A Review of Monitoring Systems and Practices in Community Forestry at Local Level

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Executive Summary

This report reviews the monitoring systems of various stakeholders involved in local level forest management in Nepal. The purpose of this review is to assess the current status of monitoring, identify and document lessons learnt, and explore gaps and opportunities for possible interventions.

The study looked mainly at two aspects of existing monitoring systems and practices: a) self-monitoring practices of forest user groups (FUGs), and b) collaborative monitoring practices between FUGs and four different categories of stakeholders - Government, donor field projects, I/NGOs and civil society. A review of concepts related to participatory monitoring is made based on the literature, and a conceptual framework has been proposed for the review of monitoring practices in the context of community forestry in Nepal. Key elements used in the analysis include a) meanings and perceptions of monitoring, b) purpose, c) focus and scale, d) approach, processes and tools, d) contributions to adaptive management.

A total of 15 cases from among FUGs as well as their different types of collaborators are analyzed. The cases represent different levels of success and failures, including some innovations in various aspects, under different conditions. Some experimented approaches and methods highlighted by concerned stakeholders during the discussions have also been captured. Emphasis has been given on official monitoring systems of local level forest management, although some informal processes have also been observed. A synthesis of findings on both FUG self-monitoring and collaborative monitoring is made, followed by lessons that can be replicated or used as a basis for further innovations. The emphasis of analysis is on generating lessons from individual cases rather than making comparative analysis.

Data for the study were collected mainly through interactive meetings and discussions, review of documents, and researcher's observation through the period of the study.

In view of widespread confusion and ambiguities about the meaning of the term monitoring, the term has been used to describe the processes of review, reflection and learning which in the context of community forestry has a potential to enhance the effectiveness of the local level forest management. This is possible through a process of adaptive management that relies heavily on the process of monitoring.

The study concluded that monitoring has been in practice at both FUG as well as the supporting institutions levels, although the meanings, purpose, focus and approach vary significantly. All types of stakeholder groups have similar conception that monitoring is the tool or means of controlling the people and processes rather facilitating learning, and this is particularly so with more formal and bureaucratic organizations.

While there are informal processes and forms of FUG self-monitoring, collaborative stakeholders hardly see a scope of self-monitoring integrated with strategic planning within them. Major part of innovations and practices in collaborative monitoring is initiated by bilateral forestry projects, and yet, it was found out that projects still consider monitoring as a discrete part of project cycle, and fail to capitalize on the opportunities of learning through an in-built process of testing assumptions, and reflecting upon outcomes and processes.

Despite having common working spaces and agendas, institutions have limited established linkages with each other to facilitate two-way flow of information. Different institutions, particularly donor field projects have initiated various studies and actions, mainly at pilot scale but there are few examples of scaling up over space and time. There is very limited documentation of monitoring experiences because of limited commitment to monitoring at professional, and organizational levels.

The study cases and analysis describe these issues in specific contexts and conditions, and hence generate some lessons, which form the basis for identifying future directions. There is a need to recognize different types of information needs across different types of institutions involved in community forestry and at various layers within them, as well as a mechanism to facilitate communication, cross-learning and interactive reflections. The main areas of improving the overall monitoring system of community forestry in Nepal are to strengthen strategic planning and self-monitoring at all levels including FUG, and then facilitating participatory/collaborative monitoring systems between institutions, and levels within them. A precondition for this is that all have to understand monitoring as a way of learning, and this requires debates and deliberations among the stakeholders.

Acronyms

ANSAB	Asia Network for Sustainable Bioresources
CF	Community Forest
CHFDP	Churia Hill Forest Development Programme
CPFD	Community and Private Forestry Division of Department of Forest
DDC	District Development Committee
DFO	District Forrest Office(r)
DoF	Department of Forest
EFEA	Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal
ForestAction	Forest Resources Studies and Action Team, Nepal
FUGs	Community Forest User Groups
MFSC	Ministry of Forests & Soil Conservation
NACRMP	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project
LFP	Livelihood & Forestry Programme
NARMSAP	Natural Resource Management Support & Assistance Programme
NSCFP	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project
RP	Range Post
SEACOW	School of Education, Agriculture and Community Works
TECOFAT	Terai Community Forest Action Team
VDC	Village Development Committee
WATCH	Women Action Together for Change

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.Background

Community Forestry in Nepal is growing quickly, and generating a wealth of experiences and (sometimes controversial) outcomes. In the last two decades, 11 000 community forest user groups (FUGs) have been formed throughout the country. However, most work to date in community forestry has concentrated on the formation of FUGs and forest hand-over, and there is a lack of much needed post-formation technical and institutional support. Some recent studies have indicated that the physical condition of many community forests has improved, but there are many questions regarding whether or not the local forest stakeholders have actually benefited from the forest management interventions. In some cases, there are clear indications of disadvantaged forest stakeholders such as the resource poor farmers whose livelihoods is dependent on forests are loosing in the process of community forestry interventions.

Community forestry, in its goal to make sustainable and equitable use of community forests, involves a number of interrelated, often complex activities. These include, for example: defining users and forest boundaries; forming user groups; undertaking informed negotiations of roles and responsibilities among forest stakeholders within and outside the CFUG; developing management plans; implementing the designated activities; and, distributing the benefits. Effectively carrying out these activities depends on involved forest stakeholders having an adequate understanding of the dynamic forest context, the local issues, and the interests of different stakeholders, particularly of the people dependent on such resources for livelihoods. On-going CF management decisions need to take into account a range of ever-changing information, including the effects of management activities on forest condition, on the degree of fulfillment of forest products requirements of the FUG members livelihoods of the FUG members, and other stakeholders, and on equity in processes and outcomes. In order to make those decisions, forest stakeholders must be able to make efficient use of their information and knowledge, and apply it to generate improvements in their management.

Monitoring systems are an increasingly popular means of doing so. Monitoring systems provide feedback to institutions on their own progress and contexts, both biophysical and social, so that they may effectively learn from their experiences and more rapidly and effectively adapt to change. They are also increasingly considered as potentially important tools for 'closing the information gaps' *between* institutions such as between DFOs or CF projects and FUGs, by providing a framework for communication.

In the last few years in Nepal, there have been a number of significant CF monitoring initiatives – from self monitoring by FUGs, to DFO's 'health checks' of FUGs and other ministry initiatives, to projects' monitoring of FUGs – but very few lessons about these distinct experiences have been very rapidly or effectively communicated across institutions. Perhaps as a result, the opportunities to reduce overlaps between monitoring initiatives (and thus reduce costs), or to develop synergies between monitoring systems, and/or to improve the distinct systems have not been successfully explored in many cases.

In view of the above, at this point in time there is a need for critical reflection on past and current monitoring experiences in CF in Nepal. This Monitoring Review is designed to address this need by

helping to generate a better understanding of the potential contribution and limitations of various FUG self-monitoring and collaborative monitoring (i.e., with DFOs, projects or other institutions) initiatives, the potential linkages between the various monitoring initiatives, and the various strategies, methods and tools employed by the various monitoring approaches.

In particular, the study will undertake a detailed assessment of the current and past approaches to monitoring by several institutions such as various FUGs, DFOs, FECOFUN, NGOs, and projects, including their goals for the monitoring, the CF contexts, their chosen methods and tools for developing and applying monitoring systems, the 'indicators' used, and the outcomes of their initiatives on institutions, livelihoods and forests. The information generated by the Monitoring Review is intended to be useful to FUGs, forestry projects, NGOs, FECOFUN and Forest Department in their efforts to monitor and evaluate the processes and outcomes of community forestry interventions (either independently or together), so that they may continue to adapt and improve their actions.

The study is part of the larger research program on Adaptive Collaborative Management of Forest (ACM), which is being conducted by Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in collaboration with a number of institutions in 14 countries around world. This part of the study is designed to explore the systems and practices of FUG self monitoring and collaborative monitoring with support institutions. The study assumes that different institutions have pioneered different types of community forestry monitoring systems with varying degrees of success and failures, which together offer a great potential for learning and improvement with respect to adaptive collaborative management of forests.

The review focuses on two broad categories of local level community forestry monitoring: a) FUG self-monitoring, b) collaborative monitoring between FUGs and other key stakeholders. An analysis of purpose, focus, approach, process, methods, tools is given with examples. Based on this, specific and broad lessons are drawn for wider application and identifying future interventions.

2.Research Questions

This study analyses the question of under which CF and institutional contexts, if any, local level monitoring CF systems are viable tools for improving forest management processes, decisions, and outcomes. In particular, the study focuses on the following interrelated themes and related questions:

A. Comparative Assessment of *FUG self-monitoring systems* (i.e., carried out primarily by and for the FUG)

- What *forms* of self-monitoring system exist, and with *what purpose, processes, and tools*?
- How are these monitoring systems initiated, sustained, and adapted over time, and by whom?
- How do they link with the other FUG management processes, such as FUG Management Plans? How do they influence the decisions (or decision-making process) of the FUG?
- Do they link with any outside institutions or processes? How, why and with what effect? (Including, does it in any way feed into a policy making process?)
- What are the contributions and limitations (strengths and weaknesses) of such systems in terms of contribution to FUG goals? Including, what contribution does the monitoring system make, if

any, to learning and improvement by the FUG? What influence does it have, if any, on equity, social capital, and livelihoods in the FUG?
- What kinds of costs and benefits are associated with the monitoring systems, and who within the FUG bears the costs and reaps the benefits?
- What 'indicators' are used (and why), and how is the information collected, assessed, and used?
- What lessons have they already generated, or can be learned now, from each monitoring initiative, including about processes and tools?

B. Collaborative and/or external monitoring at local level (i.e., carried out either jointly by an external institution and the FUG for mutual benefit, or primarily by and for an external institution)

- What institutions besides FUGs have initiated monitoring of local level forest management, and why? What are their monitoring interests – stated and unstated?
- What form of monitoring is it, and what processes and tools are used?
- What information do they seek and by whom and how is it used (intended and actual)?
- How does it influence the decisions (or the decision-making process) of the institution? (In the case of DoF, does the monitoring inform the policy making process, and if so, how?)
- What is the linkage to the FUG management (including monitoring) processes, if any?
- Who is involved in the decisions about the monitoring?
- What are the contributions and limitations (strengths and weaknesses) of such systems in terms of contribution to the institution's goals? Including, what contribution does the monitoring system make, if any, to learning and improvement by the institution? What influence does it have, if any, on the FUG processes, or on equity, social capital, and livelihoods in the FUG?
- What kinds of costs and benefits are associated with the monitoring systems, and who bears those costs and benefits?
- What 'indicators' are used and why?
- How is the information collected, assessed and used?
- What lessons have they already generated, or can be learned now, from each monitoring initiative, including about processes and tools?

C. Comparative Analysis of various self, collaborative and external monitoring of FUGs:
- What is common and what is divergent, (and why, and with what effect) in terms of:
  - Goals (and uses of information)
  - Processes and tools
  - Indicators
  - Costs and benefits (and allocation of costs and benefits)
  - Contributions to decision-making, institutional learning and improvements
  - Influence on intra and inter-institutional relations

D. Lessons Generated about the contributions of monitoring systems in effective forest management and local livelihoods
- What contributions, if any, does monitoring by FUGs, and/or other institutions make to effective forest management decisions and processes (by the FUGs and the other involved institutions, including policy makers) and to local livelihoods? Under what conditions?

E. Lessons Generated about Replicable Elements of Monitoring Systems and Processes
- What lessons can be derived about the utility of the various forms of monitoring systems for various goals, and institutions, and CF contexts?

- Are there currently redundancies in monitoring systems of different stakeholders? Are there areas in which monitoring systems should be synthesized (combined) for greater effect? How?
- What processes and tools are useful in various contexts? For What? How? And for, and by whom?
- What indicators, if any, appear commonly useful, and what ones divergent across a range of CF contexts and monitoring goals?

3. Methodology

RESEARCH TEAM

Forest Resources Studies and Action Team, Nepal (ForestAction) has carried out this review work. Krishna Paudel led the overall research process, and Hemant Ojha also contributed in conceptualization and data analysis. Basundhara Bhattarai and Hari Neupane also contributed in generating information for the study. Comments from Cynthia McDougall were crucial in shaping the scope and content of the study.

DATA COLLECTION

Specific research activities conducted are as follows:

Literature review: Reviewed the relevant documents on monitoring systems adopted at the local level community forests management both in Nepal and elsewhere.

Consultation meetings: Interactive discussions were made with the representatives of key stakeholders along with document reviews of the respective stakeholders (Forest Department, field projects, Institute of Forest and NGOs) involved in Nepal's forest sector management, especially community forestry.

The study team interacted with the key personnel, group members and heads of the institutions-monitoring sections c) a series of informal meetings and discussions, telephone calls, email exchanges with concerned individuals were also organized.

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Collected data /cases have been analyzed mostly using qualitative parameters with reference to specific contexts. Information was organized by individual cases of each stakeholder group, including FUG sites in the Middle Hills region.

Informal discussions with the different concerned people were held – particularly the ACM teams in Nepal and abroad. A formal dissemination workshop is under consideration to be organized to share finding and receive feedback of the review and other CIFOR research works.

Since the practices and systems are highly variable among the institutions, we have not focussed on comparative analysis, but an attempt is made in making synthesis exploring the range and patterns of experiences, along with the institutional and other relevant contexts.

II. PUTTING MONITORING INTO CONTEXTS

Three elements are considered relevant that define the context of monitoring: a) stakeholders, b) institutions, and c) policy. Stakeholders include both resource users as well as policy shapers and service providers, who undertake or facilitate forest management. Each of these stakeholders operates within specific institutions that include government, business groups, local community, donors, and civil society. Policy includes provisions of national plans, legislation, by-laws, directives as well as the overall environment in which such policies are prepared and implemented. A brief description of the three elements as a context of local level monitoring is presented below.

1 Stakeholders

Forest users depend on forest for their livelihoods, and therefore may be considered as the principal stakeholders. They are not a homogeneous group, but represent a diversity of caste, class, and gender groups who have varying interests, dependencies and expectation from forest management (see Table 1).

Recognition of their rights as resource users through formal and informal policies as well as institutions enable them to be engaged in the process of forest management for livelihoods. These groups are in constant need for monitoring the FUG collective action processes as the community level to identify scope for pushing their agendas and interests through the group level decisions.

Government has remained a key stakeholder in terms of shaping forest management through policies, providing services and sometimes, sharing resources as royalties or taxes. There are two systems of governance in Nepal: a) central governance, b) local governance (at district, village and town levels). Whilst central government have a balanced

Table 1 Internal Stakeholder within FUG

Volunteer / informal groups / clubs	**Caste**
Women group	Brahmin – Chhetri
Women saving group	Middle caste
Mothers group	Dallits
Male group	**Occupational group**
Fathers group	Subsistence Farmers
Men saving group	Cash crop cultivators/farmers
Youth group	Commercial Livestock holders
Rodi groups	Businessmen
Children groups	Wage labour
	Service holder
People taking FUG institutional roles	**People using alternative technologies related to energy**
Forest Watcher	Biogas
Office secretary	Peltric set
Accountant	Solar
Toli leader	**People involved in forest farming individually or in group**
Group commander	Group/Farmers field school
Administrative sub committee	Group/NTFP cultivation
Audit committee	Group/Naspati-Mayel grafting
Vice chairman	Individual/Plot farmer
Enterprises/ co-operatives	**Marginalized people's groups who depend on selling forest products**
Allo processing-committee	Stone collectors
Leaf plate	Fire wood seller
Grain mills	NTFPs collectors
Milk co-operatives	Excluded groups
Multi product enterprises	Excluded/ no use right
Settlements with varying distance from forests	Excluded/ with use right
	Persons interested to be users

interests of livelihoods, conservation and economic development at larger societal level, local bodies (DDCs, VDCs) are more interested in the social development (contribution) from forestry than forest management per se.

Private sector agencies in Nepal are not so strong considering the forestry sector, but in the case of NTFP, they are emerging and expanding in number and influence. These have limited interests in social aspects of community forest but they are however keen to know the status of commercially valuable natural resources. They are therefore interested in monitoring the changes in forestry sector particularly the community forest management because these institutions have to survive on benefits from forests resources.

There has been a strong presence of donors and their field projects who have been engaged in service delivery, facilitating policy development and funding research activities. In the context of wide spread realization of the limited impact such donors' project, impact as well as process monitoring are increasingly high in project management agendas.

Recently, there has been a strong civil force in forestry sector that comprises of networks of forest users, CBOs, and I/NGOs who have influenced the process of devolution, technical service delivery and community empowerment. Despite limited formal spaces offered by the state policy framework, particularly in the context of forest management, these groups have demonstrated their capacity to add value in forest management. They are in constant need of getting updated on the grassroots situations and processes, as well as the policy processes going on at micro and macro levels.

