

Learning Visit: Nepal Government Officials Participate in an Enriching Experience in India

Through the USAID-funded ALIGN Project, WWF-Nepal organized a visit to India for government officials from Nepal in December 2023. The delegates visited several important sites in Haridwar and Dehradun and interacted with experts and officials from India. They also observed sites with successful examples of wildlife-friendly infrastructure and safeguard measures. This was the second visit of this kind, after the first visit to the same site by federal-level stakeholders in August 2023.

understanding of natural resource safeguards in linear infrastructure. Fifteen government officials from federal and provincial ministries related to forestry, environment, physical infrastructure development, and province policy and planning commissions participated in the visit.



India learning visit participants at Rajaji Tiger Reserve, Motichur Range

The visit's main objective was to facilitate cross-learning, best practices sharing, and field observation to broaden and enhance participants' knowledge and



Coverage of the visit by a newspaper in Dehradun, India

The delegates visited and observed elevated road sections at the Dehradun-Haridwar-Rishikesh Highway (NH 72) field site. The participants also observed the Chilla power and irrigation canal, which is up to 30 m deep, and the elevated road section along Delhi-Dehradun Road that was under construction. The 20-km stretch of the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway passes

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“I think we must all change our thinking after this visit. Now we have understood the importance of considering the natural resources safeguarding during infrastructure development, we must apply this to our professional work.”

BHIMARJUN PANDEY, MINISTRY OF PHYSICAL
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, LUMBINI PROVINCE

through the eco-sensitive zone of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve (RTR). The participants also met and interacted with RTR officials and learned about the conservation practices and impact of the elevated road’s construction at the reserve. In addition, the participants took part in a presentation and interactive sessions with various officials from RTR and WWF-India.

In a reflection program after the visit, the participants shared that the visit helped them gain a deeper understanding of natural resources safeguarding in infrastructure development and that the learnings will be useful to them in their current roles. They also said that this visit initiated the promotion of partnerships among infrastructure and conservation-related

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“I used to think that infrastructure development should be prioritized before thinking about conservation. But after this trip, I feel that natural resources safeguarding must be considered during the construction of infrastructures.”

SHOVA GIREE,
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PROJECT DIRECTORATE,
DEPARTMENT OF ROADS

government agencies and the private and financial sectors for balancing biodiversity conservation and infrastructure development. Many of the participants shared that their perspectives toward conservation-related government agencies have changed and expanded toward a collaborative approach.

This visit facilitated a deeper understanding of the challenges shared by both countries, setting the stage for potential collaboration. It served as a platform for regulatory agencies to come together and identify and address the challenges and limitations inherent in executing linear infrastructure projects, thereby fostering a common understanding among stakeholders. ■ *To learn more about the ALIGN Project, visit alignproject.org.*

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