

1 Darwin Project Information

Project title:	<i>Institutionalising Participatory Forest Biodiversity Management in Nepal</i>
Country(ies):	<i>Nepal</i>
Contractor:	<i>Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia in collaboration with Institute of Forestry Pokhara</i>
Project Reference	<i>11-020</i>
No. :	
Grant Value:	<i>£178,447</i>
Start/Finishing dates	<i>1st October 2002 – 30th September 2005</i>
Reporting period	<i>1st October 2002 – 30th April 2003</i>

2 Project Background

His Majesties Government of Nepal (HMGN) has made significant initial progress in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, through forming a network of protected areas covering almost 15% of the country. The National Report on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (1997) states 'the goal is to integrate biodiversity conservation with socio-economic development'. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) is *also* an internationally recognized leader in implementing Community Forestry – handing responsibility for forest management across the middle hills in particular to local rural communities (over 12,000 FUGs formed managing over 18% of Nepal's forest land. In the recent Nepal Biodiversity Action Plan the Community Forestry programme is cited as being a success in reversing forest habitat degradation. However beyond rhetorical endorsement there has been no concerted policy programme to promote biodiversity management in Forest User Group. Other policy initiatives (for instance seeking to introduce biodiversity 'corridors' outside of protected areas) even indicate a de-legitimation of FUG biodiversity management role. At present Forest User Groups (FUGs) feel excluded from the biodiversity management process (Shrestha, NK: 2001). Identification and piloting of inclusive, participatory and equitable modes of biodiversity conservation is urgently needed. Both senior figures in the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and in Federation of Forest User Groups (FECOFUN) have agreed to be involved in and actively support this policy-oriented project.

3 Project Objectives

Project purpose: To institutionalize Biodiversity Action Planning processes in the forests of Nepal, at both District and Forest User Group levels, to ensure biodiversity is identified, protected, and where appropriate utilised on a sustainable basis to help alleviation of rural poverty.

Project objectives: The project aims to institutionalize participatory assessment, conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity across the middle hills of Nepal. This will be achieved through supporting FUGs to incorporate biodiversity consideration in their Operational Plans (OP) for forest management, product extraction, processing and marketing. New ways of coordinating biodiversity

conservation between the stakeholders at national, district and local levels be identified and implemented, through facilitation of District Biodiversity Action Planning. (Stakeholders include District Forest Officer (Dept. of Forest), Wildlife Warden (Dept. of Wildlife), Regional Director (MoFSC).

See appendix I for project log frame.

Objectives and plans have not been modified.

4 Progress

History of Project to beginning of reporting period

The project began on 1st October 2002 (in this reporting period).

The beginning of this project was delayed from the summer due to two factors: Firstly I (OSB) was in the process of moving institutions from University of Leeds to University of Norwich. Secondly it became clear that the start of the project should coincide with the beginning of the academic year in order that the MPhil / PhD training would coincide with project schedule from the start.

Progress Summary over last year

The project thus began in October and has proceeded according to plan since then:

2002-2003	Key milestones	Progress
Oct	Inception planning meeting in Kathmandu with research team	<i>Meeting held in September – plans for research finalised. Internal project document written.</i>
Oct – April	2 MPhil / PhD students to UEA Norwich	<i>Students have completed training. They have become well acquainted with the biodiversity literature and issues pertaining to the situation in Nepal, and also to appropriate research methods. They have drafted research outlines and are preparing to return to Nepal for fieldwork phase. Briefing papers relating to their research programmes are being prepared.</i>
Oct-Jan	Review of existing literature and state of knowledge related to research objectives	<i>Review of literature has been completed.</i>
Jan	Field Tools & Processes developed	<i>Field tools for integrating biodiversity consideration into local forest management have been developed.</i>
Jan	Field training of team in participatory biodiversity assessment methods takes place	<i>Field team training was successfully completed.</i>
Jan	Piloting Biodiversity Assessment and Action Planning process in 1 FUG	<i>Piloting activities successfully completed</i>
Feb-Mar	Review & revision of process	<i>Field tools and process are being refined in preparation for next phase of field research.</i>

