Fairer use of shared forest resources

**Validated RNRRS Output.**

In the mid-hills of Nepal, work has been conducted to ensure that the poor benefit more from the community forests on which they depend. Nearly 33% of the 10 million people found in these hills live in poverty and rely on community forests. Currently, 23% of the mid-hills forests are managed by 12,500 Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs). These CFUGs have succeeded in reversing forest degradation. However, they tend to marginalise women and the poorest groups, restricting their access to the forest. Working closely with stakeholders, researchers have devised a whole range of management options which could improve the services CFUGs provide to the poor. Examples include micro-credit provision, support for forest-based enterprise and the promotion of trade linkages.

Project Ref: NRSP25:
Lead Organisation: Springate-Baginski, O. (Independent)
Source: Natural Resources Systems Programme

**Document Contents:**


**Description**
A. Description of the research output(s)

1. Working title of output or cluster of outputs.
   In addition, you are free to suggest a shorter more imaginative working title/acronym of 20 words or less.

   FOREST CPR MANAGEMENT AND USE IN NEPAL

   PROMOTING PRO-POOR COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN NEPAL’S MID-HILLS THROUGH INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR INCREASED FOREST PRODUCTIVITY AND EQUITABLE BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION

2. Name of relevant RNRRS Programme(s) commissioning supporting research and also indicate other funding sources, if applicable.

   FOREST AGRICULTURE INTERFACE

3. Provide relevant R numbers (and/or programme development/dissemination reference numbers covering supporting research) along with the institutional partners (with individual contact persons (if appropriate)) involved in the project activities. As with the question above, this is primarily to allow for the legacy of the RNRRS to be acknowledged during the RIUP activities.

   R.7889 (building on research conducted under project R.6778)

   Project Leader:
   Dr. Oliver Springate-Baginski, Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK (oliver.springate@gmail.com)

   Institutional Partner:
   Dr. Om Prakash Dev, Resources Development and Research Centre, New Baneshwar, Kathmandu, Nepal (phfm@mos.com.np)

4. Describe the RNRRS output or cluster of outputs being proposed and when was it produced? (max. 400 words).
   This requires a clear and concise description of the output(s) and the problem the output(s) aimed to address. Please incorporate and highlight (in bold) key words that would/could be used to select your output when held in a database. [411]

   **Opportunity:** Community Forestry (CF) can provide enhanced subsistence needs, income and enterprise opportunities and safety nets to the poor
   - Nepal's mid-hills contain over 10m people, of which 32.8% live in poverty.[1]
   - Forests provide critical inputs to mid-hills rural livelihood systems, especially for the poorest.
   - About 12,500 Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) managing 23% of mid-hills forests, have reversed forest degradation.[2]
**Constraint:** CFUGs replicate the Department of Forests’ traditional management objectives: conservation and timber harvesting regulation.
- CFUGs work in a static, blueprint, and regulatory rather than livelihood-development mode, marginalising the poor’s livelihood interests.
- The Nepal government has not prioritised in policy the significant poverty alleviation potentials of CF.
- Pro-poor processes, methods and tools have not been institutionalised by CFUGs or service providers.

**Solutions:** (produced 2003)

**Output 1: Inclusive Democratic and Need-based Micro-Action-Planning Processes for Pro-Poor Outcomes [3]**
- CFUGs are not ‘real’ communities but comprise diverse (in ethnicity, caste, wealth) actual users of a particular forest. Group heterogeneity has led to elite male domination, conflict, and marginalisation of women, poor and low status groups (those daily dependent on forests) and restriction of their forest use.
- The ‘actual’ homogenous and cohesive hamlet level communities can form the basis for inclusive equitable planning: hamlet micro action plans facilitated by hamlet representatives (may be women, poor and low status group members) can then be negotiated into CFUG-level action plans.

**Output 2. Pro-poor Provisions within CFUGs [4]**
- Pro-poor provisions hold major potentials for reducing poverty. For example:
  - leasing community land to the poor for agroforestry or herbal cultivation
  - self-employment in forest product collection, processing and trade,
  - forest-based enterprise start-up support and skill transfer, networking local enterprises and promoting trade linkages.
  - preferential employment in group enterprises,
  - micro-credit
  - mobilising group funds for enterprise-oriented activities,
  - regulating product collection at sustainable levels, favouring poor in quotas

**Output 3: Promoting Demand Led, Need-based CFUG Support Relationships [5]**
- CFUGs have complex institutional development paths, involving a range of processes. They require needs-based support specifically tailored to their priorities.
- Existing district forest office service delivery is routinised, supply-driven, unresponsive to local needs and not linked to poverty reduction objectives. The outcome, weak institutional development, disfavours the poor.
- A twin-track intervention is necessary:
  1) to move CFUGs from passive support recipients to empowered support demanders, their needs identified through equitable micro-planning.
  2) to prompt service providers to become responsive to CFUG support requests, tailoring annual support plans accordingly.

