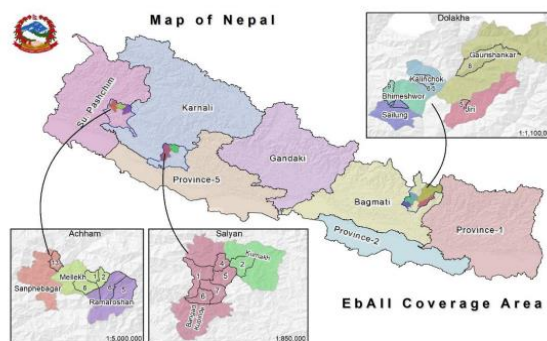




Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE)
Climate Change Management Division
Catalyzing Ecosystem Restoration for Climate Resilient
Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in Degraded
Forests and Rangelands of Nepal (EbA II)



Exit Strategy and Plan

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Executive summary

The Project “**Catalyzing Ecosystem Restoration for Climate Resilient Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in Degraded Forests and Rangelands of Nepal**” (EbA II) is at the final stage of implementation. In the next two quarters, the project is expected to accomplish the planned activities and handover the completed actions to the respective governments at local, provincial and federal levels. This strategy presents the course of actions that requires to be followed by relevant stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the project and smooth handing over of the project operation and outputs to the respective institutions.

The Exit Strategy will be effective upon approval by the CCMD/MoFE and UNEP. The central element of the exit strategy is sustaining the project outcomes through appropriate transfer of management responsibility to the competent institutions. In addition, expediting remaining works that are either identified by the project document or by MTR within the remaining period of the project is another key component of the Exit Strategy. The entire range of activities carried out using the project resources will be handed over to the respective municipalities, Division Forest Offices (DFOs) or forest user groups. The work under soil and water conservation & livelihood dimension will be handed over to the local municipalities. The activities under forest and rangeland restoration will be handed over to the respective DFOs under the provincial governments. So will be the nurseries and seedling production activities. Project physical assets, documents and other papers will be handed over to CCMD/MoFE.

The terminal evaluation mission for the project will appraise the progress, both financial and technical. This has been planned for the third quarter of 2024. During the course of the first two quarters of 2024, all remaining works (restoration, knowledge management and communication and dissemination) will be completed. The schedule for expediting the complementary activities including the task of terminal evaluation has been illustrated at **Programmatic Exit Strategy** section of the document. The operational handover will be completed by December 2024.

Project Background

The project “**Catalyzing Ecosystem Restoration for Climate Resilient Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in Degraded Forests and Rangelands of Nepal**” is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)/ Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF) through a USD 5.2 million grant as well as USD 22.4 million counterpart fund from the Government of Nepal. The project was approved by the GEF/LDCF in 2015, and the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) was signed in 2017. Project launch took place in March 10, 2019 with the conduction of central level inception workshop. The project duration initially was for four years (2019-2022). Given the delays caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic, project implementation was hampered by 1.5 years resulting into a no-cost extension as mandated by the PSC decision and MTR. Project closure is expected to occur by December 2024.

The project is implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and executed by the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE). The implementation modality includes at the central level a Project Steering Committee and a Project Management Unit [comprising of National Project Director (PD), National Project Manager (NPM), National Project Coordinator (NPC), M&E Expert and Admin/Financial Officer] supported by external national experts. At the district and local levels, District Project Coordinators (DPC) work with Division Forest Offices (DFO), Municipalities and wards as well as user groups to implement field activities.

A Technical Working Group (TWG) within the government’s Inter-Ministerial Climate Change Coordination Committee (IMCCCC) has been established to help mainstream ecosystem-based adaptation across line ministries and to provide technical and strategic guidance and support. The project budget for the LDCF/GEF grant is co-managed between UNEP and MoFE [with funding channeled through the Ministry of Finance (MoF)]. Given operational challenges related to procuring services using national rules and regulations, MoFE requested UNEP to manage budget items related to procurement of international and national consultants, experts, international travels as well as procurement of equipment. As of October 30, 2023, seven installments have been made by UNEP to the Government amounting to USD 2,878,619 of USD 4,427,013 and USD 2,761,117 has been liquidated by the project. In addition, USD 468,844 (as of April 27, 2023) has been spent by UNEP.