Research, training and technical work

The project began in October, although just before then an inception workshop was held in Kathmandu with all the research partners – in which the design was agreed and work was allocated. Two research officers were selected, one from civil society and one from the Ministry of Forests & Soils Conservation. In case selection was made by project leader after consulting senior members of each organisation, and interviewing candidates to assess their suitability. These two students then came to UK to start MPhil / PhD training at the University of East Anglia in late September 2002.

The project is designed as a process oriented project in which research work links staff from both the Ministry of Forest and Federation of Forest User Groups over substantive issues of how to improve the capacity of Forest User Groups to assume a biodiversity management role. The 2 research officers have been trained during the year to date in research methods and have received guidance in designing their research work. One concerns understanding local knowledge on medicinal plant utilisation, the other on improving benefit sharing from forest biodiversity management. These research strands will fit within the overall project objectives.

The overall field research programme was initiated through the field piloting exercise in January 2003. The piloting process involved developing a method for the team to facilitate biodiversity assessment and action planning. Tools have now been developed and will be again tested and refined in coming fieldwork phase, prior to publication.

Difficulties

The continuing civil unrest in Nepal, (due to quasi feudal socio-political situation, widespread dissent and Maoist revolutionary mobilisation), has so far constrained the choice of research sites to some extent. However the project has been able to proceed as planned and it is not anticipated at this stage that difficulties will increase.

Revisions to project plan

Since partners were involved from the outset in the project design there have been no significant revisions to the plan as yet, although refinements to fieldwork methodologies have of course emerged.

Timetable for next reporting period

2003/2004	
May-Sept 03	fieldwork & analysis
Sept. 03	Biodiversity assessed in 6 FUGs, 6 management plans documented
Sept 03	Tools & processes for participatory local Biodiversity Action Planning documented & circulated
Sept. 03	National Workshop held
Mar 04	3 local and 3 national press releases in Nepal
Mar 04	1 National and 1 local press release in UK
Mar 04	1 National radio feature on Nepali Community Forestry show

5 Partnerships

The primary collaboration relationship has been between UEA – ODG and Institute of Forestry, Pokhara. Professor Dutta has been an active member of the research team. He is a particular expert on medicinal plants and Non-timber forest products. He has published widely which has contributed to his national reputation. He has several further books under preparation, and has recently completed a national survey & database for NTFPs for the Ford Foundation. There are many opportunities to expand the scope of the relationship with Prof. Dutta, which are only constrained by available financial resources.

Because the research is action-oriented and policy-process oriented we have sought to develop strong links from the outset with the 2 main organisations involved in the issue at hand: the Federation of Forest User Groups of Nepal (FECOFUN), and the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC). Both bodies have agreed to participate in our research and leading members have actively supported it so far. We are also gradually developing links with other organisations involved in these issues.

6 Impact and Sustainability

At this early stage of the project we have only actively worked in one Forest User Group (FUG) in one district. Already there biodiversity management has become prioritised for attention, and the FUG's Operational Plan (the plan for forest management operations) is under revision to incorporate greater consideration both for conservation practices and for regulated utilisation of marketable plant resources.

7 Post-Project Follow up Activities (max 300 words)

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8 Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)

Code No.	Quantity	Description
4B	4	2 weeks training in biodiversity assessment for research team (2 Nepali postgrad.s – S. Dahal & H Dhungana) provided with biodiversity assessment training by Prof. Dutta, O Springate-Baginski, OP Dev, S. Thapa.
5	2	2 Nepali students receiving PhD training at University of East Anglia.
8	1	Inception planning meeting held in Kathmandu with research partners
8	2	Team piloted Biodiversity action planning process in 1 Forest User Group
9		
11B	1	Briefing paper produced: 'Institutionalising PFBM in Nepal – Briefing Paper'
12A	1	Website established: http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/odg/pfbm/

Additional outputs:

There has been a briefing paper produced (4 page) outlining the project, which has been printed and widely circulated in Nepal.