Table 1 Stakeholders and their roles in forest management

Groups of Stakeholders	Potential Roles		
	Enabling	**Delivery**	**Utilizing**
Government agencies (MFSC, DoF, DFOs and Illaka & Range posts)	Policy making Setting and regulating legal frameworks Information and resource channelling	Extension of networks and strengthening Technical support Developing Human Resource Development (HRD) and other capitals	Undertaking sectoral integration process
Multinationals, bilateral agencies & their field projects DANIDA, DFID, SDC, GTZ, USAID, FAO, UNDP, World Bank)	Information an resource channeling Policy advocacy	Technical support Support to Develop HRD and other capitals	Extension of the processes and learning
I/NGOs (Action Aid-Nepal, CARE, UMN, WATCH, ForestAction, FECOFUN, TECOFAT, and other local NGOs)	Information and resource channeling Policy advocacy Facilitating processes and capacity building	Technical support Support to Develop HRD and other capitals	Extension of the processes and learning
Local government (VDCs, DDCs)	Coordination, local policy	Mediation of conflicts, resource sharing (From VDC to FUG)	Resource sharing (from FUG to VDC)
NGOs, CBOs, VDCs, users groups	Advocacy group formation Policy advocacy and influences Conflict resolution Capacity building	Technical support	Awareness raising Strengthening community based institution and organizations
Research (Institute of Forestry, Department of Forest Research and Survey, Kathmandu University, Tribhuvan University, regional and international research institutions)	Publicizing Capacity building	Updating information	Public awareness Increase level of knowledge systems

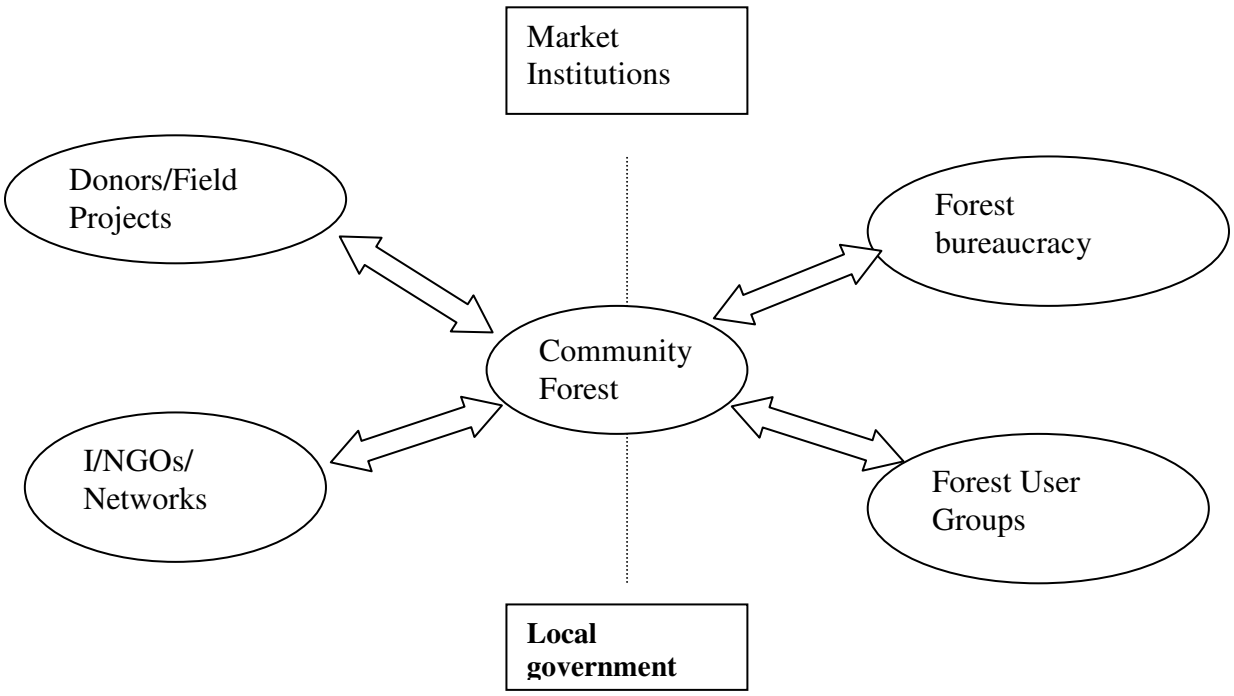
All these stakeholders have different pathways and time scale of evolution historically, and have gained different levels of power, legitimacy, and capacities in getting involved into the community forestry system. All this determine the type, scale and frequency of monitoring systems they have or would like to have in respect of community forestry.

2 Institutions

Institutions are here used to include organizations, social rules and relationships that affect stakeholders' behavior with respect to forest management through incentives, sanctions, and other means. So it is not the interests of stakeholders in isolation that matters but also the institutions that modify their responses to forest management is important to be considered as a context of monitoring.

Five principle categories of institutions include a) forest bureaucracy, b) donor projects, c) community intuitions including the FUGs, d) Local government, e) I/NGOs and FUG networks. This indicates that these key institutions give birth to or regulate different sets of stakeholders in forest management mentioned earlier.

Figure 1 Principle groups of institutions in forest management



The structure of MFSC is huge in terms of manpower, spaces & resources, whose role is changing over time: from conservation to service provider and then to facilitator of community forestry but the orientation, capacity & facilitating skills are still limited.

Forest bureaucracy comprise of Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC) and its five constituent Departments, 6 divisions, including some semi-independent committees and para-statals. Among these the Department of Forest (DOF) is the oldest institution in forestry, with over 3 decades of its existence. The department is the principle agency that implements as well as initiates policy development processes. The Department has district forest offices in all the districts (except one), which on an average consists of about 2-3 forest officers, a dozen forest rangers and 3-5 forest guards. The main responsibility of this ministry and its subsequent layer is to formulate, execute and monitor government's forest policy coordinating other agencies and users.

Community institutions have long mediated the interaction of local people and forests, particularly in the hills. The agriculture-based livelihood system is inseparably linked with forests ecosystems, and the traditional institutions have enabled the management of forests. However, the forms and efficiency of such institutions have been affected by the relative presence or dominance of forest bureaucracy and state forest policies, and very recently influenced by changes in larger social contexts.

Following the enforcement of the forest act 1993 and 1995 rules, that followed the spirit of the Mater Plan for the Forestry sector in Nepal, users' groups have been formally recognized as

independent and perpetually self-governed institutions with rights to use and management the given forest area. FUGs consist of various Toles or hamlets, which usually coincide with traditionally shaped groups. Since the communities consist typically of members from different types of caste, class, ethnicity and gender, all members do not have equal access to decision-making and benefit sharing from forests. As a result, power elites have dominated the community institutions as their priorities set the directions of the institutions that mostly go against the interests of the poor, women and marginalized groups.

DDCs and VDCs are increasingly influential local players in development, following the enforcement of Local Self-Governance Act 1998. . These are autonomous local Government units lead by periodically elected local political leaders. DDCs councils have been given a mandate to coordinate and facilitate overall district development process, and annual programs and budgets of central Government line agencies need to be endorsed by the council. The districts are divided into a couple of dozens VDCs to over hundred. VDCs represent village level local government units, and together constitute the DDC councils.

In addition to multi-national donors such as World Bank, FAO, and Asian Development Bank, there are 6 bilateral donor field projects that are currently involved in forestry sector development. CHFDP (GTZ), LFP (DFID), NACRMP (AUSAID), NSCFP (SDC), NARMSAP (DENNIDA), EFEA (USAID) are the donor field projects directly involved in the promotion community forestry from field to national levels. They assist DFOs in FUG formation and post formation support. They use significant portion of their money in reforming government's forestry sector, including the strengthening the human capacity. All these are area based field projects working at a number of districts. Although they are very specific to forestry sector development, some of them have started to address a broad range of livelihoods issues.

Civil society and its networks have a history of less than a decade. Despite rapid proliferation of NGOs in various aspects of development, there are very few that work exclusively in forestry sector, or in particular, community forestry. However as the scope of community forestry expanded gradually from conservation to livelihoods, with consequent shift of FUG priorities to overall community development, there has been an increase in the interests and involvement of NGOs in this sector. In 1997, a national level workshop was held to explore the role of NGOs in community forestry and rural development, which provided a significant impetus to the involvement of NGOs in participatory forest management. The third national community forestry workshop that brought together representatives of government and non-government organizations as well various other groups developed a common vision of community forestry, and this provided a forum for these stakeholders to identify and negotiate spaces and roles for each of these groups, including the NGOs.

At least three streams of I/NGOs are discernible when viewed through their approach and political positioning. A stream of I/NGOs, in alliance with FECOFUN, have emerged as a strong group advocating for the rights of local forest users, and over the past few years, they have mobilized dozens of local groups and people, particularly in the Teari, to resist some of the policy moves of government, that were decided with limited consultation of the local institutions and non-government stakeholders.

The second stream could be identified as close allies of government, focusing mainly on technical aspects such as inventory, biodiversity and other areas. They take resource management largely as a technical and apolitical process. They represent large international organizations such as WWF,

IUCN or small grassroots NGOs funded by government or bilateral projects. The third stream represents somewhat a mid way between the two, and while they recognize that forest management is as much political as technical process.

Institution of private service providers in forestry sector is rather weak, and this indicates very limited private interests in the community forestry. The private, business sector in forestry (market system of forest resources) is mostly timber based, and recently, however, the markets of the NTFPs and non-consumptive goods of forest are also growing fast, leading to groups of NTFP traders, tourism operators, and others. Expansion of community forestry in areas where high value NTFPs or tourist destinations exist have gradually been within the jurisdiction of forest users' groups, which means that the private traders are in need to know this aspect as part of their business environment analysis.

The relationship among the institutions is also a critical intersecting element shaping the context of monitoring. The constitutions and operational plans of FUGs are approved by DFOs, and the formats are mandatory requirements to furnish annual report and other required information to the DFOs. And since most of the FUGs are closely supported from DFO or range post, the relationship between the two on based on horizontal linkages – both the perceptions of forest officials and the FUG members reinforce that there exist a patron client relationship between the two (Malla, 2001).

3 Policy

There are number of policies, legal instruments and mandatory documents that define the policy and institutional framework in the forestry sector. The main include National Conservation Strategy 1988 (NCS), the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector 1989 (MPFS), the Nepal Environmental Policy and Action Plan 1993 (NEPAP), the Agriculture Perspective Plan 1995 (APP), five-year periodic plan (currently the 9th plan is running until 2002), the Nepal Bio-diversity Action Plan, forthcoming (NBAP), the Forest Act 1993, the Forest Rules 1995, Operational Guidelines 1995 (now under revision process), FUG's constitution and the groups' Operational Plan.

Forest resource related policies, acts, legislation, directives, plans, orders and circulars include:

FOREST POLICY: MPFS, 1988

Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS), 1988 has recognized Community Forest as main approach to manage the forest resources of Nepal, though in implementation its essence has been weakly translated into practice. Master plan has put forwarded the development imperatives of the forestry sector as to fulfil the basic needs of the people for forest products, sustainable forest management, participation of people in decision making and benefit sharing and socio economic development of the people (MPFS, 1988). The policy document has also recognized the participation of people in managing their resources around their locality and also emphasized the principle of decentralization to be implemented in community forestry programme. Policy also favors the poor and marginalized people by explaining that the people below the poverty line, small farmers and entrepreneurs dependent on forest resource will manage the surplus forest area (after the fulfilling the needs of the local people) on the basis of priority (MPFS, 1988).

FOREST ACT 1993

The Forest Act of 1993 legitimises, actively promotes and recognizes Community Forestry Users Groups as an autonomous institution. Key implications of these policy documents for local level monitoring indicate that: forest users have great scope to adapt forest management practices through constant learning, although they have to work in close coordination with DFOs; there is increasing level of biodiversity and environmental concerns, for which stakeholders are increasingly asked, encouraged and provided incentives to monitor and assess broader environmental consequences of local level forest management actions; stakeholders are under increasing pressure to comply with multiple policies and legislations often involving collaboration among multiple agencies. However, in recent amendment, including the proposed, the forest bureaucracy seems stepping back - curtailing some of the rights of users and their institutions. Considering the existing, recently changed and proposed provisions in the legislation, the government will continue to retain ownership on forest land as well as certain aspects of community forest management.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE ACT 1998

Government has enacted local governance act and regulation to implement the principle of decentralization in the country. This act has also given rights to Village Development Committee (VDC) and District Development Committee (DDC) to manage local natural resources. Article 68 of local governance act has defined forest as a property of VDC. Article 60 (Cha) has encouraged VDC to control illegal collection of forest products that the fine and penalties charged would be collected in Village Committee Fund. Similarly, VDC can make income from the forest area within the VDC by selling the dry timber, fuel wood, twigs, roots, grass and thatch etc (Article 58). In addition to this, (Article 28, Ja) has considered VDC responsibility to develop and implement the programme on the development of forest plant, bio-diversity and to conserve the soil erosion.

Though this act has explained the rights and responsibility of VDC and DDC on the natural resource management, it is silent about the existing community forestry user groups, as they have been already taking those rights and responsibility on forest resource management using the rights given by act. The users of the forest resource are not separate part of the VDC, DDC users. It is yet to be seen how local government marries with the existing forest user organization in their development programs.

4.Other issues

The present context of forest management is very much influenced by concerns of sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. In promotion the livelihoods new approaches such as Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) have been increasingly recognized. These approaches have to some extent changed the approaches and strategies of development organizations, and accordingly the kind of information they want to generate through monitoring.

Although the issue of devolution is highly emphasized by policy provision, in effect none of the policy documents is properly implemented, due primarily to the poor governance mechanisms. This has sometimes confused stakeholders, destabilized the incentives structure and institutions. This is particularly true in the case of forest management in the Terai.

Forest users have been granted rights to manage the forests that have been handed over but these are mostly confined to operational choice decisions (forest operations), and rarely the groups enjoy collective choice decisions without approval of district forest office (Varugheese 2001). This sets important limits and scope of self-monitoring within FUGs.

Government, although a most prominent stakeholder to collaborate with FUGs in forest management, has dilemma as regards it relationship with FUGs – whether to trust or control. This has corresponding confusing effects on the scope of management at both FUG and government levels.

III. CONCEPTUAL ISSUES AND FRAMEWORK

1. Review of theories, concepts and knowledge

A. MEANINGS OF MONITROING

Monitoring has different meanings to different people (Abbot and Guijt, 1998). The term has been used extensively in the discourses and practices of development over the past 3 decades or so. Yet there is no single, coherent, conceptual definition of participatory monitoring and evaluation (Abbot and Guijt 1997 quoted in Estrella and Gaventa, 19998: 3).

Two different meanings are discernible that have slightly evolved over time: a) control oriented monitoring, and b) learning oriented monitoring.

Monitoring has been an integral element of management within bureaucracy historically, that is used primarily as a tool of punishment (Pokharel and Grosen, 2000). This connotation of monitoring still prevalent within many traditional organizations, including some newly evolved organization such as NGOs.

Oxford dictionary defines monitoring as a process of maintaining regular surveillance. Spelberg (1991) defines it as a systematic measurement of variables and process over time. Hobleyand Shields (1998) consider monitoring as a process of assessing the difference between plans and actual results. Davis Case (1990) defines it as a systematic recording and periodic analysis of information. All these definitions indicate a common element of review of action for the purpose of improvement, primarily at the level at which some plans are made. This idea has influenced monitoring systems and practices of development projects, which extract information for contributing to the project level decision-making.

The more recently innovated idea of monitoring involves an emphasis on internal learning of people and institutions. Monitoring is a key component of adaptive management, which is fundamentally a way of incorporating reflections into actions learned through previous actions (Salafsky 1998). This is based on the premise that what we plan to achieve through some actions is actually an assumption regarding the relationship among a complex set of factors and variables, and there is a great scope of learning if such assumptions are made explicit and tested during the course of actions.

Monitoring is an inherent habit of human beings, and this tenet remains valid at individual, group or institutional levels. Alexandra et al (1996) quoted in Abbot and Guijt (1998):

"We all monitor the environment. We look, feel, smell and listen. These are basic survival skills, which we use while driving, shopping, farming or whatsoever. Knowledge is increased by recording observations and noticing patterns, and by organizing, analyzing and collating information derived from dispersed and diverse observations. It happens in families, tribes and international scientific endeavours; it happens in small specialist disciplines and in large organized networks. Repeated observations of environmental

conditions over time can help us understand the key causes of environmental changes and provide early warning of environmental problems. Monitoring is a basis to human understanding and necessary if we are to improve our environmental management."

B. PURPOSES OF MONITORING

There are three reasons for growing importance of monitoring: a) need to enhance internal learning of organizations, b) demonstrate external accountability, c) global call of more information and knowledge about the environment (Guijt 1998).

(Guijt 1998) contends that as the task of creating sustainable agriculture has social, institutional and policy related aspects, several objectives can and in many cases should be monitored simultaneously. This idea holds true to forest management as well, where both livelihoods and forest ecosystem form the key elements of monitoring. The depth, breadth, form and frequency of information needed, however, may vary greatly among the stakeholders, depending on their interests and roles.

There are many functions that monitoring can perform: it can provide information on the efficiency, relevance, sustainability, impact, effectiveness etc. of efforts. Sharing insights on what worked and what did not is an important way of improving the system (Guijt 1998). Successful project plan includes conceptual model, management plan and monitoring plan together (Morgoluis and Salafsky, 1998 cited in Salafsky 1999).

Monitoring is most effective as a self-evaluation that is used to improve management plan (Morgoluis and Salafsky,1998).

Estrella and Gaventa (1998) identify 5 different purposes of monitoring: impact assessment, project management and planning, organizational and strengthening and institutional learning, understanding and negotiating stakeholder perspectives, and public accountability.

An emphasis on 'indicators', rather than 'process', may result in the development of a range of indicators; however, these indicators are less likely to be considered in actual forest management practice. It is, nevertheless, possible to arrive at a useful set of indicators for forest management, provided a right approach and process is used (ForestAction and Reading University, 2001).

