

# Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, Nepal

Nepal's Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management (DSCWM) was established in 1974 as a department of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation with the mandate to develop the national capacity for watershed management. Until 1974, soil conservation and watershed management activities were scattered throughout various divisions of the Department of Forests and Department of Agriculture: land rehabilitation activities, such as reforestation, gully plugging, and slope stabilisation, were carried out experimentally by the Forest Department in degraded forests, and the Department of Agriculture applied soil and water conservation techniques to agricultural lands.

Many of Nepal's watersheds are in a state of physical and biological deterioration resulting from overexploitation of watershed resources by their inhabitants. Restoration and improvement of watersheds are essential for the betterment of the national economy and the environment, and DSCWM aims to contribute to meeting people's basic needs for forest and food products by improving the productivity of land through the conservation and management of watershed resources. It assists in maintaining ecological balance by reducing pressure from hazards such as floods and landslides.

To date, the DSCWM has 81 professional, 185 mid-level technical, and 266 administrative staff working in



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the central and district offices and channels services through 45 permanent and 10 temporary district offices. The Department has trained numerous watershed users and community development groups in activity planning and implementation. It has carried out soil erosion studies on different land uses and sedimentation surveys of the major lakes and reservoirs in Nepal. Systematic guidelines for prioritisation of watersheds, participatory planning and implementation, technical guidelines for survey design of soil conservation activities, and bioengineering techniques are in place. DSCWM has collaborated with ICIMOD since its inception, particularly in carrying out soil loss and erosion studies and implementing soil conservation and watershed management activities in the Jhikhu Khola and Yarsha Khola watersheds.

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Lots of new features and a new layout. Please send us your feedback and ideas!