



## The Third Year of ForestAction in 'Action'

### Annual Report 2003



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## Introduction

Forest Resources Studies and Action Team (ForestAction) has completed the third full year since its establishment in 2000. This report summarizes the ForestAction's activities in 2003 in all aspects of its life— organizational development, progress, networking and alliances, and the indication of possible future directions. This report is aimed at communicating the experiences with a range of stakeholders, who are concerned with sustainable management of natural resources and enhancement of livelihoods in Nepal. We anticipate feedback and suggestions in exchange, and hope to strengthen our alliances with people sharing similar visions and missions in the days to come.

## ForestAction Group

ForestAction Group is a self-governed civil society organization specializing in the field of community based natural resource management, including community forestry, as a strategy of strengthening environmental management and rural livelihoods. Started as an HMG registered NGO (July 2000) called Forest Resources Studies and Action Team (ForestAction), the ForestAction Group has recently (December 2002) expanded its formal institutional structure to include a for-profit company called Environmental Resources Institute (ERI) with a view to respond to ever increasing national and international demands for quality scientific, educational and consulting services. The two organizational entities of ForestAction Group allow to engage in both the civilian politics of the environmental sector (through ForestAction), as well as deliver competitive intellectual products and services (through ERI). This report is about ForestAction.

## 1. Our Mission

Established in 2000, ForestAction has a vision of forest dependent communities, particularly the poor and marginalized groups, taking control and active role in, and equitable share from, the management

of forest and natural resources. Our mission is to accelerate the process of change through policy, institutional and technical innovations that ultimately benefits and empowers these groups. Our mission is based on the premise that devolution of power, democratization of institutions, and participatory governance can facilitate sustainable, efficient and equitable management of natural resources.

## 2. Key Results

ForestAction strives to bring concurrent changes in policy, institutional and technical aspects of natural resource management. We will continue to achieve the following results through our future actions in Nepal's forestry and livelihood sector:

- ❑ Enabling policies for community/participatory forestry
- ❑ Improved participation of the poor and marginalized in forest related decision-making
- ❑ Redefining roles, relationships, responsibilities and authorities of civil society, forest bureaucracy, communities and private sector
- ❑ Effective linkages across micro-meso-macro levels of resource management
- ❑ Analysis of contemporary policy issues and documentation
- ❑ Improved management of forest including biodiversity conservation
- ❑ Strengthening of national service delivery capacity through training and information dissemination
- ❑ Development of innovative strategies, methods, processes and tools through participatory action research

## 3. Progress and Activities:

We have conducted several research and development activities on key issues of forestry and livelihoods using participatory action

learning approach in collaboration with several research and development. The activities are briefly outlined below:

### ***Research and Development***

- i. **Management of Knowledge System in Natural Resource Management - Exploring Policy and Institutional Framework in Nepal:** This project has been awarded to ForestAction by International Development Research Centre (IDRC) through research on Knowledge Systems Competition 2002 – 2003. The study on knowledge systems aims to make a significant contribution in improving policy and institutional frameworks for managing knowledge systems in Nepal. For this purpose, the study intends to understand, explicate and analyze selected natural resource institutions at local, sub-national and national levels. One specific objective of this study will be to explore ways in which knowledge is perceived, approached, communicated and applied in natural resource management sector (mainly forestry, irrigation and agriculture). Besides, it also proposes to investigate policy and institutional frameworks for effective management of natural resource knowledge systems at strategic and operational levels in Nepal. The project was started in November 2003 and will last for one and a half years.
- ii. **Developing Methodology for Sustainable Harvesting of Medicinal Plants in Nepal:** This project is being carried out with financial support from Department for International Development (DFID), UK. This is a collaborative research of ForestAction, Environmental Change Institute of Oxford University, UK and Foundation of Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), India. This research aims to develop methodology for sustainable harvesting of medicinal plants resources in Nepal that will support in improving the livelihoods of rural people by enhancing access to cash and healthcare; contributing to sustainable environment and resources through development of new, reliable, efficient and usable methods. The

methods will be biometrically acceptable and will incorporate indigenous technical knowledge.