The project focuses on decreasing the vulnerability of communities in three districts (*i.e.* Dolakha, Salyan and Achham) to the impacts of climate change. Specifically, the project aims to increase the capacity of Nepali authorities and local communities to adapt to climate change by implementing Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA II) project in degraded forests and rangelands in the mid-hills (Salyan and Accham districts) and high mountain areas (Dolakha district). The project plans to achieve this objective through three components: (i) local and national institutional capacity development; (ii) policy and strategy strengthening; and (iii) demonstration interventions that increase adaptive capacity to climate change and restore natural capital.

The project is being implemented by MoFE as the lead executing agency. The Department of Livestock and Department of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) are the collaborating partners. At the local level, the project is working closely with the municipalities and rural municipalities and Division Forest Offices to implement field level activities. The project covers two distinct physiographic regions; mid-hills—Accham and Salyan and high mountain—Dolakha district. A total of four municipalities, six rural municipalities encompassing (*Sanfebagar Municipality, Ramaroshan RM, Mellekh RM in Achham, Bangad-*

Kupinde Municipality, Kumakh-Malika RM in Salyan and Gaurishankar RM, Bhimeshwar Municipality, Kalinchowk RM, Shailung RM, Jiri Municipality in Dolakha district) fall within the project working jurisdiction.

Similarly, three working districts cover 18 wards. Among them, Achham district covers six wards (Babla, Bhatakatiya, Ramaroshan, Rishidaha-1 and 2, Sodasha), six wards come under Salyan district (Devasthal, Ganjaripipal-6, Ghanjaripipal-7, Mulkhola-4, Mulkhola-5, Suikot-2) and Dolakha district also covers six wards (Khare, Lakuri Danda, Lapilang-5 and 6, Magapauwa 4 and Jiri 5). A total of 11,453 households with a population of 56,170 are expected to benefit from EbA II interventions.

Project interventions

Project Implementation has been guided by its Intervention Strategy (2019—2024) which is outlined in the following table.

Year	Priorities
2019	Project Start Up
2020	Project implementation
2021	Project implementation
2022	Project implementation
2023	Project implementation (No Cost Extension)
2024	Institutionalization and Handover (No Cost Extension)

The Project has three outcomes:

Outcome 1: increased capacity of Government Officials and Local User Groups to implement EbA through enhanced institutional arrangements, inter-sectoral collaboration and research

Outcome2: National Policies and strategies strengthened to promote EbA implementation

Outcome 3: EbA implemented and monitored by User groups to restore forests and rangelands in the mid-hills of Accham and Salyan and high mountains of Dolakha to decrease the sensitivity of local communities to climate change

The project has initiated EbA interventions in the project site. Besides, the project has prepared various guidelines and training manuals that contribute to enhancing the capacity and understanding of EbA measures. A total of 132 Community Forestry Operational Management Plans has been revised with the integration of EbA intervention measures into their management plans. During this reporting period, the project has initiated EbA interventions and has made substantial progress in meeting the project's target. However, owing to the COVID 19 pandemic, the effective implementation of the project has been delayed by one and half years. Therefore,

the project needed no-cost extension to achieve the target. As directed by the PSC, the project underwent MTR during the month of September 2022. The MTR came up with a set of recommendations for the remaining period of the project including recommendation for no cost extension of two years following the scheduled completion of the project (Dec 2023). The MTR has rated the project as **Satisfactory**.

The following narrative summarizes the progress made during the life of the project.

Outcome 1: to increase the capacity of Government Officials and Local User Groups to implement EbA through enhanced institutional arrangements, inter-sectoral collaboration and research.

PMU organized training on ecosystem-based adaptation planning and implementation for Government officials and faculties of different universities at the center. At the district level, basic training on EbA planning and Implementation was organized in all the three project districts for the district-based government officers. EbA orientation training was provided to community leaders and ward officials at district, municipality and ward levels. Altogether, 505 participants benefited, out of which 175 (34.7%) were female. A total of 22 training events were organized at the community level to expedite the EbA intervention activities. The pre and post evaluation was conducted on every training organized in district and central level to assess the change in level of understanding of the participants. It was found an average 30% increase in the level of understanding. As a result of the training, the Government officials at the center and district have internalized EbA planning process and are expected to be applying it in their day-to-day business. Similarly, at the ground level, community leaders and ward officials are now able to clearly distinguish between EbA, CBA and support the implementation of the activities accordingly.

