MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT

For

Sustainable Land Management Project in Churia Region, Nepal

WWF/GEF/Government of Nepal

Project Funded by: The Global Environmental Facility (GEF)

GEF Project Implementing Agency: WWF Report

Report Prepared by:

Madhav Karki, Ph.D.; MTR Consultant
Executive Director, Centre for Green Economy Development, Nepal (CGED-N)
(Supported by Sanjeev Poudel, Sustainable Development Expert, CGED-N)

Kathmandu

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

GEF Project Summary Table

GEF Project ID	5596	**WWF Project ID**	G0002
Focal Area (s)	Land Degradation	**Country**	Nepal
GED Focal Area (s) Objective (s)	LD-1, LD-3	**Project duration**	36 months
Expected Start date	November 2013	**Project Type**	Medium Size
Project Executing Organization	WWF-Nepal	**Executing Project Partners**	MoLRM, MoAD, MoFSC, MoLP
GEF Project Cost	US $917431.00	**GEF Agency Fee**	US $82,569.00
Total GEF STAR	LD: US $ 1000000.00	**Total Project Cost**	US $ 5,398,864.00
Co-finance	GoN & WWF: US$ 4398864.00	**Midterm Evaluation Date**	February/March; 2016

Source: WWF-GEF Project document, GEF project database

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BZMC	Buffer Zone Management Committee
BZCFUG	Buffer Zone Community Forestry User Group
BZUC	Buffer Zone User Committee
CBDP	Community Based Disaster Preparedness
CBRP	Corridors and Bottlenecks Restoration Project
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
CHAL	Chitwan Annapurna Landscape
DDC	District Development Committee
DFCC	District Forest Coordination Committee
DLAs	District line agencies
DNPWC	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
F&A	Finance and Administration
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users of Nepal
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GoN	Government of Nepal
IPNMS	Integrated Plant Nutrient Management System
IWRMP	Irrigation and Water Resource Management Project
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plan for Action
LFLP	Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoAD	Ministry of Agriculture Development
MoAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
MoLRM	Ministry of Land Reform and Management
MoSTE	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
MTR	Midterm review
NAP	National Action Programme
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NTNC	National Trust for Nature Conservation
PABZ	Protected Area and Buffer Zone
PACT	Project for Agriculture Commercialization and Trade
PCC	Project Coordination Committee
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
SALT	Sloping Land Agriculture Technology
SWC	Social Welfare Council

SLMNP	Sustainable Land Management in Churia Range, Project
TAL	Tarai Arc Landscape
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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MTR Team:

Madhav Karki, Ph.D.
Independent Evaluation Consultant
Supported by
Sanjeev Poudel
Sustainable Development Expert, CGED-Nepal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Nepali)

दिगो भू व्यवस्थापन परियोजनाको मध्यवधी मूल्यांकन प्रतिवेदन

कार्यकारी संक्षेप

परिचय

नेपालको चुरे क्षेत्रमा दिगो भूव्यवस्थापन कार्यक्रम एक प्रारम्भिक योजना हो, जसको प्रमुख उद्येश्य चुरे क्षेत्रमा भएको भूमि अवक्रमणलाई कम गर्नु हो। यस कार्यक्रमले रौतहट, वारा, पर्सा तथा मकवानपुर जिल्लाको चुरे क्षेत्रलाई समेट्छ। यस कार्यक्रमको उद्येश्य भनेको भूमि अवक्रमणलाई दिगो रुपमा घटाइ कृषि चरण क्षेत्र तथा चुरे साल र मिश्रित जंगललाई रणनीतिक परियोजना स्थलमा व्यवस्थित गर्ने रहेको छ। कार्यक्रमका लक्ष्यहरु यसप्रकार रहेकाछन् (१) २५०० हेक्टर कृषि चरण क्षेत्र को भूमि अवक्रमण कम गर्ने। २) ५००० हेक्टर जंगलमा एकीकृत भूपरिधी व्यस्थापन तथा जलाधार प्रबंधन कार्य गर्ने ।

मूल्यांकनको उद्देश्य तथा मूल्यांकनका प्रश्नहरु

यस मध्यावधी मूल्यांकन प्रतिवेदनको मूल उद्येश्य, परियोजनाको मूल्यांकन स्वतन्त्र ढंगले गर्ने जसमा १) परियोजनाको ढांचामा रहेको त्रुटी पत्ता लगाउने २) अनुगमन तथा मूल्याङ्कन सूचक प्राप्तिमा प्रगति मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने ३) कार्य योजना कार्यान्वयनको प्रगति नियान्ले ४) सिकेका पाठहरूबाट जसले चुनौतिको सामना गर्ने ५) अवसर र चुनौतीहरुको मूल्यांकनको व्यवस्थापन मार्फत योजनाको उद्येश्य सुझाव प्रस्तुत गर्ने रहेका छन्।

मूल्यांकनमा प्रयोग गरिएको प्रमुख समीक्षा प्रश्न (परियोजन लक्ष्य प्राप्तिको दिशामा कसरि अग्रसर भएका छ तथा परियोजना कार्यन्वयनमा के कस्ता चुनौतिहरु रहेकाछन्, परियोजना अवधि भरमा अपेक्षित परिणाम आउने सम्भावना कतिछ, कार्यक्रम को दिगोपन र प्रसार गर्ने संभावना कति छ भन्ने थिए।

समीक्षा क्रियाविधि

कार्यक्रमको समीक्षामा उपलब्ध सबै कागजातहरुको सुक्ष्म विस्लेषण तथा स्वतन्त्र अनुसन्धान गरिएको थियो साथै भविष्यमा गरिने क्रियाकलापका बारेमा समीक्षा विश्लेसकहरुले अन्तरक्रिया मार्फतगरेका थिए। समीक्षामा प्रयोग गरिएको विधि नतिजा भन्दा काम गर्ने प्रकृयामा बढी केन्द्रित थियो किनकि परियोजनाको लक्ष्य रास्ट्रिय तथा अन्तरास्ट्रिय नीति नियममा प्रभाव पार्नु रहेको देखिन्छ।

मुख्य निष्कर्ष

वातावरणीय /सामाजिक प्रभाव

यस मध्यावधी मूल्यांकन प्रतिवेदनले वातावरणीय तथा सामाजिक सुरक्षाको सुनिसक्ष्ता अनुपालन सन्तोषजनक रुपमा रहेको देखिन्छ। परियोजनाको दस्तावेजमा उल्लेखित क्रियाकलापहरु, सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समुह जुन नेपाललाइ विश्व स्तरमा चिनाउने सामुदायिक वन नीति, ऐन र नियमावालीमा आधारित रहेका छन, मार्फत सन्चालन भएको पाइयो। परियोजनाले समेटेका सवै २४ सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समुहहरुले आफ्नो व्यवस्थापन योजना पृस्कृत गरि, सम्बन्धित बन कार्यालयमा बुजाएको देखियो जस मध्य अधिकाङश स्वीकृत भएको एंब करीब पांच प्रकृयामा रहेको देखिया साथै नकारात्मक प्रभाव न्यूनीकरण गर्ने सुरक्षाका उपायहरु प्रत्याभूत गरेको पाइयो।

मुल्यांकनको नतिजा को स्तर वा तह निर्धारण, परियोजनाको क्रियाकलापमा असर पार्ने **तत्व**हरुको गहिरो बिस्लेशन र वर्गीकरणलाइ ध्यानमा राखी गरियो जसलाई विस्तृत रुपमा पूर्ण प्रतिवेदनमा ब्याख्या गरिएको छ। संक्षिप्त टिप्पणीले समीक्षाका विभिन्न आयाम उजागर गर्छ र मुल्यांकन तह विष्लेषणको तथा निर्धाराण औचित्य प्रस्तुत गर्छ।

मुल्यांकनले परियोजनाको लक्ष्य प्राप्ति गर्ने क्रियाकलाप राम्रो रहेको दर्साउछ तर परियोजनाको तत्कालिन प्रभाव, दिगोपन तथा अनुभवको सिकाईको प्रदर्शन मनन गरी आगमी योजना हरुमा आत्मासाथ गरेको भने उल्लेखनीय देखिएन। यसकारण मुल्यांकन तहमा यस परियोजनालाइ सामान्य सन्तोषजनक भनी मुल्यांकन गरिएको छ।

निष्कर्ष र सिफारिसहरू

समग्रमा यस दिगो भू व्यवस्थापन परियोजना बहुक्षेत्रीय संरचनामा आधारित भएको तथा यसले जिल्ला स्तरियस्थानीय निकायका विषयगत कार्यालय तथा गैर सरकारी सस्थाहरुको विशेषज्ञतालाइ प्रयोग गरेको देखियो जुन कार्य प्रसंसनिय छ। तर परिचालन तहमा अन्तरक्षेत्रीय समन्वय चाहींकम भएको पाइयो जुन बिभिन्न विषयगत कर्मचारीहरुले प्रतक्ष्य रुपमा परियोजना व्यवस्थापन इकाईमा सम्पर्क गर्नको कारण हुन् सक्दछ। परियोजना व्यवस्थापन इकाईको योजना निर्माण, मुल्यांकन र सहजकर्ता परिचालनमा सक्रिय भूमिका सराहनिय भए पनि यस्ले जिल्ला स्तरिय कार्यलय बिचको सहकार्य, स्वामित्व र अन्य निकाय संगको तालमेललाइ कमजोर पारेको भान हुन्छ। **PCC / PSC** जस्ता संरचना परियोजना सन्चालन उपयुक्त भएतापनि अन्तरक्षेत्रीय समन्वयमा अनुकुल वातावरण निर्माण गर्न भने यसले प्रभाकारी भूमिका खेल्नसकेका छैनन्।

परियोजनाले थुप्रै क्रियाकलाप र परिणाम सृजना गरको भएतापनि परिणामको समग्र प्रभाव कमजोर देखिन्छ। विभिन्न जनचेतना मुलक र तालिम कार्यक्रममा, बृक्षारोपन तथा खुल्ला चरिचरण रोक्ने कार्यले कृषि र वन क्षेत्र सुधारमा सकारात्मक प्रभाव पारेको महसुस भएको छ। खुल्ला चरिचरण पूर्ण

रुपमा रोक्नलाइ सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समुह र जिल्ला वन कार्यालय विच गहिरो र नीयमीत सहकार्य हुन हुन जरुरीहुन्छ जुन आहिले देखिन्न।

स्लोपिंग ल्याण्ड एग्रिचल्चार टेक्नोलोजी (SALT) जस्ता पुराना अवधारणहरुको प्रयोग सन्तोषजनक छैन र अनुपयुक्त र अनेछुक विषयगत कार्यालयबाट प्रयोग भएको देखिन्छ। स्लोपिंग ल्याण्ड एग्रिचल्चार टेक्नोलोजी (SALT) मन्त्रालय को प्राथमिकतामा परेपनि परिणामहरु व्यापक रुपमा देखिएका छैनन् र दिगो पनि छैनन्। साथै, कार्य क्षेत्र चयनमापनि कमजोरी देखिन्छ जसले गर्दा पर्यवेक्षण र बजारसंगको समन्वय कार्य गाह्रो छ। समग्र तथा अनुकूलीत एकीकृत जलाधार व्यवस्थापन (IWM) वा जलवायु मैत्री कृषिसंग सम्बन्धित कार्यक्रमहरु आउदो बर्षमा गर्ने सुझाव गरिन्छ।

परियोजना संचालनमा महाभूकम्प, मधेशबन्द जस्ता असुरक्षाका चुनौतीहरु बेहोर्नु पर्यो साथै जिल्ला र केन्द्र स्तरमा कर्मचारीहरुको परिवर्तन पनि अर्को मुख्य असजिलो पाटो थियो। तरपनि परियोजना व्यवस्थापन इकाईले कार्यक्रमअनुकुलितव्यवस्थापनमार्फतराम्रो संग सन्चालन गनगर्न सफल भएको छ।

योजनाबाट प्राप्त मुख्य सिकाईहरु

क) कस्ता कार्यहरु सफल देखिन्छन् र किन ?

- तल्लो स्तरबाट माग भएका कार्यहरु खास गरि पशुपालन विकास सम्बन्धि कामको राम्रो कार्यन्वयन भएको र कृषकहरुबाट अपनत्व प्राप्त भएको तथा फाइदाजनक भएकोदेखिन्छन्। यसका प्रमुख कारणहरुमा १) प्याकेजमा कार्यक्रम दिनु २) तुरुन्त फाइदा देखिनु र ३) उत्पादनको बजार तथा मुल्य पाउनु रहेकाछन्।
- त्यस्तै तरकारी खेतिलाइ पनि कृषकहरुले मन पराएर आफ्नै लगानीमा तार जाली खरिद गरि क्षेती ग्रस्त जग्गालाइ उर्बरक बनाएर खेति गरेको देखिन्छ। योजनाले यस कार्यको लागि सिंचाईको ब्यवस्था (पोखरी, थोपा, सिंचाई तथा कुलो सुधार) गर्न सहयोग प्रदान गरेकोले स्थानीय जनता आकर्षित भएको देखिन्छ।
- योजना लागू भएका चुरे क्षेत्रको जिल्लाहरुमा मुख्य समस्या वर्षेनी बाढी आउने, खहरे खोलाले भू विनास तथा भू क्षेयिकरणहुने रहेकोमा योजनाबाट सोको रोक्थामका लागि जिम्मा भू संरक्षण कार्यालय मार्फत बायो इन्जिनियरीङ कार्य तथातारजाली तथा प्राविधिक सहयोगगर्ने कार्यधैरै प्रभावकारी देखिन्छ।
- त्यस्तै घरायसी इन्धनको रुपमा प्रयोग गर्न सक्ने तथा खेत बारीमा मल पनि हाल्न पाउने, बायोग्यास उपकरण जडान गरेका कार्य पनि सफल मान्न सकिन्छ। यसले प्रमुख रुपमा वन जंगल बिनास कम गर्ने तथा जैविक विविधता प्रबर्धनमा सहयोग पुर्याउन सक्दछ। सोर्य ऊर्जा सुधार भएको चुलो पनि सबल कार्य मा देखिन्छ ।

ख) कस्ता कार्यहरु प्रभावकारी देखिदैनन?

- योजना समन्वयनको ढाचा, योजना संचालन गर्न एक योजना निर्देशन समिति र एक योजना समन्वय समिति गठन गरिएका छन्। यी समितिहरु नियमित रुपले आफ्ना बैठकहरु गरि कार्य सम्पादन गरिएका देखिन्छन्। तर आवश्यक पुर्व तयारी तथा योजनाले भोगेका समस्याहरु केन्द्रित छलफल तथा निर्णय गर्ने प्रक्रियाको अभावमा यी बैठकहरु बढी औपचारिकता मात्र सिमित रहने र जिल्लामा योजनाले भोगेका समस्याहरुको निदान नभएको देखिन्छ। खास गरि वन मन्त्रालयको भूमिका बढाएर सम्बन्धित विभागहरुको महानिर्देशकहरु समेत सहभागी आमन्त्रितको रुपमा भएको PCC र PSC बढी प्रभावकारी हुने देखिन्छ।

- खुल्ला चरिचरण मुक्त क्षेत्र घोषणा गर्ने, योजनाको एक मुख्य उद्देश्य रहेकोछ। यसको लागि सम्बन्धित बन उपभोक्ता समितिहरु मार्फत चेतनामुलक तालिम, गोष्ठी तथा सशक्तीकरणका गतिबिधि संचालन गरिएको देखिन्छ। केहि उपभोक्ता समितिहरु मुक्त क्षेत्र घोषणा गर्ने निर्णय पनि गरेको देखिन्छ। तर योजनाले चाहेको जस्तो zero grazing क्षेत्र घोषणा हुन् जिल्ला वन कार्यालय संग समन्वय गरि रास्ट्रिय वन तथा बगरमा समेत zero grazing लागू नगरी यो उदेश्य प्राप्ति हुन् नसक्ने देखिन्छ।
- भिरालो जग्गामा खेति (SALT) योजनाले चुरेको माथिल्लो भिरालो क्षेत्रमा SALT प्रबिधि अपनाएर भूक्षय तथा खेति योग्य जमिनमा भुबिनाश रोक्न यो कार्यक्रम संचालनमा ल्याइएको छ। तर जिल्ला कृषि कार्यालय संग SALT सम्बन्धि विशेषज्ञ तथा अनुभव दुवै नभएकोले SALT प्रबिधि सफल नरहेको स्थिति छ। तराईका ३ जिल्लामा कृषिले यो कार्येक्रम जिल्ला भू(संरक्षण कार्यालयलाइ दिईसकेकाछन। तसर्थ यसबाट मुख्य सिकाइको रुपमा SALT तथा भूसंरक्षण कार्यलाई एकीकृत गरि DSCO मार्फत एकिकृत जलधार व्यबस्ता पनि (IWM) गर्नु उपयुक्त हुन् सक्दछ।

राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तराष्ट्रिय महत्वका सिकाई

SLMN योजना एउटा नमुना कार्यक्रमको रुपमा संचालन भएको तथा यसले नेपाल तथा विश्वका अन्य मुलुकहरु जहाँ भूक्षय तथा भूबिनासको सहि रोकथाम तथा व्यवस्थापन कसरि गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने विषयमा ज्ञान सिर्जना गरि नीति तथा रणनीतिलाइ नै प्रभाव गर्ने सक्ने क्षमता राखेको देखिन्छ। तसर्थ योजनाले Policy and institutional scaling up अर्थात् नीति तथा संस्थागत विकासका लागि प्रयास गर्नु उचित देखिन्छ।

योजना मुल्यांकनका सिफारिसहरु

दिगो ब्यवस्थापन योजनाको बाकि रहेको करिव १ वर्षको लागि तपसिलका सिफारिशहरु गरिन्छ। सिफारिस दुइ भागमा बाडिएका छन। १) योजना अबधिको लागि २) भविष्यको लागि

तल प्रस्तुत सिफारिसहरु योजना अवधिका लागि मात्रप्रस्तुत गरिएका छन।भविष्यको लागी तयार पारेका सिकाइ र सिफारिशहरु मुल प्रतिबेदनमा राखिएको छ ।

क) योजनाको अवधि बजेट तथा कर्मचारीका सम्बन्धमा योजना कार्यन्वयन काममा भूकम्प र मधेस बन्द जस्ता घटनाहरु भइ कार्येक्रम संचालन गर्न अवरोध सिर्जना भएर कार्य सम्पादनमा ढिलाई भएको अवस्थालाई ध्यानमा राखी ३ महिना सम्म थप बजेट तथा कर्मचारी नलाग्ने गरि बढाउने।

ख) २०१६ को कार्यक्रम परिमार्जन तथा सुधार

मुल्यांकन प्रतिवेदनको आधारमा योजना टोलीले उपलब्ध बजेट तथा कार्यक्रमको पुनरावलोकन तथा समीक्षा गर्ने। यसो गर्दा सफल देखिएका कार्येक्रम तथा गतिबिधिहरुलाई प्राथमिकता दिनेतथा बजेट समेत बढाउने र कमजोर कार्यक्रमहरुलाइ सफल कार्यसंग मिसाउनेतथा outcome प्राप्ति उन्मुख बनाउने।

कम्पोनेन्ट अनुसारको सिफारिसहरु

ग) कम्पोनेन्ट १

नेपाल भूउपयोग नीति २०७२ लाइ कार्यन्वयन गर्न हाल भूउपयोग ऐन नभएता पनि नेपाल सरकारको विधमान भुमि ऐनलाइ आधारमानी नमुनाको रुपमा (Pilot scale) भुमि सुधार तथा व्यवस्थापन र बन तथा भूसंरक्षण मन्त्रालय **पये** संयुक्त प्रयासमा लागु गर्ने। यसको लागि मकवानपुरको हाडी गाउ गाविस भित्र मसिने शान्ति मध्य क्षेत्रीय सामुदायिक वनलाई नमुना क्षेत्र चयन गरि भू उपयोग नीति तथा Parcel based zoning लागू गर्ने।

घ) कम्पोनेन्ट २

यस योजना अन्तर्गत प्राय सबै जस्तो कार्यहरु सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता र समिति मार्फत गरिने प्रावधान रहेको हुनाले तथा यस कम्पोनेन्ट अन्तर्गत गर्नुपर्ने कार्यमा वन मन्त्रालय तथा अन्तर्गतका विभागहरुको प्रतक्ष्य सहयोग तथा सहभागिता आवश्यक देखिएकोले वन मन्त्रालयको जिम्मेवारी बडाउने तथा वन पैदावार तथा सेवामा आधारित जीविकोपार्जन तथा आयमुलक कार्यहरु योजनाको आफ्नै श्रोत र वन मन्त्रालय अन्तर्गत संचालित रास्ट्रपति चुरे हरियो बन जस्ता कार्यक्रमसंग सहकार्य गरि संचालन गर्ने। यसले एकीकृत भूपरिधि ब्यवस्थापन तथा दिगो बन ब्यवस्थापन दुवै उद्येश्य प्राप्तिमा मद्त गर्ने देखिन्छ।

ङ) कम्पोनेन्ट ३

योजना कार्यालय**ष्पबष** (PMU) ले आफ्नै तवरबाट पहल गरि PSC तथा PCC को बैठकहरुलाइ बढी समस्या समाधानमुखी बहुविषयगत तथा अन्तर क्षेत्रीय तथा सहकारीकोसोचलाइ वास्ताविक रुपमा जिल्ला स्तरमा कसरी प्रभावकारी बनाउन सहयोग गर्ने तथा निर्णय दिने जस्ता कार्य गर्ने सहयोग तथा सहकार्य गर्ने सिफारिश गरिन्छ। यस बिषयमा गहन छलफल अगाडी बडाउने PMU ले अगृम भूमिका निर्बाहा गर्नु पर्ने देखिन्छ ।

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Sustainable Land Management in Churia Range, Nepal (GEF/WWF/GoN) Project (SLMNP) is a Pilot project aimed at reducing land degradation problem in Churia. It covers Churia area of Rautahat, Bara, Parsa and Makwanpur. The project objective is **"**to substantially reduce degradation and maintain or improve conditions of agro-pastoral lands and Churia Sal and mixed forest areas in strategic project locations..." Specific aims are: a) substantially reduce degradation in 2,500 ha of agro-pastoral lands and 5,000 ha of forests by 2016 through integrated land and watershed management work in strategic locations.

