

Paani Project

Introduction

The Paani Program—also known in Nepali as the “USAID Water Project”, युएसएडपानीपरियोजना—is a 5 year, \$25 million USAID-funded Project in Nepal. Water is the single most important natural resource underpinning Nepal’s economy and livelihoods. The sustainable management of water resources in Nepal depends on addressing climate change and protecting healthy, biodiverse ecosystems. Paani aims to enhance Nepal’s ability to manage water resources for multiple uses and users through climate change adaptation and the conservation of freshwater biodiversity. Paani employs an integrated, whole-of-basin approach with activities under four “intermediate result” (IR) areas at the watershed, river basin, and national scales, to reduce threats to freshwater biodiversity and strengthen the resilience of targeted human and ecological communities in the Karnali, Mahakali, and Rapti river basins through improved water management. This will be accomplished through 11 strategic approaches and four intermediate results (each with several sub-IRs), and supporting activities.

Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) is one of the leading umbrella institutions of more than 22,000 community forestry user groups (CFUGs) throughout Nepal. From the establishment (1995), FECOFUN has been being protecting the rights of local communities over natural resources such as water, land and forest through advocacy. In addition, FECOFUN is struggling for the meaningful participation of women, poor, Dalit, and Indigenous communities in the natural resources protection and equitable utilization. To achieve organization's goal, different programs have been being implementing with the coordination and collaboration of different local, national and international organizations. In this context, FECOFUN has been being implementing PANI project in 6 watersheds (i.e. SetiNadi Gud Ganga 329, SuenayaGaad 322, Middle Karnali 333, Thuli Bheri 344, Thuli Bheri 348 and Phoksundo-suligad 888) of Karnali and Mahakali river basins of Nepal since March 2017 with the support and collaboration of USAID/Paani Project. Two projects were effectively accomplished between the periods of March 2017 to June 2019. Key achievements of both projects are as below:

Project 1: “Strengthening Capacity of Nepal's Water Users to Adapt to Climate Change at the Central and Grassroots Levels - Forest Users” from March 2017 to September 2018, G-KAT-002

Key achievement of this project:

- Success to support USAID/Paani project to develop watershed health profile through Bio-physical data collection TOT and data from 6 watersheds (i.e. SetiNadi Gud Ganga 329, SuenayaGaad 322, Middle Karnali 333, Thuli Bheri 344, Thuli Bheri 348 and Phoksundo-suligad 888). And household data collection TOT and data from 2 watersheds (i.e. Middle Karnali 333 and Phoksundo Suligaad 888). Total 71 local citizen scientists were selected, trained and mobilize for watershed baseline data collection.
- Capacitated to 16 local and district FECOFUN members from 8 districts of Karnali and Mahakali river basins on proposal writing skill.
- 5 Informative hoarding boards including the messages of integrated watershed management, aquatic bio-diversity conservation, environment-friendly rural road

construction, etc and relevant arts has been developed and placed in public area of 3 districts of Middle Karnali watershed.

- One chapter of bilingual civil society guide has been prepared on behalf of FECOFUN.
- Media publications about the impact of FECOFUN/Paani program implementation and was published on online news paper.
- Watershed principles was developed and approved by Board of Directors of FECOFUN
- Prepared plan for watershed monitoring health.

Project 2: Promoting Environment Friendly Roads and Climate Smart Watershed Management Practices to Increase the Climate Resilience of Community through Grassroots Capacity Building” from June 2018 and June 2019, G-KAT-019.-Middel Karnali Watershed.

Key Achievement of this project

- Forest, Water, Land conservation and management related existing good management practices from Middle Karnali watershed area has been collected and documented.
- Two existing good management practice up scaled in Naraharinath (3040 seedlings plantation in 4 ha. eroded area) and Bio-engineering support (3050 seedlings plantation with green road concept) in Thatikath RM, Dailekh.
- One low cost bio-engineering demonstration site is established in eroded area of Chilayatra CF, with the coordination of Chamunda Bindasaini Municipality, Dailekh. 3000 seedlings was planted and bamboo structures were made in demo site.
- Prepared one CAPA focusing on 20 ultra-poor and dalit household of Nandadevi CFUG, Naraharinath RM 2, Kalikot. Coordination and Collaboration with RM and wards for sustainable implementation of CAPA. 3040 seedlings were planted in eroded area with the support of FECOFUN.
- All 9 RM/M of Middle Karnali watershed representatives, road contractors, road construction committee and local community groups were aware on EFLG framework and advantage of green road.

Recently FECOFUN has been implementing third project with the support of USAID/Paani Project as below:

Project 3: Increase the Community Resilience to Climate Change through Increasing Capacity, Livelihood Promotion and Establish Good Governance from December 2019, G-KAT-069

Working area: Phoksundo Suligaad watershed-999.

There are many issues in the sustainable management of watershed and aquatic biodiversity conservation around Phoksundo Suligaad trail path. The space between the National Parks and the communities is called the “buffer zones” where hotel businesses and poorly managed ecotourism are rapidly increasing and polluting the river system. Climate change is one of the major issue in the watershed creating drought and drying of water resources in the watershed. This is causing limited access to irrigation and drinking water, decrease in agricultural productions, destabilization of slopes, landslides, and water pollution. Additionally, this has caused conflict between national park and local community groups with the lack of good governance, coordination, and

communication between the two. FECOFUN will facilitate good coordination, communication, and governance between the local community, business, and local government committees through capacity buildings and awareness raising programs. It will also facilitate women led cooperatives with environmental friendly enterprises for women in the watershed, such as home stays for ecotourism.

Project objectives

The specific objectives of the project are:

1. To build institutional capacity of Buffer Zone Management Committee (BZMC), Buffer Zone User Committee (BZUC) and Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group (BZCFUG) on rules, regulations and policies related to national park and buffer zone for natural resources management, incorporating local businesses, communities, and government.
2. To build resilience of vulnerable communities to adapt climate change through climate smart agricultural practice demonstration
3. To enhance capacity on GESI and develop environment friendly enterprises for women's livelihood

Major activities

- Inception workshop
- Orientation on National park and Buffer zone policies, rules and regulation
- Institutional Capacity Development of BZMC, BZUC, LMC, BZCFUG and women groups. Coaching will be conducted simultaneously.
- Climate Smart Agriculture Practice Demonstration
- Cooperative Formation and Registration
- Cooperative management training
- Entrepreneurship and marketing skill training
- Awareness campaign and hoarding board installation
- Hospitality and solid waste management training

Expected Outputs

- 60 persons trained on institutional capacity development including record keeping, accounting, documentation, good governance and leadership development
- 50 persons oriented Shey Phoksundo National Park and BZMC related act, policies, rules and regulations
- 10 demonstration site on climate smart agricultural practices established for farmers
- 1 cooperative of women groups formed and registered
- 25 persons trained on Cooperative management
- 25 persons trained on entrepreneurship and marketing skill
- 25 person trained on hospitality and solid waste management training at Chhekpa area of Phoksundo Suligaad watershed
- Awareness campaign for environment friendly ecotourism promotion and solid waste management in 7 places of Phoksundo Suligaad watershed area.

- 8 hoarding “bill” boards including the messages of aquatic bio-diversity conservation, solid waste management, climate smart agricultural practice, awareness placed in 8 different locations of Phoksundo Suligaad watershed area.

Expected Outcomes

The capacity and institutional strength of BZMC, BZUC and BZCFUG are built and enhanced on rules, regulations and policies related to national park and buffer zone for natural resources management.

- Resilience power of vulnerable communities to adapt climate change improved.
- GESI integrated and environment friendly enterprises for women's livelihood developed and enhanced.