 CFUG, it is unclear if the 25% allocated to forest management will ensure forest sustainability in the long run. We understand that if more income is generated from a community forest, more money will be used for forest management activities. We are not sure if this 25% fits all situations, or is applicable to all community forests at all time in Nepal.

We have learned these lessons:

A. Leadership is critical

The three NGOs involved have exerted a strong leadership and are genial for promoting their causes. They are well connected and understand important forestry issues and the need for improving community forests and empowering underprivileged women in Nepal. The sites selected by the IA are evidence of their effectiveness. Similarly, we saw the importance in the leadership of CFUG. We witnessed the impact of a good Chair in a CFUG in Sarlahi district. When the current Chair of the CFUG was the Chair for seven years prior to 2010, he was able to generate a higher income for the CFUG than the Chair who followed him. In this year, he was again elected as the Chair.

B. Project conception/design is important

This project has clear and achievable objectives and a detailed activity list, focuses on an important SFM issue in an important developing economy, and has an able IA. This all starts with the conception and design of the project and selection of sites. Appropriate conception of project greatly enhances the chance of a successful project.

C. Incentivizing the participating communities and community members will ensure the project being carried out/expanded after this project is completed

In this regard, we urge the IA to conduct a benefit-cost analysis of activities implemented on the supply side and the demand side and to encourage the CFUG to expand these activities that are effective and efficient. This will ensure the best outcomes for their community forest management and economic well-being.

D. Requiring matching fund is a good practice

Requiring matching fund can make the IA be careful in project development and site selection as well as make it resourceful in seeking other supports. Although the amount of the matching fund required for this project is not large, we saw evidence of good uses of some of the matching fund to expand the aromatic herb nursery from one to two in Sarlahi District.

E. For the project to have a big impact, the GoN must be involved and lead the promotion effort

In order for this project to have a broader impact, it is necessary for the three NGOs to coordinate and collaborate in documenting a good model for community forest management. More importantly, there must be a strong ownership and leadership in DOF in promoting the model to other CFUG in the economy. Without a strong commitment and leadership in DOF in publicizing and promoting the model to the economy, the impact of this project would be severely limited.

Annex 1: Evaluation agenda

Agenda of Midterm Evaluation on Supporting Community Based Sustainable Forest Management and Economic Empowerment of Women in Central Region of Nepal 27 Sep - 3 Oct, 2016

Tuesday, 27 Sep 2016: Arrival in Kathmandu	
After arrival	After arrival in Kathmandu airport, transfer to and check in (Hotel Himalaya), pick up by Hotel Himalaya
Wednesday, 28 Sep 2016: Overview of the project and field visit to Kathmandu sites	
8:30–11:30 hrs	Meeting with Project Director and Financial Head <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing of Project activities and results at three project sites (by Ms. Anita Shrestha) Financial Progress (by Mr. Madhav Dhungel) Introduction of the evaluation procedure (by Mr. Daowei Zhang) Review project documents
11:30-12:30 hrs	Lunch at Himalaya hotel
12:30-13:30 hrs	Travel to Chandragiri CFUG, Kathmandu
13:30 – 14:25 hrs	Nursery site visit in Chandragiri CFUG
14: 25- 15: 30 hrs	Demonstration plot visit in Setidevi CFUG (short interview with 2-3 households who were trained on SFM practice)
15: 30 – 17: 00 hrs	Eco-tourism park development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green trail - Rest zones - Bird watching view tower 1
17:00- 18:00 hrs	Return Back
18:00–19:00 hrs	Dinner at Thakali Hotel Dhobighat (Special Daal Bhat Nepalese food)
Thursday, 29 September 2016: Field trip to project site in Makwanpur	
8:30–13:30 hrs	Group Travel to Makwanpur (Way via Daman)
13:30–14:00 hrs	Arrival at Samana hotel and have lunch
14:00- 17:00 hrs	Visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced training on wooden handicraft training in Piple Pokhara CFUG - Nursery site visit and share with local users about effect of the project interventions (short interview with chairperson/leader of CFUG) - Installation of alternative energy devices. Solar installation in Piple and ICS in Manakamana or Newreni Chishapani CFUG. - Plantation site visit in Newreni
17:00 hrs	Back to Samana Hotel