Evaluation purpose and questions

The purpose of the MTR is to evaluate the project in an objective and independent manner and identify: a) any project design problems, b) progress towards monitoring and evaluation of indicator targets, c) progress on implementation of the work plan, d) lessons learned that respond to challenges, and e) emerging opportunities or strengths. The evaluation recommends specific actions to improve the project performance through adaptive management.

The key review question is: "how well the project is progressing towards achievement of its objectives and challenges to project implementation and timely completion, the likelihood of achieving expected outcomes during the project lifetime, the sustainability and replication potential of the project and the adequacy of the project management structure"

Methodology:

The review was conducted in an in-depth review of the available documents; independent observation of and interaction and reflection on project progress and planned future actions by the review consultant. The methods and tools used for the review were focused more on the process assessment than on the products as the project outcomes and impacts aimed to influence national and global policy and practices on SLM. Major review findings, conclusions, observations, lessons learned and key recommendations are reported.

Key Findings:

Environmental/Social Impacts

The MTR finds generally satisfactory compliance with most of the environmental and social safeguards required by GEF/WWF. Since the Project is implementing its activities through CFUGs that are governed under Nepal's globally acclaimed Community Forestry (CF) Policy, Acts, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines, the beneficiary selection criteria, participation rules and governance systems enshrined in the project document are generally found practiced. All the 24 CFUGs covered by the project have either revised or got their management plan approved by the

government or are in the process of doing so soon. Also, necessary mitigation measures to ensure safeguards are found taken and no negative impacts are observed.

Evaluation ratings are prepared and presented taking into consideration of the full set of issues affecting or characterizing project performance and results are discussed in full in the report. The summary comments highlight different aspects of the assessment that provide justification for the rating given. The rating recognizes that at the output level performance is good. However, at the intermediate outcome, sustainability and lesson learning and scaling up levels, the project performance is found lacking and therefore the overall rating given is Fair to Good or Moderately Satisfactory (Table 1).

Table No. 1. Rating Table: Summary of Ratings based on Performance Criteria[1]

Rating/Score	Description of Strong Performance	Evaluator Rating/ Score**	Evaluator Brief Justification Please note indicator, source or methodology when relevant.
Relevance	1. addresses the necessary factors in the GEF Focal Area	Very Good	overall good relevance; weak design hampering desired outcome
Quality of Design	1. Application of design tools.	Fair	structure –good; content not fully integrated
	2. hitting the right 'pressure points'.	Fair	Necessary – yes; sufficient – may be?? Scattered
Efficiency	1. strong value for money.	Good	Generally cost effective; fund leveraging is weak; adaptive management is good
	2. Governance and management	Good	Framework sound management leadership needs improvement
Effectiveness	1. Most/all intended outputs and outcomes were attained and address identified threats.	Fair	Outputs –yes; outcomes – work-in-progress
	2. Attribution to the WWF GEF project.	Good	High to Project (WWF GEF); Low to Co-funding agencies; topping effect is not visible and clear
Impact/Results	1. desired changes in the status of the conservation targets	D/I	Not assessed; not enough data.
	2. Attribution to perceived changes.	D/I	Early sign point to WWF/GEF only; need to broaden the mindset
Sustainability	1.factors for ensuring sustainability	Fair	sound institutional framework at local level but not at district and national level
	2. Scaling up mechanisms	Fair	Yes to Institutional and political scaling up May be to geographical

[1] More detailed for of the table and explanation is provided in the full report.

			scaling up/out.
Adaptive Management	1. Outputs/outcomes qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrated.	Good	Demonstration of outputs good; fair for intermediate outcomes
	2. project team uses these and other findings,	Fair	Internal findings –yes; external findings – generally not used (e.g. TAL, WTLCP, HB)
	3. Learning is documented and shared for project & organizational learning	Fair	Lessons are documented but not well internalized

Summary Findings, Conclusions, Lessons and Recommendations

Overall, there is good appreciation of multi-sectoral structure in governing the SLMP including the mobilization of local line agencies and CBO/NGO expertise. However, at the operational level the inter-sectoral coordination and coherence is found missing as different line agencies directly deal with the PMU and work at different locations. While the PMU's proactive role in planning, monitoring and mobilizing focal persons in each district has ensured completion of most of the activities planned but this has weakened the ownership, synergy, and integration with other compatible projects and programs of the DLAs. The governance structure comprising PCC and PSC is ideal but as expected they are not able to create the enabling environment for inter-sectoral coordination at the implementation level.

The project is delivering a wide range of activities and outputs. However, their cumulative effect on outcome is rather weak. Numerous awareness raising and training activities do seem to lead to a realization on the part of the CFUGs that controlling of open grazing and better care of the afforestation work are necessary to improve both agriculture and forest lands. However, for declaring Zero Grazing (ZG) areas, both CFUGs and the DFOs have to coordinate and declare and enforce ZG in community and national forest patches simultaneously which is not the case.

The SALT related interventions are not satisfactory since this is a rather outdated concept that has been wrongly assigned to the Agriculture ministry to implement. This was transferred to DSCO by DoAD in all the districts except in Makwanpur that did implement in an earnest manner but results are neither visible widely nor sustainable. This was because the site selection was poorly done resulting in poor supervision and lack of market for products. A more holistic and adaptive integrated watershed management (IWM) or climate smart agriculture (CSA) related activities are suggested.

The project faced challenges as a result of insecurity associated with the Madhesh Band, Nepal Earthquake and high turnover of staffs both at the Centre and the districts. However, the PMU handled them well through adaptive management. The PMU however has suffered from its own staff turnover and small team of staffs is challenged to cover all the activities located at difficult locations.

Lessons on what has worked and why?

Livestock farming activities: A number of sub-activities especially livestock husbandry related activities are doing well. The main reason is that the program is delivered in package form and is not fragmented. Animal bull distribution, artificial insemination (AI), technical backstopping through annual animal

health camps and free veterinary medicine distribution as well good marketing for animal products have lent to the success of this program across the districts.

Vegetable farming: Vegetable farming, especially in Handi Khola is doing very well due to two factors: irrigation facilities have been created, and b) market supply chain is well established as the production areas are very close to the national highway and Hetauda town market.

Gabion wall-based bio-engineering structures: In Handi Khola, bio-engineering measures to rehabilitate flood damaged agriculture land are effective although uncontrolled grazing remains a minor problem. Farmers are enjoying benefits out of fisheries and farming.

Biogas and alternate energy – Project has created one bio-gas villages that is helping to reduce pressure on forest and is also generating livelihood benefits. The use of slurry as fertilizer needs to be better managed for realization of full benefits. Solar energy and ICS are also promoted in small scale.

Lessons on what is not working and why?

Project Coordination: The SLMNP is governed by project steering committee (PSC) and project coordination committee (PCC) which are inter-sectoral bodies led by the MoLRM. While these committees are meeting regularly and approving plans, programs and reviewing progress, they do not seem to go into substantive discussion and resolve issues that are affecting progress, especially at the district level. Since the Department heads (DGs) are not in the loop, the district level line agencies do not feel obligated to implement the project activities leaving them to the focal person. The major work under this project is to be done under the MoFSC which currently has low ownership of the project.

Overly top-down and academic design: The SLMPN could have been better designed taking elements from MoFSC's Chure strategy, 2013 and Nepal's successful leasehold and livelihood forestry programs. Improving agro-pastoral land can also learn from FAO and ICIMOD's New Generation of Participatory Watershed Management experiences.

SALT: theoretical concepts: The approaches of SALT for improving agriculture land and integrated landscape management for promoting sustainable forest land management are conceptually good but relatively untested and new to Nepal. Churia land management demands conservation agriculture and IWM approaches using a river basin framework which is missing in the project's mission.

Open grazing free zone: Although a very sound goal, the outputs and outcomes of this component are only partially met. The reason is again top-down approach and faulty assumptions. The project areas are predominantly inhabited by indigenous and poor communities who practice pastoral livelihoods and some ethnic groups keep large herd of cattle as status symbol. Many CFs have common boundary with national forest making it difficult to check animal entry. Certain organizations are providing free exotic goats increasing the risk of open grazing by local goats.

Co-funding: The project document has indicated the availability of close to 82% co-funding from the GoN ministries and the GEF implementing agency: WWF. The financing assessment also took note of the large finance available from GoN/WWF implemented TAL conservation program. However, the reviewer did not observe any significant activities funded under the co-finance budget heads. Better integration with compatible projects of the WWF, Nepal could enhance this aspect.

Lessons for wider relevance:

The SLMN project being a pilot project, the wider relevance implies achievement of outcome and impacts. For this, the project has to strive for both geographic and institutional scaling up successes. Based on the results to date, geographical spread or scaling out do not seem possible. However, the project has good possibility to achieve policy and organizational/institutional scaling up influencing the governance and organizational practices of SLM in Nepal and beyond.

3.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are being made based on the main findings of the review and consultant's professional views and insights. The recommendations are divided into two sections: A) actions that can be taken during the remaining project period; and B) actions that future SLM project in Churia should use. Here only first set of summary recommendations are listed.

Recommendation 1. No-cost Extension

Due to the above mentioned disruption and delays in implementing the planned project activities in the first and second half of 2015, a three month extension is recommended without additional budgetary and staffing implications. The carry over or surplus budget shown in year II can fund the staff salary during the extended period.

Recommendation 2: The Revision of 2016 Work Plan and Budget:

The PMU should undertake a realistic revision of planned activity and budget working with the collaborating agencies and WWF senior management in order to accommodate a project extension and ensure adequate administrative support to the project during the remaining period of the project. While undertaking review, there is also a need to review prospects for better consolidation, targeting and synergy development of project activities especially among the four components internally and with similar projects and programs externally (e.g., PCCP and Hariyo Ban).

Recommendation 3: Delivery of Component I: Implementation of OGFZ

MoLRM and MoFSC should jointly explore the possibility of using existing regulations (e.g. Land Act or Bhoomi Ain) to implement National Land Use (NLU) policy in a pilot scale in order to achieve the outputs and outcome under this component. Piloting of OGFZ can be done in selected VDC and CFs where the VDC has already agreed to implement the policy; communities are already aware, empowered, committed; and the CFUG members are ready to implement the OGFZ policy. The most feasible areas are the BZCFUGs in Handi Khola where there should be fewer problems as the forests are part of protected area (PWR) and the benefit sharing from the increased generation of ecosystem goods and services is also attractive (50%).

Recommendation 4: Delivery of Component II: Enhanced Role for MoFSC

The PSC should give greater role to the MoFSC in coordinating the project activities especially in managing Components 2. The desired progress is being affected by a range of factors including weaknesses in project design by not making the MoFSC the co-lead of the SLMNP and poor livelihood component for the CFUGs. It is therefore recommended that MoFSC increases ownership of the project and enables more support for developing sustainable livelihoods of the CFUG members. Improving multi-purpose nature of afforestation work through better selection of species, improving seedling

qualities and inclusion of more medicinal, aromatic and dye plants and value chain development (VCD) of the forest ecosystem goods and services are some of the work MoFSC staff can enable if the MoFSC departments are involved meaningfully.

Recommendation 5: Delivery of Component III: Enhance the Role and Responsibility of PSC and PCC

The PSC/PCC should recognize the weaknesses in project's coordination mechanism reported above and improve the functioning of the PSC and PCC to make them more effective, inclusive and engaging. The PMU should take lead in advocating for restructuring and streamlining the functioning of at least the PCC to ensure better ownership of the project responsibility by the MoFSC and the new Ministry of Livestock and Poultry whose roles and responsibilities are the key to the success of the project.

MAIN MTR REPORT

PART I

A. INTRODUCTION

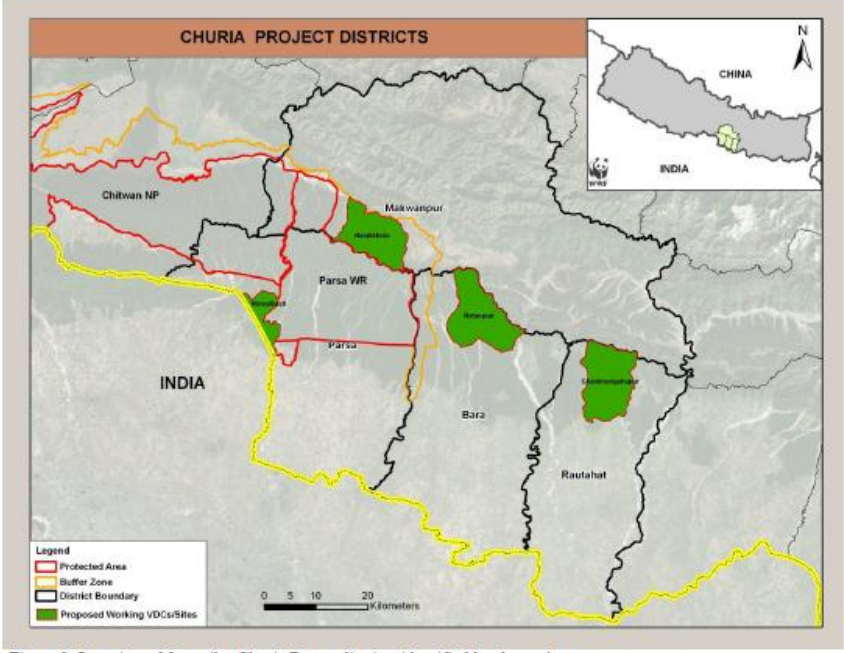


Figure 1: Location of four pilot Churia Range districts identified by the project.

The Sustainable Land Management in Churia Range, Nepal (GoN/GEF/WWF) Project- `SLMNP' in short- was designed as Pilot project aiming to reduce land degradation problem in Nepal's Churia landscape covering 4 pilot districts of Rautahat, Bara, Parsa and Makwanpur. The strategy of the project is to reduce land degradation and promote sustainable agricultural and livestock grazing land management practices creating enabling conditions through better inter-sectoral collaboration and co-operation among the collaborating ministries to achieve implementation of sustainable land use planning and long-term integrated land rehabilitation and management practices (Figure 1).

The objective of the project is**: "**to substantially reduce degradation and maintain or improve conditions of agro-pastoral lands and Churia Sal and mixed forest areas in strategic project locations throughout the four pilots Churia Range districts". The project aims to: a) substantially reduce degradation in 2,500 ha of agro-pastoral lands and 5,000 ha of forests by 2016 through integrated land and watershed management work (IWM and ILM) in strategic locations.

The project hopes to achieve the above objectives by: i) promoting sustainable agricultural and livestock management practices; ii) engaging local communities in forest conservation; and iii) create enabling conditions for inter-sectoral collaboration for sustainable land use and management. The project is closely aligned with the GEF Land Degradation focal areas objectives no. 1 and 3: " to maintain or improve flows of agro-ecosystem services to sustain livelihoods of local communities", and "to reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape".

The project is being jointly executed by the PMU and the four district line agencies (DLAs) to introduce and implement innovative and sustainable agro-pastoral systems and community

participated forest management in the four districts. The technologies and techniques include Sloping Land Agriculture Technology (SALT) to reduce soil erosion, improve water storage for irrigation and decrease climate vulnerability and stress. In addition, the project aims to identify and redress relevant policy gaps to provide secure land tenure, and improve land use planning and land allocation through better inter-sectoral coordination, institutionalization and implementation.

The project prioritizes institutional capacity building, mechanisms and forums for coordinated inter-sectoral land and resource use planning and will support district-level land use planning and analyses to identify important and sensitive areas for restoration and conservation. Successful implementation of the project will do more than support the pilot districts by demonstrating to the surrounding region and key stakeholders the innovative tools that can be replicated and up-scaled across the country.