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5. What is the type of output(s) being described here? Please tick one or more of the following options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Process or Methodology</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. What is the main commodity (ies) upon which the output(s) focussed? Could this output be applied to other commodities, if so, please comment

Forest products and services for subsistence use, processing and sale:
- sawn timber,
- poles,
- fuelwood,
- wood for artisanal implement production (e.g. plough, agricultural implements),
- charcoal (for blacksmith use),
- medicinal and aromatic plants,
- wild fruits, mushrooms and other edibles,
- grass and leaf fodder,
- ground fodder grazing,
- leaf-litter for animal bedding,
- Agro-forestry crops such as cardamom, millet seedbed, ginger, turmeric, broom-grass for broom-making.

7. What production system(s) does/could the output(s) focus upon?
Please tick one or more of the following options. Leave blank if not applicable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Arid High potential</th>
<th>Hillsides</th>
<th>Forest-Agriculture</th>
<th>Peri-urban</th>
<th>Land water</th>
<th>Tropical moist forest</th>
<th>Cross-cutting</th>
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8. What farming system(s) does the output(s) focus upon?
Please tick one or more of the following options (see Annex B for definitions). Leave blank if not applicable
9. How could value be added to the output or additional constraints faced by poor people addressed by clustering this output with research outputs from other sources (RNRRS and non RNRRS)? (max. 300 words).

Value could be added to this output if linked to the outputs of the FAI project R.7975 in the Nepal Tarai (in list of circulated outputs). The latter output also focussed on key opportunities for institutional development support to Forest User Groups to improve poverty alleviation in rural Nepal. Clustering the outputs from the two projects could support development of national-level pro-poor policy process to develop. It could also contribute into international processes.

The current output is also closely related to the FRP project R.8101 which examined the implementation of Participatory Forest Management policies across India (West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra) and Nepal (Hills and Tarai). Linking with this project outputs offers opportunities for poverty impacts across the hundreds of millions of forest-dependent poor in India.

Please specify what other outputs your output(s) could be clustered. At this point you should make reference to the circulated list of RNRRS outputs for which proformas are currently being prepared.

The outputs of this research, based on work in Nepal hills, are closely related to the subsequent FAI project R. (Janet’s one) in the Nepal Tarai. It is also closely related to the later FRP project R8101 (OSB) across India (West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra) and Nepal (Hills & Tarai)

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**Validation**

**B. Validation of the research output(s)**

10. How were the output(s) validated and who validated them?

Please provide brief description of method(s) used and consider application, replication, adaptation and/or adoption in the context of any partner organisation and user groups involved. In addressing the “who” component detail which group(s) did the validation e.g. end users, intermediary organisation, government department, aid organisation, private company etc... This section should also be used to detail, if applicable, to which social group, gender, income category the validation was applied and any increases in productivity observed during validation (max. 500 words).

During the 3 year project (R6778) on which this output is based, Leeds University and the DFID-funded Nepal UK Community Forest Project (NUKCFP) collaborated according to a participatory action research (PAR) method. This meant that findings were developed and shared in a multi-stakeholder process, promoting their direct uptake
and validation within NUKCFP the Department of Forest field offices. The outputs were used by the project
design team in the designing of the new DFID supported Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP) (2001-
2011).

The outputs were adopted and validated at various scales both in a number of CFUGs and districts as well as at
national level. The PAR process involved self-adoption at CFUG level. It also involved promotion with extension
materials and training, and facilitation support from research team and service providers across districts involved.
It also involved policy adoption due to workshops and advocacy.

Output 1 (Micro-action-planning process)
- This was validated during the PAR project process in 14 CFUGs across eastern hills districts (Dhankuta,
  Bhojpur, Terathum, Sankhuwasabha). Subsequently, through dissemination there has been self-adoption by
  a number of CFUGs elsewhere (e.g. Dang district).
- Application of the micro-action planning led to significant pro-poor impacts, in terms of institutional
  strengthening, increased inclusion of women, dalit and poor and their representation in FUG committees and
  improved livelihood outcomes especially for the poorest. These were validated by the project team, DFO staff
  and project field staff.
- This output was subsequently adopted for widespread application and scaling up in the LFP.

