

REDD+ Himalaya Nepal Project

Progress report 2015

Back ground

Nepal has been actively involved in REDD+ development since COP 13, and has received international assistance to prepare itself for the implementation of REDD+, including preparation of R-PP, piloting REDD+ activities and setting stakeholder forums for policy planning. Under the World Bank's FCPF, Nepal has started programs to strengthen its readiness for REDD+. Nepal submitted its Readiness-Project Idea Note (R-PIN) during early 2008 and Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) in 2010. As envisioned by the R-PP, Nepal has completed first phase of REDD+ readiness activities including capacity building; REDD+ strategy preparation; development of forest monitoring/MRV system and Forest Reference level (FRL). Several studies complementing REDD+ safeguard policies have also been completed namely Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), Institutional Framework, Carbon Ownership, Policy, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) review, Customary Rights, Economic Modelling, Identification of Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Tenure Rights and Cost Benefit Sharing Arrangements.

Nepal has made a significant progress in setting up a basic institutional framework for REDD readiness. The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC) developed a three tiered framework consisting of the REDD Implementation Centre; a multi-stakeholder REDD Working Group (RWG) with representation from government, experts, donors, and civil society organisations (CSOs), and a high-level, inter-ministerial REDD Apex Body. The REDD IC is responsible for coordinating the REDD+ readiness process under FCPF, as well as other REDD+ project initiatives in Nepal.

Despite significant progress on readiness process, Nepal is not yet fully prepared for REDD+ implementation. REDD+ stakeholders including local communities, women and government agencies, particularly at local level, are yet to be capacitated in terms of their understanding, governance and skills to engage in REDD+ process. REDD+ policies, laws and regulations are yet to be developed and put in place with appropriate institutional arrangements. Working guidelines for different REDD+ activities like MRV, safeguard, multi-stakeholder mobilization, monitoring of carbon and non-carbon benefits and scientific management of forests are lacking.

Considering these gaps and the urgency to address them, the World Bank has recently agreed to provide additional 5 million (\$US) grant support. In addition to the additional grant, Nepal is also accessing the World Bank's Carbon Fund for Emissions Reduction Program (ERP) to be

implemented in Terai Arc Landscape covering 12 districts (TAL area). REDD IC is currently preparing Emissions Reduction Program Document (ERPD) aiming at Emissions Reduction Purchase Agreement (ERPA) by the end of 2017. Nepal has also expressed her interest to access Forest Investment Programme and is in the pipeline country. In addition to the World Bank, Nepal has also been receiving supports for REDD+ process from different agencies like UN REDD, NORAD, GIZ, US Aid, DFID, SDC and FINIDA.

ICIMOD has been one of the major development partners supporting REDD IC technically and financially. The REDD+ Himalaya project is one of key initiatives by ICIMOD for developing and sharing REDD+ experiences in Nepal. The four year project is funded by the German Government through GIZ. The project that was started in July 2015 in Nepal has been implemented jointly by REDD IC and the ICIMOD under the guidance and control of National Coordination Committee (NCC). The NCC approves activities and makes necessary decisions related to the project. Head of the Foreign Aid Coordination Division at the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation chairs the NCC. The NCC meeting held twice in 2015. REDD IC coordinates and facilitates program implementation and quality control.

This report highlights progress made by the REDD+ Himalaya Nepal project in implementing NCC approved activities for 2015. Table 1 and 2 below provide basic information of the project and summarizes financial status by the end of December 2015 respectively.

Table 1: Basic information of the project

Project title	REDD+ Himalaya: developing and using experience in implementing REDD+ in Himalaya
Country of implementation	Nepal
Implementing organisation/ Grant recipient	REDD Implementation Centre (RIC), Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation Nepal
Project duration	01/07/2015 – 31/12/2018
Reporting period	01/07/2015 – 31/12/1015
Date	

Table 2: Financial status of the project by the end of 2015

	Budgeting of funds in USD in accordance with grant agreement / contract	Disbursement of funds by ICIMOD in USD to the end of the reporting period
2014	45500	0
2015	132,500	5455742 NRs +1500 Euro
2016	84500	
2017	57500	
2018	62500	
Total	382500	

Place, Date

Legally binding signature and stamp

Progress status of the activities implemented in 2015

Activity 1: Development of participatory Monitoring, Measuring and Reporting (MMR) guideline of REDD+ activities (Activity code in the project document: 1.2.3.2)

Budget: (i) allocation: 15000 Euro

(ii) Expinditure: 13,02,664.00 NRs

Progress: Satisfactory

Output: A participatory MMR guideline of REDD+ activities at local level both in English and Nepali version (soft and hard copy)

Approach: This assignment was accomplished through a consultant following GoN procurement process including TOR development; publication of EOI notice; EOI assessment; contract negotiation; and contract agreement. The assignment was started at August 2015 and completed by the end of 2015.