The SLMP commenced in January 2014 for duration of 36 months. The GEF budget for the project is US$ 917,431. Pledged co-financing is US$ 4,398,864.00 equivalent to 81.5% of the total cost of the project. The mid-term evaluation of the project is being undertaken just over two years into implementation of the project. It will identify: a) any project design problems, b) progress towards monitoring and evaluation indicator targets, c) progress on implementation of the work plan, d) lessons learned that respond to challenges, e) emerging opportunities or strengths. The evaluation recommends specific actions to improve the project performance through adaptive management

a. General structure of the report

The key questions (Annex 5) the MTR is addressing are related to: a) how well the project is progressing towards achievement of its objectives and outcomes; b) how the challenges faced by the project are being addressed through adaptive management; c) is it possible to meet the implementation schedule and timely completion despite the political and natural disturbances that caused delays and d) what is the likelihood of achieving expected outcomes during the project lifetime, the sustainably and replication potential of the project and the adequacy of the project management structure i.e. PSC and PCC mechanisms. The report is divided into three parts: Project introduction, background and summary of the filed observation and review of progress to date are described in Part I under different sections. Major findings, conclusions and comments on milestones and project delivery and effectiveness are addressed in Part II, again under different sections. The lessons learned, social and environmental safeguards, sustainability and scaling up as well as recommendations related aspects are presented in Part III under different sections. The explanatory factors and challenges in the form the Rating Table are also addressed in Part II. In addition, the review has paid particular attention to delivery of the coordination at the district level and also discusses the issue of coherence with other similar ongoing initiatives being implemented by the same line agencies in the same district as the GEF

project. The review also discusses the way in which the progress of the project has been affected by the Madhesh Band, economic blockade and the Nepal earthquake.

b. Purpose, objectives, and intended use of the review:

The purpose of the MTR - commissioned by the GEF project implementing agency WWF, USA - is to undertake a Mid-term Review (MTR) of the Nepal Churia Project in an objective and independent manner. The mid-term evaluation of the project is being undertaken just over two years into implementation of the project. It will identify: a) any project design problems, b) progress towards monitoring and evaluation indicator targets, c) progress on implementation of the work plan, d) lessons learned that respond to challenges, e) opportunities or strengths. The evaluation recommends specific actions to improve the project performance through adaptive management. The intended use of the review is to provide a state-of-play assessment and report on the way the project is progressing to the project Manager and the WWF GEF Agency, GEF and the co-executing partners in the Government of Nepal. Specifically, the SLMNP being a pilot project addressing global portfolio of GEF's SLM objectives, the MTR can inform the GEF managers on future funding strategy and program design. It may be noted that the project is closely aligned with the GEF Land Degradation focal areas objectives nos. 1 and 3: " to maintain or improve flows of agro-ecosystem services to sustain livelihoods of local communities", and "to reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape" respectively. Since the MTR can help the Project to achieve the above global and national objectives by: i) promoting sustainable agricultural and livestock management practices; ii) engaging local communities in forest conservation; and iii) creating enabling conditions for inter-sectoral collaboration for sustainable land use and management, the report focuses on these aspects in an in-depth manner.

B. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Summary of the Project

The SLMNP is under joint execution by the Project Management Unit (PMU) based in the WWF-Nepal office in partnership with the Government of Nepal (GoN) Ministry of Land Reform and Management (MoLRM) – the lead ministry, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC), Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) and Ministry of Science Technology and Environment (MoSTE). Recently the GoN has split the MoAD into two ministries: ministry of agriculture and ministry of livestock and poultry. The project commenced in January, 2014 with activities starting on-ground in June, 2014 and has duration of 36 months.

The main strategy used by the executing agencies to reduce degradation include: a) promoting sustainable agricultural and livestock management practices; b) engaging local communities in forest conservation; and c) creating enabling conditions for inter-sectoral collaboration. Expected outcomes include: a) improved agricultural and land management; b) adoption of integrated

landscape management by communities; and c) a cross-sectoral enabling environment for integrated and participatory landscape management. There is a strong focus on local community participation in the activities through training events, community grants, agriculture extension services, livelihood opportunities, and inclusion of communities in planning.

The project is being jointly executed by the PMU and the four district line agencies to introduce and implement innovative and sustainable agro-pastoral systems and community participated forest management in the four districts. The technologies and techniques include Sloping Land Agriculture Technology (SALT) to reduce soil erosion, improve water storage for irrigation and decrease climate vulnerability and stress. In addition, the project aims to identify and redress relevant policy gaps to provide secure land tenure, and improve land use planning and land allocation through better inter-sectoral coordination, institutionalization and implementation.

The project activities are geared toward to achieve the above objectives by: i) promoting sustainable agricultural and livestock management practices; ii) engaging local communities in forest conservation; and iii) create enabling conditions for inter-sectoral collaboration for sustainable land use and management. The project is closely aligned with the GEF Land Degradation focal areas objectives no. 1 and 3: " to maintain or improve flows of agro-ecosystem services to sustain livelihoods of local communities", and "to reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape". The PMU is working proactively and constantly communicates with the focal persons. However, the communication and rapport between the focal persons in the district line agencies and beneficiaries – specifically the CFUG leaders – is not ideal.

The project has prioritized institutional capacity building, mechanisms and forums for coordinated inter-sectoral land and resource use planning, and will support district-level land use planning and analyses to identify important and sensitive areas for restoration and conservation. Successful implementation of the project will do more than support the pilot districts by demonstrating to the surrounding region and key stakeholders the innovative tools that can be replicated and up-scaled across the country.

b) Theory of Change and Results Framework

General concept of the SLM: Land degradation from anthropogenic over-exploitation of natural resources and unsustainable land use practices is global problem. This issue is increasingly linked with climate change and biodiversity conventions. Land degradation problem in Nepal, especially in Churia is the result of an increasing population with greater resource demands, which places increased pressure on land and land based resources through over-harvest of forests and forest products, over-grazing by livestock, and cultivation of marginal lands to meet food, fodder, fuel wood and composting materials. In Churia region, due to extreme ecological fragility, these activities lead to soil erosion, and loss of soil nutrients and fertility. Degraded lands then result in a decline in biological and/or economic productivity of agricultural lands,

pastures, and forests not only in Churia but also in fertile plains in southern Tarai region. According to the GEF (GEF, 2012) SLM Strategy the main drivers of land degradation in agriculture, rangelands, and forest landscapes are poverty and lack of enabling environment and that there is a need for effective institutions and policies to promote sustainable land management. This SLMNP assumes that land degradation in Churia can be substantially reduced through the adoption of sustainable agriculture management programs that are complemented by wider landscape conservation approaches.

*Conceptual Model***:** Among the threats to the rich biodiversity in Churia region population growth due to migration from both north and south, high poverty incidence, low economic opportunities and politicized land ownership issues combine to make the SLM a complex problem in Churia region. The factors of degradation form a vicious cycle of poverty, land degradation and under development. Native people who practice slash and burn agriculture in Churia hills are ultra poor people with no other alternative livelihood means and are forced to engage in unsuitable and unsustainable agricultural practices. This results in erosion, floods and loss of land forcing them to encroach upon more land. People cultivating encroach forest land in the foothills area of Churia are likely to make their current de facto ownership into de juro in due course of time. The major obstacle to stop this vicious cycle is weak land administration and political interference. Mostly the marginalized families get pushed to more fragile hilly slopes and continue unsustainable land management practice. This Project targets them as the primary beneficiaries and aims to convert the vicious cycle into virtuous cycle through the SLM.

The MoFSC has updated the Churia Conservation Strategy (2012) to include emerging climate change related challenges. The strategy recommends streamlining sectoral efforts to address issues through better integration and coordination of activities and programs, and balancing the needs of the people with environmental safeguards. The document lays out the strategic framework with goals, objectives and strategies, and an implementation plan for Churia conservation. The document emphasizes the need for: improved legal instruments; conserving the soil and forests through integrated soil and watershed management; conserving and managing. The MoLRM has prepared Land Use Policy of Nepal, which aims to classify and utilize land according to their suitability, potential and environmental importance for larger national goals.

Application of Theory of Change Approach: The project has been designed using WWF's Project and Program Management Standards based on results chain to describe the theory of change (TOC). The logical frame links inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts into hierarchical chain of results based management. Given the extensive literature available on Churia conservation, especially the Churia Landscape Strategy (MoFSC, 2013), the project has developed results chains that are used as the basis of evaluation. The MTR is using the TOC to examine cross-program integration and coherence among the project activities by different GoN line agencies. As the GEF resources are limited, cross-project learning or aggregation of results on threats appears to be one viable option. In this context, the review is assuming that that all project

activities are addressing multiple threats aiming to fulfill multiple objectives with synergy and complementarities building.

Synergy through Collaboration and Partnership: The project also is expected to collaborate and coordinate with the following ongoing initiatives: a) The Project for Agriculture Commercialization and Trade (PACT) implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture Development (MoAD); b) The Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme (LFLP) implemented by the Department of Forests. This program focuses on rehabilitation of degraded forests, environmental conservation and poverty reduction through the participation of local people. The GEF; c) The Irrigation and Water Resource Management Project (IWRMP) supported by the World Bank focuses food security by improving agricultural productivity through integrated crop and water management; d) The Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) Programme implemented by the Nepal Red Cross Society focuses on preparing the communities to face potential disasters and to empower them in planning, managing and eventually coping with small scale disasters on their own; e) The tiger and rhinoceros conservation projects (WWF, Global Tiger Initiative, and NTNC). The ecological services from the Churia are essential in supporting these endangered species, and the Churia Range forests also serve as important forest corridors for tigers and elephants; f) The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Program is being implemented under the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) and WWF Nepal in partnership with local communities. WWF is currently implementing two projects, including the Protected Area and Buffer Zone (PABZ) project and Corridors and Bottlenecks Restoration Project (CBRP). The projects are being implemented in the GEF project districts also. G) The Hariyo Ban Program is a USAID-funded initiative being implemented in TAL and CHAL. The activities of Hariyo Ban include biodiversity conservation, sustainable landscape management, and climate change adaptation. Some of these activities are being implemented in GEF project also. The project will develop an implementation modality at the central level that includes representatives from the relevant ministries, Terai Arc Landscape, Hariyo Ban, and President Churia Conservation Programme. Planned activities will be shared through this mechanism for better coordination. The mechanism will also provide a forum to share lessons and experiences, and provide input for the annual plans of this project. Similarly, a district level mechanism (e.g. Project Management Committee) will be set up to implement the activities, and facilitate timely reviews.

However, MTR consultant did not find any cross-program forums and sharing of lessons between above listed programs and the GEF project. One plausible option would have been to mobilize compatible project staffs of the WWF Nepal in planning and review of the project activities and progress reporting.

C. REVIEW METHODS

a) Review Process:

The MTR has been conducted as an in-depth and independent reflection of project progress and future priority actions. The consultant closely liaised with the Project Manager and WWF GEF Agency on all logistical and methodological needs and queries for conducting a sound review. The review process includes a) desk-top review of Project documents, b) observation of sample activities in the project districts, c) interaction with DLA heads, CFUG leaders, general beneficiaries, select PCC and PSC members and WWF, Nepal management. The list of documents and literature reviewed are provided in Annex 2. The evaluation time line and the TOR are provided in Annex 3.

***b) Review approach*:**

Given the complex nature of the SLMNP due to its competing as well as complimentary objectives, multiple partners (five ministries are involved) and at least three components to be managed in a landscape framework with a special focus on reduction of ecosystem degradation by promoting sustainable agriculture land and livestock management practices in a participatory, multi-stakeholder and collaborating manner, the approach used was based on both process and performance assessment. The enhancement of ecosystem goods and services (EGS) was used as a concept and framework for understanding the way in which nature benefits people who have traditionally developed indigenous, traditional and integrated approaches that are increasingly being used as a foundation to design and implement climate resilient sustainable land and ecosystem management at landscape level. Through review of the project documents and interactions with key stakeholders including community representatives, the reviewer examined how the project is using ecosystem services approaches in supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management ensuring sustainable livelihoods and sustainable flow of EGS. Specifically ecosystem-based approach was used to assess: a) development of broader constituencies for conservation and expanded possibilities to influence decision-making; b) opportunities to add or create new value to conservation areas (e.g. eco-tourism); and c) the opportunities to manage ecosystems sustainably outside of protected areas. Project intervention areas visited in which EGS approaches to examine how effectively enhanced EGS production is promoting sustainable land management as envisaged by the Project. Areas of particular attention was: a) plantation of species without utilitarian or economic value; b) ecological processes that do not directly benefit people; and c) critical ecological services and functions that may be undermined in attempts to optimize project outputs.

The approach used to examine each of these comprises how the project locations, beneficiaries and interventions were selected and decided. In the Churia context, the location for each activity such as zero grazing, afforestation and livelihood activity is critical since CFUGs have jurisdiction only over the CF areas which are distributed in patches in the overall national forest or agriculture landscape. The success of plantation depends on site quality and genuine interest among the CFUGs to maintain it. And finally, the fragile Churia landscape are source of both water and siltation to the downstream communities which means unsustainable and intensive

agriculture on hilly slopes can undermine the water storage and hydrological regulation processes of the Churia ecology.

Since the objective of the project is to "substantially reduce degradation and maintain or improve conditions in agro-pastoral lands and Churia sal and mixed forest areas in strategic project locations throughout the four pilot Churia Range districts" reducing degradation in 2,500ha of agro-pastoral lands and 5,000 ha of forests during its 3 years duration, the focus was on strategies and activities such as a) promoting sustainable agricultural and livestock management practices; b) engaging local communities in forest conservation, and c) creating enabling conditions for inter-sectoral collaboration in reaching these outputs and outcomes. For the two GEF/SLM global Objective 1 and 3: the projects' outcome indicators deduced as: 1.1 Land area under effective agro-forestry and agro-pastoral management and/or supporting climate-smart agriculture; 1.2 Land area under effective management in production systems with improved vegetation (fuel wood, fodder and pasture) cover; 1.3: Value of financial and material resources flowing to SLM from diverse sources (NAPA, President's Churia Program). For objective 3 the indicators expected are: 3.1: Demonstration results strengthening cross-sector (agriculture, forestry and Land reform ministry) program integration of SLM; 3.2: Application of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) practices in wider landscapes; and 3.3: Increased financial, human and material resources flowing to CBNRM and other land uses from the concerned ministries, NGOs, INGOs and President's Churia program were assessed.

Based on the critical analysis of the processes and practices employed by the Project especially in coordination and input-output-outcome-impact chain management, the review attempts to identify any problem with the project design, progress in achieving intermediate outcome indicator targets, progress on implementation of the work plan, and lessons learned that respond to challenges, opportunities or strengths. Some specific recommendations to improve the project through adaptive management, innovative planning and better teamwork are forwarded. The names of key informants, list of consulted documents and any synthesis tables containing project information used are presented in the annexes (Annex 2).

PART II: REVIEW FINDINGS

A. GENERAL FINDINGS

Analysis of Results Framework (RF), Monitoring Matrix (MM), project logic, strategies)

The results framework (RF) for the SLMNP titled: *Sustainable Management for Improved Flows of Agro-ecosystem Services* is presented under Appendix 3 of the project document. An analysis of the RF conveys that the Project aims to contribute to SLM through inter-sectoral and integrated landscape management approach and efforts to achieve interlinked results by supporting creation of enabling policies, legal frameworks and administrative mechanism based on Nepal's Forest Policy (1988, 2000, and 2015) and Forest/Community Forest Regulations 1993 that have been recently revised to make them compatible with the Forest Policy, 2015. Besides sustainable land management in Churia has to also follow the Churia Strategy, 2013 of the MoFSC that has to ensure the consideration of necessary social and environmental safeguards.

Implementation of the new national land-use policy (NLU, 2012) has been visualized. This requires compatible legal and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms which the RF assumes as forthcoming. The RF identifies and addresses priority drivers of deforestation and forest land degradation including agro-pastoral land degradation and shows the need for enhancing technical capacity for intensive supervision and monitoring of the flow of ecosystem goods and services using the project's monitoring matrix (PMM)

The RF should be treated as a living document and should be reviewed regularly as the context of the project and relevance of certain activities change. The current RF and MM derived thereof has too many physical or quantitative and too few socio-economic and qualitative indicators. Therefore there is a need to review the existing indicators critically and examine the need to develop some new and more appropriate indicators especially from community perspectives and/or modify/clarify the definition and methodologies for measurement of some of the existing indicators. Indicator such as: *Number of land-use policies/plans developed for sustainable land management* is vague and implies to only MoLRM developed policies and plans whereas for sustainable agro-pastoral and forest land management policies and plans of MoFSC and MoAD might also be relevant. Also most of the indicators are measuring acreage (in ha) of land improvement, which is already proving difficult to monitor. Instead the focus should be to improve the entire forest area under the CF or LHF jurisdiction and therefore proxy indicators such as improvement in capacity and technical skills, knowledge or knowhow, organizational management and ability to understand CF policy and legal framework by members of CFUG, BZCFUG, LHFUG and Collaborative Forest Management Committees might be more appropriate and practical to measure and monitor the progress. The RF also does not clearly show any indicators on direct and underlying drivers that need to be formulated for individual drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Restoration of previously encroached areas; level of unsustainable harvest of forest products, environment friendly infrastructure design and implementation promoted for climate resiliency; incidents of uncontrolled forest fire reduced; and level of overgrazing in forest land reduced. Methodologies such as threat reduction assessment, knowledge, awareness and perception mapping need to be included for measuring some of these indicators. These can be used in developing vulnerability mapping, adaptation

planning, embankment construction and location of fish ponds, and irrigation infrastructure that the project has been promoting.

Review of Project's Monitoring and Evaluation and project's use of Adaptive Management;
The PMU reports that it has applied participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process to monitor the project results and activities. An M&E framework has been developed to conduct monitoring of the progress throughout the project cycle ensuring feedback mechanism at different implementation levels. Monitoring is conducted at 4 levels – community level, project or site level, project/program or central level and donor or funding agency level. The M&E component has one outcome: Participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is also reported that the project's M&E officer is implementing the monitoring plan using the indicators such as biodiversity conservation target, best practices and alternative energy technology; agro-pastoral and forest ecosystem services and flows; land management plans and policies and cross-sectoral coordination and community engagement.

In reviewer's view, participatory monitoring system involves both technical and socio-economic monitoring process wherein the indicators are also determined in a participatory manner which the project does not seem to have been doing. The local communities, especially the representatives of the beneficiaries have to be involved in the monitoring of its progress and results to be informed on the status of the project and jointly decide on the nature of measures needed to address the gaps identified through the process. The PMU has been conducting monitoring diligently and providing information on project progress on a half yearly and yearly basis as per the GEF requirements. However, the participatory nature activity planning and output quality evaluation needs to be improved also in a participatory manner.

The WWF PRISM report has observed that ".as monitoring is a priority for the project manager, is a key part of the work performed by the leads for forest and agriculture, and the M&E officer is committed, organized, and thorough. However, monitoring a number of the project indicators remains an issue, as bi-annual monitoring for certain outputs presents a significant challenge for a small project with restricted amounts of funding for M&E". This observation is still valid based on the review.