C. APPROACHES

At least three approaches are identifiable: a) monitoring of others (conventional monitoring), b) participatory monitoring, and c) self-monitoring. Which are analysed in following paragraph:

Conventional monitoring

With the purposes of evaluation, assessment and keeping the program/project's predefined goals on track, the monitoring is used to collect information in a one-way direction. This conventional monitoring and evaluation approach (often non-participatory) have been typically carried out by donor and government agencies with predefined output that defines what, how and where to monitor as well as how the information derived from monitoring is used (Abbot and Guijt 1998, Marisol et.al., 2000). Their (agencies) motives for monitoring are often just to know if

beneficiaries or recipients of funds are accountable to pre-agreed goals and targets. In this sense, the monitoring has been used as a means of 'control' by state and forestry project authorities of the other stakeholders including local communities rather as a process of 'reflection to learn'.

This method is widely used among government bureaucracy and bigger institutions in Nepal. The most common tools include guidelines and formats to extract the quantitative information. In this method the informants, particularly the local communities from where most of the information is drawn are not informed about what this information is used for. Nor thee information collectors themselves know what the use of the generated information will be.

Participatory monitoring

There is a growing concern over transparent and accountable system of governance at all levels, and this is consequently leading to discussions on participatory monitoring approaches and processes. The earlier approach of monitoring by outsiders is being increasingly challenged for its inherent limitations of one-way information flow, which creates knowledge and information gaps. (Greenwood and Levin 1998, cited in Reason and Bradbury, 2001, Rahman, 1993).

Participatory monitoring and evaluation has co-evolved with participatory approaches to development. This trend is seen in all types of stakeholders including NGOs and many community based organisations, policy makers, donors, governments and development agencies (Estrella and Gaventa 1998, Ticehurst 1999).

When one institution monitors for its purpose in such a way that it also generates information useful to the participating institutions by involving the latter in deciding why and how of the process, this may be termed participatory monitoring.

Increasingly, participatory monitoring is being put forward as a dynamic approach that recognizes the multiplicity of stakeholders' roles and interests. Also, it is being considered as an integral part of innovative developmental processes to track progress, identify pitfalls and even adjust the goals in the light of changes in contexts and values to generates creativity, facilitates self-reflection, provide feedback, help and to set proper goals.

This approach can be defined as activities carried out by two or more stakeholders together. This method is becoming popular within various institutions just because of the key word 'participatory'. In practice, it is heavily misused. We should not forget that the term participatory itself does not automatically tell the whole story about the level & nature of participation which is crucial in developing a meaningful monitoring process to generate knowledge (and thus capacity for action- learning) at the local level.

In particular, the program implementers or field base institutions that value participation as a key to development uses this method. There are dozens of variations in this approach such as participatory monitoring and evaluation, participatory monitoring, evaluation and transferal (P M, E & T), participatory self-monitoring, participatory monitoring etc., which are more close to their specific 'brands' than differences in the theoretical roots.

The major limitation of these types of methods does not lie with its definition but with the methodology they are implemented. In many cases, some of the stakeholders particularly less powerful ones have very limited roles in monitoring process and outcomes.

These days, most of the agencies particularly donor field projects, I/NGOs are taking consideration on it. Stakeholders meetings, planning and sharing workshops, review works are key indications of moving into that direction.

A more empowering and politically balanced approach of monitoring could be collaborative monitoring, which involves monitoring of each other, jointly or individually, for the purpose of improving joint learning and collaboration between the institutions involved.
It is close to the participatory approach but differ with the level of recognition to each of the stakeholders as well as the methodology of participation. Some research institutions and donor field projects are piloting, testing the methodologies that promotes the stakeholders' involvement in Participatory Monitoring.

The underlying core concept of Participatory Monitoring and reflection is derived from the Participatory Action and Learning (PAL) (Orlando Fals-Borda et. al, 1993, FFMP, 2000) process with some adaptation. It is a process of learning by doing together with both the local people and outside facilitators involved in the process.

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring is basically done by and for persons and institutions engaged in making actions and decisions. These may be either assisted by other agencies or completely self-initiated. Many case studies are about externally led PM&E, and there are fewer examples of self-monitoring of community-based stakeholders.

Self-monitoring process has been a common practice at the community level. Abbot and Guijt (1998) gives examples of 'when this, then that' type of community level monitoring indicators at the community level. Despite having in-depth local knowledge about the environment, many external driven monitoring approaches exclude or ignore the informal conscious and unconscious ways in which community as resource users monitor their environment.

In summary on the basis of implications, key differences between the conventional and participatory monitoring are presented in the table below

Table 2 Comparative analysis of internally and externally oriented monitoring

Key Questions	Monitoring for learning and improvement (internal)	Monitoring for Evaluation (external)
Who	Self-initiated or at least with substantial participation of the actor	External experts, with information from local informants

What	Monitoring Criteria and indicators or other means of verifiers developed by stakeholders, activities, processes designed and implemented and followed up by participating stakeholders	Pre-agreed or projected criteria and indicators of monitoring outputs
Why	Conscious Learning and reflection Corrective actions & effective decision making,	Budget accountability, external review and impact assessment against predetermined project goal
How	Informal, using participatory tools with triangulation and pre-test	Formal Format and guideline
For whom	Whom it may concerns	Donors/Governmental agencies, project heads
When	When it is appropriate, continuous process	Project schedule (Mid term & before writing the next phase proposals or end of the phase

Despite a recent emphasis on participatory monitoring, several common pitfalls in approach have been reported. Most common are: lack of clarity about the end user, assuming local ignorance, assuming local interests, imposing indicators and methods, excessive amount of overly detailed indicators, inappropriate frequency, starting too big and detailed (Guijt 1998).

D. PROCESS, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Process, tools and techniques are the operational elements of monitoring. They are the link between concept and approach on the one hand, and the practice/application on the other.

Monitoring can be regarded as a process, in which various activities are carried out to collect and analyze information well as bring the result to the attention of decision-makers. Processes are largely dictated by the purpose, focus and approach of monitoring.

Guijt (1998) suggests a 12 step process for monitoring based on experiences in Brazil: 1) decide to start. 2) Identify participants, 3) identify expectations, 4) clarify objectives, 5) identify indicators, 6) select methods, 7) make calendars, 8) prepare methods, 9) implement calendars, 10) deal with data, 1a) document findings, and 12) use information.

In participatory approaches to monitoring, tools that generate locally useful information are used, although they vary with purpose, approach and focus of the monitoring. In conventional monitoring, more sophisticated tools may help in the collection of data in a speedy way, but they have little relevance in participatory monitoring. In self-monitoring, particularly at the community level, pictorial, visual and simple tools may be effective. Techniques here are related to how a certain tool is used.

E. FOCUS

Since monitoring is an emerging concept, particularly from the viewpoint of learning organization, institutions tend to focus on one or other aspect of system, rather than the totality. Institutions may emphasis one or the aspects such as process, indicators, activity, outputs, and quality.

F. SCALE

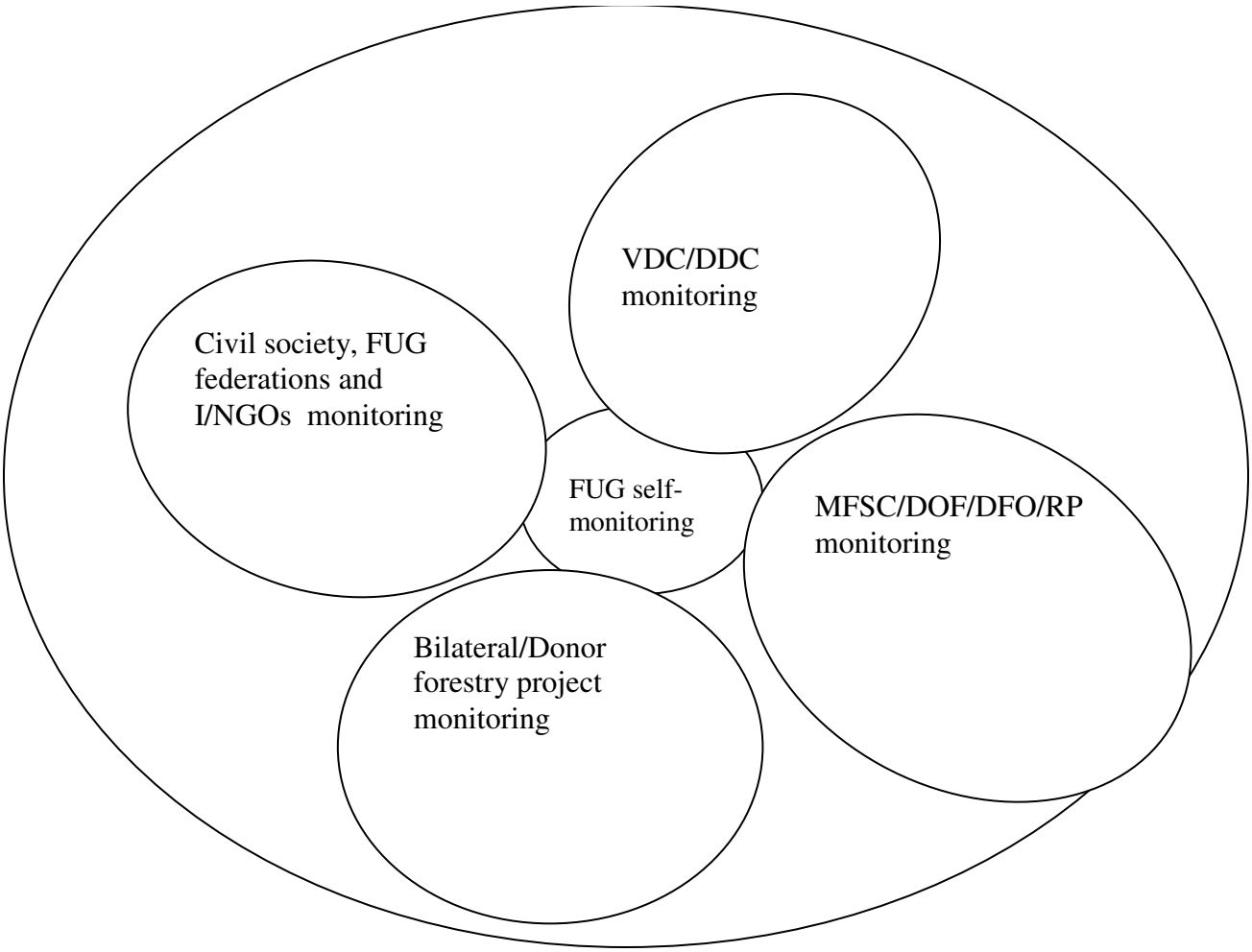
Since community forestry as a system is being sustained by a number of actors from FUG to other higher-level institutions, monitoring may be a relevant management tool at various levels in the institutional landscape. This may range from CF unit level monitoring (i.e. at FUG level), immediate support level (range post), district management level (DFO, project, DDC), regional level (project and regional director), to central level (DOF, MFSC, NPC). These levels represent incresingly larger scales, and have implications on: a) level (s) of which the issues of monitoring are dealt with, b) extent and scope of generalizations made, c) the length and trajectory of information collection, processing and feedback, d) modality of monitoring system and practices/extent of formality etc.

2. Developing a conceptual framework for analysis

For our purpose of analysis, local level community forestry monitoring has been divided into two sub-systems: a) FUG self-monitoring, and b) collaborative monitoring between FUGs and other stakeholders. Both of these systems can be analyzed through certain common conceptual elements such as approach, process, tools and methods as well as using some unique parameters. In analyzing FUG self-monitoring, representation in and benefits from monitoring may need to be disaggregated by caste, class and gender, whereas in collaborative monitoring, the relative sharing of costs and benefits as well as the power to control and design the monitoring systems (between FUGs and their collaborators) are important.

Both of the monitoring systems operate in specific conditions, and it is important to segregate their effects. Key groups of factors related to conditions include: stakeholders, institutions, policy, and ecological factors. Like wise, outputs that are generated by monitoring are considered as institutional learning, improved action, improved plans, and improved management of the participating institutions.

Figure 2 A spectrum of local level community forestry monitoring



Key elements that can be used to analyze FUG self and collaborative monitoring systems are briefly discussed below:

Table 3 Key elements for analysis of FUG self and collaborative monitoring

FUG self monitoring	**Collaborative**
Forms	Actors
Purpose	Stated unstated monitoring interests
Processes	Forms of monitoring
Tools	Processes
Initiations	Tools
Sustainability	Information need
Adaptation over time	Intended and actual use of information
Linkage with FUG management process	Influence on decision making
Influence on decision	Contribution to policy making
Linkage with outside institutions	Linkages to FUG management
Contributions to FUG goal	Monitoring decision making
Learning and improvement	Contributions to institutional goals, learning and improvement
Influence on equity, social capital and livelihoods	Influences on FUG processes, equity, social capital and livelihoods
Indicators	Costs and benefits including sharing
Information collection and analysis	Indicators
	Information collection, analysis and use

IV. MONITORING SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

As outlined in the conceptual framework, our study looks at two main systems of local level community forestry monitoring: a) FUG self-monitoring, and b) collaborative monitoring between FUGs and other institutions. This chapter explores the two types of systems, taking into account a few cases, and then presents a synthesis highlighting innovations, strengths and weaknesses, and the replicable elements. Key lessons that can be learnt are then identified.

1. FUG self-monitoring systems

Case studies of 3 FUGs regarding their self-monitoring systems is presented, followed by a synthesis of the cases, with additional evidences where appropriate. Key variables considered for analysis include a) forms, b) purpose, c) approach, processes and tools, d) focus. Overall discussion is also made on what is common what is different, why and with what effect.

A. CASE STUDIES

The 3 case studies, despite constituting a smaller sample than would ideally be considered, represent at least two different contexts of monitoring. The first two FUGs (Pallo Pakho and Bhane) are supported by external agencies in the development of self-monitoring systems. The second FUG, Rani, represent a case for the review of self-initiated self-monitoring system. *(The experiences of FUG self-monitoring at CIFOR action Research site could not be included in theses cases because of the time constraints- authors)*

Background information of 3 FUGs

1. Bhane FUG, Baglung

The self-monitoring process was established through ForestAction and The University of Reading through action research (detailed process to be given). Key features of self-monitoring system include:

- Key **forms** of monitoring in this FUG are**:** presence of monitoring sub-committee, division of responsibility among users, committee regarding monitoring.
- **Process and methods**. Assembly has given a mandate to the FUGC to form a special monitoring committee to look after key areas of activities for the FUG. Bhane has 12 activity areas throughout the year which includes: The 3 member cub-committee prepares a detailed plan of actions using five questions (why, who, when, how, and where based on the assembly mandate, the sub-committee follows up with these questions for each activity. They report on the monthly FUGC meeting on the status and progress. The sub-committee and the FUGs jointly prepare a statement or report to be read out in the annual assembly.
- **Tools** used include: tole-based meetings, record by sub-committee, meetings between FUGC and sub-committee, periodic forest visits, registers/minutes.
- **Information collection and analysis.** Information is analyzed at Tole level, where both the demand for forest products as well as potential forest management activities are discussed and assessed.

Proposals regarding these are then sent to the FUGC finally to discuss in the assembly. Information coming from outside such as from DFO and FECOFUN are sent by FUGC to Toles.

- **Indicators**. They focus on emerging questions based on perceived problems. They discuss at tole level and decide. They combine the outcomes of 4 Tole reflections and develop indicators. Hade Uniu (an obnoxious fern) in forest indicates poor institutional quality of FUG. Weed in forest was compared with a dispute in forest product distribution and limited institutional effectiveness. This analogy helped them to identify problems within FUGs and correct them through discussions. Wildlife in forest indicates forest health. Participation in meetings is considered an indicator of relationship within FUGs.

- **Linkage with outsiders**. A spider diagram exercise conducted by the external facilitators with local users showed weak areas of outside linkages. Following these reflections, they have started to more intensively look for potential linkage options.

- **Purpose**. 3 key objectives include of the self-monitoring system are: a) share the responsibility of forest management, b) facilitate benefit sharing particularly fund mobilization, product distribution and income generation activity, c) improve internal communication as well as with external stakeholders.

- **Adaptations over time**. The process was at first used to be done by chairperson or FUGC. The meeting used to be regular, there was little participation. Gradually, the responsibility has shifted from Chairperson to FUGC and then to sub-committee of users.

- **Linkage with FUG management process**. The process of monitoring is closely linked with planning and implementing processes as the guidelines for monitoring as well as the expected outputs are determined by the FUG assembly, which ultimately uses the information. Besides, the sub-committee works in close coordination with the FUGC.

- **Influence on decisions**. The information provided by the sub-committee to the assembly and FUGC enhances the quality of decisions. A forest visit by Tole representatives made them realize many works to be done. A reflection in the village subsequent to this sensitized all users for better forest management actions. Users then asked the FUGC to take initiative in this regard.

- **Effect on equity, social capital and livelihoods** Rigorous reflections of forest conditions, members' demands, clarity of goals of forest management led to a decision to harvest and use forest products. Earlier, it was just protected.

2. Pallo Pakho FUG, Baglung

The self-monitoring system of this FUG was also strengthened through the action research support of ForestAction and the University of Reading. Key features of self-monitoring include:

- **Forms**. Sub-committee, mentioned in annual operational plan, wwith support from FA and The University of Reading.

- **Processes and methods**. One major difference from Bhane is that whereas Tole has emerged as the unit in Bhane, in Pallopakha, there are tole representatives who are the unit of monitoring.