Outputs not yet achieved:

The review paper of existing practices is still under development and will be circulated shortly.

Press releases in Nepal have not been circulated as yet. They will be made when project partners (FECOFUN and Ministry of Forests & Soil Conservation) have had more time to plan their own roles in the project. This is expected to occur over the summer.

Dissemination network: in discussion with different stakeholders it was recommended that the project links with and uses existing networks, such as the ANSAB network, the Nepal NTFP network, the RECOFTC network, and so on. It is expected that through networking on project issues the learning group will develop and consolidate organically over the coming months.

Table 2: Publications

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(e.g. journal paper, book, manual, CD)	(e.g. title, authors, journal, year, pages)	(name, city)	(E.G. CONTACT ADDRESS, EMAIL ADDRESS, WEBSITE)	
paper	Springate-Baginski, O (2002) ' <i>Institutionalising Participatory Forest Biodiversity Management in Nepal – Research Project Briefing Paper</i> ' (4 pages)	-	http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/odg/pfbm/	-

As the project has just begun there have not been any dissemination activities as yet.

9 Project Expenditure

Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period

Item	Budget	Subtotals	Itemised Expenditure
Salaries (specify)			
O Springate-Baginski			
P Blaikie			
Prof. IC Dutta			
OP Dev			
S Thapa			
Hari Dhungana			
Shankar Dahal			
Rent, rates heating lighting etc			
Office administration costs			
Postage etc			
Capital items/equipment			
Laptop, desktop, printer			
Others			
Training costs			
Airtfares * 2 return			
UK stipend Oct - March			
Tuition fees			
Travel, subsistence			
Printing			
Conference, seminars etc			
Total			

There have been some changes to the budget as the project has got under way:

On salaries, Prof. Blaikie has been unwell, and so his input has been restricted for the initial months, beyond giving overarching advice.

Training costs were slightly underestimated, as stipend costs has to cover 4 weeks more than anticipated for each student.

Capital equipment (computers became more important in our considerations – one further laptop had to be purchased, and the models needed were more expensive than anticipated.

Office administration costs have been higher, mainly due to the printing of inception materials – (which were printed through our Kathmandu office).

On the other hand travel costs were kept to a minimum by staying only in the most basic accommodation during field visits, and cutting costs wherever possible

10 Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

The main method to monitor and evaluate has been according to completion of project milestones.

For this year the main indicator of achievement relevant to the projects development for this year are:

1. Orientation of research team and training of some members.

The inception meeting was a success in the sense that partners agreed on the importance of the project and committed to it, and agreed to the plan with remarkably few revisions. For PhD training of research officers the University has its monitoring and evaluation procedures, which I understand have been satisfied.

2. Consolidation of project plan in consultation with project team members and institutional partners

The plan has been reviewed by senior personnel at the Ministry of Forest & Soil Conservation (the Department responsible for implementing Nepal's Biodiversity Action Plan), and also by FECOFUN, and both have expressed commitment to it.

3. Successful piloting of action-research method and field tools

The piloting process was a valuable learning experience for all partners and allowed us to clarify our thinking for the future work.

Lessons

We have been impressed by the major opportunity for promoting Forest User Groups to adopt an integrated or holistic approach to forest management. At present the Department of Forest field staff promote to FUGs a silvicultural oriented programme of forest management – focussing on timber and fuelwood – according to their own professional training. But within FUGs (as well as at the Institute of Forestry) there is a wealth of knowledge on other practices and management options which would be more conducive to Forest Biodiversity protection and management. We have developed processes and tools to highlight and promote these alternative practices.