In the PPR Year II report, the PMU has reported that M&E officer has been conducting visits regularly to support, monitor and supervising the activities of the executing agencies. The monitoring was conducted in a participatory and joint manner involving the implementing partners at both the district and central level while visiting the project sites. It was also reported that the project staffs working on the agriculture and forest components are found to be working in close coordination with the DLAs and concerned communities, and are playing the role of bridge building between the two. Also reported was the organization of high level monitoring visits with the participation of ministries, WWF Nepal and the AMU to take stock of the issues and observe the activities. Joint monitoring visits by PCC members and PMU team (2 joint monitoring by PCC and PMU members in January and December 2015 and one joint monitoring

visit by the AMU and PMU members in February 2015, and a high level monitoring visit in December 2015 by the WWF Nepal Country Representative and Program Manager are the highlights of the monitoring activities which is supported by the WWF through its co-finance support. The review however, did not find reporting of these important visits that should have addressed some of the lessons documented in the PPRY1. One of the important lessons reported was the weaknesses seen in the coordination mechanism among the DLAs due to the absence of the line agency Department and Regional heads in the mechanism. However, this problem still exists which needed intervention at the PSC level.

a) Summary of implementation of annual work plans (is the project on track?) and summary of achievement of results against M&E plan (is the project delivering?);

Status of the Project: The Project is making slow but steady and generally good progress moving toward outcome and impact achievement. The major highlights of the successful and struggling interventions are listed below:

Major Highlights of Successful Activities:

- The project has been successful in introducing and adapting Micro Irrigation Technology (MIT) involving pond, drip and gravity flow irrigation benefitting marginalized families in Bara, Parsa and Makwanpur. Sound utilization of water in a water scarce season and region, introduction of new technology in isolated communities and a change in perception about agriculture with farmers deciding to cultivate vegetables rather than tobacco are generating multiple benefits. Conservation outcome expected from these outputs is that by going for healthy cash crops (unlike tobacco), farmers can get more income from small holdings by reducing pressure on both forests and agro-pastoral lands (Outcome 1.1).
- Almost 48 ha of land has been conserved through the construction of a gabion wire embankment in Makwanpur. This has protected agricultural land from flash floods, and beneficiaries have been able to cultivate paddy on land that was damaged by floods yielding total of 1,500 kg of rice per ha. The intermediate conservation outcome here is protection of farmland from flash floods and rehabilitation of already flood damaged agro-pastoral lands thus reducing the chance of forest encroachment (Outcome 1.2)
- 26 CFUG representatives in the project sites have been provided training and knowledge to understand and implement integrated landscape management (ILM) practices in the CFUG managed forest. These CFUGs are implementing sustainable forest management practices by revising their forest operational plans. Regular cleaning and weeding, fire line construction, thinning and pruning are being practiced. Out of the 24 CFUGs, revised plans of 19 have been approved by the DFO. The five remaining revised OPs in Bara districts are pending due to Range officer not able to visit the sites because of the Tarai Band. During the MTR, it was given to understand that these plans will be approved within a month. This will help achieve outcome 2.1.
- 9 additional CFUGs in the project sites have incorporated the Community Forest Development Guidelines (CFDG) of having at least one female in one of three leadership positions of their group. This policy was adhered to by 14 CFUGs before project, and this

has increased to 23 CFUGs since the project began. The consultant talked to a number of women leader thus elected. The positive aspect is that the women leaders interacted with feel empowered and want to take some new initiatives. But the negative aspect is that in the absence of targeted capacity building there is a danger that they will not be able to play their expected role. One general comment the team heard from a number of male members of the CFUG is: "committee members have to patrol the forest during night time which women leaders are unable to do".

- 10 community forests (CFs) in Rautahat districts decided to designate their forests as Open Grazing Free Zones (OGFZ). A series of stakeholder consultations were organized and awareness raising activities were conducted to make them aware and acknowledge the need of declaring OGFZ. This has encouraged the community to practice stall feeding their livestock, rearing improve breed and to artificially inseminate breeding livestock and selling milk to the Dairy. The capacity building was in the form of training classes from the project officials on the merit if declaring OGFZ followed by interactive discussions. The result so far is that while most of the CFUGs are convinced on the need to declare OGFZ and some of the CFUGs have made decision to declare OGFZ in their forest. However, they expressed their inability to enforce the CFUG decision unless the adjoining national forests and river banks are also declared OGFZ which only the DFO has authority to do. The project does not seem to have built the capacity and enabled the process of the DFO in this regard.
- 240 ha of open space in Nirmalbasti, Parsa was identified and mapped for the formation of BZCFs, as there are no forests in the area. Plantation will be undertaken, maintained, and conserved by buffer zone users for communal use in the future. This will contribute to reducing pressure on valuable forests adjoining PWR and Valmiki Tiger Reserve, India and also provide an alternative means of meeting needs for forest products among local communities. This will contribute to the project objective of conserving, restoring, and managing critical forest and biodiversity areas. However, the area demarcated for afforestation and controlled grazing needs fencing and the allocated budget is inadequate and wrongly placed under the DLSO. This needs a coordinated approach among the DLSO, Parsa, PWR office and the local community.
- 114 ha of open barren areas, river beds have been conserved through fencing and plantation to restore forest areas in strategic locations during the last two years. However, the quality of afforestation (e.g., Pashupati CFUG, Bara; Kalapani in Rautahat) is not satisfactory, especially the bamboo plantations. Bamboo rhizomes instead of bamboo cuttings should be planted in these difficult areas. Also, `cut-and-carry' system of grass harvesting should be allowed to render benefits to the community. Rodents and termites have damaged some areas. There are however, no negative effects.
- The project supported 565 HHs and helped increase their income through agriculture (mainly vegetable, fish and fruit farming) and some forest based income generating activities. The MTR found that forest based (sal leaf plates) livelihood interventions in Rautahat are still in nascent stage and need more funding, technical backstopping and marketing support.
- A parcel-based land use classification list, based on the land use zone map of four VDCs has-been produced by MoLRM. The map has an overlay of individual land and classification based on the National Land Use Policy 2072. However, its acceptability

and feasibility in the project area is doubtful due to large scale encroached and unregistered land especially in Ratanpuri, Bara.

B. COMPONENT WISE FINDINGS:

A brief overview of the progress reported (largely based on `PPR Yr. II) and observed on project's activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts are described below by each component:

Component I: Sustainable management of agro-pastoral land

Altogether, 28 CFUGs (8 CFUGs in Rautahat and 9 in Bara; 9 BZCFUGs in Makwanpur and 2 BZUCs in Parsa districts) are involved in this component. Most have incorporated the Community Forest Development Guidelines (CFDG) of electing at least one female in one of three leadership positions as well as one each dalit and indigenous community member in the CGUF Executive Committee. Similarly, all the CFUGs have also ensured inclusive character by ensuring a minimum of 33% of the committee members are females. They are also practicing improved, innovative forest land management.

The project activities reported by the PPR Yr2 include: SALT, zero tillage, mixed cropping, rain water collection and storage ponds for micro-irrigation and mixed crop rotation, innovative agriculture, and water management practices covering around 127.482 ha of agricultural land of local farmers. However these impressive outputs do not generally translate into targeted outcomes The achievement of SALT is affected due to poor matching of the program with the mandate of the designated line agency (DADO) and poor interest and understanding both among the farmers (because of wrong perception that once they plant trees or accept forest department sponsored programs in their encroached and unregistered agricultural land, they will be vulnerable for forceful eviction from the land they are occupying now) and implementing partners (because the concept is new to them) in spite of the training and exposure visits. The implementing partner for SALT is the district agriculture office, but due to lack of knowledge and capacity, this was shifted to DSCO in three Tarai districts.

Based on the site observation and interaction with the DADO and CFUG members, the reviewer conclude that the target of covering 200 ha under SALT is not feasible and therefore this activity should be changed either to Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) or Conservation Agriculture depending on the line agency that takes up the work. Synergy can be developed with water collection ponds, mixed cropping and kitchen gardening to achieve the outcome of sustainable agriculture land management. More practical approach will be to integrate SALT into DSCO's bioengineering activities. The DSCO is spearheading the bioengineering activities under which close to 50 ha land has been stabilized to reduce soil erosion and restore productivity in Makawanpur district. The clear impact of this work is observed in Handikhola-7 Masine Shanti CFUG where the communities have started re-cultivating the farmland that had been damaged by the Dheduwa Khola before the project.

For initiating zero-grazing, a series of consultation awareness raising workshops were conducted involving different stakeholders in Rautahat. 10 CFUGs managing around, 8,908 ha of community forest, agriculture, riverbank, shrub and grass lands were mapped for declaration as Open Grazing Free Zone (OGFZ). However, the DFO has yet to ratify the decision of the community who gave the following reasons why he thinks it is impossible to declare the area as OGFZ: a) does not have staffs to enforce the decision; b) there are downstream pastoral communities who have traditional grazing rights in national forests; c) certain NGOs are providing free exotic goats that are kept at home and local goats are sent for open grazing as they do not want to mix them for fear of breed deterioration; d) indigenous (e.g. Tharu) and local families traditionally keep large herds of animal as a social status; and e) livestock farmers do stall feeding of milk producing and improved breed and unproductive cattle are sent for open grazing.

Forest fire hazard mapping was conducted in Chandranigahapur and Ratanpuri VDCs and 30 CFUG members were trained to identify fire prone areas and control wild fire in their respective forests as a part of activities done in Yr 2. 31 sets of fire control equipment were handed over to Masine Shanti CFUG in Makwanpur. This activity is appropriate since a government sponsored study has indicated that the project areas have high fire risks threatening adjoining settlement areas. The study recommended capacity building of local forest user groups and government agencies for putting in place integrated and participatory forest fire mitigation and management. Fire hazard preparedness training for all the CFUGs in the studied district has been planned for 2016. Also, hazard mapping of Lal Khola (Bara) and Chand Khola (Rautahat), with a focus on water induced disaster were conducted by MoLRM.

The interaction with CFUG members in all three districts indicated that one-off awareness raising, training and equipment distribution alone do not result in effective fire management practices. Participatory fire management practice should be made part and parcel of operational plan which generally is limited to fire line development and clearance. But under the project this aspect needs to be improved by making fire mitigation and control as one of the annual activities under the CF's operational plan, which is not the case now.

It is reported that 13 different types of trainings have been provided covering the subjects such as GESI, Leadership and organizational development in CFUGs, account management, training of 16 focal persons on climate change adaptation, SLM practices, and SALT) to more than 500 people to prevent land fragmentation and promote productive management, however, the cumulative effect is mixed change in knowledge, skills and practices due to two reasons: a) most of these are one-off training and b) they are not seem to be based on systemic training needs and gaps assessment and therefore are generally supply driven. In case of SALT first training should have been how to assure general farmers that the land tilled by them are having secure tenure and access (at least to crop and tree products if not land itself) without which the underlying drivers of degradation is not going to be solved through measures like SALT.

Component II: Integrated landscape management in forested areas

The PPR II has reported 99-35% progress under this component based on the outputs such as supporting CFUGs in identifying forest areas in strategic locations, afforestation and revision of CF operational plans. It is also reported that the project accomplished targets in supporting livelihood opportunities, biogas units, solar panel and ICS, and training and workshops. Members and representatives from CFUGs/BZCFUGs have been trained and capacitated by the project to implement a sustainable forest management (SFM) practices including fire management, thinning and pruning, and cleaning and weeding. 20 CFUGs/BZCFUGs in the project sites have shown improved capacity to understand and implement integrated landscape management practices better conserving around 4677.46 ha of forest land. The project has in a small scale has initiated alternative income generation (AIG) activities through growing of forest based products like broom grass, bamboo plantation, However, in the absence of scaled-up and sustainable on-forest and off-forest based income generating opportunities (IGOs), the goal of sustainable and integrated landscape management (ILM) will be difficult to achieve. This is because ILM is a long-term collaboration among different groups of land managers and stakeholders to achieve the multiple objectives required from the landscape which is absence as different line agencies are working at different places. Churia Landscape is interconnected socio-economic and ecological systems with high complexity and rapid changes that require coordinated and long-term intervention and management. Agricultural production, provision of forest ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, cultural identity and value; and local livelihoods, human well-being have to be managed through multi-stakeholder, inter-disciplinary and multi-level approaches managing trade-offs and strengthening synergies among different landscape objectives. This big picture vision and management is largely missing in the project.

The project has supported different types of IGAs covering 336 HHs (selected using project's beneficiary selection criteria) that are dependent on forest ecosystem services for their livelihoods generating income to improve their household income. However, except in vegetable farming, market links are weak. For example, in turmeric farming, plate making using Sal leafs and bamboo and broom grass cultivation, marketing aspect need to be improved through value chain development (VCD) and forward and backward linkages. The VCD study on Turmeric is a good start but requires piloting and integration with other products since market for these products are highly fluctuating (sunset and sunrise phenomenon).

The Project has contributed in updating the State of Nepal's Environment, 2015 being prepared by the Ministry of Population and Environment which is a laudable effort and hopefully project will get credited for this.

Component III: Cross-sectoral coordination and local community engagement

Under this component, 5 outputs were targeted: inclusive beneficiary selection system, institutional capacity building, cross-sectoral coordination, creating enabling environment, land

use planning, and awareness raising. The project is practicing project prescribed inclusive beneficiary selection criteria using the WWF Policy and GoN GESI Framework as guide. Orientation on using guidelines in the selection of CBO/CSOs, individuals and households based on community consultations, status and rankings were provided by the project staffs. However, these activities in general are producing mixed outcomes as training activities are one-time requiring follow-up, GESI guidelines are not fully followed especially in activities such as mixed cropping, irrigation facility development, as registered land owners tend to have higher receptivity and dedication to sustain these initiatives. The outcomes are still possible provided small grants are tailored to suit different gender and social groups such as women's group could be targeted to develop their Aama Samuh, Saving and Credit groups and others.

A number of CBO members have been given capacity building training classes but due to poor monitoring and follow-up training, not all the skills developed and knowledge enhanced does not see translated into improved and integrated landscape management in all the project districts. However, the awareness built is perceptible that is expected to contribute in sustainable land management in Churia.

The parcel based land use zone classification list and maps of 4 VDCs has been produced by the Land Use Project of the MoLRM. While the classification of land based on National Land Use Policy (NLUP), 2072 is a good step aiming to put in place land use according to the capability class or zoning, legal framework will be required to use the classification in implementing sustainable VDC Plan which the Hadikhola VDC has already developed and got endorsed by DDC Makawanpur. The PPR II itself reports that `unveiling of this classification will be controversial". The reviewer feel that the best option is to pilot NLUP in the Handi Khola VDC using the existing Land Act. of the Govt. of Nepal. This will help achieve the intended outcome (albeit partially). Lastly it is reported that 32 awareness building program were conducted. The Project has to be credited that at least in Makwanpur, the awareness raised is translating into good SLM practices. Perhaps, the PMU could plan peer learning for the CFUG members from the 3 Terai districts with Masine Shanti CFUG members rather than doing more of supply oriented awareness-raising activities in 2016.

Component IV. Project Monitoring: Partner Reporting

The project has reported that all the AWP listed and some unlisted activities under this component has been completed including organization of 3 PSC, 6 PCC and 2 annual review and reflection meetings. Monitoring visits by PCC members and supervision mission from the WWF US team have also been held. However, the recommendations made in the PRISM report such as `improving priority/capacity of DLAs and improving access to markets' do not seem to have been well monitored and followed-up. Inviting DLA focal person/representative to PCC meeting for improving coordination at the district level is also does not seem to have been implemented.

The current indicators in the monitoring matrix as already stated above need to be reviewed and revised and more qualitative indicators such as Knowledge, Awareness, Attitude, Perception, Skills and Transparency, Accountability added. The quality of technical reporting need to be improved by deliberating how lessons learned were internalized and challenges faced met besides meeting the GEF reporting requirements. The Agreements signed between GEF and WWF and between WWF and the co-executing agencies require preparation of one full annual report as well as input to the annual reviews. This should be made available with the main annual report for project tracking.

The quarterly and annual reporting by co-executing partners that should be shared in the PCC and PSC meetings were not available for the reviewer to study. Such reports reflecting the perspectives can help address specific concerns about progress, the challenges faced by the DLAs and focal persons in a timely manner. This can also address the coordination gaps in the districts. The PSC meetings should be well prepared with the Progress reports shared in advance and key issues presented along with the suggested Action-to-be-Taken list in the PSC/PCC meeting so that decisions happen. The current meeting process observed by the reviewer is somewhat light in content and low in deliberation.

Both the RF and MM should be reviewed and revised annually specifically focusing on adding qualitative and/or socio-economic indicators. Existing quantitative indicators also should be revised reflecting the experience of the past participatory monitoring exercise. The indicators as experts say should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant/realistic and tractable). The examples of qualitative indicators are: knowledge, awareness, and perception, attitude, and capacity, skills".

Finally, one should remember: `*monitoring is as good as planning'* which means the monitoring officer should be closely working with the planning and management staff to get a meaningful M&E outputs and outcomes.

C. NEED FOR REVISION OF THE 2016 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

It is understood that 2016 plans are already finalized and in some cases communicated to the DLAs. Given that a number of challenges such as staff turnover, fragmented and scattered nature of programs, and poor quality of output generation (e.g.afforestation, SALT and capacity building) are continually faced by the project, the MTR strongly recommends to revise and consolidate the 2016 plan to consolidate activities and build on successful interventions so as maximize the chance of `reaping low hanging fruits'.

It was reported that the fund transfer to the DLAs in 2015 was delayed and implementation was affected in Tarai districts due to prolonged strike and blockade. A significant amount of carry over budget saving seems to be available with these DLAs. Some activities such as DLS related ones were implemented but implementation of activities such as `Zero Grazing', enrichment plantation and training seem to be poorly done or not done. The PPR YrII mentions that "The

progress of Component I, II and III are above 75% but the achievement of component IV was affected by prolonged Banda. The PMU was not able to secure a visit to the headquarters of Bara, Parsa and Rautahat" for more than 4 months resulting in significant savings under this component (only 64% expenditure reported). This problem should be converted into opportunity to consolidate the activities and work on those that are producing promising results.

Effective Implementation of Work Plans and Budgets:

While the 2015 (2nd half) progress is 80.4% in technical area and 87% in financial expenditures, the factors such as carry over form previous year and previous half year, delays and disruptions of due political and natural causes should be more critically analyzed and their repercussions on output quality needs to be elaborated. This has definitely affected the effectiveness of the work plan in 2015. There is need to improve both effectiveness and efficiency by building on the successful activities and leveraging other project resources to improve the quality of outputs so that they can be managed to achieve the project outcomes. Activities that generate synergy and meet multiple objectives are: bio-engineering measures; multi-purpose tree planting both in agro-pastoral and forest lands; and improving animal breeds.

D. ANALYSIS OF KEY FINDINGS BASED ON EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria and Ratings Based on the Response to the Questions

Based on the key findings narrated above, the six recommended evaluation criteria were critically analyzed and rating is presented below in Table 2 against the guiding questions. Additional analysis of the activities and outputs are provided in the Annex 9.

Table 2. Rating Table: Summary of Ratings based on Performance Criteria[2]

Rating/Score	**Description of Strong Performance**	**Evaluator Rating/ Score****	**Evaluator Brief Justification** Please note indicator, source or methodology when relevant.
Relevance	1. The project addresses the necessary factors in the GEF Focal Area and is able to meet its project objective towards achieving Global Environmental Benefits. It can bring about positive changes in the conservation targets and/or project objective identified in	Very Good	The project demonstrates overall good relevance of all activities across all the five sub-criteria; However, due to poor design (top-down nature of the selection of programs such as SALT and OGFZ), some limitations are also assessed due to PMU alone selecting sites and communities in year 1.