Similarly, with the objective of developing the capacity and skills of local journalists to produce and broadcast media/radio programmes and magazine articles to enhance national awareness/campaigns on the values and importance of EbA measures emanating from forests and rangelands, PMU organized a three days' media training to local journalists of Dolakha, Salyan and Achham districts (September and October 2021). A total of 69 participants (local journalists) including 18 (26%) females participated from the print and electronic media. The focus of the training was to capacitate them on written and analytical reporting on pertinent EbA issues and promote local level involvement through increased on-air debate and dialogues. The pre and post evaluation was conducted to assess the change in the level of understanding of the participants. It was found that an average 35% increase in the level of understanding of the journalists. Consequently, the local journalists from the three districts are publishing news, articles related to EbA in local and national mainstream broadsheet papers and video reporting of EbA interventions in national electronic media.

Similarly, to manage research grants for students undertaking research on EbA, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and MOFE was signed. Based on the MoU, a Letter of Agreement (LoA) was signed between NAST and MoFE (July 2021). Likewise, the LoA was signed between EbA II and NAST. After the agreement, PMU supported the orientation of potential applicants for the student grant (students pursuing

degrees on respective academic institutions) focusing on application process and areas of interest (identified research areas) for the project. Two events were organized: one at Post Graduate Campus, Biratnagar and the other at the Institute of Forestry, Pokhara. These programmes provided an insight of the EbA, priority research themes and clarified the application formats among the students and faculties. The EbA II project has planned for a total of 40 research grants during the tenure of the project (20 Bachelors, 15 Masters and 5 PhDs). Ten recipients of the 22 student's grantees are female.

Outcome 2: National Policies and strategies strengthened to promote EbA implementation

The project has recruited the National Policy and Review Expert (NPRE) by January 2022. Three policy briefs are developed and submitted to the CCMD.

- Restoration of Degraded Private Land through Plantations, Natural Regenerations and Agroforestry
- Mainstreaming Ecosystem-based Adaptation into Community-Based Forestry Management.
- Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Rangelands

Likewise, the project is developing an EbA up-scaling strategy and financial plan. The project has planned to complete the strategy and plan by December-end 2023.

Outcome 3: EbA implemented and monitored by User groups to restore forests and rangelands in the mid-hills of Accham and Salyan and high mountains of Dolakha to decrease the sensitivity of local communities to climate change

Implementation of EbA has been made easy and understandable through development of various knowledge products. An EbA Protocol has been developed and validated by the project level stakeholders (Feb 2022). The degraded area on the project site was identified with use of local knowledge and Google maps. The results were validated with the local level stakeholders. Thus, sites of restoration identified by the project are internalized by DFO as well as by local municipalities so that even after the completion of the project tenure, the document will serve as a basis for the implementation of forest restoration work. A total of 132 forest user groups have revised their Community Forestry Operational Management Plans with the integration of EbA intervention measures into their plans. These plans are implemented by the concerned forest user groups with the technical and facilitative support from the concerned Division Forest Offices.

Based on a consultative meeting amongst the key project stakeholders to explore the possibility of establishing an EbA Working Group within the project districts (February 2022), EbA working group have been formed in Accham and are functional. The objective of the district level EbA working group is to coordinate, discuss and collaborate on EbA issues while planning and implementing interventions.

The project has developed Community Livelihoods Improvement Plans (CLIPs) for the entire 18 project working wards consisting of 32 activities (15 forest and 17 agro-based). Implementation of most attractive CLIPs activities is underway.

An MoU has been signed with Bhimeshwor Municipality, Dolakha with the objective of developing an EbA curricula for grades 6-8 school students. The MoU was signed between CCMD/MoFE and Bhimeshwor Municipality (March 2022). As a result, EbA curriculum has been developed for grades of 6-8 students in Bhimeshwor Municipality, Dolakha. Plans to replicate this learning across all the palikas of the country focusing on community schools are under process. The project has helped establish six Students-Supervisor Networks (SSNs) in all three project districts (Kutidanda and Shree Mahendrodya Secondary Schools in Dolakha, Rastriya Secondary School of Babla and Nilakantha Secondary School of Ramaroshan Rural Municipality-5 in Achham, and Shree Tribhuvan Janata Secondary School at Chiura and Shree Narayan Secondary School at Neta Bazar in Salyan district). The objective of such a network is conducting regular education and awareness raising programmes through school's annual calendar activities and sharing experiences on climate change and EbA. The project has also prepared EbA toolkit and green resource book.

A total 274 hectare of degraded forests has been restored. Similarly, 217 hectares of degraded rangelands have been restored by the project. The restoration work in the project site will be continued in the remaining part of the project to meet the targeted result.

