



Capitalisation and Sharing of Experiences on the Interaction between Forest Policies and Land-use Patterns in Asia

Linking People with Resources



Volume 1: Proceedings Summary



Partnership Platforms

1/06

About the Organisations

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The **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development** (ICIMOD) is an independent 'Mountain Learning and Knowledge Centre' serving the eight countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas – Afghanistan , Bangladesh , Bhutan , China , India , Myanmar , Nepal  and Pakistan  – and the global mountain community. Founded in 1983, ICIMOD is based in Kathmandu, Nepal, and brings together a partnership of regional member countries, partner institutions, and donors with a commitment for development action to secure the future of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. The primary objective of the Centre is to promote the development of economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystems and to improve the living standards of mountain populations.

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Volume I: Proceedings Summary



Samjhana Thapa

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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

Kathmandu, Nepal

March 2006

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Published by

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
G.P.O. Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal

Cover photo: Background: Trials on a private silvopastoral plantation in Bhutan – *P. Gyamtsho*
Inset: Members of Kabhre Community Forest User Group – *P. Gyamtsho*

ISBN-10 92-9115-003-7

ISBN-13 978-92-9115-003-8

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Printed and bound in Nepal by

Hill Side Press (P) Ltd.
Kathmandu

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The affiliation and professional positions of the various participants were those current at the time of the meeting.

foreword

Productive and sustainable use of sloping land and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) are increasingly recognised as two major options across Asia both in natural resource sectors and in cross-cutting strategies such as poverty reduction, environmental management, and rural development. Since the early 1980s, decentralisation of management has become the dominant policy paradigm in natural resource management in Asia and the basis for many donor supported CBNRM development projects, which are being implemented with varying degrees of success. A common feature of these projects and regional programmes is the decisive influence of policies on the productivity and sustainability of land use, particularly in relation to forestry and agroforestry interventions. However, there is no effective mechanism for interlinkages or exchange, and a great deal of duplication of efforts is observed whether projects have been going on for over a decade or are just starting.

Strong cooperation between countries and organisations working in CBNRM must be a priority in order to share and capitalise on the valuable experiences gained. In Asia, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is supporting projects on natural resource management in forestry, rangelands, soils and soil nutrients, water, and upland development, as well as supporting regional and international centres of excellence like the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), thus the opportunity to take forward the concept of cooperation seemed ideal. To this end, a regional workshop entitled 'Capitalisation and Sharing of Experiences on the Interaction between Forest Policies and Land Use Patterns in Asia' was chosen for the beginning of a larger knowledge management initiative within SDC East Asia Division and its partners. The workshop was held in Kathmandu Valley in Nepal in January 2005 in partnership with ICIMOD, which provided organisational, editing, and publishing support, and supported by RECOFTC and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The main aim was to improve policy and institutional frameworks for comparing and scaling up best practices in CBNRM in the region

The community forestry management policy in Nepal clearly demonstrates how understanding of the role of forests, as well as of the social and environmental goods and services that they provide, has changed along with understanding and appreciation of the roles and responsibilities that local people can shoulder if given the opportunity and appropriate supporting policies and programmes. It is a unique example of transferring the rights for natural resource use to the community, and shows how essential the creation of an enabling policy environment conducive to peoples' participation and the creation of locally owned democratic institutions are for the sustainable management of forests and other natural resources. Policies are the indispensable instruments that provide the legal framework to merge and ensure the safeguarding of local interests related to sustainable and improved livelihoods and national, regional and global interests of protection and conservation. They are also indispensable in cross-cutting 'second-generation' issues like governance, gender, equity, and access/distribution to disadvantaged groups – which are SDC's strategic development priorities.

ICIMOD, SDC, RECOFTC, and GTZ have been associated with community forestry since its early days through facilitating policy dialogue; sharing of information and knowledge among foresters, users, and advocacy groups; and support of projects and programmes across Asia. However, as the presentations from participants in this workshop have clearly shown, community forestry is but one name for a particular form of CBNRM, while other types of natural resources with other ecological and socioeconomic conditions such as rangelands, wetlands, parks, and protected areas play an equally important role for sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation in other areas. Thus the objective of this workshop was to examine how the lessons learned in community forestry could help to improve policy and institutional frameworks and be transferred to other countries in Asia that are at different stages of implementation of CBNRM concepts and have yet to operationalise their plans on a significant scale.

When the topic for the workshop was first chosen, the wide interest this workshop would create was neither expected nor anticipated. The large number of participants from a wide variety of organisations and countries is a clear demonstration of how important this area has become to a wide number of stakeholders from government agencies to research organisations and civil societies across the region.

We from SDC and ICIMOD consider ourselves fortunate in the wide interest this workshop has created and the keen participation from participants representing stakeholders from so many areas and levels of CBNRM implementation and so many countries. We feel confident that the participants were able to truly capitalise on the knowledge they shared on policies, processes, and institutional and technological innovations by adapting them to their own specific situations, as well as profiting greatly from the new partnerships and collaborations they entered into during the course of the workshop. With this in mind, we hope that the publication of these two volumes of workshop proceedings and technical papers will continue to serve as a valuable source of information and inspiration for everyone working in CBNRM.