[2] More detailed for of the this table and explanation is provided in the full report (p.xxx).

	the prodoc.		
Quality of Design	1. The project has rigorously applied key design tools (e.g. the WWF PPMS).	Fair	The design is sound in structure but lacks latest concepts and approaches in content
	2. The project is hitting the right 'pressure points' to meet necessary and sufficient conditions for success.	Fair	Project interventions are targeting the communities and sites inclusively and appropriately but activity packaging is fragmented and scattered
Efficiency	1. Most/all project activities have been delivered with efficient use of human & financial resources and with strong value for money.	Good	The implementation is cost effective and inputs are used optimally; due to slow start of the project and mid-term disruptions and delays, extension is required
	2. Governance and management systems are appropriate, sufficient, and operate efficiently.	Good	Generally sound institutional framework and governance system exist but more efforts are required
Effectiveness	1. Most/all intended outputs and outcomes were attained and address identified threats.	Fair	Most of the outputs are attained in quantitative terms but quality needs improvement; Outcomes are ambitious and need innovative management of outputs
	2. There is strong evidence indicating that changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF GEF project.	Good	In the sites where interventions were made, attribution is high but `critical mass' is missing in some structural measures
Impact/ Results	1. Most/all outcomes relating to desired changes in the status of the conservation targets (species, ecosystems, and ecological processes) and project objective were realized.	D/I	Intermediate outcomes were assessed but at the mid-term stage, there is not enough data to assess full outcomes and impacts.
	2. Evidence indicates that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to	NA	Change in mindset, attitude, perception and practice need time

	the WWF GEF project.		
Sustainability	1. Most or all factors for ensuring sustainability of outcomes/impacts are being or have been established.	Fair	While a sound institutional framework exist at local level that has high policy and political support, external factors (choice of technology, finance, and political stability) might hamper sustainability
	2. Scaling up mechanisms have been put in place with risks and assumptions re-assessed and addressed.	Fair	Assigning of the project execution to sector line agencies provides prospects for scaling up; however, poor integration and collaboration with similar programs such as President's Churia Conservation puts question mark.
Adaptive Management	1. Project results (outputs, outcomes, impacts) are qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrated through regular collection and analysis of monitoring data.	Good	Regular and participatory monitoring and site visits have created high visibility of outputs and intermediate outcomes
	2. The executing project team uses these findings, as well as those from related projects/ efforts, to strengthen its work and performance.	Fair	Only the outputs of the GEF projects are highlighted; links with related projects are generally not made as the GEF projects sites are in different locations
	3. Learning is documented and shared for project and organizational learning	Fair	While lessons are drawn but learning and using the to improve subsequent years' plans and programs are poor

** Explanation: Very Good/4: The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a very good extent; Good/3: The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a good extent.; Fair/2: The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a fair extent; Poor/1: The project embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a poor extent.; N/A: The criterion was not assessed (in the 'Justification,' explain why); D/I: The criterion was considered but data were insufficient to assign a rating or score (in the 'Justification,' elaborate).

E. GENDER MAINSTREAMING & SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

Gender and Social inclusion: The project has developed the capacity of the local communities giving special focus on women, poor and socially marginalized groups. Each of the project objectives has prioritized gender and social inclusion as an integral component of the overall project to ensure that both women and men receive equitable social and economic benefits. The project team has generally ensured that the local communities do not suffer adverse effects during the implementation process from both intended and unintended actions. The project has been using gender mainstreaming tools such as planning women friendly or drudgery reducing livelihood activities such as Sal leaf plate making, vegetable farming and clean energy (biogas, solar and ICS) promotion. This has reduced the demand for traditional cooking fuel that is largely forest based and reduced pressure on the forest. Gender and social inclusion (GESI) in the project document calls for giving priority to women and marginalized groups in planning engagement inthe entire project activities which the project has been doing. The project team has strived to ensure equitable social and economic benefit sharing in the community. It has an institutional framework for mainstreaming gender that ensures women's participation and provides equal opportunity in all project activities, consultation processes, and training activities. The project also collects and maintains gender-disaggregated data.

The project has several interventions such as community, leasehold and buffer zone forestry management where women have high participation. A large number of women have been given capacity building training on sustainable land; water management and alternate energy use as these are women's priority areas. The project components although highly technical have provisions to include poor, women, Dalit and Janajati in the activities as almost all the CFUGs have been following GoN's CFDG in revising their CF operation plans. Some positive outputs and outcomes observed are as follow:

- Project document captures GESI adequately
- Project objectives are sensitive towards gender and social inclusion;
- Institutional framework in place to mainstream gender;
- Disaggregated data maintained.
- Further Area of improvement:
- Lack of GESI related qualitative indicator that might hamper analyzing the project form gender and social inclusion prospective;
- Project team should include gender and social expert to guide the project and its implementing partners (ministries) that are all technical and lack expertise
- Enhance women's knowledge in seed selection and storage;
- Develop linkages with government extension services or train local resource person (LRP) for extension services giving priority to gender and social inclusion;
- Provide refresher training to the same women and other marginalized groups as one time training is not sufficient.

Assessment of Environmental and Social Safeguard Criteria

The reviewer as already elaborated above finds the beneficiary selection criteria followed by the project generally adequate and practical. However, the use of the benefits by the recipients should be monitored for improvement in qualitative indicators such as women's health, children's education, family nutrition level, perception toward conservation and behavior in mobilizing community for collective actions that are important for promoting conservation and sustainability values. Since students have also been involved by the project, change in conservation values should be monitored among children also.

The MTR did not observe or hear any adverse (direct or indirect) impacts on the existing access and benefit sharing tools and mechanism used by the project from the local communities during several interactions and site visits. Generation of ecosystem goods and services through the project support are occurring inthe CFUG managed forests, agro-pastoral lands and afforested areas. Some restriction on grazing lands is imposed which is more than adequately compensated by the provision of seeds and seedlings of fodder tress and grasses and improved animal health care, breed development and animal shed improvement activities.

F. FINANCE AND CO-FINANCE REVIEW

The project has received close to 82% co-finance from the IA – WWF and co-executing Govt. of Nepal partner ministries which is a good sign. The total budget of more than 5 million USD indicates the potential of making adequate number of quality of interventions than can achieve intended results and create long-term impacts in the area of sustainable land management in Churia region of Nepal. However, the high co-finance figures do not seem to be translating into focused, coordinated and coherent efforts in implementing project activities in a truly integrated forest landscape management and sustainable rehabilitation of agro-pastoral lands. The reviewer feels that this is due to three reasons: a) weak governance and coordination structure of not having the DGs in the loop, b) poor quality of coordination, and c) lack of ownership by the partner, especially mandated and resourceful ministries such as MoFSC. This has resulted in poor or no communication to the district line agencies either from the PSC/PCC or by their respective Director General's office on the need for an integrated and mainstreamed approach. The PMU needs to hold a discussion on this issue urgently and institute a more functioning and enabling governance and management mechanism.

G. MAJOR CHALLENGES AND THEIR MITIGATION

Challenges- It is normal in the life of a project that challenges are faced and innovative and planned project management and risk mitigation efforts address those challenges. The SLMNP however, faced both normal and abnormal challenges that are described below together with how to mitigate them in future:

1. Time constraint of district implementing partners for integrated planning and implementation to address land degradation. Government line agencies in the project districts are

executing a large number of projects including President Chure Conservation Program (PCCP) and implementing agencies have their normal work as well. Because of these reasons, some district line agencies are reluctant to allot staff to the project, which affects the overall progress. Small amount of GEF funding also disappoints them.

Suggested Mitigation approach: maintain some flexibility in selecting sites within Churia region and encourage and empower the concerned DLA to integrate GEF project with other ongoing Churia project (e.g., PCCP) without compromising on outputs and outcomes.

2. The Terai banda (strike) started in September 2015 and continues to date. This prolonged banda impacted the mobility of implementing agencies and restricted the timely fund transfer to communities as the headquarters of Parsa, Bara and Rautahat were severely affected.

Mitigation approach: Nepal is still in political transition and political unrests are likely to continue. Fortunately Churia region proper is bit immune to political disturbance in Tarai. Therefore capacitating, empowering and preparing local CBOs, CFUGs, and Women's Group to carry out planned activities can mitigate this risk.

3. Despite several orientations and reminders, none of the implementing partners use any of the formats provided for record keeping during activity implementation. This resulted in the absence of disaggregated data, and doubled the time and effort required to maintain and update the database.
Mitigation approach: The PMU should hire an extra local hand (local expert or a student intern) to collect data and prepare the records under the guidance of the concerned DLA.

4. The project has multiple interfaces with the communities, as activities are implemented through diverse district line agency partners and each of these partners are also implementing their own programs in these communities at the same time. This dilutes the visibility of the project in the community, with activities often misunderstood as being activities of other projects and programs implemented by the same partner.

Mitigation approach: the PMU and WWF should not strive for full attribution of the results to themselves only. All partners can share maintaining some flexibility to bundle GEF project with similar nature projects could yield more sustainable and visible results the impact attribution of which.

5. High staff turnover among the government partner ministries, institutional head and focal of the DLAs.
Mitigation approach: This is normal practice in bureaucracy; the PMU should prepare one standard and updated Project Briefing Kit (it can be uploaded in the WWF/Project website or kept handy in a Stick Drive and handed over to the new focal point. This will save time and keep the focal person briefed fully.

6. The long distance between the district headquarters and project implementation site has led the ineffective communication between community and implementing partners.

Mitigation approach: Compared to Hilly districts, the distance involved is insignificant. Inaccessible road during monsoon is a problem. Empowering CFUGs and Use Groups and recruiting Local Experts can solve this challenge

7. Implementation of SALT and its adoption by the local communities has been a major challenge. SALT itself is new technology to the communities in project sites and district implementing partners. SALT implementation was supposed to be led by the district agriculture office, but due to lack of knowledge and capacity, it has to be shifted to DSCO. Also, the amount of sloping agriculture land in the project area is low and the land holding capacity of the HHs is also low.

Mitigation approach: SALT is an outdate technology; training was of academic nature and MoAD was not the right ministry to be assigned this activity; replace SALT by either Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and augment activities and if DESCO has been transferred this task practice Conservation Agriculture

H. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- The PMU has been employing adaptive management to overcome the political and natural hindrances to mobility and effective communication. Alternative travel routes and coordination meetings venues were used by the PMU to implement and monitor the activities. As a result, coordination and supervision was effective in continuing activities of DLSO in Nirmalbasti, Parsa, where the equipments were brought from Hetauda was passed through the fire line of PWR to Nirmalbasti for the same.

- The surplus budget of the DLSO Rautahat was used for developing artificial insemination (AI) facility and construction of 9 improved sheds and administrative support for the Jaya Chautari dairy co-operative. This was because of high community demand for AI service. As an incentive, fodder and forage saplings/seedlings were made available to the communities with the coordination and collaboration with other national programs. Livelihood opportunities in the Open grazing free (OGF) area have been created (e.g. Turmeric farming involving 45 women in Kalapani CF, Chilling VAT in Adarsha CF and Leaf plate making in Tileswornath CF in Rautahat).

- The plastic pond in Handi Khola, Makawanpur was constructed in year one was damaged by the earthquake that hit Nepal in April 2015. An engineer was immediately deployed to the site and the pond was designed and reconstructed following stronger engineering design in the year 2015.

PART III: LESSONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDAITONS

A. LESSONS LEARNED:

Overall lessons are based on interview with stakeholders and consultant's own reflections, insights and understanding of the process followed by the Project and progress that are observed during the field visit. Also included are the lessons that are documented by the PMU:

Lesson on What has worked and why?

Inter-sectoral approach: First, the concept of inter-sectoral approach involving five ministries to sustainably manage Churia landscape region is well appreciated especially by the DLA heads. In fact, there is a suggestion to include the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development also (MoFALD) also. "It is a great platform that needs to be better planned" is the general view. Besides the structure, the planning and implementation process and the governance mechanism need to be improved.

Livestock farming activities: A number of sub-activities especially livestock husbandry related activities are doing well. The reasons are: a) the program is delivered in a package form and is not fragmented. Animal bull distribution, artificial insemination (AI), technical backstopping through annual Animal Health Camps (AHC), and free veterinary medicine distribution; b) it aligns well with local people's traditional practices; c) do not need huge investment and return is quick and assured; d) market linkages are well known for which the Project is providing meaningful support (e.g., chilling VAT and Cattle Shed (Goth) improvement; e) diversification or options among animals – cattle, buffaloes, poultry, inland fisheries, goats, piggeries exist to suit every culture and gender; and e) risk is low and the Project focal persons are motivated. Small gaps observed in this largely successful program are that the lack of proper use of by-products such as compost making and animal urine utilization.

Vegetable farming: Vegetable farming, especially in Handi Khola is doing very well due to two factors: irrigation facilities have been created, and b) market supply chain is well established as the production areas are very close to the national highway and Hetauda town market. In Rautahat and Bara also vegetable farming in the form of kitchen gardening is picking up meeting household needs.

Gabion wall-based bio-engineering structures: Especially in Handi Khola Ward No. 5, gabion mesh wire embankments reinforced with vegetation plantation – a bio-engineering approach is doing fairly well. The embankments have rehabilitated damaged farm lands and more significantly protected valuable rice lands, vegetable farms and settlements. In places where they have not worked or are getting weakened or damaged, the causes: open and uncontrolled grazing and poor afforestation quality.

Biogas – Project has created a bio-gas village in Nirmal Basti, Parsa covering 25 HH that have received support for establishing Biogas units from the project. The units were found running well providing clean energy for cooking and lighting. This activity is also generating conservation and health benefits as clean and alternate cooking energy reduces fuel wood consumption and improves kitchen environment. However, the full benefits from the Biogas units can be realized if the dung slurry can be managed as organic fertilizer, human toilet waste is connected as well as a reliable maintenance service provider is available in the community. This aspect was observed not well communicated and managed in the biogas village. Also the sustainability and scaling up of small biogas plants is feasible provided a multi-stakeholder approach is adopted (Pokharel and Chhettri, 2012) where in health, agriculture, forestry, livestock and co-operative agencies coordinate their activities will. Such a model has been found to be widely replicated in other renewable energy technology promotion activities (Pokharel and Chhettri, 2012).

Lessons on what is not working and why?

Overly top-down and academic design: The SLMNP was designed 2 years after the Govt. of Nepal announced the formation of the President's Chure Conservation Program (PCCP) in 2011. Among the four major programs of the PCCP, at least two are directly related to the SLMNP themes. They are: Integrated River System Management (IRSM) and Improvement in Agriculture System and Income (IASI) which directly relate to Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and SALT programs of the SLM respectively. The SLMP not only did not fully embrace these scientifically sound strategies aimed at conserving Churia landscape on a long-term basis but also seems to have ignored the conceptual principles underlying these programs. For example, the main problem of Churia is not only the degradation of land in Churia proper but in the entire river basin in Tarai going across the border into India.

The IRSM program of the PCCP states that due to the annual flash floods cultivable land is destroyed all along and encroachment increases. The PPCP basically prescribes integrated watershed management (IWM) led by tree plantation drive in uplands. Similarly, the IASI, an integrated approach comprising "empowerment of communities, improvement in agriculture system, modernization in animal husbandry and improvement in pasture land, fruits and conservation cultivation, promotion of private forests, promotion of herb cultivation, infrastructure development for village tourism, skill development for productive business.." which very much relate to FAO and ICIMOD's New Generation of Watershed Management (FAO, 2012) and Nepal's successful Leasehold Forestry (LHF) programs. More strikingly, Makwanpur Development Initiative (MDI) has developed globally recognized SLM models and practices in Manahari Catchments (just on the opposite side of Handi Khola watershed) that seem to be complete ignored by the Project.

SALT: theoretical concepts: The approach of SALT is to promote improved agriculture land management in the frame of ILM for attaining sustainable forest land management goals. The

approach although is conceptually good but has not been tested and practiced in Nepal. SALT is in fact new to the MoAD and the expertise has been all along assigned to the DSCWM. To aggravate the situation, the implementing partners seems to have decided the Year 1 program without much consultations with the concerned DADO by selecting sites and communities (e.g. Mul Khola in Makwanpur) as well as without meaningfully analyzing whether or not an enabling environment for the success of the program existed in the selected sites. Some of the observations of the DFOs and Focal persons below are the testimony to this top-down approach and consequences: DLS- Parsa: " WWF Nepal should act as a facilitator and decision should be given to us to decide which programs shall be effective at local level. There is a tendency of micro management on the part of PMU"; DSCO, Bara: "…a blanket approach does not work in the current context which the GEF project seems to have." DADO, Makwanpur: "The GEF project is not mainstreamed in the regular programs of the Government hence neither plans nor reports are included in our annual work. This has weakened institutional memory and whole information is centralized with focal person. This project is not able to respect the district based institutional norms. Churia land management demands conservation agriculture, which sometimes is contested with the goal of the project which has on its own decided to implement SALT).

Open grazing free zone (OGFZ) or Zero-grazing (ZG): Although critically important output to achieve the project outcomes and a common policy adopted by the successful CFUGs in Nepal, in Churia range it is a challenging task due to mixed land tenure and multiple users. Therefore both the outputs and outcomes of this component are only partially met. The reasons are again top-down approach and faulty assumptions. The project areas are predominantly inhabited by indigenous and poor communities whose major source of livelihoods is rain fed agriculture and livestock rising. The concept of free ranging is ingrained in the culture of indigenous (Tharu, Tamang, Danuwar) peoples (IP). Keeping large herds of cattle and herding and grazing them in the forests, especially when they are not in lactating period is their traditional culture. Activist organizations such as Bhumi Adhikar Manch (BAM) and NEFIN campaign for IPs' rights. Ignoring these underlying drivers of open grazing and land degradation and planning OGFZ program is a recipe for failure. While awareness raising, empowerment, and even inclusion of provision in the revised CFUG operation plans and decisions of the CFUG committee have been well accomplished by the project, but these are `necessary' but not `sufficient' conditions for declaring ZG mainly because if the SLM uses the approach of integrated landscape management and plans to make the ZG as one of the SLM good practices, then it has to also ensure that national forest and river bank areas that are interspersed among the CFs are also declared ZG areas which only the DFO can do. But given the reality that DFO does not have enough resources to enforce, it is impossible to declare ZG in the entire project CFUG areas. Besides, there are downstream pastoral communities some of whom have traditional grazing rights in the areas. There are other problems: certain organizations are providing free exotic goats increasing the risk of open grazing by local goats as people do not want to mix local and exotic goats due to the risk of breeding.

Vulnerability risk assessment and hazard mapping: The reviewer did not find any vulnerability risk and hazard maps produced. Only parcel based zoning based on land use mapping of 4 VDCs has been produced by MoLRM. The map has an overlay of individual land classification based on NLU Policy 2072. Vulnerability assessment in the context of climate and socio-economic changes is done based on multi-hazard/risk assessment and impact assessment (commonly known as VIA) and is used for Adaptation planning. In the SLM context, VIA should be done to plan adaptive management or even better building resilience in infrastructure (including natural infrastructure), institutions, communities and watersheds. The vulnerability maps of the project CFUGS and VDCs should be integrated for sustaining this activity.

Project Activity Coordination: The MoFSC developed Churia Conservation Strategy (2012) "recommends streamlining sectoral efforts to address issues through better integration and coordination of activities and programs" (MoFSC, 2012). The participants of the national seminar on *"Sustainable management of Chure: efforts, challenges and potential"* organized by the PCCP (PCCP, 2012) stressed the need to develop a clear vision, systematic plan and coordinated approach at ecosystem level. They suggested involving and engaging other line agencies – such as Ministry of Local Development, Agriculture, Water Resources, Education, Health as well as civil societies, private entities by establishing a national level coordination mechanism including donors, ministries and implementers. In this context, the SLMP approach of developing an inter-ministerial steering committee (PSC) and coordinating body (PCC) for implementing the project is good. While these bodies are meeting regularly and approving plans, programs and progress, they do not seem to have developed a clear understanding and responsibilities of different line agencies, especially sending a clear communication to DLAs to work in an interdisciplinary manner. There is also the lack of match between the competence required and compatibility of the ministry to implement program activities.

Co-funding: The project document has indicated the availability of close to 82% co-funding from the GoN ministries and the GEF implementing agency: WWF. The financing assessment also took note of the large finance available from GoN/WWF implemented TAL conservation program that includes funding of compatible activities in the Churia foothills including in the project districts. The TAL also funds important activities in the project areas to replant and protect forests and to protect and conserve water in the Churia hills. Therefore both of these projects have very high potential to collaborate. Similarly, the co-executing ministries, especially MoFSC have a number of projects doing activities with high synergistic characteristics. However, the visibility and impact of co-funding to date is rather weak.