- iii. **Reforming Governance of FUGs through an Action Learning Process.** ForestAction is carrying out this study in collaboration with Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihood Project (NACRMLP). The main focus of the project is to facilitate planning, self-monitoring and learning processes to reform the existing governance of selected forest user groups of Kabhreplanchowk and Sindhupalchok districts. This will also provide platforms for joint learning among relevant stakeholders with respect to strengthening FUG level self-governance as well as to document and share the sets of knowledge and experiences on the strategies and approaches of governance reform gained through experiments (action-learning-reflection process) within the given contextual background and conceptual framework.
- iv. **Gender Mainstreaming in Tiger Rhino Conservation Project:** ForestAction supported in gender mainstreaming in Tiger Rhino Conservation Project with financial support from King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC). The objectives of the work was to provide backstopping support for the field staff in increasing women participation through women empowerment and gender mainstreaming in all project components in natural resource management sector of KMTNC.
- v. **Project on Strengthening Advocacy and Local Government Accountability:** The project was implemented in the four Terai districts (Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha and Sarlahi) of eastern and central region of Nepal. The aim of the project was to create good governance by strengthening people's advocacy actions and sensitizing the duty-holders about their accountability to generate better livelihood opportunities particularly for the poor and marginalized groups in the project area. The Asia

Foundation coordinated the project implementations. Two national level NGOs - Pro-Public and INSEC took the major implementing role of the project with the technical support from ForestAction.

- vi. **A Review of Forest Policies and Practices in Cambodia and Strategies for Promoting People Centered Management of Forests:** This study was carried out by ForestAction with financial support from ActionAid, China. The aim of the study was to understand the overall policy and institutional context of the forestry sector in Cambodia, with particular reference to problems and opportunities of community management of forest resources. An attempt was made to understand linkages between policy and practices, and to analyze opportunities to enhance the rights, access and institutions of local people, including poor and marginalized groups.
- vii. **Analyzing Participatory Trends in Nepal's Community Forestry:** In collaboration with Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) Forest Conservation Project Japan, ForestAction undertook this study. The main concern of the study was to discuss the trends of Nepal forest policy in terms of historical background, legislative policy, institutional and administrative policy, as well as the change in policy goals, planning and priorities, and analysis of trends of local participation.
- viii. **Action and Learning Processes for Common Property Forest Management:** This project was funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), UK through Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP), UK. It was a follow up study on previous project called 'Common Property Forest Resources in Nepal: Developing Monitoring Systems for Use at the Local Level' conducted on 2001. The aim of the previous project was to develop methods for facilitating the initiation of group level action and learning processes with a

focus on self-monitoring as a crucial link within this. The processes were consisted of steps in sequence of negotiation and information analysis, which was hoped, would be continued in the case study sites and possibly scaled out in the local area. The follow up study therefore aimed to find out whether or not the processes, or steps within them, have been continued or adapted.

- ix. ForestAction had contributed on a consultancy work on **Enhancing Access of the Poor to Mountain Natural Resources Policy Processes and Practices.**
- x. ForestAction facilitated **A Study Tour for a team of Cambodian NGOs** to share experiences of community forestry in Nepal. The study tour was mainly focused on briefing community forestry's policies and practices, direct interaction with different stakeholders including Forest User Groups and visit to community forests.

## Training and workshops

ForestAction organized various training and workshops in 2003. A unique feature of the national level trainings is that the full cost of the training was recovered from the participants or their organizations. A brief description of these training which were organized last year are given below:

- i. ***A National Seminar on Management of Common Property Resources (CPR) and Equity: Exploring Lessons from Nepal:*** ForestAction in collaboration with International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) organized a one day seminar on management of common property resources and equity. The main objectives of the seminar was to document case studies incorporating evidences, lessons and insights to facilitate mainstreaming of equity and poverty concerns in the management of CPR, namely community forestry and farmer managed irrigation systems. In total, thirteen papers were

presented on different aspects of common property resources including seven case studies. As a form of publication, the seminar proceeding is being published in Feb 2004.

- ii. ***Training on Participatory Resource Inventory in Community Forestry.*** A 10-day training course on "Participatory Resource Inventory in Community Forestry" was organized in collaboration with Environmental Resource Institute (ERI). The purpose of the training was to develop skills of participants in carrying out inventory in community forests. The concepts, approaches, and processes of inventory along with current issues of inventory were also discussed in the training sessions.
- iii. ***Training on Self-monitoring System (SMS) at Community Based Organization.*** A five-day long training course on "Developing Self-Monitoring Systems at Community Based Organization" was organized by ForestAction in collaboration with ERI at Dhulikhel, Kavre. The purpose of the training was to orient participants on the concepts, approaches, and processes of self-monitoring as well as some tools to facilitate self-monitoring systems at community level institutions.