- **Tools**. Registers with Tole representatives. Others similar to Bhane.

- **Information collection and analysis**. Sub-group formed for each of the 10 planned activities such as establishment of sample plots, fund mobilization, income generation, Amriso plantation, and forest operations. Analysis is done by sub-group and FUGC together. Sub-group is more responsible to coordinate meetings.

- **Indicators**. They tried to develop indicators for each activity using 5 questions through workshop of representatives from all toles. They were not implemented due to their poor articulation with their common explicit goals and visions. Some of the working indicators are: whether or not a man can be seen in the forest (indicator of forest condition), presence of Banmara (indicating poor institutional health of FUGs), need for watcher to guard forest (indicates that there is no trust among the users).

- **Linkage with outside institutions**. This is the second best FUG of Baglung, and considered a most active FUG in the southern belt of the district. They have very good network with outsiders as many visitors concentrate in this area. As FUG perceives their forest is being monitored by outsiders, they are motivated to monitor their institutions. High ambition for prizes (target to win national award in ten years) is conducive for self-monitoring.

- **Purpose.** Improve forest management, mobilize group members, and enhance the supply of forest products.

- **Contributions to FUG goal.** Established a clear vision and are in a position to assess the progress

- **Linkage with FUG management process**. The recently strengthened monitoring system has contributed to improved planning and decision-making through awareness. Attendance has increased to over 90% from an earlier of around 60% in meetings. Analysis of demand and supply through the establishment of sample plots in the forest as well as wealth ranking of members has contributed to effective planning and equitable and effective use of forest and financial resources.

- **Influence on decisions**. Wealth ranking revealed the need for more poor-focused use of FUG funds, and they decided to give priority to the poor in getting loans for goat rising. Earlier, the FUG chairperson used to hold more than 15 responsibilities out of 20 but now he hardly has 3 as all others have been shared with the rest of the members.

- **Learning and improvement**. Increased knowledge on forest potential, increased clarity on CF policies and concepts, Tole recognized as a unit of decision-making and reflections, monitoring established as a system.

- Influence on equity, social capital and livelihoods. The self-monitoring system has strengthened FUG capacity to plan and implement a wide range of community development activities, and the FUG linkages with outsiders have also strengthened. The FUG has been awarded second best winner of Ganeshman Singh forest award.

- **Adaptation over time**. Earlier, chairman was regarded a monitor, with a conventional type of monitoring. It was then followed by FUGC based monitoring, and then by tole representatives and sub-committee (based on activities planned).

- **Sustainability**. Tole based processes have been continuous. Although transaction cost has increased, the FUG members see benefit in getting the systems right, enhancing the compliance, equity in benefits. With experience, the costs would decrease particularly through increasing awareness, feeling of rights and sense of responsibilities by all individual households or members.

3. Rani FUG, Makawanpur

This is a case of self-initiated monitoring system, although the FUG was established with support from external agencies. Sstudents from the Institute of Forestry, Hetauda and numerous visitors have facilitated self-reflection of the FUG. Key monitoring practices include:

- **Forms.** Two forest watchers and one office secretary, a monitoring and evaluation sub-committee, chairperson is more responsible with informal type of monitoring activities. In addition, regular FUGC meetings and assemblies are also important forms of monitoring.

- **Processes and methods**. Regular meeting of sub-committee, regular reporting by watchers to secretary, who then reports to the chairperson. The secretary keeps records as well. The chairperson briefs in the committee and assembly meetings. They have specific forms for finance, forest products distribution and others. Updated brochure and information leaflets to communicate with outsiders. .

- **Tools**. Forms, meetings, minutes, registers, reflections, interaction with outsiders, reflection with outsiders.
- **Indicators.** No of visitors, recognition and prize, regeneration and age structure (transect walk), growth indicator – willingness to buy services

- **Linkage with outside institutions**. Very strong – RTC, DFO and other neighbor FUGs, local clubs. Videos, brochures and leaflets have helped to strengthen their linkage with outsiders. For getting MFSC prizes on best FUG, they have been constantly looking into themselves to improve internal quality of FUG management.

- **Purpose**. To get established as a well-managed FUG that promotes the environment protection, income generation and fulfillment of forest product demands of the FUG members. In order to achieve this monitoring practices have been primarily focused in identifying issues, opportunities, problems with in FUG as regard income generation, forest protection, forest product distribution and community welfare (scholarship).

- **Linkage with FUG management process.** Frequent visits to forest by chairperson, and other member of the FUGC, feedback of individual user and outsiders and reflections made by officials.

Influence on decisions. There are some evidences that the decision of FUG in different aspects has been influenced by monitoring. For example, FUG has recently changed its strategy to provide the scholarship to the 17 poor and Dallit students of governmental school replacing the provision of scholarship to the 2 student of Boarding school. FUG has decided to support the poor and Dallit primary students at government school instead of supporting two students at costly Boarding school. This change in decision has been influenced by members monitoring who is benefiting from the scholarship and the opportunity for education to dallit and disadvantaged in relation to availability of fund and alternative schooling institutions. As a result of this member's monitoring FUG, users were able to figure out alternative strategies for scholarship in assembly, which unanimously indorse the ideas.

Learning and improvement. The FUG used to have a practice of issuing written notice and circulars for inviting its members to the meeting and assemblies. Fewer people attended than expected and through a reflection on the cause behind this, they knew that many of the users are unable to read the notice and understand the message. The understanding on the situation led FUGC to decide to purchase a loud speaker for communication.

Influence on equity, social capital and livelihoods. Highly Heterogeneous group like Rani more internal discussion and reflection process is required to influence on equity and livelihoods supports. This is again exemplified in the case of scholarship distribution.

Adaptation over time. There is limited monitoring of monitoring particularly it is more at technical and operational level therefore the adaptation over time is rather slow.

Sustainability. Although monitoring and monitoring of monitoring have **a** potential to add the value to FUG, some issue related to sustainability are; 1) only the chairman and key leaders are aware and motivated to some extent in this aspect 2) interests are more on immediate and operational issues than on strategic thus limiting a scope of learning that has a potential of future improvement.

- **Condition.** Leadership, Heterogeneity, Accessibility and proximity to key support institution outsider's visit, close to town with possibility of markets for agricultural products.
-

B. SYNTHESIS OF FUG SELF MONITORING PRACTICES

Synthesis of FUG self-monitoring is done in aspects of forms, purpose, approach, processes and tools, contributions to FUG management goals.

Forms of monitoring

1. Chairperson monitoring
In most cases, particularly where there is no conscious support from outside on the self-monitoring, chairperson based monitoring system is the critical element of FUG self- monitoring system. This is because chairperson[1] is mostly a person who is most trusted, powerful and considered capable doing the job. Chairperson of Pallopkha, who is an old and trusted person mostly, looks after other committee members, who have committed certain tasks and roles on behalf of the committee. Chairperson, as a social role, is considered rewarding through recognition and power, and they see benefits in understanding the social, political and ecological system. This means that they explore and collect information at deeper levels than normal users do with respect to community forestry. If the size of FUG is relatively small, this system runs smooth and generates useful insights and contributions to management.

In some instances, instead of chairman, there maybe another committee member such as secretary who may be taking the roles of chair person functionally.

2. Responsibility sharing among FUG committee members
FUCC members divide responsibilities of monitoring by activities matching with their individual experiences, capacity and interests. Monitoring of activities being led by a committee member is mostly done by themselves. This is a general practice among FUGs. Dilli in Pallo Pakha is in 18 committees, and his responsibility is mostly monitoring.

3. Special subcommittee
This form of monitoring is partly a result of assistance of or requirement to projects, DFOs, NGOs. Institutions that assist FUGs in monitoring tend to emphasize formal elements and processes, and as a result several FUG operational plans have a provision to undertake monitoring through a sub-committee. People who have good presentational skills (such as school teachers) are nominated for this, and this is a more formal type of structure captured by elites. This type of monitoring is present in Rani, Bhane, and Pallo Pakha. The sub-committee may either be thematic (such as audit sub-committee of Judhabir FUG, Parvat) or overall FUG processes as in the case of Pallo pakho FUG.

4. Temporary task forces
Assemblies sometimes form special committee, for example to look into the issues of conflicts, funds mobilization or explore any opportunities that have emerged. They work as a task force for some defined period of time and end with submitting reports to FUCG or assemblies. For example, a task force has been formed in Koidim to evaluate IGA activities undertaken by users so that best performers could be rewarded. Conflicts related task forces are very common. These bodies are temporary, and get dissolved with the submission of report or conclusion to the main decision making body such as committee or assembly. This type of arrangement allows FUGs to look critically to their own processes by the help of relatively independent persons.

[1] These days, community forestry practitioners classify the quality of FUGs in three classes: a) chairman's forestry, committee forestry, and community forestry. The three types indicate the level participation and institutional status of FUGs.

5. Sub-group level monitoring (tole level):
Toli leaders, who are representatives from each of the Tole constituting the FUG, regularly observe the users activities in forest plots and see whether the practices are as per the requirement or rule. They also monitor to see if forest products are being duplicated. The four FUGs of Baglung (which received assistance from ForestaAction) conducts regular tole meetings to review group and forest management processes. In action research sites of CIFOR in Kaski and Sankhuwasabha districts, FUGs have also adopted Tole based planning, monitoring and decision-making systems.

6. Interest group level
Since FUG consists of number interest groups with respect to dependence on forests, it is a common practice that member representing common interests review jointly the FUG decisions and processes. For this, individuals monitor in their own way and sit together for reflection and forming coalitions. This often forms the basis for developing their responses to collective action.

Purpose of monitoring

An investigation into the 'why' of monitoring gave rise to the following specific objectives:

- Strengthen outside communication, and recognition from them
- Share internal responsibility and contributions
- Ensure that planned activities are implemented
- Reflection and learning
- Facilitate sharing of benefits
- Facilitate negotiations
- Impact
- To deal with difficult situations
- Maintain legal obligations
- Public accountability

Focus of monitoring

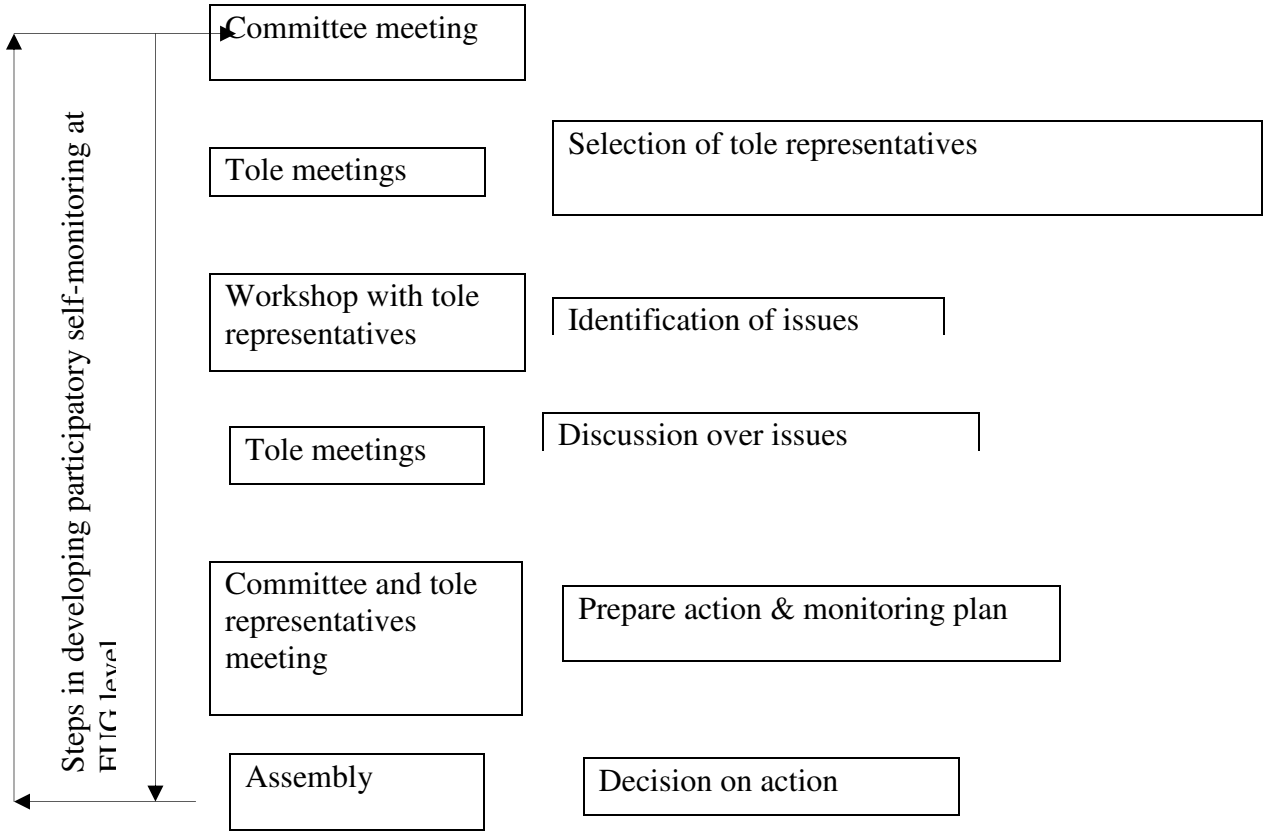
FUG self-monitoring focus more on immediate, tangible, specific concerns than general, long term ones:

- Tangible benefits - product sharing, financial management
- More on activity than impact
- More on control than learning
- More on FUG than forest
- Focused on operational than direction-setting processes

Approach, processes and tools

Approaches of FUG self-monitoring vary from a) conventional (monitoring of others), b) collaborative monitoring among members and interest groups, c) self-monitoring at different levels of FUG (from whole group to household).

The general process followed in developing monitoring process during a PAR on monitoring, is presented below. This process was developed during the Action Research with 4 FUGs of Kushmisera Range Post, Baglung District under a research project 'Developing monitoring process and indicators for forest management conducted by DIRD of The Reading University, ForestAction, Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP).



Source: summary report on developing monitoring process and indicators for forest management, ForestAction and The University of Reading)

In Janachetana FUG of Baglung, users maintain a register at household level to maintain record of their contributions (labor, money etc.) to and benefits (forest products etc.) from the community forests.

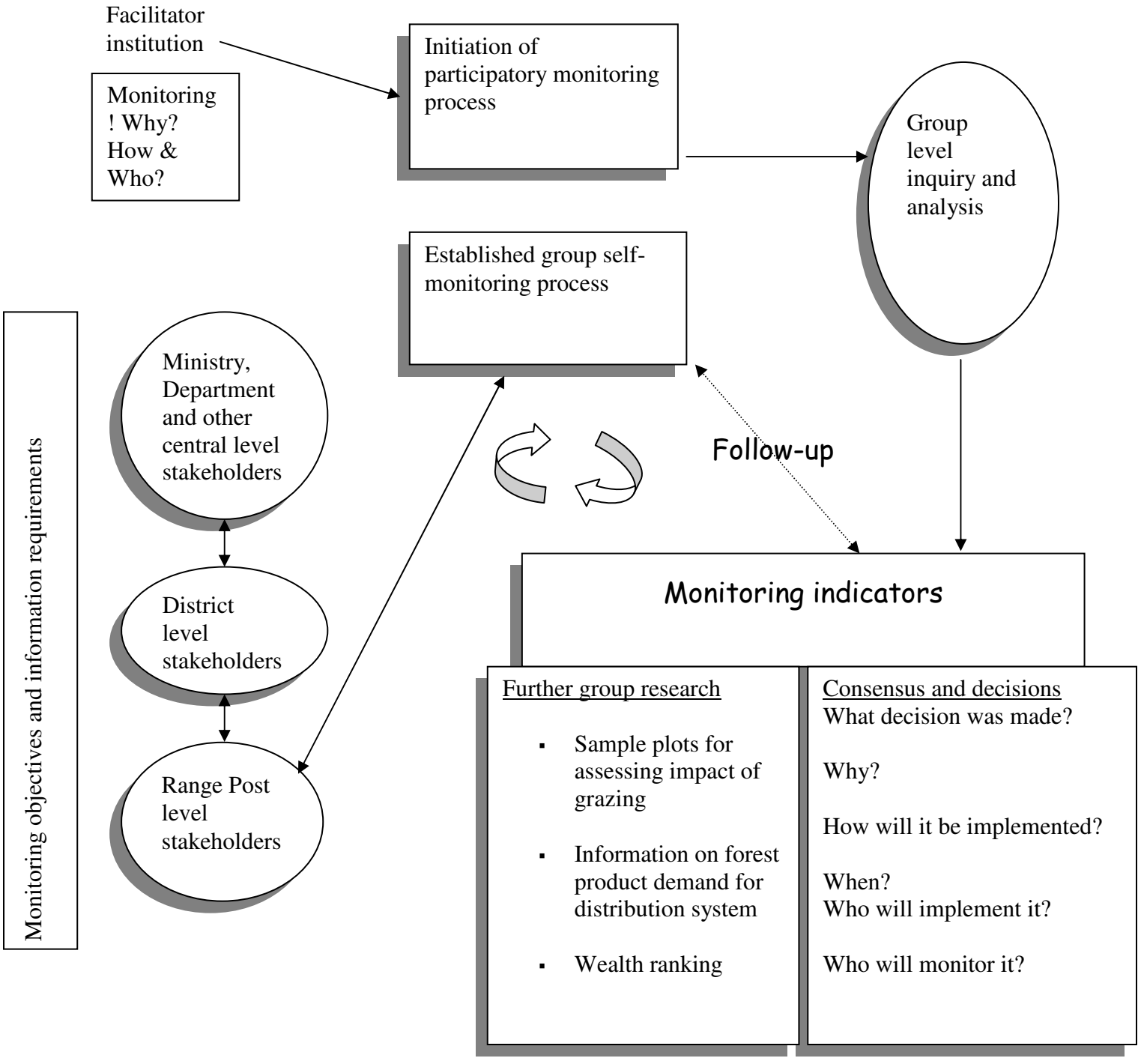
Conditions

Socio-cultural factors- ethnic composition of the groups, natural condition of the forests and level of livelihoods dependency, geographical situation (Terai, Hill, Himalayan region), and external support were found to have impact on the development of self-monitoring system at FUG level.