The guideline preparation process followed the approach as shown in the box below. At first, related literature (published and unpublished documents, existing guidelines etc) were reviewed. A framework of the guideline was developed based on the review and shared with district level stakeholders through consultation meetings (each in Gorkha, Chitwan and Dolkha). Informal group discussions and key stakeholder consultations were also done following the district level consultation meetings. Draft guideline was prepared incorporating outcomes of district consultation meetings and presented at the central level stakeholder consultation meeting in Kathmandu. Following the central level consultation, the guideline was fine-tuned incorporating suggestions. Final draft was then reviewed by several related experts including from REDD IC and ICIMOD. The guideline was then finalised after the peer review process. Stakeholders who participated in the consultation meetings were 99(79 male and 20 female). Detail of consultation meetings and participants is given in the table at the end of this report.



Steps followed for developing the MMR guideline

Activity 2: Carbon Assessment training (activity code in the project document 1.2.3.3)

Budget: (i) Allocation: 10000 Euro

(ii) Expenditure: 9, 27,663 NRs

Progress: Satisfactory

Output: A LRP training package for carbon assessment, two trainings were conducted and a training report prepared.

Approach: This assignment was accomplished through an individual consultant following GoN procurement process including TOR development; publication of EOI notice; EOI assessment; contract negotiation; and contract agreement. The assignment was started at August 2015 and completed by the end of 2015.

The assignment started with an extensive review of the literature on REDD+ and on the need of carbon assessment and human capacities for achieving goals of REDD+ process. In particular, the review of the literature focused on exploring ideas and skills on forest inventory and carbon assessment. Some important literatures reviewed include Nepal's Community Forest Inventory Guideline and other REDD+ related national and international publications. Two carbon assessment trainings were conducted in Gorkha and Chitawan. Some 43 participants including 15 (35%) female participated. Details of participants, training venue and dates of these five days long trainings are given in the table below this report. Training delivery followed consecutive approach of theory delivery followed by practical in the field. Each session began with a brief introduction of the content to be delivered followed by interactions, group work, brainstorming exercises, question answers and other relevant teaching approaches as appropriate including field practical and data analysis. A training report with learning and recommendations for the future is also submitted.

Activity 3: Stakeholder analysis (activity code in the project document: 1.2.1.3)

Budget: (i) Allocation: 3000 Euro

(ii) Expenditure: 2, 90,000 NRs

Progress: Satisfactory

Output: An analytical report on district level REDD+ stakeholders from Gorkha, Chitwan and Dolkha districts (soft and hard copy).

Approach: This assignment was completed through an individual consultant following GoN procurement process including TOR development; selection of appropriate interested service provider through quotation process (no EOI published because the total budget was less than 300 000 rupees) contract negotiation; and contract agreement made. The assignment was started at November 2015 and was completed by the end of January 2016.

REDD+ stakeholder analysis followed several consecutive methodological steps including review, framework, development, consultation, listing, analysis and categorization. The review expanded understanding of stakeholder theory, helped to define stakeholder in the context of REDD+ and explored processes and frameworks for identifying REDD+ stakeholder and analyse their relevance. Further, the review enriched knowledge on stakeholder types, interests, roles, responsibilities, capacity and other attributes that are likely impact of REDD+ implementation. Following the literature review, framework of the stakeholder profile was developed. Draft framework was then validated through consultation meetings with district level stakeholders. The framework was also validated by REDD+ experts working for REDD IC, ICIMOD, and civil society organizations including FECOFUN, NEFIN, and INGOs working in Kathmandu. Identified stakeholders were further evaluated based on their potential roles and responsibilities in REDD+ process and then prioritized using criteria scoring approach. In order to do so, seven key criteria (needs/objectives, interests, engagement, coverage, capacity and influence) were indentified based on the literature review and consultation meetings. In addition to the scoring system, stakeholders were also categorised based on their affiliation including government, local communities, civil society organization and development partners. This helped to explore and understand affiliation of key stakeholders, their concerns and capacity.

