

Strategic forest management planning in Terai¹

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The Terai component of the Livelihoods & Forestry Programme (LFP) has a first phase objective of facilitating the participatory development of district strategic forest management plans in the Terai. Nawalparasi, Rupandehi and Kapilvastu districts have been selected for the implementation of this first phase. A preliminary strategy as outlined in the LFP Inception Report is as follows.

LFP wishes to facilitate the full and effective participation of all interest groups in forest management planning, especially the poor and marginalized and those who depend heavily on forest resources for their livelihoods. For this, LFP intends to work with all existing organizations with an interest in forest management. An assessment of the existing capacity of partners will be undertaken, and plans for capacity building formulated where necessary in agreement with other stakeholders.

In each district LFP proposes to facilitate the establishment of a District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC) along the lines being suggested by the SNV supported Biodiversity Sector Programme - Siwalik & Terai (BISEP-ST), comprising representatives of all stakeholder groups [BISEP-ST 2002], to coordinate LFP and district forest sector stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring activities. The process of DFCC establishment will commence at district multi-stakeholder workshops.

In order to promote full community participation, LFP wishes to undertake a mass communication program, explaining the goals and strategy of LFP and encouraging participation. The idea is to promote LFP as the district stakeholders' vehicle for forest management planning and implementation.

Having fully investigated existing information and secondary data, district-wide baseline surveys will be undertaken over a period of 6-8 months, to enable the drawing up of Village Development Committee (VDC), Ilaka, Range Post, District profiles. Baseline surveys of all VDCs are proposed, although these will have different focuses depending primarily on distance from the forest. These should be organized by DFO and carried out by mixed teams of DFO staff. Local Government representatives, NGO and CBO representatives.

Within each Range Post, baseline surveys will be carried out at the VDC level, the basic profiling unit for the survey. Trained facilitators from partner organizations will coordinate the fieldwork at the VDC and sub-VDC level. At the VDC level, the facilitators will encourage sub-group formation. The community participants themselves will define this process in order to best represent their diverse interests and opinions.

One range post per district will be initially selected for piloting the above approach, after which an evaluation will be undertaken, jointly by LFP and partners, in order to assess the Programme's effectiveness and to make suggestions for improvements for the Programme's implementation in

¹Management of Nepal's Terai forests has remained contentious issue. An article by Dr J C Baral in this issue looks into the various dimensions of this debate. A component of DFID supported livelihoods and Forestry programme is mandated to initiate a process of identifying options and strategies for the management of rapidly depleting Terai forests. This effort is being seen with interests in Nepal, and a brief information on how the project is approaching the issue is given so that a wider reflection of the progress may be made. Editors.

the remaining Range Posts of the districts. Subsequently, two or more Range Posts will be trained simultaneously in each district over the coming months.

The same facilitators that undertook the baseline survey should be involved in strategic management planning at the community level, where possible management scenarios need to be discussed by the same interest groups that participated in the baseline survey. The results of the baseline surveys will already have been disseminated to communities, yet there will remain a need to discuss how these fit in with the findings from all VDCs in each district, and what the implications are for the options of forest management.

LFP has other components, including research collaborations and the establishment of pilot forest management systems in selected localities for demonstration and viability studies. LFP will also work closely with projects in other Terai districts, especially BISEP-ST, the Churia Forest Development Project (ChFDP) and CARE Nepal's Churia Watershed Management Project and Forest Partnership Programme (FPP). LFP will represent the districts at central level policy and legislation discussions.



It is a story about governance. There was a team of four people named EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY AND NOBODY. They had governed an organization. One day there was an important job to be done and EVERYBODY was sure that SOMEBODY would do it. ANYBODY could have done it. But NOBODY realized that EVERYBODY would not do it . It ended up that EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY when NOBODY did that ANYBODY could have done.