Friday, 30 September 2016: Travel to Sarlahi project site & Field visit in Sarlahi Project site	
8:30 - 11:00 hrs	Group travel to Sarlahi district
12:00-13:00 hrs	Lunch
13:30-17:30 hrs	Visit Radhakrishna CFUG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nursery and enrichment plantation - Plantation of Aromatic herbs (short interview to 2-3 households who have planted aromatic herbs) - Visit ICS and Solar panel distribution
18:00-19:00	Dinner and check in
Saturday, 1 October 2016: Field monitoring to project site in Sarlahi & Travel back to Kathmandu	
8:30-12:00 hrs	Visit Nandeswor and Janajyoti Community Forests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aromatic herbs plantation sites observation - Aromatic herbs nursery sites - Visit Demonstration Plot sites/ Forest management modality and future plans - Alternative energy ICS and solar installation
12:00-13:00 hrs	Lunch
13:00-20:00 hrs	Return to the hotel in Kathmandu (via Sindhuli District)
18:00-19:00 hrs	Dinner and check in (Himalaya hotel)
Sunday, 2 October 2016: Remaining field visit of Kathmandu and Meeting with PSC members	
9:00- 10:30 hrs	PSC meeting- MTE and Progress Report Sharing
15:00-16:00 hrs	Return back to Hotel Himalaya
17:00-18:00	Meeting with consortium with dinner
Monday, 3 October 2016: Departure from Kathmandu	

Field Visit

Mr. Daowei Zhang - Evaluator

Mr. Li Zhaochen- APFNet

Mr. Prakash Lamsal- Department of Forest

Ms. Anita Sherestha- Project Director

In Kathamandu Field

Madhav Dhungel

Rama Ale Magar

LRP- Ram Sharan Ale Magar

In Makwanpur Field Visit

Bharati Pathak

Aarati Pathak

DPC- Sushma Lama

Dipesh Ghimire

In Sarlahi Field Visit

Gopi Prasad Poudel

Durga Chaudhary

Annex 2: Project Progress Table for evaluator (against project logical framework)

Project Objective/Outputs/Activities (in line with PD)	Indicators (in line with PD)	Baseline of activities	Progress made (%completion of activities and degree of output/objective achievement)	Evaluator's rating	Evaluator's comments
Objective 1 Demonstrate sustainable forest management practices and promote alternative energy to reduce pressure on forest and carbon emission	Demonstration plots in 13 CFUG (3 CFUG in Sarlahi, 4 CFUG in Makawanpur and 6 CFUG in Kathmandu); Alternative energy devices installed and used successfully				
Output 1 Sustainable forest management practices are demonstrated and the local communities' capacity on SFM built or improved	3 Demonstration plots in 13 CFUG (3 CFUG in Sarlahi, 4 CFUG in Makawanpur and 6 CFUG in Kathmandu) local communities capacitated in SFM; CF managed by trained forest user groups; regular practice of SFM		Two nurseries and affiliated facilities were established, and more seedlings were produced than expected.	Highly satisfactory	
Activity1.1 Forest inventory survey for each project site	Baseline data of 3 demo sites established resource assessment of each CF Provided available and potential resources in the area	No forest inventory data/no demo sites	Forest inventory survey has been conducted for all participating CFUG; 3 demo sites has been established.	Satisfactory	The useful purpose of the demo sites is murky
Activity 1.2 Trainings on SFM for local communities	Capacitated households on community based Enterprise development and SFM; Increased participation, well trained participants	Members of CFUG lack SFM knowledge	135 members of CFUG have been trained on SFM, handicraft-making, and aromatic herb-growing skills.	Satisfactory	Trainees only represent 3% of all households