Output 2 (Pro-poor provisions within CFUGs)
- in a number of locations CFUGs and donor-supported projects, with support from the more progressive
  District Forest Officers, have validated this approach through adoption
- However this is occurring in a limited way in the field because at the centre the FD policy and strategy
  has not yet recognised or supported this approach.

Output 3 (CFUG-led Need-based support)
- This was validated and adopted by the action research CFUGs in the study, and was partly adopted by
government of Nepal and forestry/development projects, especially by adopting strategies of diversifying
service delivery organisations.
- DFID-funded Livelihoods and Forestry Programme introduced animation programme (social mobilisation
  with local NGO support) in order to understand CFUG priorities and to plan to support them.
- The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (Govt of Nepal) also recognised, the importance of social
  mobilisation and the need for involvement of NGOs as complementary service providers, for the success of
  CF programme in achieving benefits to the rural poor. They have subsequently produced guidelines to
  advance from the bureaucratic approach to multi-stakeholder service / support delivery:
  • Service provider Guidelines (2005)
  • District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC) Guidelines (2005)
- While this constitutes a step forward, CFUG capacity to proactively explore and demand support and
  services from district line agencies, is still lacking. Furthermore, delivery needs to be coordinated between
  service demanders and provider through both conducive policies and institutional arrangements at the district
  level.

11. Where and when have the output(s) been validated?
Please indicate the places(s) and country(ies), any particular social group targeted and also indicate in which
The research outputs were validated at three levels - local, district and national, corresponding to the scope of outputs.

Originally the outputs were validated at village level as inbuilt to the PAR design of the project across 14 CFUGs in four Koshi hills districts of Dhankuta, Bhojpur, Terathum and Sankhuwasabha during 1998-2000. The outputs were adapted and adopted beyond the project, in other areas, either as self-adoption by CFUGs though learning from extension materials, or with facilitation from LFP which adopted outputs on the project scale.

Subsequently they were validated at the district level through uptake after dissemination activities with Department of Forests and project staff during 1998-2000 and beyond, though at a limited scale and without sufficient appreciation of the role of forest production within the farming systems.

Finally, after national level dissemination workshops these outputs were recognised as priorities for ‘second generation’ community forestry intervention.

The outputs were developed from within the Hillsides, and Forest-Agriculture production systems, and in smallholder rainfed highland farming systems of four districts in the hills of Koshi Zone in eastern Nepal.

The research focused especially on enhancing productivity and equity within Nepal’s complex, integrated hill farming system.

## Current Situation

### 12. How and by whom are the outputs currently being used? Please give a brief description (max. 250 words).

The outputs are currently being used mainly by the donor-supported Community Forestry projects, to some extent by the DoF field staff, and by some CFUGs. However they have not yet been incorporated into government policies or normal practice.

The outputs were used in the design of the new LFP. LFP implements the outputs mainly through funding local NGOs (LNGOs) and CBO support providers in social mobilisation programmes, to facilitate their use in CFUGs, as well as encouraging District Forest Offices to adopt them.

- The LNGOs and CBOs deploy animators to facilitate the process of inclusion of marginalised groups in CFUGs decision making and the equitable distribution of benefits,
- They also facilitate the revision of CFUG’s Operational Plan to incorporate the range of livelihoods.
potentials, through awareness-raising, improving forest production, and the collection and use of diversified forest produce.
- They also form hamlet groups (e.g. dalit, and women groups) for their livelihood improvement.

Similarly, the Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project focuses on forest based enterprise development in order to increase the income of the poorer groups. This project also works with village and district level service providers and stakeholders to improve the needs based service delivery to the CFUGs

The DoF uses these outputs through revision of Operational Plan of the CFUGs, allowing CFUGs to incorporate forest based livelihood activities in their Operational Plans after assessment of forest stocks. However although the DoF has incorporated poverty reduction strategies through forest sector in 10th Five Year Plan of Nepal there has been limited change in field practice.

13. Where are the outputs currently being used? As with Question 11 please indicate place(s) and countries where the outputs are being used (max. 250 words).