The project has also developed the guidelines for mainstreaming EbA actions on Community Forestry Operation Plan. Based on the guideline, a total of 26 Community Forestry Operational Plans (CFOP) have been updated adding the number to 132.

A total of 472 ha of terraces has been improved in the project municipalities. The progress on improved terraces is 65.56 % against the target of 720 ha. Similarly, a total of 126 units of filtering dams have been constructed during the project period. The progress on filtering dams is 350% against the target of 36 units. Additionally, a total of 64 water conservation ponds have been constructed or rehabilitated. The progress on water conservation ponds construction is 177% against the target 36 units.

The progress made towards conservation of top soil and water are above the target made under the result framework. The work on topsoil conservation and water conservation are highly satisfactory considering the targets.

Since the project operations are made as “on budget on treasury mode”, with the full ownership of the government, the fund flow for annual program execution is made as ‘conditional grants’ from the federal ministry to the respective provincial and local level bodies. This calls for developing a framework procedure for conditional implementation on each new fiscal year by the ministry. The project developed its working procedure to implement the project activities at the field level. As per practice, the working procedure is approved by MoFE. Likewise, in line with the government planning process, PMU prepared the project budget along with activities and aligned it with the Line Ministerial Budget Information System (LMBIS) through the planning division of MoFE. The project governance has been ensured through the project steering committee. So far, 8 steering committee meetings have been completed. An additional two meetings are planned for the remaining period of the project.

The project implementation has experienced a setback due to COVID 19 pandemic during the period of 2020 and 2021. The MTR has recommended a no cost extension of the project by

additional two years, of which 18 months to be the accelerated implementation period and remaining six months for closing up and reporting. The project has developed an accelerated plan for FY 2022 and 2023 in order to meet the project targets.

Finally, the Project has reviewed the project implementation risk categories. Few of the risks associated with the projects are i) Lengthy procurement process following Public Procurement Act (PPA), ii) Procedural delays for channelization of funds. Based on the assessment, the project risk was categorized as medium level (M). However, with the addressing the project risks, from the last year of the project it has been categorized as the project with Low level of risk (L).

Exit Strategy and Plan

This Exit Strategy and Plan is a specific plan that describes the way CCMD/MoFE will withdraw to ensure sustainability of outcome and output level achievements. This document will guide the transforming the ownerships to the local communities and collaborating or implementing institutions across various levels. This is expected to contribute to the overall sustainability of the Project.

Mid Term Review of the Project was undertaken in September 2022 which rated the project as a **'Satisfactory'**. However, the MTR has recommended focusing on the sustainability aspects of the interventions undertaken by the project. Based on the recommendations of MTR and project priority, CCMD, MOFE has devised strategies and actions that align with the Exit Strategy in order to fulfill the overarching thrust of sustainability. This strategy has been outlined in two major sections: Programmatic Exit and Operational Exit. The programmatic part of the Exit Strategy covers the period of January to December 2024.

Programmatic Exit: Output wise Targets, Strategies, Actions and timeline

The following detailed plans under each output are set for achieving the stated objective of sustainability of the project achievements.

Output 1.1 Technical working group on EbA established within the Inter-Ministerial Climate Change Coordination Committee (IMCCCC).						
Progress An EbA Technical Working Group (TWG) has been formed (23/03/2021) with fifteen members. Two TWG meetings have been completed (July and December 2022). It provided guidance and inputs to the technical products developed by EbA II. Three TWG meetings have been planned for the remaining period of the project.						
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Mainstreaming EbA technical working group within IMCCCC	Revise composition and ToR of the TWG to mainstream the working group	1/2024	CCMD	PMU	TWG established and operational	CCMD/MOFE will take ownership and institutionalize TWG to cater the contemporary needs of CCMD.
	TWG meetings	1, 2 and 3 Q, 2024	CCMD	PMU	Product papers are in place for scrutiny	
Output 1.2 Training provided for National, district & local stakeholders on identifying, prioritizing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating EbA interventions.						
Progress A total of 615 individuals received training on EbA planning, implementation and monitoring. Of the total participants, 26% are female. A total of 26 capacity building events have been organized during the project period. A total of 152 government officials have been trained on EbA, of which a total 39 were from the federal government, 113 from provincial Government. Similarly, people were trained that represented from 367 Local government (Ward Level Officials) and leaders from the communities.						
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supportin g Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Institutionalizatio n of EbA trainings	-Organize consultative	July 2024	PMU CCMD	FRTC MoITFE	Professional competency to run EbA trainings are	A dialogue with Central level FRTC

into government's regular training programme	meeting/WS with FRTC (federal and provincial), to internalize EbA on their trainings, -EbA trainers Roster prepared and, distributed, -Handing over of EbA training materials,				available in the project districts	team will be held to discuss on how to internalize the trainings related to EbA in their regular in-service training

Output 1.3

National campaigns implemented and district level collaboration facilitated on EbA approaches and benefits, including lessons learned in Component 3.