## Publication/ Documentation

- ***Journal of Forest and Livelihood Vol. 3 (1) July 2003:*** This issue of the journal was the joint product of ForestAction, Nepal and Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK. There are altogether seven articles based on research provide critical insights into the process, impact and challenges of community forestry in Nepal. The papers in this joint issue are expected to stimulate reflection amongst all the readers about the lessons to be learned from community forestry in Nepal for application globally. Of particular interest may be the clear conclusion that community forestry can no longer be seen as simply meeting the dual objectives of conservation and poverty alleviation, but that

it also may have a much more important role in empowering local people to take action on issues beyond forest management.

- **Journal of Forest and Livelihood Vol. 2 (2) Feb 2003:** It is the third issue of Forest and Livelihood . In this issue, the institutional and policy challenges in Nepal's forestry sector are described in terms of complexity and diversity, and several new insights and ideas put forward by authors for tackling these challenges. A common policy perspective emerging from these analyses is that the role of civil society in shaping policies and providing services should be strengthened, while refocusing the role of government agencies in monitoring of policy implementation. Such a process of redefining power and roles require even more conscious social learning and collaboration on the part of the stakeholders.
- **Hamro Ban Sampada (in Nepali) three issues in 2003:** Hamro Ban Sampada is a Nepali Journal in natural resource management. Started last year, it is published three times a year addressing the issues in Natural Resources Management, specially forest management in Nepal. The publication of this journal was initiated realizing the gap of Nepali reading material to social workers, field facilitators, community leaders.  
The first and second issues (Year 1 -No 1 and No 2) of the journal have presented articles on inventory issues, governance, community forestry, monitoring, NTFPs, leasehold forestry, role of FECOFUN, NGOs and role of community forestry. The third issue of first year has been published as a special issue on collaborative forest management, which has become a hot debate in case of Terai forest management. Besides this, the journal has presented other two articles including the issue of tax in community forestry.
- **A Survey of the Priority Problems of the Forest and Tree-Dependent Poor People in Nepal - Nepali summary report:** ForestAction conducted a survey commissioned by the Forestry Research Programme (FRP) of the Department for International

Development (DFID), managed by Natural Resources International Limited (NR International). The aim of the survey was to list the underlying causes of poverty, as perceived by the people who rely on forest and tree resources, as well as different categories of institutions that seek to reduce poverty. The survey has documented existing problems and their underlying causes. To disseminate the findings of the survey to other general Nepali readers, the Nepali summary report has been published.

- **People Centered Advocacy Manual:** This manual is a part of the joint initiatives of ForestAction, The Asia Foundation, Forum for Protection of Public Interest (Pro-Public) & Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) as an outcome of the project "Strengthening Advocacy for Local Government Accountability". The manual has useful for the field workers and facilitators as guidebook in organizing people to demand accountability of government and society.
- Biodiversity Assessment for Whom? Issues, Perspectives and Lessons from Community Forestry in Nepal (A discussion note)
- Analyzing Participatory Trends in Nepal's Community Forestry
- A Reflective Learning Report on Strengthening Advocacy and Local Government Accountability Project
- Equity and Social Justice in Natural Resource Management (A discussion note)
- Community Forestry in Nepal - Current Issues and Way Forward. (A discussion note)
- Press releases at local level –on key issues of community forestry and irrigation in Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusa and Sarlahi
- Website: linkage with ETFRN, Livelihood connect, ODI, ECI

## Partners with whom ForestAction has worked directly or indirectly

- Action Aid China
- ActionAid Nepal
- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Indonesia
- Department for International Development (DFID), UK
- Environmental Change Institute (ECI) of University of Oxford, UK
- Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu
- International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada
- Livelihoods and Forestry Programme of DFID, Nepal
- Local Forest User Groups, Women Group, Irrigation Water User Group, District Level FECOFUN and NGOs
- Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal
- National NGOs: Pro-Public, INSEC
- Natural Resource International, UK
- Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP), UK
- Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihood Project (NACRMLP), Kathmandu
- New ERA, Nepal
- Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK
- The Asia Foundation, Nepal
- The University of Reading, UK
- Whitely Awards Foundation, UK

