Forestry

Enhancing livelihoods from improved forest management in Nepal

Nepal

Overview

Nepal's Middle Hills are home to 44 per cent of the country's population, with more than two-thirds relying on a combination of agriculture and forest products for their livelihoods.

Over the last 40 years, 25 per cent of forest lands have been handed over to 19,000 Community Forest User Groups under a Nepali national program. But the management of community forests and associated agricultural systems in the Middle Hills is sub-optimal and the Government of Nepal would like to see greater wealth being generated from these important community-managed forests.

Livelihood opportunities remain limited and food insecurity is widespread as a result. Forest management has not responded effectively to new socio-ecological risks, nor integrated advances in planning and governance knowledge. Underlying these problems are inequitable planning and governance of community forestry; gender inequities in decision-making; and an emphasis on the protection rather than the active management and sustainable use of forest products.

KEY FACTS

ACIAR Project No. FST/2017/037
Duration: July 2018 to June 2023 (5 years)
Target areas: Nepal
Budget: AU$2,700,000

Project Leader
Dr Ian Nuberg, University of Adelaide

Key partners
- Forest Action Nepal
- University of New South Wales
- Department of Forest, Government of Nepal
- Department of Forest Research and Survey, Government of Nepal

ACIAR Research Program Manager
Dr Nora Devoe

Research/Objective

The project's overall aim is to enhance forest management practices in community forests and private land to improve livelihoods, social equity and environmental impacts.

The specific objectives are to:

- Enhance adoption and benefits from Active and Equitable Forest Management (AEFM) and improved private forestry practices.

- Develop and institutionalise community forestry planning, governance and gender equity frameworks within the context of new local government system.

- Design and facilitate the establishment of pro-poor small-scale forest enterprises.

Expected scientific results

- Development of participatory silvicultural technology that blends local and scientific knowledge, including the methodological strategies for practitioners.

- Conceptual and methodological lessons on how local level community forestry planning works in the context of new local government planning and the federal governance system.

- Theoretical and practical insights into how community groups and local governments can interact in a responsive and democratic way to facilitate sustainable and equitable management of forests.

- Improved knowledge of the development and enhancement of community-based forestry enterprises, focusing on poverty, gender and social equity.

- Academic outputs from the socio-ecological research showing how AEFM can be effectively integrated into wider socio-ecosystems for sustainable development outcomes, and how those outcomes can be supported through planning and policy.

Expected outcomes

- Greater application of Active and Equitable Forest Management in Nepal's community forests, leading to significantly increased incomes for local communities from sale of forest products.

- Enhanced silviculture skills of government foresters/technicians being used to provide institutional support for silviculture practice.

- Men, women and poor households having enhanced skills in managing local forest enterprises.

- Framework for pro-poor and gender equitable governance being used to enhance effectiveness of Nepal's community forests.

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