Activity 1.3 Development of Forest management plan for each site	Management plan developed in each site. Management plan group formed.	No forest management plan	A 5-year forest management plan has been developed for all 13 CFUG, covering silvicultural plan, conservation, and utilization.	Satisfactory	Block dividing plan is good; AAC is unclear to me.
Activity 1.4 Nursery establishment for SFM	Three 1-hectare nurseries (modified to three 0.359 hectare nurseries) established	There existed some nursery activities in all three sites	Three nurseries have been established (or re-utilized) and seedlings produced.	Moderate	This is not a new establishment of nurseries; Not all the nurseries is fully utilized; unclear business model for nursery
Activity 1.5 Application of Silvicultural practices	Regular practice support with technical expertise and mechanical accessories	No demo sites	Three demo site, each with 4 silvicultural treatments have been established.	Moderate	It is unclear if and how these treatment will be expanded to all the forests in a particular CFUG
Activity 1.6 Harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products (NTFP)	As a part of regular SFM and for better use of forests, scientific harvesting of timber and non timber	Unclear	Some machinery/harvesting tools have been distributed among 13 CFUG.	Un-satisfactory	At least some tools have not been used; some non-timber forest products (dead wood/fuel wood) should have been collected

Activity 1.7 Fire line construction	at least 10 KM stretched fire line constructed in forest periphery	Not applicable			
Activity 1.8 Local resource person mobilization (LRP)	Hiring three LRP		Three LRP have been hired.	Satisfactory	
Objective 2. Promote development of community forest based mini-enterprises to improve wise use of forest resources and livelihood of marginalized communities					
Output 2 The income generated from community forest increased obviously through development of community forest based mini-enterprises	3 enterprises established and 2 cooperatives and 2 sales centers established				
Activity 2.1 Community based ecotourism development in Kathmandu site		No ecotourism in Kathmandu site	A 10-Km green trail has been established, with two observation towers and two rest porches.	Highly satisfactory	The challenge is to attract tourists and to make the enterprise profitable
Activity 2.1.1 Revision of community forest operational guideline for ecotourism	guideline from CFUG operational plan revised with CFUG participation		Guidelines for the 6 CFUG are revised.	Satisfactory	

Activity 2.1.2 Development of ecotourism management plan	prepared detailed ecotourism management plan, coordination with experts	No such a plan existed	A plan has been drafted and is under discussion by the 6 CFUG.	Satisfactory	The devil is in the details.
Activity 2.1.3 Ecotourism services development	Prepared infrastructure and services	No infrastructure	A 10-Km green trail has been established, with two observation towers and two rest porches.	Highly satisfactory	New entry and exist points; price mechanism need to be established.
Activity 2.1.4 Training on ecotourism management	intensive training for CFUG on ecotourism will be conducted		Not applicable		Will start in October 2016.
Activity 2.1.5 Publicity of the park	marketing well established for ecotourism; enhanced interest among domestic and international concerned agencies		Not applicable		Will be carried out in 2017.
Activity 2.2 Community based wooden handicraft business development in Makwanpur site		No commercial wooden handicraft making	Some 50 CFUG members have been trained on wooden handicraft making, including 30 intensively.	Satisfactory	Marketing is critical.
Activity 2.2.1 Community Handicraft enterprise equipment (1 set)	a construction/ ware house built for the manufacturing and storage of produced handicrafts in the Makawanpur, ratified by the CFUG		Machinery and other handicraft tools have been purchased and put into use.	Satisfactory	There is a plan to depreciate and replace the machinery and other assets.
Activity 2.2.2 Trainings on wooden handicraft for local communities	at least 50 individuals trained for handicraft production	No handicraft skill among CFUG members	Some 50 CFUG members have been trained on wooden handicraft making, including 30 intensively.	Satisfactory	Impressed with the trainees who are women and poor