Lessons for wider relevance:

The SLMN project being a pilot project, the wider relevance implies achievement of outcome and impacts. For this, the project has to strive for both geographic and institutional scaling up successes. Based on the results to date, geographical spread (horizontal scaling up or scaling out) to more people and communities within the Churia landscape or within each watershed is rather

difficult to achieve since it would need more investment and longer project period. This can happen if the SLMP expands its size by replicating successful interventions in more CFUGs and micro watersheds increasing its beneficiary base in the 4 districts. Based on the lessons, the project has possibility to achieve political (policy influence at national and global scale) and organizational or institutional scaling up influencing the governance and organizational practices in neighboring CFUGS, VDCs and municipalities in the project areas. The project should invest in later type of scaling up activities.

B. CONCLUSIONS

General Conclusions

- The SLMN Project commenced in January 2014 and the expected closure date is December 2016. This mid-term evaluation is undertaken few months after the half of the life of the project has been completed. Five sectoral ministries as the co-executing agencies and other district level partners characterize the project. The review highlights the advantages of the multi-sectoral structure that allows mobilization of expertise and resources as well as the long-term commitment of all land based ministries to the project agenda. The report also points out the challenge such inter-sectoral project poses such as domain protection and non-cooperation to the lead ministry,
- The MTR provides an opportunity to critically look in the design and implementation process and suggest any course correction necessary to streamline the project methods and approach. The four project components were designed as complementary packages of work and therefore success or failure in one influence the outcomes of the other. The example is the overarching importance of coordination and community (beneficiary) engagement the success of which will affects all the components. The steering and coordination mechanism through PSC and PCC have been designed to bring to bear the influence and resources of all the five ministries to the success of the project.
- As well, all the partner ministries have other projects either working physically in Churia region or have national projects that can have good relationship with the GEF project. The expectation therefore is that each ministry especially MoFSC will use the GEF funds to fill in the critical gaps in projects such as Presidents' Chure Program. However, this aspect remains weak in the project management efforts. Good results are being achieved where such collaboration has occurred.
- The Project Management Unit staffs, the implementing agency (WWF, US), the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Project Coordination Committee (PCC) members are making good efforts to achieve project's success. The Project has good potential to achieve its outcomes and impacts. The DLA heads and focal persons interviewed were all-aware of the project and appreciated its high relevance. The farmers and CBOs have high expectations from the project, more training and capacity building, more financial resources including community grants. The increasing demands are particularly more in income generating, livelihood improvement and degraded farmland rehabilitation.

- The IA – WWF has an interest and commitment on keeping the project implementation process on track. For this WWF team needs to provide leadership and technical support through its team of experts. More results oriented interaction and dialogue with the PSC members and policy makers as well as experts is necessary to implement the NLUP, 2012. While WWF has demonstrated clear commitment to the project through co-financing and doing monitoring visits, however, the project influence so far seems much localized around the project co-executing and coordination team.
- The partnerships and collaboration developed between this project and the district line agencies (DLA) and local CBOs is commendable. The possibility of building better synergy by deepening these partnerships should be explored by the Project in the remaining period. One consideration could be the use of the existing PSC members to influence their respective ministries to link all Churia based projects with the GEF project.
- Coordination at district level has been less successful with isolated and scattered nature of activities being pursued by each line agencies. Very little interaction and collective learning seems to be happening among the DLA focal persons and staffs despite engagement of a wide range of local and district stakeholders in project activities. This may be a result of inadequate consultation on coordination mechanisms during the design phase and this is a good lesson for future design of multi-sectoral projects.
- The overall rating on the achievement of project objectives and results is moderately satisfactory, with ratings on project sub-components, which are each managed by one or more co-executing partners, ranging from marginal unsatisfactory to satisfactory.
- Component wise, the Component 1: Sustainable Management of Agro-pastoral Land has been progressing slowly due to some setback in implementing SALT interventions. The declaration of `zero or no open grazing' in community forestry areas also is facing problem due to some practical problems. Livestock sector activities however is doing very well with breed improvement program registering good success. Bio-engineering measures are also doing well.
- The Component 2: Integrated Landscape Management in Forest Areas is also making good progress since the main players are the community forestry user groups. Income generating and livelihood opportunities are acting as economic incentive measures to induce communities to practice conservation measure. Training and capacity building and input (planting materials) supply provide motivation to the forest users to carry out afforestation and prevent illegal harvesting and open grazing in their forests.
- Component III: Cross sectoral coordination and local community engagement is facing some challenge in that lead ministry i.e., Ministry of Land Reforms and Management (MoLRM) is neither proactive at the centre nor active in the district. The net result is lack of interest and ownership by resource rich and mandated ministries such as MoFSC and MoAD. A system of shared responsibility among the key ministries at least the MoLRM and MoAD is necessary to improve the coordination.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are being made based on the main findings of the review and consultant's professional views and insights. The recommendations are divided into two sections: A) actions that can be taken during the remaining project period; and B) actions that future SLM project design in Churia should take, the implementation of first set of recommendation require a decision to be taken by the PSC, PCC and PMU in consultation with executing ministries and the implementing agency immediately.

Section A: Recommendations for the remaining period of the Project

Recommendation 1. Extension, Budget and Staffing

Due to the above mentioned disruption in implementing the planned project activities in the first and second half of 2015, a three to six month extension is recommended without additional budgetary and staffing implications using the carry over surplus budget in the PPR II. There should be no need for additional staffing in the PMU and the salary for the key staff can be covered from the savings made in Year II.

Recommendation 2: The Revision of 2016 Work Plan and Budget:

The PMU should undertake a realistic activity and budget revision working with the collaborating agencies and WWF senior management in order to accommodate a project extension and ensure adequate administrative support to the project during the remaining period of the project. The overriding aim should be to consolidate the activities so that the planned outputs and outcomes, especially institutional up-scaling of success stories is ensured. This recommendation has four sub-recommendations:

a) Undertake review of prospects for better integration and targeting of project activities especially with the activities of the PCCP and similar other project activities including Hariyoban, TAL, Forestry Decade for better synergy and sustainability;

b) Undertake internal review of budget management by involving DLAs to identify whether there are any areas where it is likely to under-spend its allocated budget as a result of difficulty in planning or completion of project activities.

c) Integrate and/or redirect budget associated with the SALT activity to activities under DSCO's flood and erosion control activities which the PMU has already been doing in 3 Tarai districts; The budget under Zero grazing can be used to boost capacity building and institutional strengthening activities including that of the DFO staffs under coordination & community engagement (Comp III). The PCC should issue clear guidance on how these changes can strengthen the outcomes under agro-pastoral and forest land improvement. Since SALT activities are being implemented by DSCO in Tarai districts anyway integrating SALT with DSCO's bioengineering (Gabion embankments, check dams) and terrace improvement activities will face no problem. Under Component 1 focus should be on improving livestock, vegetable and fish farming in lower belt and under Component II focus on comprehensive capacity development of CFUGs and DFOs.

iv) Improve synergy among different activities especially value chain development of the agro-ecosystem goods and services generated (e.g. water, NTFP (e.g. turmeric has been done) and fodder trees and grass production). Increased supply of organic manure as an output from

Biogas activity can create on-site value addition to both vegetable farming and NTFPs that can bring synergy.

Recommendation 3: Delivery of Component I

MoLRM and MoFSC should jointly explore the possibility of using existing regulations (e.g. Land Act or Bhoomi Ain) to implement National Land Use (NLU) policy in a pilot basis to achieve the outputs and outcome of NFOG or ZG in selected VDCs and CFUG forests where the communities are already empowered, committed and their institutions strengthened to implement these national and local policies. The most feasible areas are BZCFUGs in Handi Khola where there should is no issue of multiple tenure system and the benefit generation from the production of forest products and eco-tourism is also higher. In order to assure success of this action the**,** WWF and co-executing ministries and line agencies should integrate and develop synergy and complementarities between their ongoing and compatible projects (e.g., PCCP, Hariyoban, TAL) more proactively since the scale of problem in Churia region demand that GEF fund is utilized strictly in gap filling, synergy building and achieving sustainability and long-term impacts;

Recommendation 4: Delivery of Component II

The PSC should give greater role to the MoFSC to take up sub-components 2.1 (sustainable management of forest (SMF) lands; The desired progress is being affected by a range of factors including weaknesses in project design by not making the MoFSC and poor livelihood component for the CFUGs. It is therefore recommended that all the capacitated, empowered and prepared CFUGs be provided more support for developing sustainable livelihoods and improve multi-purpose nature of afforestation through better integration of medicinal, aromatic and dye plants and value chain development (VCD) of the forest ecosystem goods and services [e.g. broom grass, pasture grass; medicinal plants (Harro, Barro, Aamla, Sabei grass, bamboo etc); and ecotourism] by improving technical knowledge and marketing capacity of CFUGs and improved quality of planting materials and value addition measures.

Recommendation 5: Delivery of Component III

The PSC/PCC should recognize the weaknesses in project's coordination mechanism reported in the project conclusions and under lessons above and improve PSC and PCC more effective, inclusive and engaging. The PMU should take lead in advocating this change using the logic of lessons learned during the last 1 year of implementation experience and initiate result-oriented discussions to restructure and streamline the functioning of at least the PCC to ensure better ownership of the project responsibility by the MoFSC and the new Ministry of Livestock and Poultry whose roles and responsibilities are key to the success of the project. Creation of a new ministry in fact is a good justification to reform the governance and coordination mechanism of the project. Also, the DGs of the departments of agriculture, livestock development, forest, soil conservation and watershed management should be special invitee to PSC meetings.

Section B. Recommendations for Future

Recommendation 1. The PMU should organize and prepare a discussion session on future SLM related project management and coordination mechanisms in future PCC and PSC meetings to internalize lessons learned. The aims of the session should be: i) to discuss on how best to use external funding to promote project coherence, learning and sharing, ownership and scaling up at national and global level, ii) to include all land based ministries such as MoFALD into the PSC

and PCC, and iii) to streamline district level coordination and integration from planning to monitoring; In addition the focal points should take responsibility for consulting and communicating with their respective district office heads and other project stakeholders before and after the PSC/PCC meetings. The PMU should also be required to ensure that communication on project activities are maintained with both focal points and their institution heads for better coherence.

Recommendation 2. The recommended practical approach to restructure PCC is to co-share the coordination responsibilities between the two main co-executing ministries: MoLRM and MoFSC as both have legal mandate to manage public and private lands. This is expected to develop better ownership and integration of programs especially within the MoFSC programs (e.g. PCCP); it will also address the fragmented and scattered nature of the SLMP activities by ensuring that `critical mass' of activities is maintained to ensure sustainability and impacts (e.g. river control bio-engineering structures) that will require adequate volume and mixture of activities (both of soft and hard nature) required to achieve the outcomes of the project; it will also ensure the continuity and integration of GEF funded activities with those of the Govt. of Nepal programs.

Recommendation 3.In the light of MTR's rating the project - **Marginally or Moderately Satisfactory,** future project design should be more informed by and aligned to the Churia Strategy, already proven national good practices in Churia land management (e.g.WTLCP and TAL) programs. Activities such as SALT, NOFG and Land Use Policy implementation should be tailored to the national and local contexts and decided based on multi-stakeholder consultation and consensus.

Recommendation 4. As the saying goes: Project Monitoring is as good as Project Planning', the current project's indicators in the Monitoring matrix need to be reviewed and revised and more qualitative indicators such as Knowledge, Awareness, Attitude, Perception, Skills and Transparency, Accountability need to be added. The quality of technical reporting need to be also improved meeting the GEF reporting requirements. The Agreements signed between GEF and WWF and between WWF and the co-executing agencies require preparation of one full annual report as well as input to the annual reviews. This should be made available with the main annual report for better project tracking.

Recommendation 5. It is recommended that each of the co-executing partners produce a summary annual report in the first quarter of each calendar year based on the standard GEF template as input for the published annual report for sharing in PSC meetings. Where there are specific concerns about progress, the co-executing agencies should share steps being taken to resolve the problem and actions to be taken by PCC and PSC separately; this will address the coordination gaps in the districts. The PSC meetings should be well prepared with the Progress reports shared in advance and key issues presented along with the suggested Action to be Taken by the PMU which the PCC should monitor in its subsequent meetings. The current meeting process is light and short in both content and deliberations. Before PMU completes PPR, they should perform reflection and learning exercises and this is fed to the PSC/PCC meetings

Recommendations 6. The Monitoring Matrix should be reviewed and revised and specifically new and socio-economic indicators added. Quantitative indicators also should be revised

reflecting the experience of the concluded participatory monitoring exercise. The indicators as experts say should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant/realistic and tractable). The important examples of qualitative indicators are: knowledge, awareness, perception, attitude, capacity (individual, institutional and technical), and skills.

ANNEXURE

1. Itinerary with list of key informants and field sites visited
2. List of documents consulted;
3. Evaluation timeline and contract
4. List of people met and interviewed including beneficiaries of the project.
5. Review Questions
6. Annual Work Plans (Summary);
7. GEF Focal Area objectives and goals;
8. Maps, diagrams;
9. Evaluation summary table; and
10. Interviews with DLAs

Annex 1. Itinerary with list of key informants and field sites visited

Field Visit Plan for the MTR Team

Sustainable Land Management in Chure Range, Nepal (GoN/GEF/WWF)

Persons traveling: Dr. Madhav B. Karki, Independent Reviewer &

Associate staff; Mr. Sanjeev Poudel, CGED-Nepal

Route Plan: Rautahat - Bara -Parsa -Makwanpur– Kathmandu

Day	Site	Activity	Remarks
1 (20/2)	KTM-Rautahat		Overnight stay at Chandranigahapur (Sita Palace Hotel - 055540237)
2 (21/2)	Rautahat	• Meeting with DFO Rautahat and Focal Person in Chandranigahapur • Visit to Milk Cooperatives at Aadarsha CF and interaction with cooperatives member (better to reach the place at 7:00 am, when milk farmers aggregate in the center) • Visit to Gaidatar, observe afforestation at Tileshwornath CF and Kalapani CF • Visit to Bamboo and Broom grass demo plot of Nava Durga CF	Overnight stay at Chandranigahapur
3 (22/2)	Rautahat/Bara	• After breakfast, travel to Gaur • Meeting with DADO & DLSO, Gaur • Lunch at Chandranigahapur and travel to Simara • Meeting with DFO- Bara and Focal person	Overnight stay at Simara (Hotel Paradise- In front of Surya Tobacco Company - 053520644)
4 (23/2	Bara	• After breakfast, travel to Ratanpuri VDC via Amlekhgunj • Observation of forest nursery, critical afforestation sites (Pashupati CF) and interaction with CFUG members • Visit to Dharapani CFUG, observe water conservation initiative and interaction with beneficiaries	Overnight stay at Simara
5 (24/2)	Parsa	• After breakfast, travel to Aadhabar • Meeting with Warden, PWR • Travel to Nirmalbasti VDC, Parsa • Observe Biogas village and Drip	Overnight stay at Simara • Lunch at Nirmalbasti

		irrigation site, interaction with the beneficiaries • Interaction with milk farmers associated with Milk Cooperatives • Interaction with Chairpersons of Nirmalbasti & Kusumbatika BZUC	
6 (25/2)	Parsa	• Meeting with DADO & DLSO at Birgunj, Parsa • Meeting with DADO & DLSO at Kalaiya, Bara • Proceed to Hetauda	Overnight stay at Hetauda (Hotel Samana, Nayarani Mall-057524821)
7(26/2)	Makawanpur	• After breakfast, travel to Handikhola-7, Masinae • Travel to Masinaeko siran, observe SALT model plot, mixed cropping, water source protection activities and interaction with the communities • Back to Masinae golghar area, observe HHs with cow shed improvement, fodder & forage plot, Travis construction and interaction with beneficiaries • Visit to Masinae khola river embankment and bioengineering works, interaction with beneficiaries • After lunch, meeting with district personnel (DSCO)	• Observation of initiatives undertaken by DADO, DLSO and DSCO for the project Focal person: Janak Dutta, DADO and Ganga Ram, DLSO to brief on the work at the site • Overnight stay at Hetauda
8 (27/2)	Makawanpur	• After breakfast, travel to Handikhola-1 • Observe IGA related to agriculture and interaction with beneficiaries • After lunch, Meeting with DADO & DLSO (Institution head)	• Community grant initiatives • Overnight stay at Hetauda
9 (28/2)	Hetauda to KTM	Travel	Return back to Kathmandu

Annex 2. List of documents consulted

Project Document:

- Sustainable Land Management in the Churia Range, Nepal. WWF Global Environment Facility Project Document – Version: 10 September 2013

Progress Reports:

- WWF GEF Project Progress Report January – December 2015
- WWF GEF Project Progress Report January- July 2015
- WWF GEF Project Progress Report January 2014 - December 2014

Technical and General Reports:

- Capacity Building of Local Stakeholders on Forest Fire Risk Preparedness under project Capacity Building of Local Forest User Groups of the Buffer zone of Parsa Wildlife Reserve on Forest Fire Risk Preparedness (Hadikhola VDC), Gyanendra Karki, June 2015

- Sustainable Land Management and Productive Agriculture Practices in Churia Region. Shrawan Kumar Sah, PhD. Professor of Agronomy and Director, CDC Agriculture and Forestry University, Rampur, Chitwan, Nepal. December 2014

GEF related documents:

- WWF Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP)
- Evaluation Policy for GEF Funded Projects
- Sustainable Land management financing in the GEF. A Primer for the Sixth GEF Replenishment phase (GEF-6)
- Mid-term review of the GED resource allocation framework (full report), Prepared by the GEF evaluation office. 30 October 2008.
- Mid-Term Review of the UNEP GEF Project "Addressing Land-based Activities in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-Lab)" April 2007.

Article (s)

- Building resilience for adaptation to climate change through sustainable forest management, Susan Braatz, Forestry Department, FAO, Rome
- Pokharel, GR and Chettri, AB (2012). Large-Scale Promotion of Animal Dung-based Domestic Biogas Digesters through Public Private Partnership: A Successful Case of Nepal; downloaded on 21-04-2016 from https://www.google.com.np/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0ahUKEwjrsIyl857MAhUFmZQKHS2_DD0QFggoMAI&url

Trainings Reports:

- Conceptual Orientation cum Training to Increase Capacity on Integrated Land Management in the Churia Region Bijay Kumar Singh, Ph.D. Consultant/Facilitator June 2014.

- Refresher Training Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation Planning
  For Sustainable Land Management in Chure Region Project, Nepal (GoN/GEF/WWF) 07-10 October, 2015, Hetauda, Makwanpur, Nepal

Miscellaneous

- GEF Project Database: https://www.thegef.org/gef/project_detail?projID=5596
- The Global Mechanism: Land Degradation Neutrality- http://www.global-mechanism.org/
- GEF Focal Area (s): https://www.thegef.org/gef/land_degradation

Annex 3. Evaluation timeline and contract

Consultant contracted.	
Materials for desktop review delivered to reviewer. Requests for more information delivered as applicable.	Immediate following contract.
GEF AMU and PMU arrange for reviewer's field visit, including interviews, site visits and logistics.	Immediately following contract.
Desktop Review.	~ 1 week following contract.
Consultant visits the project sites and Kathmandu office.	~10 days following desktop review
Presentation of findings to PMU with 1 page summary.	Preparation period.
Evaluation report drafted and circulated to relevant staff.	~March 1, 2016.
PMU and GEF AMU comment on report findings.	Review period. Comments submitted ~March 4, 2016.
Evaluation report finalized and approved by GEF AMU.	~March 11, 2016.