- Mid hills of Nepal
- Has also (in case of micro-planning) found to have been adopted in mid-western Tarai district of Dang many progressive user groups responding to widely circulated extension materials and journal articles.
- Integrated into support provision mainly in hills districts under livelihoods and Forestry Programme in Koshi and Dhaulagiri hills
- In districts of central Nepal hills (Dolakha, Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga) under support of Swiss Development Cooperation..

14. What is the scale of current use? Indicating how quickly use was established and whether usage is still spreading (max 250 words).

In Koshi and Dhaulagiri Hills, approximately 60 percent of community forest user groups have adopted output 1 nad 2 to some extent. Usage is continuing to spread.

Within donor supported project districts, the field activities are often pursued only on an ad-hoc basis. Therefore it remains essential that state policy and practice adopts and institutionalises these outputs

15. In your experience what programmes, platforms, policy, institutional structures exist that have assisted with the promotion and/or adoption of the output(s) proposed here and in terms of capacity strengthening what do you see as the key facts of success? (max 350 words)

The main factor for the promotion and adoption of these outputs, as far as it has happened so far has been close working relationships between the research project, the DFID-supported NUKCFP, the Ministry of Forests and the Dept of Forests field staff, which led to constructive working relationships and rapid validation of outputs.

At the village level, the CFUGs exist as permanent, self-governing, legal entities- and so serve as the platform to negotiate and decide on local programmes, plans and priorities.
Their institutional development has been assisted by district level actors. The Department of Forests District Forest Office staff play the key role in forming and supporting CFUGs. Where the District Forest Officers have been more progressive they have played a key role in supporting implementation of these outputs. However they have lacked direction from the central level as yet.

Donor project field staff have played a key role in promoting these outputs, both within CFUGs and to the DoF field staff. District Forest Coordination Committees (DFCCs) existing in most of Nepal’s districts, have provided the ideal platform for multi-stakeholder discussions on how CF can promote poverty alleviation...

At national level, Within the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, the Foreign Aid coordination division brings together donor projects in prioritisation and coordination of programmes supported through donor bodies. Additionally the national-level Forestry Sector Coordination Committee (FSCC) has kept poverty alleviation issues in CF on the agenda. ..

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**Current Promotion**

**D. Current promotion/uptake pathways**

16. Where is promotion currently taking place? Please indicate for each country specified detail what promotion is taking place, by whom and indicate the scale of current promotion (max 200 words).

Current promotion is ongoing mainly under districts supported by DFID-funded LFP and those SDC funded NSCFP. Promotion mainly involves:
- reorienting support staff- both of local support provider NGOs and of the government field staff to be able to appreciate and support micro-planning at CFUG level,
- increasing representation of women, poor in the CFUG committees thorugh the micro-planning process
- reorienting forest management objectives to attain livelihoods targets
- introducing pro-poor provisions: creation of feasible forest based enterprises, land allocation for poor households (farmers (at a limited scale), re-prioritisation of fund use,

17. What are the current barriers preventing or slowing the adoption of the output(s)? Cover here institutional issues, those relating to policy, marketing, infrastructure, social exclusion etc. (max 200 words).

- The current security context is still uncertain, with a lasting hangover from the Maoist insurgency and state military response
- While policies broadly recognise livelihoods and poverty reduction objectives- there is still a lack of sufficient implementation in service provider practice, especially facilitation and other support to CFUGs
- Support provision not sufficiently demand-driven, but support providers dictating the support needs
- Field support tends to be ‘donor-project-centric’ in the sense of depending on project cycles and priorities rather than oriented towards sustainable institutionalisation.
18. What changes are needed to remove/reduce these barriers to adoption? This section could be used to identify perceived capacity related issues (max 200 words).

- Greater policy-practice integration: improving the implementation of expressed intent of policies through institutional schemes and resource provision
- Wider dissemination of research outputs particularly through grass-roots publications and activities to raise awareness of CFUG members
- Rights-based approach to CFUG institutional development – raising forest users awareness of what support they have aright to from the District office, and how they can get accountability if it is not provided
- Development / promotion / training of CFUG based grassroots facilitators for ‘CFUG-to-CFUG’ learning across CFUGS. Leader CFUGs could be mobilised as local knowledge ‘hubs’.

19. What lessons have you learnt about the best ways to get the outputs used by the largest number of poor people? (max 300 words).