Activity 2.2.3 Value chain analysis and marketing of wooden handicrafts	Value chain of wooden handicrafts analyzed with documented potential market place, price determined and potential buyers identified Cooperative and sales centre established.		Some 50% of this activity (value chain analysis) has been completed.	Moderate	Works remain to be done.
Activity 2.3 Community based aromatic herbs enterprise development in Sarlahi site				Highly satisfactory	
Activity 2.3.1 Value chain analysis of aromatic herbs (Citronella, Pamarosa, Mentha and Lemon grass)	Value chain of aromatic herbs analyzed and identified the underlying policies, institution and infrastructure issues	Some knowledge of making money in aromatic herbs existed	Rough value chain analysis has been conducted.	Satisfactory	Even if the price of aromatic herbs falls by 50%, growing these herbs will still be more profitable than growing timber for CFUG
Activity 2.3.2 Awareness raising events on value chain of aromatic herbs	At least 100 participants were aware about the aromatic herbs.	Interests in aromatic herbs existed	Awareness of aromatic herbs is high, especially in the sub-CFUG that focuses on growing them.	Highly satisfactory	This is a good employment tool.
Activity 2.3.3 Aromatic herbs planting in community forests	Local farmers were capacitated to develop raw materials of aromatic herbs; Five technical persons were utilized, more than 5ha land of CF		More than 12 hectares of aromatic herbs have been planted in three CFUG.	Satisfactory	Weeding needs to keep up with aromatic herb growth.

Activity 2.3.4 Marketing of aromatic herbs	Established marketing committee of CF representative, local, domestic and international marketers were identified; Sales centre Established		Not applicable. Nonetheless, given the scale of aromatic herbs planted, I am not sure if a sales center needs to be established.		Will be an activity in 2017
Output 3 Alternative energy is promoted and pressure on forest and carbon emission are reduced	Alternative energy devices installed and used successfully				
Activity 3.1 Installation and use of 75 biogas devices	at least 150 (75) biogas plants installed in three project sites and local households have some skill to manage biogas		This is still to be completed.	Moderate	
Activity 3.2 Installation and use of 90 solar panels for illumination	At least 60 (90) solar panel installed for better health and independence of fossil fuel and thereby decreasing carbon emission	Some poor households do not have electricity	Completed	Satisfactory	The impact on reducing pressure on community forests is unclear
Activity 3.3 Installation and use of 300 Improved Cook Stoves	At least 300 ICS installed to support SFM through less dependence on forest and improve health condition for women	ICS can save up to 50-67% of fuelwood.	Completed	Satisfactory	The impact on reducing pressure on community forests is unclear
Objective 3. Draw good models of best approaches in which communities are empowered to manage and use forest resources			Not yet completed		The IP needs to work hard and have a good plan for achieving this objective.

in a sustainable way					
Output 4 Community forest management mechanism improved	Mechanism on identification and allocation of benefits established; community forest management mechanism assessment and reassessment conducted; annual community forest management plan and budget developed; regular meeting of executive committee and yearly public hearing and auditing meetings conducted				
Activity 4.1 Assessment and reassessment of community forest management mechanism through spider web	community forest management mechanism assessment and reassessment conducted successfully with all community members involvement	Only a very small proportion of CFUG in Nepal has participatory CF management mechanism implemented	A spider web type of assessment tool has been used in all 13 CFUG, which include transparency, process, rule of law, etc.	Highly satisfactory	Leadership is a key.
Activity 4.2 Regular assembly and meeting of executive committee	meeting conducted and reviewed plans and actions		Meetings of the CFUG has been documented.	Satisfactory	It seems members of CFUG are happy
Activity 4.3 Participatory planning and community forest management	revised and reviewed annual community forest management plan and budget developed;		Easily done	Satisfactory	