11 Author(s) / Date

Dr. Oliver Springate-Baginski / 27th May 2003

Appendix I: Project Logframe, Outputs & Milestones Tables (From project schedule document)

Table 1

Project summary	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumptions
<p>Goal <i>To assist countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources with the conservation of biological diversity and implementation of the Biodiversity Convention</i></p>		Independently collected data and monitoring of biodiversity and of implementation of conservation initiatives	Continued commitment of State and District governments and local people to biodiversity conservation as a priority. Independent data collection reliable
<p>Purpose To institutionalise Biodiversity Action Planning processes in Nepal at District and Forest User Group levels, to ensure biodiversity is identified, protected, and where appropriate utilised on a sustainable basis to help alleviation of rural poverty.</p>	Number of FUGs with Biodiversity Action Planning (BAP) process institutionalised, and FUG Operational Plans accommodating biodiversity issues. Number of Districts with Biodiversity Action Planning process institutionalised. Evidence of maintained or improved biodiversity in	FUG's BAPs collated at district level annually. District' BAP's collated annually. Evidence of changes in biodiversity collected through biodiversity assessment exercises in 12 study sites.	FUGs and District Development Committees (DDCs) willing to co-operate with research project.
<p>Outputs Field tools for local participatory Biodiversity Assessment, and Action Planning (BA/BAP) process developed BA/BAP implemented and documented in at least 12 FUGs. District-level Biodiversity Action Planning (DBAP) process implemented in at least 3 Districts</p>	Field tool documentation produced BACAP documentation for 12 FUGs produced, including biodiversity assessment data DBAP documentation produced for 3 Districts	Project progress reporting: By month 3 field tools documented. By month 12 documentation of 4 local BAPs By Month 24 documentation of at least 3 district BAPs. By month 36 documentation of National	Existing institutional arrangements provide a basis for more participatory and sustainable approaches to biodiversity management. Innovations in management regimes and collaboration can be developed and implemented
<p>Activities Field tools developed and piloted. BACAP process facilitated in at least 12 FUGs District DBAP process facilitated in at least 3 districts. National BAP process regarding CF sensitised to local participation issues.</p>	Budget summary Project milestones: 1:26	Project reports	Political instability does not prevent meetings and field work

Table C

PROJECT OUTPUTS		
Financial Year	Output ref. no.	Details
2002/2003		
Oct 03	8	<i>Inception planning meeting in Kathmandu with research team OSB – 1 week in country</i>
Oct 03	9	<i>Future research programme reviewed & revised</i>
Jan / Feb 03	4B	<i>Research team 2 weeks training in biodiversity assessment</i>
Jan / Feb 03	8	<i>Team to pilot FUG Biodiversity Action Planning process OSB - 4 weeks in country</i>
Mar 03		<i>Review Paper of existing practices produced & circulated</i>
Mar 03	12A	<i>Web database for local and District Biodiversity Assessment and Action Plan data established</i>
Mar 03	17a	<i>Dissemination network established in Nepal via National 'learning group'</i>
Mar 03	15A/B	<i>3 local and 3 national press releases in Nepal</i>
2003/2004		
May-July 03	8	<i>OSB - 4-8 weeks in country supporting fieldwork & analysis</i>
Sept. 03	9	<i>Biodiversity assessed in 6 FUGs, 6 management plan documented</i>
Sept 03	7 / 10	<i>Tools & processes for participatory local Biod. Action Planning documented & circulated</i>
Sept. 03	14A	<i>National Workshop held</i>
Mar 04	15A/B	<i>3 local and 3 national press releases in Nepal</i>
Mar 04	15C/D	<i>1 National and 1 local press release in UK</i>
Mar 04	19A	<i>1 National radio feature on Nepali Community Forestry show</i>
2004/2005		
Sept. 04	14A	<i>National Workshop held</i>
Sept-Mar 03	8	<i>OSB - 4-8 weeks in country supporting fieldwork & analysis</i>
Mar 05	9	<i>6 further local FUG level BA/BAPs produced, 3 District level BA/BAPs produced</i>
-"-	7 / 10	<i>Tools manual for participatory BA/BAP produced at local and District level in English and Nepali</i>
-"-	7	<i>Bulletins, posters and leaflets summarising tools & processes produced at local and District level in English and Nepali</i>
-"-	15A/B	<i>3 local and 3 national press releases in Nepal</i>
-"-	15C/D	<i>1 National and 1 local press release in UK</i>
-"-	19A	<i>1 National radio feature on Nepali Community Forestry show</i>
2005-2006		
April - Oct 03	8	<i>OSB - 4-8 weeks in country supporting fieldwork, analysis & presentation of findings</i>
Sept05	14A	<i>Final National Policy Seminar workshop 3 district workshops</i>
-"-	22	<i>12 FUGs & 3 districts will have Bio. Assessment process established in their forests</i>
-"-	1A	<i>2 MPhil / PhD theses to be submitted</i>
	1B	<i>2 MPhil / PhD qualifications for Nepali team members attained</i>
-"-	14B	<i>At least 3 international conferences attended where findings presented</i>
-"-	15A/B	<i>3 local and 3 national press releases in Nepal</i>
-"-	15C/D	<i>1 National and 1 local press release in UK</i>
-"-	19A	<i>1 National radio feature on Nepali Community Forestry show</i>
-"-	20	<i>£800laptop computer handed over to partners, & Rs.80,000 desktop computer & printer</i>