- **Collaboration** bringing the widest possible range of stakeholders on board both during the research process, and for dissemination activities
- Following a **Participatory Action Research** method which gives stakeholders, particularly local people an active role in the learning process
- **Acknowledge diversity** of social and resource situations. This demands adaptation to local situations.
- **Vertical integration**- working from local to national level, for positive feedback. Outputs should feedback to both the policies and ‘ground’ actions. Each cannot be conceived of in isolation..
- **Civic engagement** - technical processes alone are insufficient to bring about changes – it requires engaging with civil society organisations to deliberate on and influence policies..

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**Impacts On Poverty**

**E. Impacts on poverty to date**

20. Where have impact studies on poverty in relation to this output or cluster of outputs taken place? This should include any formal poverty impact studies (and it is appreciated that these will not be commonplace) and any less formal studies including any poverty mapping-type or monitoring work which allow for some analysis on impact on poverty to be made. Details of any cost-benefit analyses may also be detailed at this point. Please list studies here.

21. Based on the evidence in the studies listed above, for each country detail how the poor have benefited from the application and/or adoption of the output(s) (max. 500 words):

- **What positive impacts on livelihoods have been recorded and over what time period have these impacts been observed?** These impacts should be recorded against the capital assets (human, social, natural, physical and, financial) of the livelihoods framework;
- **For whom i.e. which type of person (gender, poverty group (see glossary for definitions) has there been a positive impact;**
- **Indicate the number of people who have realised a positive impact on their livelihood;**
- **Using whatever appropriate indicator was used detail what was the average percentage increase recorded**

Although these studies’ qualitative analyses point to a number of aspects where livelihoods improvements were possible, although they have not quantified impacts...

- Land allocation to the poor: land-poor households provided with common lands (community forest lands) on a lease basis, by specifying a range of income generating activities, including production and sale of forest seedlings, broom grasses, cash crops (cardamom, ginger, turmeric etc.)
- Value addition of forest produce to additional income and employment: adoption of both local knowledge and external inputs to both conventional and non-conventional enterprises- including Nepali handmade paper manufacturing, essential oils extraction, broom making, wild-nettle cloth making, *Bael* juice making,
- Access to CFUG funds: Members of CFUG receiving support (mainly as loan) for such activities as goat raising, grocery shop, cottage industries,
- Increased employment, especially giving preferential selection of the poor, in CFUG generated employment opportunities- in cultivation, collection and processing of medicinal herbs and other non-timber forest produce (NTFPs)
- Creation of enterprise oriented institutions: CFUGs brought together to form community-owned companies/cooperative structures for improved marketing
- Rural development investment: rural infrastructure development (school building construction & financing for teacher compensation, drinking water, village trail, irrigation improvement, etc.)

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**Environmental Impact**

**H. Environmental impact**

24. What are the direct and indirect environmental benefits related to the output(s) and their outcome(s)? (max 300
This could include direct benefits from the application of the technology or policy action with local governments or multinational agencies to create environmentally sound policies or programmes. Any supporting and appropriate evidence can be provided in the form of an annex.

Environmental benefits would include improved forest management, improving the forest cover and regeneration.

25. Are there any adverse environmental impacts related to the output(s) and their outcome(s)? (max 100 words)

Not foreseeable

26. Do the outputs increase the capacity of poor people to cope with the effects of climate change, reduce the risks of natural disasters and increase their resilience? (max 200 words)

Yes. Forest resources offer major safety nets (such as wild food, and timber cash opportunities) in case of crop failure

Annex

Publications:

ODI Rural Development Forestry Newsletter special issue 26 July 2003, Co-published with Journal of Forest and Livelihood 3(1)


Nagendra Prasad Yadav, Om Prakash Dev, Oliver Springate-Baginski; and John Soussan 2003 Forest Management and Utilisation Under Community Forestry in Rural Development Forestry Newsletter 26 (ODI: London)


Om Prakash Dev, Oliver Springate-Baginski; Nagendra Prasad Yadav and John Soussan 2003b Impacts of Community Forestry on Livelihoods in the Middle Hills of Nepal in Rural Development Forestry Newsletter 26 (ODI: London)
Why aren't Poor People Benefiting More from Community Forestry?  
Yam B. Malla, Hari R. Neupane and Peter J. Branney

Economics, Poverty and Transparency: Measuring Equity in Forest user Groups  
Michael Richards, Maksha Maharjan and Keshav Kanel

Other Project-related Outputs:


Springate-Baginski, O, JG Soussan, OP Dev, NP Yadav, and E Kiff 2001 Community Forestry in Nepal: Progress and Potentials (School of Geography: University of Leeds)