The diagram below shows how an external organization or facilitator worked with FUG to strengthen self-monitoring system.

A process adopted to assist in the development of FUG self-monitoring

Method for developing group level monitoring process and Indicators



Similarly, CIFOR action research team also used NUKCFP experiences on monitoring in their action research process.

Indicators: We were there to develop monitoring process and indicators for forest management at local level through an action research. We discussed with villagers and in a workshop we developed some Indicators for self-monitoring...initially villagers enjoyed doing this exercise but later they found these indicators are not so useful as expected. While reflecting this situation, we found that unless there is a well developed monitoring process that helps to develop common vision among the Users how we can develop common Indicators based on common perspective. This indicates the need for a more flexible and highly reflective approach to explore and identify indicators. And, in some occasions, more careful inquiry with active participation of men and women revealed more subtle indicators pertaining to forest condition and institutional health (see FUG cases above).

Key tools used in self monitoring at FUGC, Tole, HH level include:

- Meeting, minutes, and attendance registers
- Record, Ledger book, Register, File, Receipts
- Katuwal or and BAN HERALU (forest watcher)
- Tole representatives
- Constitution and OP
- Interaction with neighbor/relatives

Contributions to FUG and external decision-making, institutional learning and improvements

In Pallo Pakha FUG, a wealth ranking exercise to analyze the distribution of benefits, particularly the loan distribution, made FUGC members realize the issue of equity. Subsequent to this, a committee meeting proposed to change the lending policy to benefit the low-income groups. This indicates contribution of self-reflection in FUG direction setting, ultimately who benefits from forest management and how. The FUG leaders refer to this reflective exercise time and again, to sensitize others on the scope of 'looking back' in improving the FUG actions.

A similar exercise in Janachetana triggered a new system of distribution of forest products – based on needs rather than equality.

The table below summarizes the situation before and after the monitoring system intervention in Baglung. The scenarios, both from the perspectives of FUGs as well as researchers, indicate significant changes. The main contributions include increased participation, increased concerns for equitable benefit sharing, improved learning, and better linkages with other institutions, particularly at the local level.

Table 4 An analysis of situation before and after the FUG self-monitoring system intervention

Situations before	Situation after
FUG perspectives	**FUG perspectives**
Forest management activities were not being carried out properly	Before implementing decisions, everybody discusses why we should do it, how and when, and who will take the responsibility
Activities were only carried out according to the constitution and OP	Incentives to get involved in work, such as fines and rewards
There were problems with communication	Use of tole representatives (tole divisions), and sub-committees for monitoring and implementing many activities (apart from Jyamire)
People were not clear about the objectives of forest management	Now we gather information on forest product requirements in the group
Apart from Jana Chetana, women's participation was very low	Fair distribution of forest products (in Jana Chetana there is a distribution system according to requirements)
People were not very clear about the benefits and costs of community forestry	There is increased participation of both women and men in meetings
People did not look back and reflect on the group activities	Priority given to poorer households in fund mobilisation
Only committee members were involved in decision-making processes	There is sense now that the forest belongs not only to the committee but also to the group
The funds were not mobilised in a systematic manner	Communications are a lot more effective
There was no direct correspondence with outside organisations	Slowly establishing contacts with other organisations
There was little idea as to the productive potential of the forest	Now there are regular committee meetings and assemblies
Nobody knew anything about what research and monitoring is being done by other organisations, and why?	Improvements in record keeping - and notebooks and pens have been distributed to each household for record keeping
Words such as 'interest group' or 'wealth rank' did not exist in the group language!	In each site there is a committee formed to ensure that the group will continue to do research
	Group members have now become a lot more confident in learning and working
External researchers' perspectives	
Monitoring has not been recognised as an issue in 5 sites	**External researchers' perspectives**
There were no regular tole meetings	Monitoring is an issue in 5 sites
No transparent system for communicating decisions and the process for making decisions	Tole has been established as a forum for regular interaction and taking decision
Limited understanding of CF issues	Greater understanding of community forestry
No use of OP for forest management/ monitoring	System for planning and self-monitoring has been initiated
Responsibility allocation to only a few people (including Annual report - outsider consultations)	RP have initiated their own monitoring system,
No Tole meetings in the FUG formation process	
Misunderstanding of nature of CF in non-FUG	

areas No knowledge of FECOFUN or its objectives No official status in Range Post nor records kept in RP - no decisions allowed to be made - follow instructions from DFO DFO/ RP recognise the need the need for monitoring system, but do not know how to? No basis for info flow from outside to FUGs - understanding outside perspectives	but these need to be encouraged by the DoF FECOFUN more aware of their roles

Source: presentation notes of FUG members and researchers in a national workshop, ForestAction, LFP and Reading, 2001.

A significant contribution of the self-monitoring has been on the FUG ability to explore opportunities. Four FUGs in the Baglung study sites identified various actions through self-monitoring systems:

- Increase correspondence with other organisations in community forestry, and concentrate on working according to local needs for community development
- Establish forest sample plots
- Pallo Pakho and Jana Chetana have plans to make an FUG office and a training hall, respectively
- Improve the running of FUG school (Pallo Pakho)
- Participate in more training, skills development workshops and study tours
- Environment improvement programmes (including toilet construction in Jana Chetana)
- Medicinal plant identification, conservation and enterprise (Jana Chetana)
- Review the Operational Plan and constitution to make them of more practical use
- Hold interactive meetings between the 5 groups in the research project with the Range Post and FECOFUN (arranged by Sabitra Devi Sharma)

Costs and benefits

Poor and marginalized groups face higher opportunity costs to participate in meeting and discussions. Depending upon the type and use of forest resources, if the forest product are for subsistence use the most benefited members are the mid- level farmers (high level farmers are more mechanized they need not require all type of forest product similarly poor farmer land less members. Poor and marginalized group such as wage labors of Theule village of Bhane FUG Baglung perceive high opportunity cost in participating FUG meeting including monitoring activities and are interested to participate.

C. LESSONS

- Different types of self-monitoring, assessments, evaluation and review and reflection have begun at FUG committee, Tole, members and household level. Some FUGs[4] have started to incorporate monitoring activity in their annual plans. Appointment of Ban Heralu, regular meeting at FUG committee, Tole, minutes on decision, various financial and activity records and annual assemblies are the usual activity of monitoring.

- FUGs do have one or the other kinds of self-monitoring system. This varies with size, area and types of the forest resources, diversity of interest groups within a FUG, benefits that can be accrued from the resource as well as ways in which FUGs are formed and operational plans and FUG constitutions are developed.

- FUG perceptions on indicator is dynamic, varies with the nature of dependency on forests. Objectively verifiable indicator is not the focus. Monitoring approach and practices change over time, as the level of common understanding and knowledge balance among the users change.

- Self-monitoring is a useful self-reflective process that leads to strengthening of FUG management. Proper and systematic collection and handling and presentation of information has a potential to make a big difference in making FUG aware of the consequences of their actions, and then sensitize them to make necessary adjustments.

- However, the pertinent inequalities among users in aspects of power, knowledge, wealth that often coincides with the traditional caste, ethnicity and gender structure in Nepal, create corresponding unequal participation, benefits, contributions to and from monitoring, and in the process, poor and disadvantaged often do not see benefits. Depending upon the type and use of forest resources, if the forest product are for subsistence use the most benefited members are the mid- level farmers (high level farmers are more mechanized they need not require all type of forest product similarly poor farmer land less members.

- Focus on activities, problems, issues, and organizational control and not much opportunistic, proactive and forward looking and learning-oriented. This has limited scope for collaboration and external interface. If such a narrow focus is widened towards an overall reflection and institutional learning, it has a potential for strengthening equitable and effective forest management.

- There is extremely limited number of institutions supporting FUG self-monitoring. Even when there is some intervention, the supporting institutions have done limited self-reflection and documentation of experiences in this regard, particularly in relation to what worked and what did not, why and in what situation. Connected to this issue is a need for an awareness of self-monitoring as a valid and necessary tool even at the institutions supporting FUGs.

[4] See detail in FUG case study

- Conditions such as market access, commercial value of resources, ethnicity and size of group, leadership affect the way self-monitoring processes are initiated, sustained and adapted over time.

- Users use meeting, minutes & attendance basic tools to monitor the day-to-day activities. Tole representatives, constitution & operational plans and various forms of records, ledger, and registers are maintained at FUG as the tools for monitoring. Despite such a diversity of tools and processes adopted, these remain limited in specific situations and contexts. There is a need to make a synthesis of various innovative processes and tools so that FUGs as well as their service providers can use them as guidelines. At FUG level some of the tools that are found effective (ForestAction and Reading, 2001) [4] are as follows: social/village and forest map, sample plots, web diagram, wealth ranking, small group discussions, village and forest tour, forest product ranking, games (such blind-fold and marble).

- The issue of participation is critical within the FUG. It is the community leaders and elites whose perspectives dominate the group reflection, and decisions.

- In view of the highly heterogeneous forest user groups, more internal discussions and reflection process has a potential to influence decision in favor of more equitable livelihoods.

[4] Monitoring process and indicator project Baglung

2. Collaborative monitoring

Collaborative monitoring is carried out either jointly by an external institution and the FUG for mutual benefit, or primarily by and for an external institution. This section presents the cases of collaborative monitoring between various types of institutions and forest user groups (FUGs). Based on the analysis of innovations, successes and failures in various aspects, replicable lessons on various dimensions and scales are drawn.

Apart from FUG doing self-monitoring (discussed in the previous section), all the other categories of stakeholders, with roles ranging from service delivery to policy making, are engaged in one or the other form of monitoring of community forestry at local level, which is essentially a collaborative monitoring. As discussed in detail in chapter 2, institutional context of community forestry has expanded to include a range of stakeholders that include: government (NPC, MFSC, department of forest and its sub-ordinate offices), bilateral projects, I/NGOs, local government, and the local communities (including the FUGs).

Government institutions are the principle stakeholders in shaping policies and providing services to community forestry. Along with National Planning commission (NPC), 6 tires of MFSC form the principal governmental institution that extend well into the community level through field offices (i.e. range post). Besides, at least 7 donor field projects, two network organizations and a few NGOs are involved in promoting the local level community forestry management in Nepal.

A question in this regard is: why do stakeholders engage in the process of monitoring? After all, they need to plan, organize, implement and adapt their involvement in community forestry, and for this they should constantly test the assumptions behind the activities, processes and outcomes. Depending on their roles and stakes in forest management, monitoring interests vary. Interactions with representatives of these stakeholders, and review of documents reflecting their views indicate that there are both common as well as divergent monitoring interests, which are summarized in the table below:

Table 5 Stakeholders and stated and unstated monitoring interests

Stakeholders	Stated and un-stated monitoring interests
Government stakeholders	
NPC	Impact of community forestry on conservation and livelihoods, MFSC annual work plans, budgets and progress, revenue generation
MFSC and DOF	Number of FUGs and operational plan, financial, fulfilment of annual district targets, impact of the project/program on forest conservation
Regional Director	DFO and range post support to FUGs, number of FUGs and operational plans, impact of CF management on conservation
DFOs/RPs	Forest management activities by FUGs, extent of forest product harvesting, use of funds, pressure shift on national forest, implementation of operational plan and group

	constitution, institutional health, FUG affiliation with FECOFUN and other civil society organizations
Bilateral Projects	Number of FUGs and operational plan, technical and institutional innovations at local level, project activities and outputs, livelihoods impact of forestry, policy issues and implementation problems
I/NGOs	
Local NGOs and CBOs	Institutional processes of FUG, forest management activities, forest condition, fund generation and mobilization
National and international NGOs	Emerging issues in community forestry at different levels, service needs of communities, networking, social capital
FUG networks (such as FECOFUN)	Policy issues, implementation problems, service delivery, FUG capacity, conflict, networking
Local Governments (VDCs, DDCs)	Income generation, environmental protection, FUG contributions to community development, conflicts between FUGs

The study reviewed the experiences of some of the institutions representing these categories (except DDC/VDC), and key findings on monitoring systems and practices are presented below. Key elements for analysis include: forms of monitoring, approach and processes, tools, information need, intended and actual use of information, influence on decision making, contribution to policy making, linkages to FUG management, monitoring and decision making, contributions to institutional goals, learning and improvement, influences on FUG processes - equity, social capital and livelihoods, costs and benefits including sharing, indicators, information collection, analysis and use.

A. GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

Monitoring systems at Central level

Monitoring Division at MFSC and planning Division at department of forests are the two main responsible units for developing and coordinating community forestry monitoring at central level. These units are considered less important, attractive to officials in terms of job satisfaction, compared to other similar units[2]. This sets an important context for the efforts and initiatives of these units regarding monitoring.

Although monitoring and evaluation has been put forward as one of the programs, there is no updated operational or strategic official document guiding the monitoring system. As a result, the practices are scattered, and poorly linked to learning goals. There is no any evidence of systems developed and documented except a discussion paper by monitoring division. The paper is prepared by a forest officer, and is not yet recognized as the official strategy document of the Ministry.

Staff meetings are sometimes held, depending on the interests of secretary or minister.

[2] Informal interaction with forest officials. Names are kept anonymous.

At community and private forestry division (CPFD) of Department of Forest (DOF), there is a FUG database systems and a set of formats to draw the information required for it. This is maintained and updated through the information supplied regularly by the district. This has been an important source of information to wide range audiences on the quantitative progress and status of community forestry in Nepal.

Key features of this database include:

- Regular update
- Use of computer in handling and processing of data
- Incorporation of social as well as resource data

In addition, CPFD is closely working with different donor projects to develop guideline and formats for monitoring purpose.

Interaction with forest officials indicate that both the ministry and DOF have not clearly spelled out the information needs from various layers below, and how the information is going to be used. This has implications on the methods and systems used in collecting and analyzing information, with a possibility that the system will generate both relevant as well as non-relevant information.

Head of the Monitoring and Evaluation Division (MED) thinks that monitoring is a tool of evaluation, and that there are no any pro-active monitoring related actions from MED. Recently, there has been an increased appreciation for the need of monitoring initiatives within the Ministry.

Though MFSC and DOF yet have to make clear the information requirements and the process of accessing those information with a defined system of monitoring at central level, they are continuously organizing various events, activities using different tools to generate information related to local level forest management. However, a huge amount of information is generated through this process but to date there is few evidences of the uses of this information. Some of the ways in which information is generated and transferred include:

Regional planning and review meeting

Quarterly and annual progress report

Supervision and monitoring visits by central staffs

FUG awards

National FUG database

Frequent evaluation made by NPC

> In a workshop a District Forest Officer was answering the question asked to him 'why you need all these information and what is the use of these information?' He replied ' My boss has asked to generate these information and in bureaucracy I can not ask my boss "why?"

Categorically, MFSC and its subsequent layers use the formats, which are developed with some checklists (indicator guidelines). Different forms of reports (monthly, tri-monthly, and annual and project level covering financial as well) are other tools to generate monitoring information. Similarly program and staff performance forms, FUG database, and circulars are also important tools of monitoring in this category.

Most of the tools used by central level government institution are extractive, and less reflective to the lower levels. Same tools are used at all levels, which are mostly designed at central level, with

limited consultation with the lower levels. As a result, there is no or limited processing of information at the intermediate levels. Achievement evaluation form, for instance, is same from range post to DOF.

Pokharel and Grosen (2000) review the monitoring systems of community forestry at all levels, from FUGs to MFSC, and identifies an option, among others, in which they contend that support should be given to strengthen FUG level monitoring systems as a part of the national monitoring systems. They describe monitoring within the MFSC as:

"Monitoring is today largely done for the purpose of control and supervision by an upper level of a lower level. This is often contested with anxiety among the people being monitored, which is not conducive for the development of a learning organization. The existing system of communication is more or less top down and there is one-way flow of information. The hierarchical structure of the government organization reinforces the upward accountability and weakens the downward and horizontal accountability".

The head of the MED indicated several problems related to monitoring and evaluation:

- Lack of documentation on concrete achievements
- Gaps in information flow (MFSC to RP and back)
- Geographic situation and diversity of forest types
- Negative perceptions on monitoring
- Frequent changes in structure of MED and positions
- Limited priority on monitoring

MFSC is interested more in getting the information it needs rather than strengthening the self-monitoring systems of the offices below it so that there is a smooth generation of information there, and that MFSC can easily access when needed.