mechanism improvement coaching	beneficiaries' criteria developed				
Activity 4.4 Resource and benefit allocation	Mechanism on identification and allocation of benefits established and generated income distributed among community members equitably		Some 25% of CFUG's net revenue is for forest management; 35% for poor households in terms of subsidy (no cash); and 40% for community development (road, school, other infrastructure).	Highly satisfactory	This is a good model.
Activity 4.5 Public hearing and public auditing	yearly public hearing and auditing meetings conducted				Unsure
Output 5 Good models of best practices of community based sustainable forest management disseminated to policy makers and practitioners.	Good models and best practices of community based sustainable forest management from the project summarized and documented as well as disseminated in domestic workshop and through media				
Activity 5.1 Project workshop	information on project output, best practices and learning shared among stakeholders		Not applicable		
Activity 5.2 Publication and media dissemination	At least six case studies, three success stories and three video documentaries prepared; at least 2 interested journalists will be identified to write feature articles; at least six features in domestic influential newspapers, 4 episodes on FM and 1		Not applicable		

	episode on television will be broadcasted				
Activity 5.3 Summarizing best practices of community based sustainable forest management from the project	Best practices of community based sustainable forest management from the project summarized and documented		Not applicable		

Annex 3: Project Overall Rating Table

To support more systematic recording of evaluation findings, APFNet evaluation will use a rating table with score to record project performance and the table should be attached to the evaluation report. The scoring criterion is as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory/4:** The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *very good* extent.
- **Satisfactory /3:** The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *good* extent.
- **Moderate/2:** The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *fair* extent.
- **Unsatisfactory/1:** The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *poor* extent.
- **Highly unsatisfactory/0:** The criterion was *not assessed*.
- **D/I:** The criterion was considered but *data were insufficient* to assign a rating or score.

The external evaluator(s) also are to provide a brief justification for the rating with score assigned. Identify most notable strengths to build upon as well as highest priority issues or obstacles to overcome. (Note that this table should not be a comprehensive summary of findings and recommendations, but an overview only. A more comprehensive presentation should be captured in the evaluation report.)

Criterion	Description of Strong Performance	Description of Poor Performance	Evaluator(s)' Rating	Evaluator's Brief Justification
Relevance of Project Design	Community forestry is the most important part of forestry in Nepal; project sites are well selected; all 13 CFUG are motivated.	Some adjustments in the proposal; none of them is major	4	The conceptualization and design of this project are outstanding.
Efficiency	All activities implemented for the project are on budget; the IA did all it proposed to do.	Some of SFM activities lack quantification, scientific justification, and evidence; the mini-enterprises need to make a profit.	3	The project is carried out in an efficient manner. It could be more efficient if the benefit and cost of all SFM activities are well understood and if the most efficient ones are applied to the

				whole CFUG
Effectiveness	The demand side of SFM is effective, the income-generation of aromatic herbs plantation is evident; women are involved in decision-making of CFUG	It is unclear if some of supply-side SFM activities are needed	3	To make a big difference in SFM and income generation, additional marketing efforts are needed.
Impacts	The impacts for income-generation is large and evident for aromatic herb plantation; the potential impact of ecotourism is high; women have participated in community forest management activities.	At this moment, it is unclear if some of the SFM activities could be carried out to all the forests managed by the 13 CFUG and if the wooden handcraft-making business would make a profit.	3	Some of the SFM and income generation activities have a large impact; others are not.
Sustainability and duplicability	It is appropriate to enhance forest sustainability from both supply and demand sides, to generate income, and to empower women	The economic sustainability and duplicability of some SFM activities need to be analyzed, and if possible, expanded to the whole community forests managed by the 13 CFUG	3	Some 70-80% of the activities could be carried out by the CFUG on their own after this project. It is unclear whether the leaders of the 13 CFUG understand which ones should be carried out and which ones should not.
Overall Score	The IA implemented what was written in the original and revised proposal; project is on time and under budget; some impacts of the project is evident and encouraging	Some SFM activities lack a clear purpose, economic analysis, and a realistic plan for implementation.	3	The design and implementation of this project are satisfactory, although a lot more can be done for it to have a bigger impact.