## International Networking

- Dr Netra Timsina attended International Community Research Network Conference, Minnesota 16-19 October, 2003 and he also attended Work Plan Review and Implementation and Planning in 21-24 October, 2003 of Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC).
- Distribution of *Journal of Forest and Livelihood* to more than 120 countries.
- Publication of articles on international Journals:
  - a) Promoting Social Justice and Conserving Montane Forest Environments: A Case Study of Nepal's Community Forestry Program. Article published in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol 169, No 3. ( Dr Netra Timsina)
  - b) Learning to Manage a Complex Resource: A Case of NTFPs Assessment Published in Nepal published *The International Forestry Review* 5(2). (Hemant Ojha and Basundhara Bhattarai)
- Continuity in international Journal articles review and collaborative book writing.

## Human Resources at ForestAction

### Persons (by category and in alphabetical order)

### Area of work

#### **Project management team**

Arjun Thapalia ( <i>left on September 30, 003</i> )	Training and advocacy facilitator
Basundhara Bhattarai ( <i>on study leave from August 2003</i> )	Gender & equity
Hari R Neupane	Participatory Forest management

Harisharan Luintel	Forest management and livelihood
Hemant R Ojha	Governance
Kamal Bhandari	Training and advocacy facilitator
Krishna P Paudel	Knowledge system and policy
Mani Ram Banjade	Adaptive management
Dr. Netra Timsina	Knowledge and politics (Political economy)
Sushila Shrestha ( <i>left on Dec 31, 003</i> )	Research officer

**Office management team**

Amrit Adhikari	Marketing and design
Jaya Lamichhane	Secretarial support
Lalit Thapa	Office assistant
Raju Bikram Shah	Finance
Tara Bhattarai	Communication and documentation

In addition, more than 15 consultants of various levels were involved in specific projects during 2003.

**Strategic Plan for the Year 2004**

ForestAction will focus its activities on forest governance and livelihoods. Our research, development and training actions will focus on the following areas:

**Improving forest governance**

- Civil society networking at different levels
- Micro, meso and macro level processes: participatory governance
- Contribution to policy discourse

**Innovative field actions**

- Action Learning initiatives for enhancing sustainable livelihoods
- Organizational and adaptive management
- NTFP management and livelihood – developing methodology for sustainable harvesting of medicinal plants

**Capacity building**

- Training, workshop and seminars at various levels
- Service support to local institutions including FECOFUN

**Government, civil society interaction**

- Cross-institutional strategic alliances
- Issue based sharing meetings and workshops
- Participation in national and international events and processes
- Advocacy for equity oriented, gender sensitive, and pro-poor policy provisions and processes.

**Publications**

- Journal of Forest and Livelihood (Two Issues - English)
- Hamro Ban Sampada (Three Issues – Nepali)
- Issue based discussion papers
- Press releases, articles and interviews in media
- Manuals and guidelines
- Posters, slides and other forms of visuals

**Finance**

**Balance Sheet for the fiscal year 2059/060**

Particulars	Amount
Application of Fund:	

<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>310,915.49</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Receivable	163,375.00
Cash & Bank Balance	225,074.78
Advance in Programme	1,069,542.74
<b>Total current Assets</b>	<b>1,457,992.52</b>
<b>Less: Current liabilities and Provisions</b>	
Current liabilities	289,824.00
Provisions/ Tax Payable	4,200.00
Advance received from donor (next year)	1,152,118.15
<b>Total current Liabilities</b>	<b>1,446,142.15</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>11,850.37</b>
Total Applications of fund:	<b>322,765.86</b>
<b>Sources of Fund:</b>	
Surplus of this year	64,640.27
Bikalpa	258,125.59
<b>Total Sources of Fund</b>	<b>322,765.86</b>

<b>Surplus transferred to Balance Sheet</b>	<b>64,640.27</b>
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#### **Income & Expenditure Statement for the fiscal year 2059/060**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>	
Net Grant Received	5,588,518.65
Other Income	35,935.30
Interest Income After Tax	4,566.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,629,020.78</b>
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	
Office Expenses	1,204,798.87
Programme Expenses	4,274,310.97
Depreciation Expenses	85,270.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,564,380.51</b>
Excess Grant Received for Next Year	64,640.27