Annex 4. List of people met and interviewed including beneficiaries of the project

List of Persons met				
	District Line Agencies (DLAs)/ Focal Persons			
Pilot Districts	**DADO**	**DFO/ Warden**	**DLSO**	**DSCO**
Rautahat District	Ram Milan B.K	Bhagwan Prasad Gupta	Dinanath Yadav	Naina Bahadur Tamang
Bara District	Birendra Yadav, Shobha Sharma	Jivan Kumar Thakur /Pankaj Kumar Thakur	Dr. Hem Chandra Jaiswal	Ramananda Bhattarai/ Anil Sinha
Parsa District	Genilal Yadav	Birendra Kandel	Arun Kumar Sinha	-
Makwanpur District	Nirmal Gadal/ Janak Datta	-	Ganga Ram Yadav	Ram Prakash Pradhan
	Community User Forest Groups/ Buffer Zoner User Groups (CFUGs/BZUCs)/ Committee/Sub-Committee			
Rautahat District	**Aadarsha**	**Tileshwornath**	**Kalapani**	**Nawadurga**
	Ramesh Timilsina, President	Acting President-Chitrarekha Kumari Dhami, Loknath Dahal	Secretary Manthi Guro, Treasurer Loknath Dhakal, Forest Guard: Binod Dhami; Dev Prasad Poudel, User: Gopal	President Santa Bahadur Pakhrin , Secretary Pradip Syangtan; Sita Maya Thokar, User
	Janaekta	**Jana Chahana**	**Namabuddha**	**Shanti**
	Ramji TImilsina	Dev Bahadur Sapkota	Prem Bahadur Baju	Govinda Nath Chaulagain
Bara District	**Pashupati**	**Dharapani**	**Janahit**	
	President Menuka Syangbu, Secretary; Krishna Bahadur Ghimire	Junu Ghalan Lama, Secretary; Buddhilal Syangtyan President	Gyan Bahadur Moktan, President; Ashakaji Shrestha, Secretary	
	Buddha Jyoti	**Lalbakiya**	**Radha Krishna**	
	Krishna Dhamala	Rajan Adhikari	Chanda Lama	

Parsa District	**Nirmalbasti BZUC**	**Kusumbatika BZUC**	
	Narayan Sir, President; Chok Bahadur- Biogas owner, Rajesh Kumar Shrestha	Santosh Shrestha, President; Khadag Shrestha Milk Chilling VAT owner, Goma Upadhayay	
Makwanpur District	**Manakamana**	**Basti Bachau Sub Committee**	**Chetana**
	Hiralal Syangtan, President; Bishnu Kumar Jimba, Secretary; Ananda Ghalan, Joint Secretary;	Naryan Prasad Subedi, President; Bachu Kumar Upreti, Treasurer	Ram Kumar Subedi
	Panchyakanya	**Lokpriye**	**Churiamai**
	Homnath Ghimire	Mohan Lal Thing	Shanti Waiba
	Janakamana	**Gaurishanker**	**Lokhit**
	Bina Gole	Chandra Kumar Thing	Krishna B. Rumba
Group Meeting (s)			
Makwanpur District	**Handhikhola-7, Masinae & Ujjwal Bhabhisya Sub Committee**	Dhurba Khadka, President; Members: Kumar, Parbati Adhikari, Devi Lamichhane, Narbada, Chandra Bahadur, Mukunda Prasad Dhakal, Madhav Gautam, Madhav Prasad Dhakal, Sita Devi Dhakal, Dil Bahadur Khadka, Chandra Bahadur Bista, Keshav Bahadur Gautam, Krishna Dhakal	
Bara District	**Dharapani CF**	Buddhilal Syangtyan, President; Junu Ghalan Lama, Secretary; Sanu Kancha, Advisor; Users: Karna Bahadur Thing, Harka Bahadur Thing, Dipesh Bal, Sher Bahadur Bal, Ashmita Ghalan, Bibi Maya Bal, Kanchi Maya Bhulon	

Important Contact Numbers

District Line Agencies (DLAs)

Name	Position	Phone Number
Anil Sinha	DSCO, Bara, Kalaiya (Focal Person)	9845024539
Dinanath Yadav	DLSO, Focal Person	9855020122
Hari Krishna Yadav	DADO, Bara, Simara	9855040032
Nirma Gadal	DADO Hetauda	9851073671
Pankaj Kumar Thakur	DFO, Simara, Bara Focal Person	9845119422
Ram Milan B.K.	DADO, Gaur	9855040129
Ram Prakash Pradhan	DLSO, Makwanpur, Hetauda	9841674992

CFUGs/BZUCs/ Committee/ Expert

Name	CFUGs/BZUCs/ Committee/ Expert	Phone Number
Aashakaji Shrestha	Janahit CF, Ratanpuri-9, Bara	9851144368
Bina Gole	Janakamana CF, Hadikhola-1, Makwanpur	9818436527
Chanda Lama	Radha Krishna CF, Ratanpuri-8, Bara	9845644424
Chandra Kumar Thing	Gauri Shanker CF, Hadikhola 4, Makwanpur	9845862443
Dev Bahadur Sapkota	Janachahana CF, Chandra Nigahpur-1, Rautahat	9745003978
Devi Pd. Poudel	Kalapani CF, Chandra Nigahpur-3, Rautahat	9813078248
Goma Upadhya	Kusum Batika CF, Nirmal Basti-9, Parsa	9845165770
Govinda Nath Chaulagain	Shanti CF, Chandra Nigahpur-1, Rautahat	9849473771
Hira Lal Syantan	Manakamana CF, Hadikhola 4, Makwanpur	9845127359
Hom Nath Ghimire	Panchakanya CF, Hadikhola-9, Makawanpur	9845167145
Krishna B. Rumba	Lokhit CF, Hadikhola-4, Makwanpur	9804249914
Krishna Dhakal	Masine Shanti CF, Hadikhola-7, Makwanpur	9845103608
Krishna Dhamala	Budha Jyoti CF, Ratanpuri-3, Bara	9815232410
Krishna Pd. Ghimire	Pashupati CF, Ratanpur-3, Bara	9845249650
Lok Nath Dahal	Tileshwar CF, Chandra Nigahpur-3, Rautahat	9819891924
Mohan Lal Thing	Lok Priya CF, Hadikhola-9, Makwanpur	9845078628
Narayan	Nirmalbasti, PWR, Head teacher	9845665728
Prem Bahadur Baju	Namo Budha CF, Chandra Nigahpur-3, Rautahat	9816864617
Rajan Adhikari	Lal Bakaiya CF, Ratanpur-9, Bara	9803572036

Rajesh Kumar Shrestha	Nirmal CF, Nirmal Basti-8, Parsa	9845288604
Ram Kumar Subedi	Chetana CF, Hadikhola 1, Makwanpur	9845253633
Ramji Timalsina	Jana Ekta CF, Chandra Nigahpur-1, Rautahat	9845190543
Ramesh Timalsina	Adarsha CF, Chandra Nigahpur-4, Rautahat	9845615354
Santosh Shrestha	Nirmalbasti, PWR	9855028145
Shanti Waiba	Churiyamai CF, Hadikhola-8, Makwanpur	9817224878

Annex 5: Review Questions

A. Broad Level (to be asked to PSC members and the Management)

a) What are the concrete signs of advances towards the outcomes?
b) What progress does the Monitoring and Evaluation plan/matrix show?
c) What challenges are causing delays in meeting the project targets? How we can mitigate for these challenges? What strategies could be adapted to account for these challenges?
d) How is the role of MOLRM – coordinating ministry in general perceived? Does MOLRM have the required vision, understand, capacity/ability as a role of coordinator?
e) What has changed in the context today compared to when the project was designed?
f) Is the project still relevant to address the changing challenges in Churia land degradation?
g) Are there new opportunities to capitalize by the project remaining within the project duration and resources?
h) Is it feasible to complete the project objectives with the remaining resources and the existing context?

B. Manager Level Question:

a) Are the outcomes targets meeting mechanism, community based and have long-term vision that works even on post project scenario with less technical assistance and support?

b) Has WWF/N helped in strengthening the links between SLM and Sustainable Wildlife Conservation (SWLC) to create a synergy between the two?

c) In the context of rapid demand of timbers by the govt. to fulfil the demand of quake affected areas- has the project considered these external market demand and supply function to maintain integrated land management practices? Has the decision by the MoFSC to free the timber from private sources from forest regulation affected the Churia forestland conservation efforts?

d) Have user group's perceived SALT technology as a tool to reduce their vulnerability level or to increase their agriculture and forest production? Was the SALT training more of academic in nature or situation specific adaptive and practical?

e) Is there availability of maintenance services for repair of damaged alternative energy sources unit to ensure continued usage on reducing firewood consumption; along with maintenance services for ponds and chilling VAT and any other infrastructure/equipment provided by the project?

f) What has become the residual impact of the awareness campaigns on sustainable land management, a) changes in perceptions, b) behaviours c) knowledge, d) capacity and e) attitude in the community? Were knowledge products translated in the local language?. Examples or Case studies and how to training manuals.

g) How was the participatory decision making ensured at the local level for the real participation of women and youths? Who decides, who participates?

h) Is there any resistive group force or indigenous community people such as Danawars, Tamanags, Bankariyas who oppose project efforts to restrict zero grazing and encroachment to national forest or protected areas (PA)?

i) What are the best practices on degraded land management rehabilitation and agricultural improvement practices that can be called a success in pilot district/VDC, which may not be the case on other sites?

j) Do the community level institutions have sound institutional arrangements for an official sanction of 'zero grazing' for better compliance? How much effective is the process of declaration of such initiatives that is dictated from Central to District level?

C. Specific questions to Local implementing partners and functionaries

a) In the post earthquake situation, implementation of component III is 11 percent - (Comp I- 47%, Comp II-40%) what are the major challenges to increase the percentage of implementation of CIII and opportunities to strengthen the project objectives and outcomes? Is coordination and coordinator weakening?

b) As a part of sustainable agricultural practices, have efforts made to build a community seed bank for regular supply of the seeds; which can also reduce risks due to the rapid environmental changes and disasters such as earthquake. Are the seedlings from a nursery and what type of pesticides or fertilizers is been used?

c) Are the basic techniques of bioengineering communicated through a learning package to the project site populations? Have the selected beneficiary of the training been retained and further strengthened as a local expert to flow the training knowledge at community level?

d) The challenge of Govt. employee's transfer has been a major challenge. What efforts are made to orient the transferred employees not to hamper the decision-making process? Are the overlaps of project activities between the MoLRM and MoFSC affecting working at the ground; if yes, how synergistic impacts are created?

e) How were the project site and beneficiary selection criteria used in choosing of beneficiaries for the grant component and site selection conducted? Is there any duplication? Please provide documentation of the implementation of the criteria?

f) Is the project grazing restriction causing any restriction of access to communities? Is that a Government led program? Did the project provide compensation, if so, how was this decided?

D. Indicators to observe during the field visit (20-29 February)

a) Enabling environment (good governance, capacitated institutions and aware community members and enlightened local leaders and functioning social organizations)
b) Adoption of SALT technology on-station and on-farm.
c) Social or Physical Fencing of the Open Grazing Lands
d) Mixed Cropping technology
e) Zero tillage practices
f) Conservation Ponds
g) Bioengineering methods and maintenance system
h) Enrichment and pure Plantations.
i) Alternative Energy Units and post-distribution service system
j) New Emerging forest based Enterprises
k) Forest Fire Management techniques
l) Real participation of Women in CFUG
m) Drip Irrigation Technology – self managed by farmers
n) River embankments- community involvement
o) M&E plan, outcomes, outputs and project objective indicators
p) Adverse environmental impacts caused die to construction of small infrastructure
q) Nurseries and plant gardens using pesticide
r) Any others.

Annex 6. Annual Work plans

Summary for year 2014-2015

Component I:

For the first year component one had plans to establish SALT model in 4 VDCs of the pilot district (s) along with legume crop for 150 HHs. To ease the water supply, total establishment of ten-drip irrigation system in Nirmalbasti was proposed with a major storage tank within the community. Three hundred ha of land was bioengineered at least in six sites of three districts; to stabilize soils and reducing erosion to restore productivity in the heavily degraded lands. It was expected to conduct at least 8 stakeholders' consultations in each district that would help to discourage grazing pastures in erosion prone areas. To encourage stall-feeding, cowshed improvement was developed as model at least once in all the project sites both the years, along with goat shed improvement only for first year twice. Two hundred cattle's were artificially inseminated at least in 3 sites also additionally support for Travis construction provided. At least

250 farmers benefitted with breed improvement services. A model plots established for perennial flow of forage in entire sites. One study was conducted in Bara and Rautahat district to identify fire prone areas and encourage BZCFUGs to initiate interventions. With special focus on PWR, forest fire fighting training and equipment support provided along with study. Four sites of Lal Khola were mapped with a special focus on water-induced disaster. A total of 15 trainings provided to groups on SLM on effective & productive agricultural practices. Fifteen community grants provided; that promotes land management for instance bioengineering. A total of 10 CFUGs focal persons were provided refresher course on climate change and capacity building. Cross learning visit for PCC members and project staffs was done through four trainings program

Component II: Integrated Landscape management in forested areas

As a part of integrated landscape management approach, communities were supported for nursery management and seedling production in entire project sites. Thirty BZCF were formulated and handed over at PWR. To enhance restoration of the forest, afforestation and plantation was conducted in entire four sites of the pilot districts. As done in CFUGs, 20 local CBOs were given institutional capacity building trainings. Rautahat was supported to declare open grazing free land through 7 CFUGs.

As an alternative energy source, 25 biogas units were distributed to reduce demand for firewood from the forest. One study conducted to provide two CFUGs for the promotion of forest based alternative livelihood along with establishing two bamboos & five broom grass demo plots. As a progress review, environment outlook was published twice. Ten grants were awarded to CSOs in year one, to promote sustainable land management in forest sector out of 20 grants.

Component III: Cross-sectoral coordination and local community engagement

To ensure inclusive participation and stake of women at the decision making level, gender inclusive selection and targeting recipients through project benefits for those most vulnerable to projects impacts for instance restricted access to resources were give utmost priority in first year. Since the VDC were upgraded to Municipalities of the project sites, stakeholders were provided trainings on resource identification, land categorization and planning in both the years. All the CFUGs focal persons were taken to learning visits on SLM. MoLRM has put an effort on parcel based land use zone classification. Districts based orientations were made on land use and SLM in Churia region. Conservation related programs were conducted in the school in the four project sites. The communication strategy used was through national radio and jingles preparations.

Component IV: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

In the M&E part, project mid-term evaluation was conducted by WWF Nepal along with high level monitoring visit to project sites, half yearly review meeting with DIAs, associates related to forest and agriculture visited field for implementation.

Annex 7. GEF Focal Area objectives and goals

The major focal areas of GEF are on sustainable agriculture, sustainable rangeland/pasture management and sustainable forest and woodland management[3]. The main mandate of combating land degradation on SLM focuses on SLM as it directly associates with desertification and deforestation, that addresses the main drives of land degradation which is a case of 4 pilot districts of Churia region in Nepal.The project major aim is to reduce land degradation problem in Nepal's Churia landscape covering 4 pilot districts of Rautahat, Bara, Parsa and Makwanpur. The objective of the project is**: "**to substantially reduce degradation and maintain or improve conditions of agro-pastoral lands and Churia Sal and mixed forest areas in strategic project locations throughout the four pilots Churia Range districts". The project aims to: a) substantially reduce degradation in 2,500 ha of agro-pastoral lands and 5,000 ha of forests by 2017 through integrated land and watershed management work in strategic locations.

In the selection of the focal areas, the ProDoc mentions that those forested lands were selected through GIS based analyses for integrated and watershed management in the pilot Chuira range districts. The pilot districts were selected based on three criteria, a) those forest which is degraded severely including unsustainable agricultural practices and land management, b) high will power of stakeholders towards project participation, and c) spatial gap with other conservation effort and government programs.

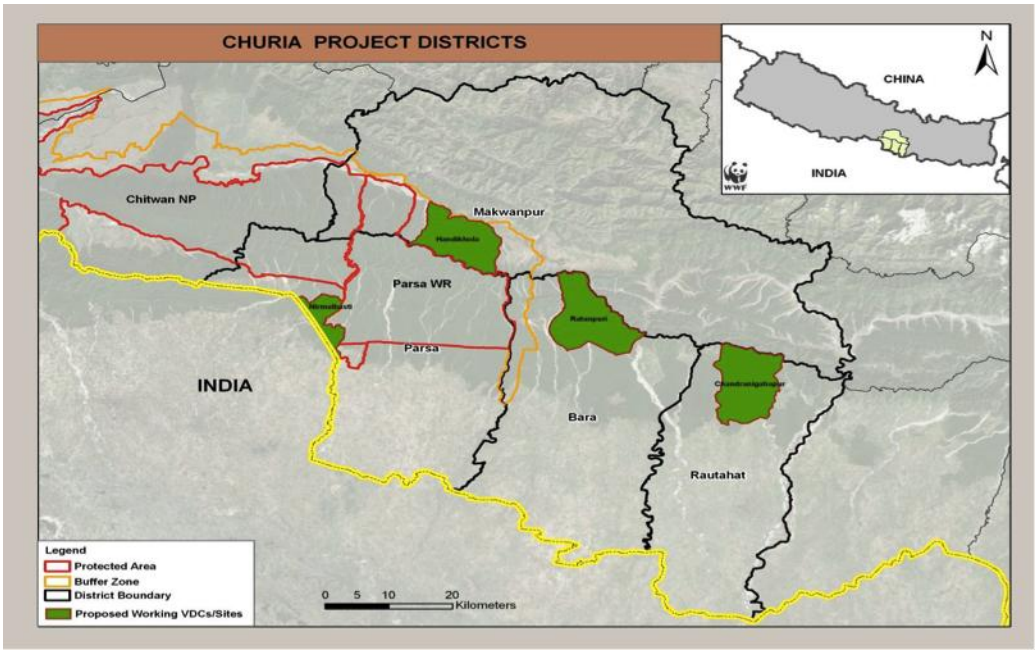
The table below extracted from ProDoc shows the extent of degraded forest and land in the four proposed districts in the Churia region.

District	Total District Area (ha)	Degraded Forest (ha)	%	Extent of Degraded Land (ha)	%	2011 Population	Population growth 1981-2011 (%)
Rautahat	104,013	2,249	2.16	1,054	1.01	686,722	107
Bara	127,687	5,088	3.98	1,827	1.43	687,708	116
Parsa	141,058	4,626	3.28	1,925	1.36	601,017	111
Makwanpur	168,326	3,542	2.10	2,692	1.60	420,477	73

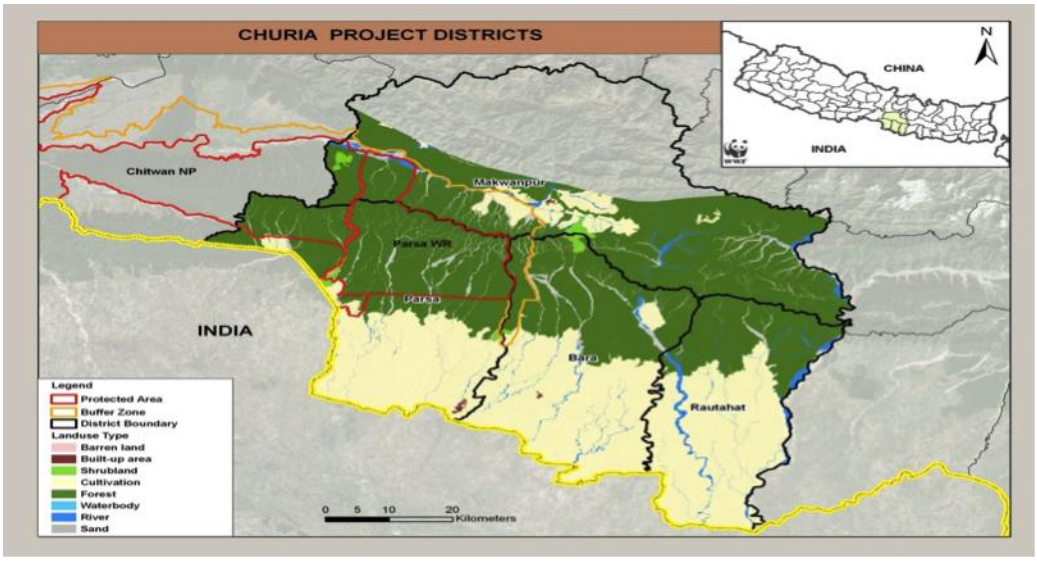
[3] Extracted from https://www.thegef.org/gef/land_degradation. Accessed on March 2016

Annex 8. Maps, diagrams

The maps and diagrams are extracted from the ProDoc to show the project sites and relevant diagrams. The figure shows the selected four pilot districts of Churai region in Nepal.