Annex 4: Reference documents

Most of the reference in this report are drawn from project documents and observations from field visits.

DOF. 2017. Community Forests.

http://dof.gov.np/dof_community_forest_division/community_forestry_dof (accessed September 22, 2016).

Ganga Ram Dahal and Apsara Chapagain. 2008. Community Forestry in Nepal: Decentralized Forest Governance. Chapter 5 in C.J.P. Colfer, G.R. Dahal, and D. Capistrano (eds.) Lessons from forest decentralization: Money, justice and the quest for good governance in Asia-Pacific. Earthscan, London, UK.

http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/events/documentations/yogyakarta/papers/cha%20pter%205%20dahal.pdf (accessed September 22, 2016).

Annex 5: Questionnaires for data collection

Key Interview Questions, Proposed Sampling Frameworks of the Beneficiaries, and List of Stakeholders to Be Consulted

Questions related to Community forests

- (1) Who own the forests in Nepal? Who own the land?
- (2) How does community forests operate in Nepal?
- (3) How the benefits and costs of community forests are distributed? Are they a common resource? What about regulation on these resource?
- (4) Who decide how much timber and non-timber forests products can be taken out each year?
- (5) Who rehabilitate community forests after degradation?
- (6) Why deforestation rate of 1.65% in Scarlahi and 1.7% in Nepal? Who restore the denuded landscape? Where does the money come from?
- (7) Is there nation-wide periodical forest survey for all community forests?
- (8) Who implement a forest management plan at a community forest?
- (9) Why only several hundreds of the (18,324) CFUG practice transparent, participatory and inclusive decision-making (p. 9. in Project Document)?
- (10) What is the annual income of the ultra-poor households?

Questions related to project implementation

- (1) Why women have less access to and control over the resources? Is it by law or something else? Was household not a unit for access to community forests?
- (2) Some 10 participants are selected for training in each community. How many families in each community? In other words, what do the 10 participants represent in the community? How many of them are ultra poor? (Note, $130/(1120+890+2500) = 3\%$ of the households will be trained.)
- (3) What proper silvicultural practices are told in training? What are the inappropriate silvicultural practices?
- (4) Why is the harvesting system supported by this project different from traditional or common practiced methods?
- (5) Who own the ecotourism park?
- (6) How benefits and costs are shared among communities who own the ecotourism park?
- (7) Who own the community forest based mini-enterprise?
- (8) Who own the production cottage and machinery supported by this project?
- (9) If and how value chain analysis for wooden handicraft market and aromatic herbs market were done? What were the results?
- (10) What is the cost of each ICS, solar panel, and biogas?
- (11) At what conditions would these alternative energy be used in an average household in the project region?

- (12) What is the rate of efficiency of the traditional stove?
- (13) How community forest management mechanism is assessed? Who is to judge a good or bad mechanism?
- (14) How to do assessment via spider web?
- (15) Why gains recognition from policy-makers and practitioners are important to the success of this project?
- (16) How many women benefited from this project, in proportion?
- (17) How could this project be expanded to more community forests in Nepal?

Questions related to project conception and plan

- (1) Why was the budget need for PD, financial persons, and 3 LRP not considered at the beginning?
- (2) Why did the IA consider that the communities unable to support the project in cash?
- (3) How much saving is achieved by reducing nursery side from 1 ha each to 0.359 ha each? What was the money saved used for?

Sampling of the Beneficiaries

- (1) For the 130 trainees on SFM, we need to get a list of them first. We then choose 3 of them in the CFUG that we will visit. We ask the PD to get us at least 1 of these three for interview. This will ensure randomness.
- (2) For the households who implemented biogas, solar panels, and ICS, we hope to use a similar method as above.
- (3) For the trainees on wooden handicraft making, we will visit the handicraft shop first and then reach 2-3 trainees.
- (4) For the households received training on aromatic herb planting, we will rely on PD and LRP to get us 1-2 trainees.
- (5) We will also randomly stop at farms and interview men and women labors.

