



ICIMOD

Himalica Pilot Project

Taplejung, Nepal

Building resilience of highland communities
by improving livelihoods and natural
resource management

FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE



Project funded by the
European Union



Overview of Himalica

The Support to Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalayas (Himalica) is a demand-driven programme financed by the European Union (EU) and managed by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The programme supports vulnerable mountain communities in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) in mitigating and adapting to climate and socioeconomic changes.

The expected results of Himalica are:

- Building capacity of national and regional stakeholders in dealing with livelihood development, more sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, and the protection of the environment in the HKH.
- Reducing poverty among mountain people through increased resilience and unlocking new livelihood opportunities through the promotion of more equitable approaches.

Pilot projects in vulnerable areas are a key component of Himalica. Under these projects, community-specific interventions are designed in collaboration with local partners and communities to improve the resilience of mountain women and men.

What we are doing

The Environment Conservation and Development Forum (ECDF) and ICIMOD initiated a pilot project in Taplejung district of Nepal under the Himalica initiative in July 2015. The pilot targets 300 households of 12 cardamom producing groups located at an elevation ranging from 1,000 m to 2,000 m.



The pilot focuses on improving the large cardamom value chain in a district where over 65% of households depend on it for their livelihood. Cardamom is a high value export commodity earning approximately NPR 300 million a year. Despite extensive efforts in the past to expand production, the total production and productivity of cardamom in Taplejung did not improve due to the majority of plantations reaching maturity, and the rising incidence of disease and pest infestation.

Therefore, the focus of the pilot is on applying climate resilient measures to improve cardamom production systems, to strengthen market linkages, and institutions, and to diversify income sources through promotion of enterprises and value-adding activities. Interventions were made in Sikaicha and Furumbu village development committees (VDCs) and Phungling Municipality selected in consultation with the District Agriculture Development Office (DADO).

The key interventions of the pilot include (i) development of package of practices for climate resilient cardamom farming; (ii) demonstration of technologies or agro forestry practices focusing on effective and efficient management of water, energy, soil nutrients, and crop cycle; (iii) training and exposure, including awareness on climate change and gender; (iv) strengthening horizontal and vertical linkages; and (v) enhancing access to information, market, and financial services.

Support is provided to develop community-led micro plans for increasing resilience of target households. Pilot activities include integration of beekeeping with cardamom farming; intercropping of Kiwi fruit plants, as well as legumes and vegetables with cardamom; introduction of Shitake mushroom using alder-wood; and nursery management for production of quality seedlings.

Moreover, the pilot facilitates exposure visits for peer learning and experience sharing, and documents baseline information, and “voices from the field”, in addition to bringing out a resource book and a climate resilient package of practices for cardamom value chain production.



What we have done so far

- Conducted baseline survey and cardamom value chain assessments;
- Conducted training and demonstration on resilient cardamom farming practices;
- Made provisions for irrigation by connecting water pipes;
- Produced disease-free saplings through the management of cardamom nurseries in pilot sites;
- Initiated integration of beekeeping and Kiwi farming in pilot villages to reduce risks and over-dependency on cardamom;
- Established a district level cooperative for the promotion of collective marketing and market linkages, including auction marketing of cardamom;
- Distributed cardamom saplings of Seremna and Jirmale varieties to target households on a cost sharing (50:50) basis;
- Improved quality of cardamom by using double drum dryers both for effective and efficient use of energy and time;
- Disseminated climate resilient practices and market information through community FM radio;
- Organised exposure visits to Sikkim and Kalimpong, India to share good practices on climate resilient cardamom production system and market linkages;
- Mainstreamed a gender perspective into the pilot through better planning, implementation and reviews;
- Shared Package of Practices on climate resilient cardamom value chain development with district to national level policymakers;
- Built capacity of community groups and local stakeholders on climate change adaptation through micro-planning for long-term sustainable development;
- Facilitated a visit of DADO and other district stakeholders to the demonstration sites for synergy.

Potential for outscaling/upscaling

The technologies and good practices tested under the project are expected to be outscaled and upscaled by concerned stakeholders, with whom ECDF is maintaining strategic cooperation. These can be applied in similar agro-ecological zones elsewhere in Nepal and other countries of the HKH region by national and development agencies.



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ICIMOD gratefully acknowledges the support of its core donors: the Governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

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