We wish to acknowledge the valuable support and hard work of all those at ICIMOD and SDC who helped make the workshop a success. Especially, we wish to thank all partners in the Steering Committee – Dr. Kheshav Khanel from the Department of Forest, Dr. Pema Gyamtsho from ICIMOD, Mr. Mike Nurse from RECOFTC, and Dr. Renate Braun and Ms Ditya Gurung from SDC – Mr. Markus Schaefer from SDC HQ Berne, as well as our colleagues from the Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihoods Project (NACRMLP) and the District Forest Offices for their help in organising the field trips in these difficult times in Nepal. Last but not least we also wish to thank His Majesty's Government of Nepal for generously extending its hospitality in welcoming all participants, without which it would have been impossible to host this workshop.

J. Gabriel Campbell
Director General, ICIMOD

Walter Meyer
Head, East Asia Division, SDC

acknowledgements

This workshop, 'Capitalisation and Sharing of Experiences on the Interaction between Forest Policies and Land Use Patterns in Asia' was initiated and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and organised by ICIMOD in collaboration with SDC's Country Coordination Office in Kathmandu, Nepal, and the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), Bangkok, Thailand. The German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) co-sponsored the participants from its projects in the region.

The impetus to hold the workshop came from the phenomenal success recorded by the rural communities of Nepal over the last two decades. The adoption of community forestry has quite literally reversed the trends from rapid forest deforestation leading to increased environmental degradation and human poverty, prior to the 1980s, to fast regeneration and reforestation of denuded slopes leading to improvements in the environment and in the livelihoods of the people who depend on the forests. The community forest user groups (CFUGs) gave hope and showed the way towards a better future for the millions of mountain people whose lives are interlinked with the commons around them. Credit must be given to the far-sighted vision and enlightened policies of His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) that enabled the transformation of the landscape from barren and denuded slopes to rich green forests. The rural people of Nepal were enabled to own and manage a critical resource, hence improving their livelihoods. The presence of the Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation, H.E. Mr. Badri Prasad Mandal, and the Secretary of the Ministry, Mr. Ananta Raj Pandey, at the inaugural function of the workshop is a testimony to the importance that His Majesty's Government of Nepal gives to community forestry. The contribution of the many pioneers and champions of the community forestry programme in Nepal, both national and international, some of whom participated in the meeting, is gratefully acknowledged. These include Dr. Tej B.S. Mahat, currently Professor at Tribhuvan University; Mr. Paul Egger, at that time Head of the East Asia Division, SDC, Bern; Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, Director General of ICIMOD; and Mr. Mike Nurse, RECOFTC, all of whom have been associated with the development of community forestry (CF) for a substantial period of their working lives.

It would have been difficult to hold the workshop without the full support and commitment received from Dr. Keshav Raj Kanel, the Deputy Director General of Forests, HMG, who served as a member of the Steering Committee for the workshop. Thanks are also due to the colleagues from NACRLMP and the officials of the Forest Department who organised the field trip and contributed in many other ways. The SDC Office in Kathmandu provided the intellectual inputs and organisational support required through two Steering Committee Members, Dr. Renate Braun, Assistant Country Director, and Ms. Dibya Gurung, Programme Officer, Natural Resource Management. From RECOFTC, sincere thanks are due to Mr. Mike Nurse who not only served as a member of the Steering Committee but also provided the guidelines for preparation of the country papers on various natural resources.

The authors invited to deliver papers deserve special mention for the high quality of the work they produced and presented at the workshop. Deliberations during the workshop

were enriched by the participation of many high-level government officials from the region as well as by the participation of the very diverse and knowledgeable professionals and practitioners from both within and outside Nepal. Their participation was made possible only because of the generous sponsorship of their participation by SDC and GTZ projects in the region.

Finally, it would have been difficult to organise the workshop without the valuable guidance of Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, Director General; Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Programme Manager, Natural Resource Management; and the professional and intellectual support of Dr. Golam Rasul, Policy Specialist – all from ICIMOD. Likewise acknowledged are the efficient coordination and logistics and secretarial support of Ms. Samjhana Thapa, Senior Administrative Assistant, and the support of Mr. Jan Valliant, an intern from Germany in documentation. Credit is also due to Mr. Bijay Kumar Singh, Consultant Forestry Expert, who carried out the difficult task of compiling and technically editing the papers being published in these two volumes. The ICIMOD Publications Unit provided strong support in the final presentation of these proceedings in book form through Ms. Greta Rana, Consultant Editor, Dr. A. Beatrice Murray, Senior Editor, Mr. Asha K. Thaku, artist/cartographer, and Mr. Dharma Maharjan, layout and design.

Pema Gyamtsho
Workshop Coordinator

executive summary

Volumes 1 and 2

More productive and sustainable use of sloping land and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) are being recognised increasingly as major options in a range of natural resource sectors in Asia. CBNRM is also recognised as a useful mechanism in cross-cutting strategies; for example in poverty reduction initiatives, environmental management, and rural development. The workshop held in Godavari, near Kathmandu, Nepal, from 26-28 January 2005, brought together over 60 participants; they included policy-makers, project implementers, and representatives of local communities from Bhutan, China, India, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Thailand; and representatives from two donor agencies – the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)—and three international organisations – the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), and the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) – to share the lessons learned from community forestry in Nepal and to explore opportunities for using them in other countries and for other natural resource types.