List of Stakeholders to Be Consulted

- (1) All these listed in Sampling of the Beneficiaries above
- (2) The three IA
- (3) PD, financial director, and three LRPs,
- (4) Heads of the respective CFUG in the project region
- (5) DDC
- (6) District Forest and Soil Conservation Office (Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation)
- (7) Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal
- (8) National Forest Plan
- (9) IUCN Office in Nepal

Annex 6: Lists of interviewees

During our field visits, we were accompanied by Mr. Prakash Lamsal- Department of Forest and Ms. Anita Sherestha- Project Director. Our interviews were mostly translated by them as well.

In Kathamandu Field

Madhav Dhungel

Rama Ale Magar

LRP- Ram Sharan Ale Magar

Chair person, secretary, and treasurer of Setidevi CFUG

A male member at Setidevi CFUG who was building a small biogas pool.

Two randomly selected members of 10-12 members in the nursery

In Makwanpur Field Visit

Bharati Pathak

Aarati Pathak

DPC- Sushma Lama

Dipesh Ghimire

3-4 randomly selected members of 20-25 members of the Piple Pokhara and other two CFUG who were working in the wooden handicraft-making sites.

Chair person, secretary, and treasurer of Piple Pokhara CFUG

A household which implemented ICS.

A female household which implemented solar.

Bishal Bhattarai, Assistant Forest Officer, DF at Makawanpur, Hetauda

Dr. Akhileshwar L. Karna, Regional Director of Makawanpur, MoFSC

In Sarlahi Field Visit

Gopi Prasad Poudel

Durga Chaudhary

Chair, secretary of Radhakrishna CFUG

Chair of aromatic herb sub-group at CFUG

3 randomly selected members of the 15-20 members of Radhakrishna CFUG presented on September 30, 2106

A female member who implemented a solar panel

A household who implemented ICS

Mahandra (whose last name escaped me), district ranger of Sarlari DF

Chair and secretary of Janajyoti CFUG

1 randomly selected female member of some 20-25 Janajyoti CFUG members at present in the afternoon of September 30

Chair, secretary, and treasurer of Nandeshawar CFUG

Three randomly selected members (2 female and 1 male) of some 20-25 Nandeshawar CFUG members at present on October 1, 2016

A Doctor (Puruattom Karki) who grew up in Nandeshawar and was visiting his family from South Korea

A manager of aromatic oil distiller

A fuelwood collector

Persons present at the summary meeting in Kathmandu on October 2, 2016:

Mr. Krishna Prashad Acharya	Chair/Director General, DOF
Mr. Resham Bahadur Dangi	FACD, MOFSC
Dr. Anujaraj Sharma	Deputy Director and Chief, Community Forest Division
Mr. Prakash Lamsal	Focal Person and Community Forest Development Officer
Mr. Pasang Lama	Social Welfare Council
Dr. Indra Sapkota	DFO, Kathmandu
Mr. Rajendra Neupane	DFO, Makwanpur
Mr. Naresh Thakur	DFO, Sarlahi
Me. Rama Ale Magar	HIMAWANTI Nepal
Ms. Bharati Pathak	Ashmita Nepal
Ms. Sushma Lama	Ashmita Nepal
Gopi Prasad Poudel	CRMC Nepal
Mrs. Anita Shrestha	HIMAWANTI Nepal/Project Director
Madhav Dhungel	HIMAWANTI Nepal/Project Financial Director
Hemant Budhathoki	HIMAWANTI Nepal
Dr. Daowei Zhang	Mid-term Evaluator for APFNet
Mr. Zhaochen Li	Program Officer, APFNet