Activity 4: REDD Working Group formation (activity code in the project document: 1.2.1.3)

Budget: (i) Allocatation: 5000 Euro

(ii) Expenditure: 2, 90,350 NRs

(Gorkha: 31,460, Dolkha: 1,53,430 and Chitwan: 1,05,550)

Progress: Satisfactory

Outcome: REDD Working Group (RWG) formed in each of the Gorkha, Chitwan and Dolkha disrtict and maintained functional.

Approach: RWG was formed as instructed by Emission Reduction Program Idea Note (ER-PIN) developed by REDD IC Nepal. The RWG in each district consists of 15 members including representation from FECOFUN, IPs, women and government agencies. There are 3 female members in Chitwan and 2 in both Dolkha and Gorkha. Generally, the RWG meets once in a month in each district and provide guidance to the REDD desk, make necessary planning and decision making.

Activity 5: Establishment of REDD desk (activity code in the project document: 1.2.1.4)

Budget: (i) Allocation: 17000 Euro (ii) Expenditure: 15, 11,721 NRs

(Gorkha: 4, 68,932, Dolkha: 543,149 and Chitwan: 4, 99,649)

Progress: Satisfactory

Outcome: REDD desk is established in each of the project district. The REDD desk has been coordinating all activities related to the REDD+ Himalaya Project as the secretariat.

Approach: This assignment was undertaken by District Forest Office as per decisions made by the RWG.

Different districts undertook different activities based on local context. Dolkha spent most of the money for the REDD desk office construction because the district was lacking required space for the desk after the devastating earthquake in April 2015. Chitwan repaired an old building and furnished the desk with required furniture. In addition to required furniture, Gorkha bought a set of desk top computer, printers and accessories.

Activity 6: School reconstruction support

Budget: (i) Allocation: 10000 Euro (ii) Expenditure: 10, 89,595NRs

Progress: Satisfactory

Outcome: A school building with four class rooms was constructed in Prithivi Narayan Lower Secondary School, Boch Dolkha.

Approach: This assignment was undertaken by the School Authority under direct supervision of DFO Dolkha and District Education Office.

Learnings

The following points highlight key learnings of the REDD+ Himalaya project implementation (2015) in Nepal.

- The project implementation approach has brought all concerned stakeholders including REDD IC, ICIMOD and local level stakeholders (DFO and FECOFUN in particular) onboard hence increased ownership, accountability and effectiveness.
- Local level stakeholders including DFO staffs, CF users, women and civil society organizations like FECOFUN and NEFIN have not yet gained required understanding on REDD+ theory, possible approaches of its implementation and progress/outcomes (both carbon and non carbon) assessment skills.
- REDD Desk Officers need an orientation training on account keeping and reporting system in line with the project's reporting format.
- Team building meetings/workshops are required to keep project actors motivated and result oriented. Such workshop would also enhance cooperation among actors and add to synergies.
- Administrative and financial assistant is required in PMU for record keeping, account keeping and producing reports on time.

Table 1: List of activities 2015 and other details including venue, dates and participants

S.N.	Activities	Completed Date and District		Participants (No.)		Remarks
		Date	District	Male	Female	
1	Monitoring, Measuring, and Report (MMR) Guideline for Publishing	9 September 2015 10 september 2015 13 september 2015 29 September 2015	Gorkha Chitawan Dolkha Kathmandu	25 27 22 25	4 3 4 9	Consultation
2	Two trainings conducted in two different project districts	2072/09/02 to 2072/09/06 2072/09/08 to 2072/09/12	Gorkha Chitawan	15 14	7 8	Training participants
3	REDD working groups at district level formed and functional , meeting minutes	2072/09/05 2072/04/15 2072/08/10 2072/09/12 2072/09/14 2072/04/17 2072/05/20 2072/06/20 2072/07/18 2072/10/06	Gorkha Gorkha Chitawan Chitawan Chitawan Dolkha Dolkha Dolkha Dolkha Dolkha	11 10 23 27 16 16 11 11 11 12	2 2 3 6 8 2 2 2 2 2	Meetings
4	REDD Stakeholder profile prepared and endorsed in district	January 2016	Chitawan, Gorkha and Dolkha	32	8	Profile prepared
5	Establishment of REDD desk in each district	2072/04/15 2072/04/09 2072/04/17	Gorkha Chitwan Dolkha	11 33 21	2 9 5	REDD Desk established
				373	88(20%)	496