



Enhancing livelihoods and food security from agroforestry and community forestry in Nepal - EnLiFT

Overview

EnLiFT aims to enhance the capacity of household agroforestry systems and community forests to generate livelihoods and food security in the mid-hills region of Nepal. It is a collaboration between two Australian universities, three Nepali development NGOs, the World Agroforestry Centre (Bogor), Institute of Forestry (Pokhara), Community Forest Division of the Department of Forests, and FECOFUN which represents community forest user groups (CFUGs). EnLiFT works with 300 farmer households and 30 CFUGS across six village sites in the districts of Kavre and Lamjung.

Research

The project has three objectives with associated biophysical and social research activities to be conducted:

1. To improve the capacity of household based agroforestry systems to enhance livelihoods and food security.
2. To improve the functioning of community forestry systems to enhance the livelihoods and food security of Community Forest User Group members.
3. To improve the productivity of, and equitable access to, under-utilised and abandoned agricultural land.

ACIAR project number	FST/2011/076
Start date and duration (years)	5 years
Location	Nepal
Budget	\$2.5 million

Project leader(s) and Commissioned Organisation

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EnLiFT Project Agroforestry Nursery Kavre. Photo: ACIAR



There are eight streams of research activity:

1. Implementing agroforestry interventions to improve livelihoods
2. Measuring and predicting household and community impact of agroforestry and community forest innovations
3. Understanding of inclusive community forestry institutions and planning processes
4. Silvicultural trials for active and equitable community forest management
5. Developing market-responsive community forest institutions
6. Understanding how to bring under-utilised land back into production
7. Women's perspective on development processes
8. Research-policy dialogues.

Achievements

Despite major earthquakes, a protracted fuel blockade, and a drought in 2015/16 EnLiFT has achieved:

1. Participatory market chain appraisal of agroforestry products, trained farmers to develop business plans for these products, promoted nurseries and demonstration plantings, and documented the barriers to the commercialisation of agroforestry trees in Nepal.
2. Dialogue with stakeholders to better understand the link between regulatory framework, institutions and community forest planning, generating insights into community-private sector partnership and the interface between community forestry and local-level planning.
3. Participatory silvicultural demonstration plots, field days, and assisting communities to harvest trees in more active and sustainable ways.
4. Explained the genesis of under-utilised land (UUL) and hosted a National Workshop on UUL, the recommendations of which were delivered to the National Planning Commission
5. Characterised its farm-forest bioeconomic model and eliciting women's attitudes to EnLiFT activities.
6. Submitted two scientific publications, seven conference presentations, two student theses, and has six papers ready for submission within next few months.

Impact story

An important achievement of the EnLiFT project to date is the establishment of silviculture demonstration and trial plots in Kavre and Lamjung Districts as sites for teaching forest users as well as to catalyse debate on silviculture-based management of community forest in mid-hills Nepal. Although, there were hesitations among forest users that cutting trees is detrimental to forests, silviculture demonstrations had changed this perception. EnLiFT forest users-partners are now sharing their experience with pride to other forest users who were interested in improving forest management. Several extension activities held at the demonstration plots have opened the door for active involvement of women in forest management.

At the start of the EnLiFT Project, Foresters and Forestry Technicians from the EnLiFT Project cooperating District Forest Offices were not interested on scientific forest management, due to possible public outcry. However, they too were able to experience from the EnLiFT silviculture work that active silviculture practice is possible if proper technical and regulatory measures are available. The silviculture demonstration plots have been eye-opener for the public particularly the media and politicians who in Nepal are extremely critical on tree cutting. The silviculture plots had therefore been instrumental in improving community perception on silviculture-based forest management, a training ground for silviculture practice, and are fertile ground for shaping forest policy debate in the country. Based on positive impressions from forest users and forest bureaucrats in Nepal, there is now increasing demand to conduct silviculture extension works in several forest groups in the two districts.



Silviculture Field Day, Lamjung. Photo: ACIAR