Despite such weak aspects, some strong elements were identified:

- Use of case studies and research reports to see how links can be made between grassroots information and policy
- Interaction among officials of various layers during workshops

District/DFO level

DFOs are the principal implementing units of the DOF. DFOs have the authority to hand over forests to communities, and are also the major service providers, particularly in technical aspects. With increasing number of FUGs and the growing complexity of community forestry, they are under pressure to prioritize allocation of resources to achieve equity, sustainability and effectiveness in forest management. Although FUGs are registered at, and forest handed over by, the DFO, many of the activities that are undertaken by FUGs may not be of direct interest to DFO. This means that DFO's management interface with FUG may not overlap fully, and accordingly, the monitoring interests of DFO may not encompass all issues of FUG interests.

At this level, various monitoring activities are organized using various tools. This layer is very important in relation to implementation of monitoring systems of higher layers of MFSC. Except in

a few cases, DFO monitoring is confined to producing information based on guidelines and format developed by the projects or higher-level units of MFSC or NPC.

Two cases of monitoring from the districts of Baglung and Kathmandu provide some examples of DFO monitoring of community forestry.

i. Monitoring systems and practices of DFO, Baglung
District Forest Office of Baglung works closely with Livelihoods and Forestry Project (LFP) in developing local level community forestry monitoring systems. In the district, there are two different systems of monitoring going simultaneously: one is based on DOF's information requirement and another on LFP's information requirement. However there are some similarities in information requirements in both cases. These monitoring practices are used to assess impact and plan the project activities to support FUGs and Ilaka and range post staffs. Focus areas of FUG monitoring include:

- Minutes of FUG's decisions
- Composition of FUG in relation to representation
- Resource usage
- Operational plans and time frames
- Sanctions made to FUGs

The monitoring information is used in decision making for award distribution, developing targets at district level. This information are also used to identify basis for awards to FUG.

Key processes and tools related to district level monitoring include:

- FUG monitoring format (National Data Base)
- FUG annual Report submitted to DFO
- FUG Data Base (District)
- FUG categorization forms
- Quarter/annual progress report by range post
- Annual report format of DFO's office
- Staff meeting minutes
- FUG tri-monthly meetings and minutes
- Annual work performance form
- Field visit reports by staff
- Annual planning/review meeting of staffs/FUGs
- Review form of training/workshop
- GaneshMan/Sandesh Nepal Prize evaluation forms
- OP as base line information for socio-economic and biophysical information
- District profile
- Occasional monitoring visits by DFOs

ii. Monitoring systems and practices of DFO, Kathmandu
Kathmandu DFO was established in 2042 as a separate office at district level. Programme areas include national and leasehold forests, community forestry. The forest coverage of the district is 41 202 ha, and out of this 34% (14118 ha) is handed over to Forest User Groups. Main donor for the programmes is NARMSAP, and Bagmati Integrated Watershed Development Project (BIWDP) covers parts of the district.

In 2001, the district forest office conducted a more intensive monitoring of FUGs, and produced a report. The report was prepared using the information obtained from its constituent range posts. The report was an important outcome of monitoring of FUGs by DFO, and this has answered several questions such as: how community forestry is being implemented? What results generated from program implementation? How the benefits are being distributed? More importantly, the DFO explicitly recognizes monitoring as a tool for learning from the past, which is not common in many Government organizations. They regard monitoring as a continuous process.

The overall objective of the monitoring was to assess the status of 113 community forest user groups formed till July 2000. Specific objectives of the monitoring were:

- Assess the institutional development status of FUGs
- Assess the sustainability of forest management, forest products utilization, and income generation activities
- Assess the community development activities undertaken by FUGs
- Assess the funds management status of FUGs
- Assess FUGs' effectiveness in sustainable forest management and their self-reliance

Main tools and techniques used to collect information were: a) Monitoring forms, b) informal discussions with forest users, c) forest visits, d) range post level analysis and report preparation. All rangers working with DFO and the constituent range posts were involved in the monitoring. The process took about 10 months' period.

Monitoring forms prepared by Community and Private Forestry Division was used with some modifications. A one-day workshop of Rangers working in the district was held to discuss and review the forms.
Assistant Forest Officer, who conducted the work mostly out of personal interests, coordinated the overall activity.

The information generated has helped RPs and DFOs in preparing plans and priorotizing FUGs for post formation support. Concerned rangers are preparing action plans for supporting inactive FUGs based on the knowledge gained.

The way this monitoring activity was done has finally created self-realization by the DFO staffs on the need for prioritizing FUGs and issues to support and address, and can also serve as a baseline or bench mark, against which the impact of project may be assessed by collating similar data in future.

A similar monitoring study is also done by Lalitpur district.

Based on the review of monitoring experiences of DFO levels, following key observations are made:

- There is no coherent, consistent, practical and easy to implement monitoring system that is well articulated to management goals. However there are some innovative examples from Baglung and Kathmandu districts. FUG categorization forms in Baglung and special monitoring study in Kathmandu are the two examples that generate useful information at the district level.

- Many formats are used for extracting information from lower levels, particularly from the FUG. There are no clear management objectives as regards why particular set of information is being collected.
- More quantitative information rather than qualitative
- No data processing efforts
- Uniform indicator at all levels
- No feedback mechanism to FUG from DFO and from higher levels to DFO

B. COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROJECTS

A brief description of monitoring systems designed and practiced by 4 bilateral forestry projects is presented, followed by a synthesis.

i. Nepal-UK Community Forestry Project

Nepal-UK Community Forestry Project (NUKCFP) was funded by Department for International Development (DFID), and lasted for seven years since its inception in 1993. It worked in 7 districts in the Koshi Hills (4) and Dhaulagiri Hills (3). The project's work in the Eastern hills was built on the foundations laid by previous Koshi Hills Community Forestry Project (K3).

The current Livelihood and Forestry project (LFP) is the successor to NUKCFP and is being implemented for the period of 10 years extending to 11 Hill and Terai districts from earlier 7 hill districts.

NUKCFP has undertaken several initiatives as regards monitoring. However, the terminology used by NUKCFP is difficult to understand and used inconsistently (Ticehurst 1999).

Two tiers of monitoring were in operation: a) log frame-based monitoring to furnish reports to DFID, b) action research and ad-hoc socio-economic studies to assess and monitor community level dynamics of forest management. The log-frame did not adequately provide scope to report processes, and this is why NUKCFP team prepared a parallel process reports in addition to log frame based reports.

There was an evidence of realization among the project team regarding the necessity of local level monitoring systems. Several attempts were also made mostly as pilot actions in different parts of the project area from the beginning the project. Their focus was mainly on participatory project monitoring process with an aim to collect information for better project planning. Some initiatives regarding FUG self-monitoring were also done but these were confined mostly as pilot actions. FUG database, baselines, FUG case studies, and field innovations and piloting were also the key elements of NUKCFP monitoring.

These monitoring activities were done for twofold objectives: a) to satisfy statutory requirements (such as project reporting to DFID), and b) to generate lessons to the project. A brief description of these monitoring activities is given below:

FUG database. Formal monitoring of FUGs by NUKCFP began in 1993 with the establishment of FUG database. Yearly FUG Information Sheets (FIS) became the main tool for collection of information on FUGs. These sheets were completed by FUGs with the help of forest guards and

rangers, and submitted to DFO, who in turn provided to the Project based database unit. The database, comprising of 122 fields, represents a resource developed by NUKCFP. Reports were also produced by analyzing the data.

Baseline studies on the forest resources of the Koshi hills and the socio-economic situation of the FUGs in Dhaulagiri hills were carried out to complement the FUG database. A follow up study on the forest resources was also done in the East, which brought interesting information on changes in forest condition and management practices[3]. The project also conducted a series of FUG case studies as well as in-depth research studies in collaboration with Leeds and Reading universities of the UK.

The project worked with other stakeholders to generate information for better project management. As a process project, it was interested in gauging the quality of the project processes as well as those of the primary stakeholders (DFOs, range-post team and FUGs). The strategy of NUKCFP was to build the capacity of service providers and service users to monitor their processes.

FUG Health Check[4]. Range Post team periodically assessed the FUGs with some predetermined indicators. Some of the information generated was also fed into the FUG database. The information generated was used to identify a winning or best-performing FUG. This process was top-down, with limited opportunities for participating FUGs to analyze their performance, strengths and weaknesses. This was subsequently modified to include pictorial analysis of four themes: a) forest resource management, social and institutional development, c) awareness and flow of information, and d) skill development and learning process.

User-Generated Pictorial Decision-Making. This is more recent approach, which incorporates REFLECT methodology, which is used to create a critical sense of awareness among people. This is aimed at enabling women to assess their involvement in FUG activities. This is primarily a workshop that assists various wealth categories of users to enhance their access to forest resources based on their prioritized needs. Venn diagrams and seasonal calendars are used to identify potential service providers and develop an annual operational plan.
Self-Monitoring

The User-Generated Self-Monitoring System. The project has also worked on self-monitoring of FUGs as well as other stakeholders. Two reasons regarding why such systems were initiated included: a) increasing demand for formation and post formation support to FUGs and the consequent workload on the staff; b) the need for creating a more inclusive learning environment within the FUGs where disadvantaged can voice their feelings. This builds on the health check and focuses on developing internal learning environment within FUGs.

NUKCFP team self-monitoring. Key areas of monitoring interests: Promoting Self monitoring at local level, building the capacity of FUGs, maintaining baseline information for project impact assessment, response to log frame, Social learning from organisational process

Tools and techniques. Key tools and techniques used for monitoring included: process reporting, indicators from log frame (Numbers of FUG training workshops, reports, preset targets e.g. number of women involved), FUG database, categorization FUG's by using forms (in the Dhawalagiri area)

[3] See Branney and Yadav (199?) for details.
[4] For detail see Maharjan (1997).

field action research, team action and reflection meeting, FUG case studies, and baseline natural resource surveys. Indicators used at FUG level: forest product management and condition, community development and income generation activities, and group development and awareness.

Linkages between monitoring and evaluation. The degrees to which the anticipated impacts of NUKCFP are integrated with monitoring system are not clear. Initially, focus was on forest resources, then among the FUGs, and finally on individual households following a call by DFID for so doing.

Monitoring interface. NUKCFP had common interface, at least partially, with the following institutions: FUGs, Range Post, DFO, and District FECOFUN. However, its focus was on FUG, and less so on other collaborators. Also, attempts to strengthen the self-monitoring of these stakeholders were limited except in cases such as FUG-self monitoring.

Strengths

- Process emphasis
- Emphasis on locally generated indicators
- Consideration of the issue of private as well as community forests

Weaknesses

- Uncoordinated systems
- Need to look at transaction costs – time spent in meetings
- Managing huge amount of information

ii. Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project

Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP), which is a bilateral forestry project similar to NUKCFP, emphasizes that **planning, monitoring and evaluation, and transferal** (of experience into forward planning) is a continuous cycle. In 2000 NSCFP reviewed its monitoring system and revised its guideline of project monitoring called Participatory monitoring, evaluation & transferal (PME&T)[5]. Recently, they are innovating a strategy whereby these elements can be integrated with regular project implementation process.

Every year, monitoring of objectives, outputs and activities are done jointly with the other partners and/or in some cases by one partner alone. Table 2 shows the log frame based monitoring indicators is given below. For evaluation, a joint annual review and reflection is held before yearly plan of operation planning meeting. This meeting is designed to capture the positive learning of the review and reflection meeting.

[5] See PME&T report

Table 6 Log frame based monitoring: A case of monitoring framework of Nepal –Swiss Community Forestry Project

Project Logical Narrative	Areas of monitoring interests
Goal	
CF contributes to livelihoods	Impact of CF on income, employment and poverty (monitored through objectives and special studies)
Objectives	
FUGs sustainable	Forest management, institutional and economic viability
FUGs equitable	Equity in constitution; forest product sharing; Dalit and ethnic minorities on committee; Dalit, ethnic minorities and women are aware; Dalit, ethnic minorities and women participation; women on committee
Outputs	
Support services strengthened	DFO capacity in FUG services; SP capacity in FUG services; DFO capacity in training; SP capacity in training; Short term and long term degrees; participatory research results
FUGs and CF development strengthened	FUGs quality; FUG meetings; FUG records
CF in Nepal strengthened	Other CF actors are more aware; coordination between projects; contributions to CF policy
Activities	
Develop CF support services	Support for DFO; support for service provider; long-term training and scholarship support; participatory research; CF experience sharing
Support to FUGs	Support to FUGs by DFO and Service providers
Contribution to CF consolidation in Nepal (including project area)	CF awareness; policy inputs provided

Reporting is also a key monitoring activity. DFO reports to Department and regional Office annually and quarterly. Within NSCFP, annual and half-yearly reporting systems exist.

Reflection, Learning and Yearly planning. At the end of each year, staff of the DFO, Project Unit and Service Providers gathered to reflect on the work done, generate key lessons and develop new programs. In a period of 3-4 days, project log frame is discussed and internalized; previous year's annual report reviewed to identify trends in activities, outputs and objectives; previous six monthly report reviewed; and yearly plan of operation drafted.

The basic monitoring idea consists in measuring the trends and status of goal, objectives, outputs and activities of the project.

These elements of monitoring are further elaborated into specific indicators, and sources of data are also envisaged. Scales for data collection (nominal, ordinal) are also identified with respect to each indicator. A working guideline exists to assist those handling such data.

Tools and techniques. The project believes that it is possible to measure activities, outputs and sometimes objective level monitoring with the help of data stored in the following databases:

- FUG general database
- FUG fund database
- FUG forest management and production database
- FUG basic information database
- OP forest database

- Training information database
- IGA information database
- Similarly they have developed various formats and checklists.
- Database tables
- Joint evaluation checklist
- Training evaluation checklist
- FUG review and planning formats
- Information sheets;
- Trainings conducted by DFos and SP
- Participatory research
- Micro and meso projects
- DFO reporting formats
- National FUG data base form
- DFO monitoring and evaluation form

For all these databases, detailed designs (fields) are given. The needed information is being collected through formal survey, continuous DFO update, and data from OP revision. Monitoring unit at project's central office collects these data in partnership with relevant NGOs, FECOFUN, Consultants/rangers, and local facilitators.

There is no any intervention made until the time data collection but the attempts made to revisit M & E activity and process itself is a good start.

iii. Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project

Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project (NACRMP) and earlier project phases have been working in the two districts of Sindhupalchowk and Kabhre palanchowk since 1978. During this time, the project was engaged in establishing pine plantations, forming forest user groups and facilitating tenure-rights of forests to them, and piloting wood and non-wood based enterprise activities.

There are 2-3 staffs involved in monitoring related activities. Over the years, the project is trying to strengthen the internal monitoring system at the project level. Key areas of monitoring interests of the project include: impact assessment, organizational strengthening of FUGs. There are different aspects of monitoring that have been tried in the project area: test site (pilot site) based monitoring, training, specific surveys and research, FUG database, OP revision, and publications.

Taking some test sites, they are trying to develop FUG level monitoring system. Key elements of this aspect of project monitoring include:

- Baseline of FUGs
- Resource information and work plan
- Monthly reports of NGOs
- Self-monitoring of NGOs
- FUG self-monitoring
- Trek reports
- Dandapakhar demonstration area

In different sites various baseline information of socio-economic and biophysical aspects are collected using PRA, household surveys and livelihood analysis. Local facilitators work with communities to identify criteria and indicators, and its scoring system for each indicator. When it is completed, the basis of a questionnaire is prepared and the results are plotted in spider diagram, which is later used to visualize the change and use the monitoring information in decision making. Mainly NACRMP staff, local NGO and facilitators as well as FUG members are involved in this process.

Training: In training, they also have separate monitoring activities. There are three main types of trainings: organizational, technical and women empowerment. Key elements of monitoring for trainings include: survey report, annual report, training database, sample visit reports, and session plan follow up.

Specific surveys and research. Key surveys/research conducted include: a) impact of stocking on growth and trees, b) Chaubas household survey, c) community forestry inventory, d) tree harvesting record.

FUG database. Information from OP relating to forests, plantation.

Publications. Project has plan to prepare reports

Strengths

- Immediate impression can be gained using a spider diagram, FUG's can be compared and comparisons made over time
- Involvement of NGO's in facilitating the process
- Use of qualitative data
- Use of local facilitators

Weaknesses
- The scoring system and questionnaire are subjective
- May not be replicable
- Govt. and DFO's not always involved
- Collecting biophysical data is still a limitation
- No indication of product use markets or gender

Key Activities
- Specific surveys
- Increment, household survey, CF inventory, tree harvesting records
- FUG database
- Information from OP, plantation
- OP revision
- Training
- Organizational and technical
- Test site
- Baseline of FUGs, monthly reports of NGOs, FUG self monitoring, SWS

iv. Natural Resource Management Sector Assistance Programme (NARMSAP)

It's a bilateral project of DENIDA. It works in 38 districts in close coordination with CPFD at DoF. This projects focuses on technical support on tree management training, forming forest user groups and facilitating tenure-rights of forests to them, and study of wood and non-wood based enterprise activities and training. The activities are implemented through DOF, while at the same time there are a number of technical staffs assisting the government at center as well as regional levels.

There is a monitoring coordinator involved in monitoring related activities. Over the years, the project is trying to strengthen the internal monitoring system as well as strengthen DFOs monitoring capacity, revision of formats guidelines and generation of monitoring related information. According to officer at NARMSAP, the monitoring activities are carried out at different tiers:

- FUGs
- DFOs
- Regional
- National level

Joint teams of NARMPSAP and DOF staff are formed to prepare preliminary assessment report on activities and programmes for each district. The reports are then circulated to regional director as well as DFOs for comments. The comments are then incorporated, and the report is then sent to the centre at both the project as well as DOF.