Table D

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE	
Date	Key milestones
2002-2003	
Oct	<i>Inception planning meeting in Kathmandu with research team</i>
Oct – April	<i>2MPhil / PhD students to UEA Norwich</i>
Oct-Jan	<i>Review of existing literature and state of knowledge related to research objectives</i>
Jan	<i>Field Tools & Processes developed</i>
Jan	<i>Field training of team in participatory biodiversity assessment methods takes place</i>
Jan	<i>Piloting Biodiversity Assessment and Action Planning process in 1 FUG</i>
Feb-Mar	<i>Review & revision of process</i>
2003-2004	
Apr-Jul	<i>BAP process 'scaled-up' across 6 FUGs in 3 Districts in 3 Development Regions (including biod. assessment over 3 seasons with local facilitator)</i>
Sept	<i>Tools & method & 6FUGs process documented (to website)</i>
Sept 03	<i>Annual process reflection workshop & coming year planning</i>
Nov	<i>FUG Biodiversity Action plans reviewed in each existing site</i>
Nov- May	<i>BAP process 'scaled up' across 6 new FUGs in same 3 Districts for contrasting issues – e.g. same NTFPs in different Region)</i>
Dec	<i>Plan for District PBA& MAP</i>
Jan	<i>Pilot DPBA&MAP in 1 district</i>
2004-2005	
April 04	<i>Develop tools & Methods for District PBA&MAP</i>
April-Jul	<i>'Scale-up' District PBA&MAP across 3 district</i>
August	<i>District Tools & method, 3 District processes & 12 FUGs (6 new, 6 revised) documented (to website)</i>
Sept 04	<i>Annual process reflection workshop & coming year planning</i>
Sept.	<i>National learning group meeting takes place to discuss outcomes</i>
Sept-Oct	<i>Investigation of marketing opportunities for NTFPs and FUGs takes place</i>
Oct 04	<i>Revisit & review existing FUGs & Districts – Field Biodiversity assessment and action planning reviewed in the 12 FUGs & 3 Districts</i>
Nov-Mar	<i>Analysis of findings</i>
2005-2006	
April-May	<i>District level sharing workshops – sharing & handover process</i>
May	<i>Regional level sharing</i>
May-Sept05	<i>Final reports written Produce materials, books & articles: e.g. inventory manual, toolkit, posters, booklets</i>
Sept 05	<i>National/International Level review workshop takes place</i>