The workshop included five plenary sessions and two working group sessions. Papers were presented on the regional and national status of community forestry and other initiatives in community-based management of natural resources, for example: leasehold forestry and parks and protected area management in Nepal; social forestry in Bhutan; Guzara forestry in Pakistan; wetlands in China; and rangelands in Mongolia. These papers examined and evaluated different approaches, models, and institutional arrangements used in community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in the region. While some papers focused on national-level policies and institutional arrangements for CBNRM, others covered micro-level experiences in implementing CBNRM, including its progress, process, effects, impacts, issues, and challenges.

The papers and the group deliberations acknowledged that, although community forestry programmes have made significant inroads in the region, they have not yet reached the scale desired and are confined to a few areas. At the country level, Nepal reported tremendous progress with a recorded 1.1 million ha of forests under the programme managed by some 13,600 community forest user groups (CFUG). Annually these CFUGs earn NRs 913 million which are reinvested either in forestry or in other community development projects. This has been made possible by an enabling policy and legislative support that was based on learning by doing and linking policy development to actual experiences from the field. It was also highlighted that the CFUGs have become robust institutions and, even in the present conflict situation in the country, they are still functional and serving as a platform for socioeconomic development at the grassroots' level. However, the current conflict has created new challenges for the CFUGs and their autonomy has been threatened by both the conflicting parties. The community forestry programme is now also facing second generation issues such as sustainability of interventions from various projects, governance, and livelihoods. There was tacit acknowledgement that the disadvantaged groups within the CFUGs have not benefited enough from the programme.

The leasehold forestry programme in Nepal was seen as an avenue for addressing the needs of the poor and marginalised groups through targeted allocation of barren

forestland on long-term lease to these groups and through assisting them to grow multiple-use trees and fodder plants to support their livelihoods. The programme is still young, but early indications were reported to be very positive, although challenges remain, like the limitations to the numbers involved and long-term sustainability. There is now a growing recognition of the use of leasehold forestry as a strategy to mitigate poverty in remote mountain areas. Similar results were reported by the social forestry programme in Bhutan from the pilot sites where, contrary to popular concerns that the communities may over-harvest trees, it was found that, when the forests were allotted to them, communities were more conservative about using the trees than they were when the forests were under state control.

The paper from Pakistan on Guzara forestry showed that although enlightened policies on forest tenure and use rights were formulated, they were not implemented effectively in the field due to inherent problems such as lack of institutional capacity, tenure overlaps, and sociopolitical conflict of interests. Nepal's experiences in managing parks and protected areas, as well as China's experience in conserving wetlands, have demonstrated that conservation without the participation of local people has little chance of success. Both highlighted that indiscriminate investments in tourism and other economic sectors not only jeopardises the survival of important flora and fauna but also the livelihoods of local people. Mongolia's case study on rangeland management emphasised the need to promote collaborative management in the use of natural resources; in the last decade the country's vast rangelands have suffered rapid desertification due to a 'free for all' system of use, following breakdown of the collective system that existed under the socialist regime prior to the 1990s.

The workshop recommended that the capacity of national agencies dealing with forests and other natural resources for policy analysis and advocacy should be strengthened and that periodic reviews of laws and policies should be undertaken to identify gaps, limitations, ambiguities, and inconsistencies. The workshop proposed that policy and institutional barriers to marketing of community forest products and affecting fair sharing of benefits needed to be identified and removed. The workshop also strongly recommended that policy development should be based on research and lessons learned from pilot practices in the field, and that the management of a particular resource should be linked to wider concerns of socioeconomic development and the ecology. The need to maintain flexibility in policies and laws to allow room for innovations at the community level was identified as a key ingredient for success. The workshop also recommended that networks of practitioners should be established or strengthened to facilitate exchange of information and experiences at various levels – local, national, and regional – and also called for increased collaboration among international research and development agencies such as ICIMOD, RECOFTC, and CIFOR and donors such as SDC and GTZ.

The proceedings and related materials from the workshop are presented here in two volumes. Volume I contains the rationale and objectives of the workshop; the summaries of the presentations and working group discussions; and the outcome of the workshop. This volume is intended for those who are interested in obtaining a quick picture of the status of community forestry and other community-based resources and what the workshop achieved in terms of facilitating useful dialogue. In Volume II, selected full papers on the various topics are presented so that detailed information on various aspects of community forestry, from policies to practices and challenges as well as opportunities for exchange of knowledge with other related land-use systems in the region, can be made available to all who have a stake in this exciting movement – community-based natural resource management.

acronyms and abbreviations

CBNRM	community-based natural resource management
CF	community forestry/forest
CFMG	community forest management group
CFUG	community forest user group
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal
FUG	forest user group
GF	Guzara forest
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JFM	joint forest management
NGO	non-government organisation
NTFP	non-timber forest product
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation

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