At regional level CF field implementation and training activities are monitored. The focus has been given on financial, process and output monitoring. The outcome indicators are developed using a logical framework because of the donor interest. There are field-tested formats used to collect monitoring information.

At project level, they are trying to develop FUG level monitoring system. Key elements of this aspect of project monitoring include:

- Baseline of FUGs
- Resource information and inventory
- Monthly reports
- Self-monitoring of the group activity

There are two distinct type of monitoring in operation a) FUG-DFO monitoring system b) self monitoring of the staffs (ranger level).

In order to promote DFO monitoring of FUG, a comprehensive format has been developed including data base information. This format filled by each DFO of the project district with the help of AFOs and rangers. The information is compiled and anlyzed at range post as well as DFO level. A typical example of range post level analysis is from Sesh Narayan Range post of Kathmandu district. Several districts within the project (such as Lalitpur) have prepared a monitoring report on the basis of information collected trough the process.

A uniqueness of the format is that there is a separate section to write the impression of the field staffs about the particular FUGs.

A pilot test has been made at ranger level as to initiate self-monitoring system. It was tested in central level only. In this method, monitoring staffs and field staffs together evaluate the programme and staffs performance and provide feedback. According to them, it could not be viable due to the lack of sufficient human resources needed to follow up.

v. Chure Hill Forest Development Project

Churia Hill Forest Development Project (CHFDP) is a bilateral project of Government of Nepal jointly implemented by Ministry of Forests and Soil conservation and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation (BMZ), Federal Republic of Germany. This project was launched in 1992 and will run till 2007 covering three Chure districts: Siraha, Saptari and Udayapur. It focuses on both local people and forests and works in partnership with local communities.

CHFDP's immediate goal is to minimize the environmental imbalance caused by forest degradation in the Churia region. Its ultimate aim is to achieve integrated and sustainable forest management in the region and thus contribute to socio-economic development. CHFDP is supporting in soil conservation, catch-ment pond, river training, IGA, micro credit, agro-forestry etc. We have not included their monitoring mechanism.

Churia Hill Forest Development Project supports Community Forestry (CF) programme through District line agencies (DFOs and DSCOs) as well as NGOs in Siraha, Saptari and Udayapur districts. The DFOs implement the CF activities and NGO supports them with awareness raising at local level, as well as technical assistance as per requirement.

Ultimately, the prime implementers of CF program are FUGs. Therefore, they also do monitoring of their activities. The same rules apply for DFOs, NGOs and Project Support Unit (PSU) for their activities. More over, the project and its partners have established some periodic monitoring mechanisms in which FUGs, DFO, and other stakeholders participate. The periodic monitoring of the programme activities is based on the programme implementation guideline, which has been developed for project's internal use. A scenario of monitoring activities in the ChFDP area is summarized below.

Table 7 A glimpse of CF Monitoring in CHFDP area

What to see?	Who are involved?	Tools used	Major Indicators	Monitoring Frequency
CFUG's mobilization process (forest management, Institutional development)	CFUG, DFO, PSU, NGO Jointly / Separately	Debit-credit Records, Minutes and reports at CFUG level CFUG's review and planning meeting minute Regular observation by field staff Detailed database of CFUG process etc.	Frequency of Meetings, Implementation of the decisions, Participation in forest management activities as planned, Transparency in income and expenditure, Problem solving methods, Contribution to social development …	Regular activity
Service delivery of DFOs and NGOs in CF activities	DFO, PSU, DDC,	Yearly progress report of District forest office	CFUG participation, quality and quantity	Yearly

implementation	FECOFUN, NGOs Jointly		of work, strengths, weaknesses …	
CF development in the project area	PSU, DFO	CF monitoring database Geographic Information System	Rate of handing over, forest area per household, geographic distribution, type of forest handed over, major problem of CFUGs.	As per requirement

CHFDP tried a record keeping method with FUGs of its working areas. Each of the FUGs was given a record keeping register and asked to write down the decision made during the meeting. The main information recorded were activity, time frame and name of the responsible person. Initially, the project staffs supported regularly to maintain register and this register reviewed time to time. But later it is found that many of the FUGs members are not literate, and therefore they found hard to keep records without the help of outsiders.

The overall monitoring at all the bilateral forestry projects is based on the logical frame-work, which is comprise of defined objectives, purpose, outputs/results, for which a given sets of indicators exist to monitor. Since such framework is defined and the indicators are set at the early stage of projects, apparently with very limited information of the situation, the subsequent monitoring practice based on this is also less likely to capture the local realities, and hence may have inherent limitations to contribute to the local decision-making. Besides this, there are several other forms of monitoring that allow situation-specific processes and realities to be captured, and hence inform the local project participants in a useful way. Discussed below are ranges of practices of different project monitoring systems.

Principally, the projects develop, design the monitoring activities, tools and processes that supports and strengthen the government's monitoring systems but in practice, these projects/programme design such plans in isolations thus producing various formats, guidelines and information sheets confusing themselves to synthesize the information[3].

There are no any evidences of cross learning among the projects regarding the monitoring system design, except cross visits and sharing. Similarly, there is no evidence that supports the government monitoring system except the DFO-FUG monitoring of NARMSAP/CPFD.

Most of the Projects have piloted, tested, and organized action research on various approaches, methods, tools of monitoring, unfortunately there is no evidences of further use of these within the projects.

C. INTERNATIONAL/NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Three different types if institutions which include federation of forest user groups, a service provider NGO and an international organisation assisting NGOs in community forestry activities are presented followed by a summary impression on NGO monitoring of community forestry.

[3] NUKCFP has developed 2 different formats (one for east and one for west)

i. Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN*)*

Community Forest User Groups (FUGs) have been recognized as a legal and self-perpetuated local body for the management, conservation and utilization of communal forests in Nepal. With the increase in number of FUGs, efforts to create networks of FUGs were made since early 1990s in some districts in the country. Later, these initiatives were merged and a national level federation (Federation of Community Forestry Users Group, Nepal), shortly known as FECOFUN, was formed in 1995. Since then, it has become a mainstream network of thousands of FUGs nation-wide.

The main objectives of FECOFUN are:

- Foster sharing among FECOFUN
- Co-ordinate with Government and Non-Government organizations
- Promote equitable sharing of benefits from community forests
- Enhance awareness of local communities on forestry policy and their rights as well as bio-diversity conservation
- Strengthen institutional capability of FUGs

FECOFUN's current organizational structure is as follows:

- General Assembly (the supreme body of FECOFUN consisting of equal number of men and women representatives from all the districts)
- National Council (second main body of the FECOFUN comprising of one male and one female representatives from each district and office bearers of the National Executive Committee)
- National Executive Committee (the main executive body comprising of one male and one female representatives from each of the 14 Zones)

- Steering Committee (the regular working committee comprising of Chairperson, Vice-chair person, Member-secretary plus three members)

Key activities of FECOFUN include:

- Institutional strengthening of FECOFUN branches and FUGs in 12 districts
- Initiate a three-year pilot program on women leadership development and capacity strengthening
- Publication of Samayik Prakashan (English and Nepali)
- Publication of Extension materials
- Publication of materials on NTFP market information and extension
- Public advocacy and litigation support to FUGs
- Training, seminar and workshop as per necessity
- Establishment of resource center at National Secretariat
- Continued operation of Radio Program

Monitoring systems and practices

- Advocacy on user's rights, and demanding public accountability
- Changes in pro-public policy and legislation
- Government's action against CF process
- Build capacity of FUG to hold other agencies accountable
- Monitoring approach/process/methods (how far they are participatory)

Tools and techniques used

- Monitor DoF decisions, policies and memos
- Monitor awareness of FUG's informally i.e. count how many FUG's are aware of their rights, roles and responsibility
- Organize workshop, seminar and demonstration rallies

Personnel and organizational structure for monitoring

- FECOFUN staff at District and National level
- Local partners at District level
- Donor projects
- Some representatives from FUG's

FECOFUN raises awareness of FUG's and can be a mechanism for FUG's to monitor other agencies. They lobby at national level and could benefit from information from the community level.

ii. Center for Agro-Ecology and Development

Established in 1992, CAED stands for rights-based holistic approach for social transformation. Focused on local material and non-material resources, it's a reflective and learning organization staffed with multidisciplinary and multiethnic team. It is striving for its own self-reliance by producing and selling herbal teas and intending to venture to socially responsible and educational tourism. The mission of CAED is to strive for sustainable, self-sufficient and a just society with minimum pain. Its objectives has two folds:

- Help people to increase production from and productivity of land while promoting multiple use crops for cash in marginal lands, and
- Help people to gain confidence and enhance awareness about their relationship between the individuals and the society and between the nature and the society.

Its approach of work is dialogue and demonstration addressing community at household level. It seeks to adapt cultural forms of knowledge and communication systems as a part of the dialogue process. It conducts location specific, need-based training within CAED's broad holistic rights based framework. Now, CAED is better known by the name of its first programme- School of Ecology, Agriculture and Community Works (SEACOW). It was named school for its approach of learning by doing.

CEAD is organising the Rights-based Community Forestry Programme in 3 districts of Chure range with an aim to support some 300 Forest User groups through local NGOs.

Key monitoring activities promoted by CAED include:

- Distribution of roles and responsibilities among the members of user group
- Appointed ban Heralu or sub committees
- Monitoring subcommittees
- Books of records
- Regular meeting at tole & FUGC
- Meeting with DFOs and other stakeholders while visiting the district headquarter

iii. Action Aid Nepal

This is an UK based international non-governmental organization works in community development. It has divided its working area in different six themes[4]. Among these, community forestry is one.

It works in collaboration with local NGOs in an area base integrated approach. Particularly focusing to the forestry sector development, it works in community Forestry promotion in mid-hills, advocacy in the Terai forestry & supporting FECOFUN and TECOFAT.

According to the staffs at central office, monitoring is used to assess the impact of the project, Project planning, Organizational strengthening (but how is not clear). Conceptually, they emphasize on 'Rights based approach to M&E' but there is no any clear framework.

Generally, Action Aid and its partners identify impact indicators through workshops and staff meetings. Partner NGO's facilitating the community to generate their own indicators.

Action Aid, Nepal monitors the processes in community forest in the Terai and support advocacy work providing feedback in meeting and seed money for fieldwork.

Through regular meeting and reflection, they monitor their own inputs & outputs of campaigns, media coverage, and group's forms.

D. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The role of VDCs and DDCs in community forestry is not clear and consistent, although in several instances the local leaders are taking increasing interests in community forestry. Their roles has been mainly to date mediating the inter community/FUG relations, particularly at times of boundary and other conflicts. In few cases, they have more actively supported FUGs in organizational and forest management, sometimes extending support to even enterprise development.

While the local bodies are being emphasized as the major unit of decentralization in Nepal, and hence a special local self-governance act is in place to implement this idea, the FUG management of forest is further ahead in the process of power devolution, and this was implemented, with necessary legal provision, even before the DDC and VDC level decentralization. Leaders of the local governments often respond to this devolution of power by indifference, debatable claims on increased VDC/DDC control on FUG, and sharing of FUG funds.

Organizational priorities and capacities are also limited so as to allow them in active engagement in community forestry. Their priorities is more on physical and infrastructure development than social and institutional issues, and even less so in relation to forest management, particularly in areas, where forest resources are used mostly for the subsistence purposes.

Key practices include:

- Visit by VDC officials in FUG assemblies
- Conflict mediation
- Maintaining of record on FUGs

[4] country strategy paper II

- Why the monitoring practices is low
- Limited capacity
- Limited interests
- Contradictions – legal
- Political rivalry
- Resource conflicts

However as the local bodies have expanding scope for monitoring in future to improve the interface between FUG and VDC. In particular, VDC may have to strengthen its services in aspects of:

- Inter-community relations (resource sharing, conflict management)
- Advocacy
- Institutional development of FUGs

E. SYNTHESIS OF COLLABORATIVE MONITORING

Overall observations of the collaborative/participatory monitoring are as follows:

Innovations

Evidences show that there are a lot of on-going experimentation, field tests, piloting on monitoring and other related issues at FUG/RP level as well as a lot of discussion, debate at central or project level but there is very limited reflections at district level which overcome the difficulties, and enables smooth operation of monitoring system as desired.

Recently, the awareness on the importance of monitoring has increased, and MFSC and donor field projects are continuously revisiting their monitoring systems, processes, and formats and guidelines. NSCFP has recently reviewed its monitoring systems and produced a document Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Transferal (PME&T). In the new phase of DFID-supported Livelihoods and Forestry Project, there is an explicit emphasis on monitoring systems development. All this indicates an emerging trend from ad-hoc to a more explicit and systematic monitoring.

There are some recent Action Research, pilot tests, experimentation, experiences related to monitoring system at local level community forest management (see Table 6).

Although the specific innovations seem to be discontinued at the level or context in which they emerged, the idea in some cases have been carried over by other stakeholders, and in this sense, monitoring practices have contributed to the adaptation and improvement of community forestry system in general. One example of adaptive scaling up of such experiences is that the PAR on monitoring by ForestAction, LFP and the University of Reading drew heavily from the FFMP and NUKCFP that innovated some useful participatory methods of monitoring at local level.

Table 6: Some monitoring innovations

Organizations/ projects	Innovation/ Methods	Status	Innovative character
NSCFP	Participatory monitoring, evaluation & transferal (PMET)	Monitoring review document with recommendations for project implementation *(not yet in practice)*	Integrated, emphasis on use of information generated, participation of all project stakeholders
NARMSAP/ DoF	1. DFO-FUG-DFO Monitoring 2. Participatory reflection & performance review	*1.* A format (similar to the CPFD's database format) for obtaining database on FUG annual report has been designed and DFOs of the project districts fill the formats regularly at the end of the each fiscal year *(Regularly followed but the question of sustaining the maintaining database after project phase out because it is costly in terms of time of resources of DFO staffs)* 2. In central region, participatory self-monitoring scheme was initiated to review and reflect the performance of field staffs *(sample basis not in practice).*	Comprehensive, has been used as a basis by district forest offices to prepare district-specific checklist
LFP (Former NUKCFP)	1. Participatory research on Self monitoring 2. Local level monitoring system research	1. Piloted pictorial self-monitoring with FUGs (now *not in practice*) 2. Action research collaborated with Reading University and ForestAction to develop monitoring process and indicators at local level with FUGs in Baglung district *(a detailed methodology of facilitating self monitoring of FUGs has been devised-not yet final stage)*	3.
CHFDP	FUG self	Piloted with some FUGs of	

	Monitoring through record keeping	project area. A register is maintained by FUGs & activity-planing decisions are recorded in the register. This register is reviewed and feedback is given to the FUGs by project staffs *(now it is not in practice and found less useful where the FUG members are illiterate).*	
CARE, Nepal	Spider web diagramming	This assessment tools is used by FUGs and other groups to monitor their activity performance. It was experienced in UAKWDP (experience *documented*)	
CIFOR	Self monitoring workshop of FUGs	Sets of prioritized activities have been identified during the workshop (on-*going action research on ACM*).	
CPFD	Review of guidelines and formats	OP guideline, Inventory, Annual progress report format etc.	
ForestAction/CIFOR	Case study on ACM	Case study of 8-10 selected FUGs are being prepared *(on-going)*	

Generally these formats are very similar in content, mostly are guided by CPFD's database requirements. Many of the formats are redesigned to appropriate with their needs of information at different layer/project level.

Comparison among institutions

Bilateral forestry projects are on the lead in terms of understanding and initiating monitoring systems, and the processes and outputs of their monitoring often form the significant part of government monitoring. Local government still lacks a clear understanding of their roles in community forestry, due primarily to some of the apparent contradictions between forestry and local governance acts, and therefore, they have actually no or limited monitoring of FUG level forest management, except some informal ways to look at political dimensions. I/NGOs work in community forestry is highly diverse in terms of services (ranging from technical to advocacy/political), geographic coverage (small area based to national) and service delivery capability, and all these have made their monitoring systems variable, yet with limited appreciation of monitoring as a value adding process.

Approach

Projects and many of the DFOs have developed criteria and indicators to monitor the FUG activity, achievements and progress. These indicators, although developed with little or no participation of FUG members and other local level stakeholders, are primarily used to generate information and feedback for project management, donor organization and sometimes DOF and MFSC.

Most of the projects have established databases at their project site on FUG. They use the workshops, field visits, case studies as the means of monitoring and reflections. Projects have developed detailed indicators-based checklists and information sheets such as training evaluation checklists, FUG review and planning formats, DFO reporting formats, and DFO monitoring and evaluation form. See table below for an overview of various tools used in collecting information by various institutions.