The figure below shows the Churia and Terai districts that are included in TAL/HB and PCCP portfolios of conservation intervention.



Annex 9. Evaluation summary table
Evaluation of Components and Outcomes of SLM in Churia Region

Components	Outcomes	Ratings (outcome) and % Achievements (outputs)	Comments on Milestones and deliverables
Project Component 1:Sustainable management for improved flows of agro-ecosystem services	Outcome 1.1 – Improved agricultural management through innovative pilot practices introduced at the field level that reduce erosion and climate vulnerability across 1,000 ha.	Moderately satisfactory (MS)	Training, exposure visits and provision of inputs were made; however lack of proper understanding of the underlying cause of lack of interest has hampered the progress toward the outcome achievement
	Output 1.1.1 – Innovative climate-smart, irrigated, terraced agriculture (SALT technology) implemented in at least 200 ha of agricultural land within the 4 Churia districts to reduce erosion and climate vulnerability on steep slopes. [MoAD]	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	SALT is an outdate technology; training was of academic nature and MoAD could not implement the activity due to poor understanding and uptake by farmers; replace SALT by either Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and augment activities and if DESCO has been transferred this task practice Conservation Agriculture
	Output 1.1.2 – Mixed-cropping implemented in at least 200 ha of agricultural land within the 4 districts to increase soil fertility and reduce climate vulnerability. [MoAD]	Satisfactory (S)	Mixed cropping is traditional practice of Nepalese farmers and therefore, this has registered good progress; More efforts should be made to match crops with the sites available and more emphasis should be given to popularize organic fertilizers and pesticides. Seeds banks for mixed cropping should be created to minimize the risk of losing the seeds during flash floods or quakes.
	Output 1.1.3 – Water collection and storage, from uphill sources and rainwater, introduced at 20 storage points across at	Satisfactory (S)	Most of the ponds are functioning well; some ponds such as one in Dharapani CFUG, Bara and Ward No. 5/HandiKhola are not functioning due to wrong location

	least 200 ha within the 4 districts for controlled irrigation of terraced agricultural fields on sloping lands to reduce erosion and climate vulnerability. [MoAD]		and lack of maintenance
	Output 1.1.4 – Bio-engineering introduced in at least 6 sites across 400 ha in 3 districts to stabilize soils, reduce erosion, and restore productivity in heavily degraded areas. [MoFSC]	S	By and large all bio-engineering work carried out by DESCO are doing well. Two issues need to be address – uncontrolled grazing and inadequate coverage; Open grazing can be addressed through social fencing and volume of gabion mesh wire can be increased by locating PCCP activities in the same location;. Strengthening of institutional arrangements for monitoring of open grazing at community level creating win-win situation.
	Outcome 1.2 – Improved land management across 1,500 ha through an enhanced enabling environment within the agricultural sector.	MS	Good attempts were made but due to wrong choice of the SALT technology, sustainability of the land improvement which is largely attributed to afforestation is considered fair.
	Output 1.2.1 – Twelve stakeholder consultations held in the four districts to identify and designate grazing pastures in areas less prone to erosion. [MoAD]	MS	The CFUG members are fully committed to declare `zero grazing'; however, they are facing difficulty in implementing fully due to their inability to control animals grazing in government managed forests and barren river beds from where the animals encroach CF.
	Output 1.2.2 – Productive cattle breeds introduced, stall feeding implemented, and native fodder and forage grass promoted in at least 6 sites across 1,500 ha in 3 districts. [MoAD]	S	The progress is good; Breed improvement through the artificial insemination (AI) and bull distribution is working well and combined with Shed improvement, the `Stall feeding' helping the goal of `zero open grazing'; Animal Heath Camps are highly beneficial and popular activity.

	Output 1.2.3 – Vulnerability, risk assessment, and hazard mapping conducted in the 4 districts to identify areas susceptible to natural disasters (e.g. landslides, floods). [MoLRM]	Unsatisfactory (U)	The reviewer did not find any vulnerability risk and hazard maps. Parcel based land use zone classification list based on land use zone map of 4 VDCs has been produced by MoLRM through Land Use Project. The map has an overlay of individual land and classification of land based on NLU Policy 2072. Awareness on various conservation and climate change vulnerability issues was raised; Students were informed on the growing conservation issues. The MoLRM does not have expertise in carrying out this task.
	Output 1.2.4 – Convene at least 20 community-training events to encourage consolidated land management to prevent land fragmentation and encourage efficient and productive agricultural practices. [MoLRM]	MS	One day workshops were organized inMakwanpur and Rautahat districts to disseminate information on the National Land Use Policy, 2012 and its classification system to the project stakeholders. Over 120 participants took part in the workshop. Topics covered were: property rights, livelihoodrights, alternatives while implementing NLY policy provisions. More than 200 students were also informed on the NLUP. There are also advocacy and Land Rights group who misguide the encroachers.
	Output 1.2.5 – At least 15 community grants awarded in the 4 districts to promote priority community programs for improved land management within the agricultural sector. [WWF-Nepal]	S	The community grant programme has been successful in creating community assets and providing incentives to practice conservation measures. Technical supervision needs to be improved.
	Output 1.2.6 – Build capacity within the local communities and	MS	Forestry, watershed management and biodiversity conservation activities are technology and

	government extension services to implement and sustain these practices, monitor the outcomes, and enhance knowledge transfer for decision support. [MoFSC]		knowledge demanding; Capacity building of the MoFSC has to cover technical, institutional and individual. At the ministry level systemic capacity building is also necessary.
Project Component 2: Integrated landscape management in forested areas	Outcome 2.1 – Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities in 5,000 ha of forested areas within the four pilot Churia Range districts.	MS	Landscape management is a new concept in Nepal for which the MoFSC lacks capacity and knowledge. In Churia landscape, the ideal integrated approach is upstream-downstream management of water, biodiversity (forest, pasture, agriculture, and shrub lands) using both IWRM and integrated river basin management (IRBM) concepts which is found largely missing in the project.
	Output 2.1.1 – Forest areas in strategic locations (steep slopes, large patches, priority sub-watersheds, water sources, high biodiversity areas, wildlife corridors) are identified, conserved, managed, and restored in at least 40 forested sites across 5,000 ha in the 4 project districts. [MoFSC]	MS	The strategy of selecting the strategic locations have been basically selecting Community Forestry groups in the Churia slopes, foot hills and buffer zones; However, some critical areas also lie in national forests (e.g. Bara and Rautahat) and river banks; these have to be also brought under the SLM purview.
	Output 2.1.2 – At least 70 alternative energy source units (biogas, solar, or improved cooking stoves) are distributed in the 4 Churia Range districts to reduce demand for firewood. [MoFSC]		The alternative energy options are widely used and these are playing important role in reducing pressure on the forest. E.g., 25 HHs in PWR- biogas tole. This has a clear linkage with AI and Improved cowshed improvement. And Private Veterinary services at community level.
	Output 2.1.3 – Alternative livelihood opportunities of at least 600 households in the 4 districts are supported with the	S	The progress in this intervention except in livestock and vegetable farming sectors is weak. While milk production, goat farming, poultry rearing are doing well,

	promotion of alternative livelihoods based on sustainable use of forest-based resources. [MoFSC]		NTFPs, horticulture, and women's micro enterprises are not very successful
	Output 2.1.4 – At least 2 workshops held to disseminate and support local authorities in policy implementation related to community, collaborative and leasehold forestry programs to enhance the engagement of communities in restoration of degraded forest lands. [WWF-Nepal]	MS	These workshops have resulted into integration of leasehold and user group concept and practices in implementing and managing the project activities. However, in some CFUGs (e.g. Dharapani in Ratanpuri, Tileswornath), more and targeted efforts are needed especially where women members have assumed leadership positions.
	Output 2.1.5 – At least 20 community grants awarded in the 4 districts to establish priority community programs for improved land management within the forestry sector. [WWF-Nepal]	S	These grants have triggered innovations and motivations for SLM and conservation work among most of the grantees; technical backstopping is required to ensure maintenance of structures and achieving impacts.
Project Component 3: Cross-sectoral coordination and local community engagement	Output 3.1.1 - Selection criteria is developed in a participatory manner to determine final project sites, recipients of training, criterion for issuing grants, and recipients of project benefits such as biogas. [WWF-Nepal]	S	While the selection of CBOs and individual participants was done in an inclusive and participatory manner, the selection of site for activities (SALT in HandiKhola) did not yield positive result; it was reported that the site selection was first done by WWF Nepal- in first year alone? and then DLAs started working in the sites.
	Output 3.1.2 – Capacity is built in 9 institutions and mechanisms and fora are instituted among local governments and diverse local community groups for inclusive, coordinated, inter-sectoral land and resource use plans. [MoLRM]	MU	This activity seems to be incomplete. Capacity building for implementing inter-sectoral, inclusive and coordinated NRM needs systematic and institutional capacity development. What seems to have been done is basically individual focused training and dissemination.

	Output 3.1.3 – At least 30 CBO representatives are capacitated through integrated landscape management job training and internships to enhance the enabling environment for land conservation in the Churia Range. [MoLRM]	MU	The review could not observe CBOs (assumed to be the CFUGs) pursuing integrated landscape management.
	Output 3.1.4 – District-level land use planning and analyses that identify important and sensitive areas for restoration and conservation management are completed and integrated into district land-use plans in the 4 project districts. [MoLRM]	U	Task not reported
	Output 3.1.5 – Localized land-use policies/plans for sustainable land management in the 4 districts developed by the Government of Nepal in consultation with local government and local community groups, and project leadership structures, contact information and formal agency grievance mechanisms are established and shared. [MoLRM]	MU	This is a work in progress; only parcel based land use classification system and maps for 4 VDCs are prepared so far. In order to implement NLUP, 2012, national Land use Act, Regulations, Guidelines for Provincial and Local Governments need to be enacted and notified which is expected to take time beyond the life of the project; therefore it is better to drop this output.
	Output 3.1.6 – Informational, educational, and communication materials on sustainable land management disseminated in at least 24 awareness programs and media interactions in the 4 districts. [WWF-Nepal]	S	These outputs are delivered satisfactorily; but these need to be done on a regular and updated manner. These materials can be uploaded in the Project website or WWF portal for wider disseminations.
Component 4: Monitoring	Output 4.1.1 – Project monitoring system	S	M&E system is working fine

and evaluation	operating and systematically providing information on progress in meeting project output and outcome targets. learned to primary project stakeholders		
	Output 4.1.2 – Baseline assessment, including GIS mapping, completed in a timely manner.	S	The task stands well performed; However the information is limited in offices- which has to be enhanced through regular interaction with community, schools etc.
	Output 4.1.3 – Interim project progress review executed.	S	Satisfactorily done
	Output 4.1.4 – Development and dissemination of project lessons	MS	This is a weak spot of the project. Several lessons are noted but these do not seem to built in the subsequent plans (e.g. SALT, Land Use plan implementation)
	Output 4.1.5 – Timely submission of GEF LD Tracking Tool.	-	NA
	Output 4.1.6 – Final evaluation carried out and reports disseminated in a timely manner.	-	-

Annex 10. Interview Notes with DLAs

GoN/GEF/WWF MTR- Interview with Line Agencies :**Field Trip (20-28 Feb 2016)**

21 Feb 2016: DFO Rautahat

He mentioned about the importance of conserving not only Churia region but also Bhabhar landscape for sustainable land management. The debate of legitimate settlement in the Churia area is ongoing and working scope gets complex accordingly. The two major reasons for open grazing in the Churia region happens to be: a) the forest land is encroached and they are unsure when they have to leave the land b) low maintenance cost of livestock for fodder and forage.There is a conflicting issue on border marking with Nava Durga CFUG and Kalapani CFUG, however the highest ridge is considered as the border demarcation. At the one end, we try to take out the people out of the encroached areas whereas on the other side, municipality registers them in official records that deter the efforts to protect land degradation in Churia region.He intrigued a question on 'Churia with or without people'. Incentive based mechanism to evict the people from Churia and implementation of Army model is only way DFO sees for the sustainable land conservation in Rautahat. There are certain organizations working at local level that provides goat as a part of livelihood program however that is increasing the risk of open grazing and rising misconception among the people on imported goats. In some community, people kept those goats separately from their own herd of goats.

22 Feb 2016: Meeting with DADO, Gaur

This program of integrated development is a great platform to work, however might seem good in paper, it is weak in implementation claims Mr. B.K. The implementation responsibility of SALT model is transferred to DSCO since DADO does not have enough expertise to implement the program. This project has fewer budgets even for administrative purpose at the first place and demands huge paper based reporting. Mr B.K. perceives this project mainly focusing on land conservation and income generating activities (IGA). The immediate results of agriculture aretangibly visible unlike works of DSCO such as river embankment projects.Chandranigapur has a higher agricultural productivity for fruits, vegetable, and leguminous plants along with riverbanks agro forestry.

DLSO and Focal Person, Gaur:

For the outreach of DLSO extension services the project sites selected are a bit in remote area and also at times difficult for monitoring. We have already invested about 0.8 million through ChureRastrapati Program for stall feeding program to reduce the open grazing and pressure on the forest. We have even provided subsidy for broom grass and Kanji house for punishment

mechanism. Services such as AI are also practiced these days producing around 800 litres of milk from improved breeds on daily basis.**Problem:** The president of CFUG has to travel till Gaur to receive money- which is around 45 kms far. Finance act does not allow DLSO to provide money in directly to CFUG bank account. IF DLSO calls for the meeting or workshop, we pay them, however if they travel to receive money at their end, they have to bear the cost of travel and food by themselves.

Meeting with DFO- Bara and Focal person

Through the GEF project first year we were more enegaged in software part such as awareness programs, fire management trainings, capacity building and afforestation. IN second year we were able to conduct plantation in 10 ha of land in Pashupati, CF ward 5 ; 13 ha in Kalki CF ward 3. Mainly we planted *Simal*and *Khair*. We also provided refreshment traning such as exposure visit to Pokjana (lumle) and also towards Sindhuli. Open grazing is still in practice in some areas, however it has now reduced largely. We are more concerned with protection of Satisaal, which is about to get extinct. People have a conception that, if afforestation is done massively, officials from department of survey won't consider their land hence afforestation is often resisted by some groups such as Bhu-AhikarManch (Land Rights Forum).After the case of Mohan Koirala, there is no timber felling from our part in the forest, however illegal smuggling cases are prevalent in the area.We follow the guideline of 2065 B.S. in Gender balance in the Community forestry user group's formation.

24 Feb 2016: Meeting with Warden, PWR

PWR has coverage areas for Handikhola and NirmalBasti. Zoological Socieity of London is more actively conducting Tiger tracing research in PWR. Unfortunately; they only work in core areas and not in BZ region.To reduce the pressure on forest, biogas subsidy is provided in the BZUC. Kusumbatika BZUC has 25 HHs with biogas and named as Biogas tole.PWR does not have much of revenue from eco-tourism unlike Sauraha hence we are not able to show much tangible work in integrated way. For instance: small area of nursery is not much a tangible achievement. An integrated programs and planning would help the community and PWR as well.

25 Feb 2016: DLSO Birgunj

The programs of distributing large livestock such as Buffalo were not discussed with DLSO. Programs such as animal shed improvement, improved breeds, and contract farming for the grass seeds are done with the BZUC. The DLS office now has 45 quintals of seeds in their storage room procured from the community. Since, milk production was not enough in the village, hence DLSO facilitated 1.2 million rupees to establish Milk Chilling Vat in the community. Along with that Ashok Shrestha has received 0.1 million as grant to increase the production of milk. The DLSO officer even had to create market for the milk with the other community where DLSO had

financed for the chilling vat.The DLSO officer has trained the local private veterinary firm on AI and hence private firm with the technical guidance of DLSO handles the extension services. Local meat shop is also established that meets the needs of the local community.The first question asked to users before providing support on improved breed s is, 'how much Grass have you planted to feed livestock?'

DADO at Birgunj, Parsa

The concept of SLM project on coordination is great concept that provides us a common platform to learn and improve from the actions. Previously, people used to plant marijuana and now have shifted to tobacco production that is directly bought by Surya Nepal Tobacco Company. Also, seeds used to be imported from India, however these days- seeds production within the village is taking place.DAD office rather a top-down approach is applied did not do the selection of the site.

DADO at Kalaiya, Bara

The major problem was with the site selection and low interest of the communities to take up SALT model. First year focus was on water source rejuvenation, kitchen gardening and plastic ponds construction. Second year community was interested in fruits farming, and water source management. The site is now selected for the third year and the community is willing to take up agricultural activities in the area. As a part of youth targeted employment program, MrRijal has started pumpkin farming with our technical guidance. For the third year of project- drip irrigation for vegetable farming is sought.

DLSO at Kalaiya, Bara

The project has become a great coordinated platform for line agencies at district level. Dharapani CF is a conflicted community. Open grazing control seems impossible for the time being. There is a Biogas tole of 25 HHs however absence of maintenance unit of biogas plants within the village.

District personnel (DSCO) and Focal Person

Mr. Sinha has implemented sub surface-to-surface water flow technique in Dhanusha district, which is being implemented in Bara as well. Now people are able to do vegetable farming and even staple foodfarming as well. 88 ha of degraded land is reclaimed however only 22ha is planed in Amlekgunj-09, Chakari, Bara. Suggestion: Unlike the process of forming Project Commission Unit, that should be applied with the line agencies as well for an integrated and bottom up. For instance: afforestation could be demand in one community however other could have priority towards road construction, hence a blanket approach does not work in the current context.

DADO Hetauda:

This concept of the project demands an integrated planning and coordination from central to district level, however at the implementation level, it cannot be observed. This coordination platform is good however part of it is not working towards creating a whole part. The GEF project is not mainstreamed in the regular programs of the Government hence neither reports- that weakens the institutional memory and whole information gets centralized with focal person.This project is not able to respect the district based institutional norms. Churia land management demands conservation agriculture, which sometimes is contested with the goal of the project.

DLSO Hetauda

In the year 2014 improved animal watershed was absent in the community, however in 2015, 25 cow improved watershed was constructed. First year the community was provided the funds directly, which became ineffective. From second year, the fund is channelized from DLSO. The leftover money of 2015 is now utilized to conduct Animal Camps in the selected sites. The effectiveness of Artificial insemination (AI) is high in the site since it is freely provided from the project cost. Open grazing has reduced and now people have switched to stall feeding with cow shed improvement as well.