Table 8 Tools used in monitoring by various organization/projects

Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation Monitoring Division	**Donor Projects: CHFDP (GTZ), LFP (DFID), NACRMP (AUSAID), NSCFP (SDC), Resource Management Project EFEA (USAID), NARMSAP (DENNIDA**
Annual progress report Work performance form Files of recommended decisions OFMP Project documents Responses to NPC and parliament	FUG general database FUG fund database FUG forest management and production database FUG basic information database OP forest database Training information database IGA information database Formats, checklists, information sheets Training evaluation checklists FUG review and planning formats Special information sheets Participatory research & pilot tests Project activities report DFO reporting formats National FUG data base form DFO monitoring and evaluation form Workshops, field visits, case studies Annual progress reports CF promotion reports (specific)
Department of Forests	**I/NGOs including federations of FUGs**
Review and planning meeting Annual progress Work performance form Annual program File National w/s, meeting OFMP OP FUG database	Annual and project reports Regular staff meeting & workshops Case studies based on checklists, Discussion forums Field visits Monitoring formats (occasional) Specific research & pilot tests
District Forest Offices	**Regional Forest Directorate**
Annual progress Work performance form Annual program Additional Circular Additional format OP, constitutions, FUG minutes Program report Financial report (audit reports) Forest product sale Forest product distribution	Review and planning meeting Annual progress Work performance form Annual program Additional Circular Additional district level format

Database (register) Meeting minutes, workshops, training Correspondence Kaa.Sa.Mu (annual staff performance evaluation report)	
Illaka & Range Posts	
Field visit Interaction Reports (monthly, quarterly and annual) Minutes of staff meeting OPs & Constitutions of FUGs	

The contents and objective of some of the formats mentioned in the table are outlined in Annex 4.

MFSC monitors FUG for national awards as well, apart from the regular monitoring.

There is no significant difference among the donor field projects and MFSC in using formats as the tools to collect monitoring information. This is so not only in terms of the limited participation of FUGs in designing such systems but also in making clearer where and how the collected information is going to be used.

I/NGOs work in specific locations and have limited geographical area, which allow them to adopt reflective methods and tools such as regular staff meeting and workshops, prepare case studies, organize discussion forums and field visits. Occasionally, they use the monitoring formats too.

All this indicates that monitoring has been increasingly realized as the concept of periodic evaluation, and many institutions have devised different approaches, processes and tools to monitor impact, process, and activity (individual performance and financial).

Many of the government officials, donor field projects, I/NGOs and other support institutions talk about the self-monitoring at FUG level. Very few of them hardly touch the issue of self-monitoring at their own institutions.

Costs and benefits

Cost and benefits of monitoring is a challenging issue particularly in participatory monitoring. Many studies show that the monitoring 'can be costly not only for an organisation or projects but also becomes more costly to local people who participate. In some way, the donor field projects who are piloting, testing the participatory monitoring are paying money for their time costs other wise used for livelihoods support, which seems justified in relation to the time of the villagers. But it raises many questions related to sustainability of the approach: Can we afford to pay the cost of participation at all level at implementation stages? Who will bear the cost of dependency created by established compensation mechanism at different level?

Strong and weak elements of collaborative monitoring

Strengths

- Diversity of approaches adopted by various projects, and even district forest offices
- Compilation and publication of report (such as by Kathmandu and Lalitpur DFOs)
- Involvement of multiple stakeholders (such as NSCFP)

- Collection of huge amount of information
- Frequent workshops, meetings and interactions across the institutions
- Databases at DFO and project levels
- DFO monitoring of FUGs connected to FUG support strategy (such as FUG categorization forms in Baglung district)
- Formation of monitoring unit in projects and various layers of MFSC
- Increased appreciation of the need for monitoring at all levels
- Trials and experimentations by projects and DFOs
- Adaptation of centrally designed formats at lower levels (such as by Kathmandu DFO)
- Some events of self-monitoring such as meetings, retreats, teambuilding workshops at various levels
- Limited monitoring of constitutional issues of monitoring (such as why, how of monitoring)
- Concerns over the need for taking into account activity, process, outputs, inputs and impacts while designing a monitoring system
- Some practices designed to facilitate internal learning of FUG (such as by NUKCFP)
- Initiatives for assisting communities to undertake upward monitoring policies and governance contexts (such as by FECOFUN)
- Longitudinal studies to monitor impact (such as by NUKCFP on the impact of community forestry on forest condition)
- Invention and application of multiplicity of tools in monitoring by different institutions at different levels

Weaknesses

- Emphasis on upward accountability
- Limited participation of FUGs in the design of monitoring practices
- Lack of clarity on objectives of monitoring
- No downward feedback
- Central level authorities (such as MFSC and NPC) emphasize quantitative indicators, and donors emphasize log-frame based indicators, which do not adequately take into account the process or the 'how' question
- Limited self-monitoring of support institutions
- Emphasis of upper layers (such as MFSC) on 'monitoring' (although this is also inadequate) rather than developing system for 'monitoring of monitoring' so that lower units become stronger and capable of doing monitoring
- Limited analysis of costs and benefits of monitoring
- Asymmetrical involvement of four categories of stakeholders in monitoring, with government and forestry projects higher, and NGOs and local governments lower
- Legal contradictions in defining scope and objectives of monitoring for local government
- Limited institutional capacity to design and undertake monitoring
- Limited cross-institutional communication and cross-learning
- Emphasis on log-frame for monitoring limiting scope for using indicators that emerge through new learning through project implementation
- Discontinuation of innovative practices and limited documentations (such as NUKCFP and NACRMP)
- Non-coherent and un-coordinated monitoring systems
- Emphasis on conventional approach (control, target etc.) than promoting learning at all levels

Contextual factors related to monitoring

These factors were observed to influence the monitoring systems and practices at different levels (however, this is not comprehensive list):

- Personal interests and motivation for this type of job
- Availability of resources with the institutions
- Institutional capacity
- Higher level directions and information demands
- Clarity on management goals
- Policy environment- is favorable, but increasingly confused, with conflicts between cross-sectoral acts, and new forestry rules and orders inconsistent with forest policy and act
- Stakeholders' perceptions on monitoring

F. LESSONS

- Monitoring improves social learning and adaptive management
- Learning-oriented diversified approaches to monitoring can generate contexts specific lessons
- Clarifying management goals and enhancing human enthusiasm within organizations can create conditions for improved monitoring systems and practices
- Vertically and horizontally linked monitoring practices can generate information that is crucial for institutional decision-making and macro-level policy shaping
- Monitoring can be integrated into action, and hence can generate feedback during the implementation
- Synthesis of experiences and learning of specific monitoring practices may contribute to system-wide learning and improvement
- Longitudinal monitoring can help generate feedback on impacts

3. Gaps and opportunities

All of the stakeholder groups at all levels and anywhere in the system have limited internal monitoring and joint monitoring for common issues. Some highlights on gaps and opportunities for monitoring with various stakeholder groups is presented below:

At the FUG level, the learning cycle is dominated by few elites of the community, and the external monitoring action by projects and DFOs is mostly extractive. Outsiders focus more on their own learning cycle rather than developing a FUG-self monitoring system to promote their action learning in forest management. A recent study (ForestAction, The University of Reading and LFP) and the on-going MFSC/CIFOR/New ERA/Forest Action research on Adaptive and Collaborative Management both indicated potentially positive impacts of strengthened FUG self-monitoring systems, and some generalizeable methodological lessons for this, notwithstanding great variations in socio-economic and ecological contexts in which these initiatives were undertaken.

At the MFSC and DoF levels, monitoring is not generally considered a tool of learning but a means of control. Current monitoring practices include target oriented styles (playing with

quantity and figures only), one way information flow, useless formats and useless information with no processing mechanisms and analysis to feed management, routine mechanical reporting, no linkage of financial monitoring with output of activities, incompatibility/ inconsistency between organizational structure within ministry and its department, M&E as neglected area and considered as functionless positions. There is a need to rectify the macro level monitoring perspectives by connecting to local level monitoring systems.

DFO and Range Post are the most authentic links between local communities and the central level policy making units, and hence their monitoring systems and interface with others is crucial in facilitating enabling environment at macro level, as well as streamlining service delivery at community level. At these levels, there are some examples of monitoring of FUGs. These are based on some formats completed by FUGs and range post staff. These contain too many details without actually considering how such information is going to be used, when and for what purpose. This type of monitoring has been encountered in several districts mostly with support from one or the other forestry projects.

The local level Government institutions (VDCs and DDCs) have tremendous scope for developing their own self-monitoring as well as collaborative monitoring systems with FUGs, and other local level intermediaries (such as field projects, FECOFUN, and NGOs). DDCs and VDCs have been legally empowered to lead and coordinate the local development processes, including forestry. As the elected political leaders, they closely look at the resources that have potential for livelihoods and community based forestry institutional processes, particularly in terms of their relative power level and resources. Their monitoring systems is based on occasional flow of information, and a proper monitoring system would enhance their contributions to community forestry by not only helping to streamline the services but through advocacy at local as well as national levels. As there are mandatory links between DDCs and DFOs (annual forest development programs of DFO must be endorsed by DDC council before they are implemented), they can develop collaborative monitoring systems to support each other (and hence to contribute to local level forests management).

FECOFUN at district level exist at two tiers – district and range post committee, which parallels with the structure of the Department of Forest. While committees at the two levels have been formed in many areas, they are still struggling to take roles in local level forest management. There are some innovative cases where local FECOFUN have taken proactive roles. National level FECOFUN interventions can be further strengthened and made more responsive to local level forest management issues if monitoring systems at local FECOFUN is strengthened and connected to central FECOFUN. Quite often, the spirit of local level FECOFUN and that of central level has been different, and this is because of absence of effective monitoring within and between FECOFUN units at different levels. Along with their organizational planning, monitoring can be introduced to strengthen their roles.

NGOs contributions in community forestry are highly variable depending on the locations, issues, type and capacity of the NGOs. They have either focussed on local community level actions or national level advocacy actions, and few works in the interface between micro and macro levels. They also have limited internal self-monitoring, and great scope of collaborative monitoring exists with DFOs, projects and FECOFUN. NGOs are expected to take increasing roles at micro and macro level roles in forestry in the years to come, with increasing unmet demand for such services.

Several bilateral forestry projects have tried to implement one or the other forms of monitoring, which are mostly designed to feed information to project life cycle, and yet there are few attempts in developing FUG monitoring systems. These PM&E initiatives have been confined to pilot actions, and no scaling up experiences has existed.

Absence of self as well as collaborative monitoring has limited the connections between community management of forest and service providers as well as policy makers at macro level. Linkage between community and Government is often recognized but no efforts made in terms of monitoring systems to date. All have one way and extractive type of systems. No knowledge on each other's monitoring systems.

Observations and studies show impact and outputs are sub-optimal. This is mainly in terms of passive management of forests, limited access of poor and marginalized groups, limited provision of quality technical and institutional development services and the like. Monitoring as a tool of learning, negotiation, aiding decision-making and providing feedback to policy can be an important means to bring a difference.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If monitoring is considered as a vehicle for learning and change, it needs to be recognized that there is a huge potential as well as scope of strengthening monitoring systems. In the contexts of changing views and perceptions of local level forest management, the approach and methods of monitoring should be changed. This is only possible when the perception about the monitoring starts to be challenged from both insiders and outsiders involved in it. Another critical but very significant gap is the use of appropriate tools of monitoring. Heavy uses of formats and guidelines have narrowed down the scope of further improvement of monitoring system through continuous review and reflections among the concerned stakeholders.

Based on the review of existing monitoring system and practices in a context of local level community forest management, it can be seen that monitoring has been an increasingly priority agenda with a growing understanding of its potential role to improve the learning cycle of FUGs as well as other collaborating stakeholders in local level forest management. But at the same time, there are many areas to improve urgently as to make monitoring system operational.

Monitoring has been in practice at both FUG as well as the supporting institutions levels, although the meanings, purpose, focus and approach vary significantly. However, all types of stakeholder groups have similar conception that monitoring is the tool or means of controlling the people and processes rather facilitating learning, and this is particularly so with more formal and bureaucratic organizations.

While there are informal processes and forms of FUG self-monitoring, collaborative stakeholders hardly see a scope of self-monitoring integrated with strategic planning within them. There is limited or no evidence of self-monitoring systems at all level among the stakeholders, who have temptation of monitoring others, rather than monitoring together, each other or self-monitoring. Major part of innovations and practices in collaborative monitoring is initiated by bilateral

forestry projects, and yet, it was found out that projects still consider monitoring as a discrete part of project cycle, and fail to capitalize on the opportunities of learning through an in-built process of testing assumptions, and reflecting upon outcomes and processes.

Despite having common working spaces and agendas, institutions have limited established linkages with each other to facilitate two-way flow of information. Different institutions, particularly donor field projects have initiated various studies and actions, mainly at pilot scale but there are few examples of scaling up over space and time. There is very limited documentation of monitoring experiences because of limited commitment to monitoring at professional, and organizational levels.

The study cases and analysis describe these issues in specific contexts and conditions, and hence generate some lessons, which form the basis for identifying future directions. There is a need to recognize different types of information needs across different types of institutions involved in community forestry and at various layers within them, as well as a mechanism to facilitate communication, cross-learning and interactive reflections. The main areas of improving the overall monitoring system of community forestry in Nepal are to strengthen strategic planning and self-monitoring at all levels including FUG, and then facilitating participatory/collaborative monitoring systems between institutions, and levels within them. A precondition for this is that all have to understand monitoring as a way of learning, and this requires debates and deliberations among the stakeholders.

Based on these finding, the following strategies have been suggested to improve monitoring system in local level community forest management: a) promote monitoring as a process of continuous review, reflections and documentation of learning at all levels, b) strengthen vertical as well as horizontal linkages at different levels by developing mechanisms of two-way flow of information, c) find out the appropriate linkage options between macro and micro level decisions systems and institutions, d) develop and strengthen FUG self-monitoring systems, e) strengthen self-monitoring systems of stakeholders at all levels, and e) promote participatory/collaborative monitoring systems between FUGs and the four categories of stakeholders.

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VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1:Checklist for case study

Name of the institution .....
Background and introduction to the organization
History/ Establishment
Goal/ Objective
1
2
3
Programme area focus

Geographical coverage

Target groups (Audiences)

Scale /size

Main collaborators/donors

Review of the monitoring and evaluation system and practices

Overview
Perceptions related to monitoring

Key areas of monitoring interests (what, why, and with respect to which programme areas, geographic focus, clients groups)

Monitoring approach /process/methods (how far they are participatory)

Tools and techniques used

Use of monitoring information in decision making
Use of the monitoring information
Decision using this information
Costs/contribution at different level
Personal and organizational structure for monitoring

Relative amount of importance/ resource allocated to monitoring

Linkages between monitoring and evaluation

Time dimension
    How the monitoring perceptions, practices...have changed over time

Monitoring interface

Success, failure, strength, Weaknesses

Key lessons/ challenges/ findings

System and practices
Activities
Outcomes Innovations

Annex 2: List of persons (consulted)

MFSC: Monitoring division (Rajendra Bdr. Joshi), Foreign Aid division (Sankar Dahal, B.Pokharel)
DoF: Planning division, DoF (Jamuna K. Tamrakar,), CPFD (K.B. Shrestha) , Leasehold forestry (Shree Baral)
RDs: R P Paudel
DFOs:
Baglung- DFO (Mahesh Hari Acharya), AFO (Kedar Paudel) & Range Post Staffs
Kathmandu- AFO (Sunil K. Sharma) & Range post staffs
RPs: Kusmisera, Baglung & Seshnarayan range post Kathamandu,
FUGs: PalloPakho ,Baglung & Rani, Makawan pur
FECOFUN: Makawanpur & Central Committee Kathmandu
AAN: Manager, Community forestry (Bimala Paudel (Rai)
CARE: X
SEACOW: Devendra Adhikari
Donor Projects;
NARMSAP: Monitoring officer (Laxman Satyal)
NSCFP: monitoring officer (Ganga R Dahal)
NRMSCFP: Monitoring officer (Sabita shrestha)
LFP: Communication unit (Sunil Lama)
CHFDP: Programme officer (Damber Tembe)

Annex 3: Time schedule: May-June, September-October, 2001

May -June Stakeholder consultation
Sept- October Documents review and write up
November 2001- April 2002: analysis and write-up

Annex 4: Monitoring formats

Monitoring and evaluation formats developed by various institutions and projects

S.N.	Name of the format	Organization/ Projects	Contents	Used for
1	CF Evaluation Form	NUKCFP-Dhankuta	Covers mainly the forest condition, institutional development, communication, awareness & Learning	Monitoring of FUGs activity
2	Annual Progress report	NSCFP	Focused on FUG income generation activities	Periodic assessment of FUGs
3	FUG Data base format	CPFD	Covers general introduction, activities on; institutional, forest conservation & development, income generation, fund management& community development activities	Database prep.
4	FUG categorization criteria and process	NUKCFP-Dhaulagiri area	Covers broad area; Forest Management Institutional development & Fund mobilization	Categories the FUGs based on score
5	FUG Annual progress report Format	NUKCFP-Koshi area	Covers general introduction, activities on; institutional, forest conservation & development, income generation, fund management& community development activities	
6	FUG's Annual Monitoring Format	DFO Baglung	Similar to FUG database format with some details!	Used
7	Monitoring format	CPFD	Two separate format for information from FUGs and information by monitor, Similar to Database format detailed with qualitative questionnaire	Applied in 38 districts
8	Criteria for prize distribution at district level	CPFD	There are 6 criteria	All 75 districts
9	Achievement evaluation form	NPC	Covers Forest management issues in a comparative form	To be filled by Ranger to DoF

10	FUG annual Report	CPFD/NARMSAP	Detailed information on FUG data base	Annual report of FUGs records to be made by DFOs
11	Ganesh Man Award FUG selection criteria	MFSC	Criteria of FUG selection for Ganesh Man award	FUGs Selection criteria
12	Monitoring indicators	SDC	Project indicators – forest, livelihoods (household), forest/natural system, network, community development, FUG institutional aspect – around 200 indicators.	
13	Annual programme/report format	MFSC	Details of targeted programme	
14	Annual/Quarterly programme/report format	MFSC		
15	Annual progress report format	Koshi hills		