Progress

In order to raise awareness on EbA, the project has produced and aired a radio Jingle and dialogue-based PSA through 318 Community radios/FM. The project has produced an EbA video documentary, focusing on ongoing EbA actions and resilience building measures on the ground targeting key stakeholders and general public.

EbA related posters and EbA fliers have been produced and widely disseminated. The project has been actively participating in the WED celebrations since its inception. For the WED 2023 event, the project participated in the campaign organized at Ramaroshan (Accham) where 300+ students from 80 schools participated. Similarly, in 2022 and 2023, the project celebrated International Mountain Day (11 December) with the theme "Women Move Mountains" and "Restoring Mountain Ecosystems" at the meadow of *Jingale Taal* of Ramaroshan Rural Municipality (Achham) and Neta Bazar of Salyan district respectively.

Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Outreach of the EbA learning	Project knowledge sharing events at provincial	Q1 and Q2 2024	PMU CCMD	MoITFE	EbA video documentary jingles are up and running.	

	headquarters (3 provinces), Bagmati, Karnali and Sudurpaschim					
Output 1.4 Primary, secondary and tertiary educational programmes developed on EbA best practices.						
Progress The project has developed EbA primer, EbA handbook, draft EbA curricula for grade 6-8, developed education tool kits based on five pillars, established six Students-Supervisor network and conducted EbA related activities. Some of the key activities are in a final stage such as EbA curricula and tools kits. Once it is finalized, it will be replicated with the support of the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) NAST on behalf of the project is providing research Grants to graduate (15) and undergraduate (20) students. The project has completed awarding research grants to 5 PhD, 10 graduate and 15 undergraduate students.						
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Sharing EbA curricula and tool kits with MoEST/CDC	EbA curricula	July 2024	Working Group, CCMD PMU	CDC MoEST MoFAGA	A WG has been formed and operationalized	Work with MoFAGA to make a national framework curriculum catering the needs of all the community schools.
Develop EbA model curricula framework	EbA tool kits	July 2024			EbA curricula rolled out in 29 schools in Dolakha district	
Outcome 2 National Policies and strategies strengthened to promote EbA implementation						

Output 2.1 Number of policy brief to guide the revision of the policies/strategies to integrated EbA						
Progress The project has developed three policy briefs on: • Restoration of Degraded Private Land through Plantations, Natural Regenerations and Agroforestry • Mainstreaming Ecosystem-based Adaptation into Community-Based Forestry Management. • Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Rangelands						
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Ensure access to and ways and means of reaching information on policy, legal, and programmatic pledges.	Conduct Policy dialogue with relative stakeholders	Mach 2024	PMU CCMD	MOFE MoITFE MOFAGA MOELD DOA DOLS	Three policy briefs are in place	Sharing them in provinces during the provincial meetings.
	Organize province-level sharing events	linked with 1.2 above				
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Institutionalize Local ownership of the EbA II achievements	Organize Municipal and ward-level consultative meetings across three project districts to aware, advocate and lobby for the allocation of regular budget for giving continuity to some of the key interventions	September 2024	PMU CCMD	Local Municipalities /DFOs		A periodic district level exit meeting will be expedited to share the exit plan and expectation

	undertaken so far including handover of accumulated outputs, plans and assets for their sustainability.					
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Output 2.2 Up scaling strategy for EbA in forests and rangelands developed.						
Progress The project has developed EbA up-scaling strategy. It has been finalized at PMU level and being reviewed at CCMD (third quarter, 2023).						
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Finalizing and sharing of the EbA up scaling strategy and financing plan	Conduct Policy dialogue sharing up scaling strategy and financing plan, including National Accredited Agencies, NPC and MoF as appropriate.	Q1/ 2024	MOFE PMU CCMD	NPC MOF TDF AEPC NTNC NIMB Li BIRD NIFRA All DPs	EbA Upscaling Strategy is in place	
Output 2.3 Financing plans developed for EbA, including proposed budget allocations						
Progress The project has developed a draft EbA Financing Plan. It will be finalized by the end of the third quarter, 2023.						

Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 10 March, 2014	Additional Priority
Sharing of the financing plan to the competent department/division of MOFE for further action.	Briefing at MOFE on continuation of EbA process (program discussion at ministerial level)	May 2024	CCMD MoFE	DoFSC	financing plan in place	
	EbA Model program planning under four BMO	June 2024	CCMD, MOFE			Formation of an implementation procedure notes for implementation process
Output 3: Demonstration interventions that increase adaptive capacity to climate change and restore natural capital						
Output 3.1 A number of ha of forests restored by the project in selected wards using EbA.						
Progress A total cumulative 274 hectares of degraded forests have been restored till date which is 27.4 % progress against the project target of 1,000 ha. As the identification, mapping and planning for restoration of the degraded forest land has been completed, the project anticipates completing the target by the end of project period. The project has made an acceleration plan for restoration in the upcoming year and will meet the intended targets.						
Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Strategic intervention developed for the restoration of degraded forests	Restoration of degraded forest lands mapped & identified by the NAEF to meet restoration targets	June 2024	DFO, Dolakha DFO Accham DFO Salyan	CFUGs at respective districts	274 ha completed (27% of the target). The remaining targets will be completed by end of June 2024	Providing technical guidance on how to capture additional restoration acreage through

						ongoing interventions.
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Output 3.2

A number of ha of Rangelands restored by the project in selected wards using EbA.

Progress

A total cumulative 217 hectare of degraded rangelands has been restored till date, under this activity, project has been able to achieve 48% against the project target of 450 ha. However, the project has developed an accelerated plan to meet the target by the second quarter of the year 2024.

Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Strategic intervention developed for the restoration of high-altitude rangelands.	Restoration of degraded Rangelands mapped & identified by NAER to meet the restoration targets.	June 2024	DFO, Dolakha DFO Achham	CFUGs at respective districts	217 ha completed (48% of the target).	

Output 3.3

A number of operational management plans updated to include EbA interventions as part of VDC level adaptation strategies

Progress

A total of 132 CFOPs have been updated with integration of EbA criteria. In this regard, 132% progress has been achieved against the project target of updating 100 CFOP.

Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
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Sharing and dissemination of the guidelines	Dissemination of “EbA mainstreaming guideline on CFOP” .	QII 2024	PMU	FECOFUN DFO FRTC (Provincial)	EbA mainstreaming guideline on CFOP in place	
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Output 3.4

Number of techniques introduced in selected wards to conserve top soils and water

Progress

The conservation of the top soil and water has been done through terrace improvement, construction of the filtering dams along the streams and construction of conservation ponds on strategic locations that can irrigate agriculture lands or recharge the underground water systems.

A total 472 ha of terraces has been improved in the project municipalities. The progress on improved terraces is 65.56 % against the target of 720 ha. Similarly, a total of 126 units of filtering dams have been constructed during the project period. The progress on filtering dams is 350% against the target of 36 units. Additionally, a total of 64 water conservation ponds have been constructed or rehabilitated. The progress on water conservation ponds construction is 177% against the target 36 units.

The progress made towards conservation of top soil and water are above the target made under the result framework. The work on topsoil conservation and water conservation are highly satisfactory considering the targets.

Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Documenting best practices on soil and water conservation	Documentation Printing and distribution of the Implementation Guidelines	QII 2024	PMU	SWMO Project Municipalities	472 ha terrace improvement (65.5% of the target). As above	Research paper depicting the lessons learnt from the soil and water conservation with appropriate recommendations.

Output 3.5

Community Livelihood Improvement Plans (CLIPs) produced from forests, rangelands and agro ecosystems and implemented with local communities.

Progress

The project has identified a total of 32 livelihood activities which are doable in the project municipalities. Plans for all 32 livelihood activities are prepared and 16 of them are under implementation. The implementation of CLIPS has directly benefited a total of 3,190 hhs.

Strategies	Priority Actions	Timeline	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Status as of 15 November, 2023	Additional Priority
Scale up best and successful practices of CLIPS	Document and disseminate the best practices among the project municipalities	QII 2024	PMU DPC	Project municipalities in Dolakha, Salyan and Accham districts	16 CLIPS under implementation	Linking the users with programs that are similar to CLIPs operationalized by MOAD and provincial ministries overseeing Agriculture, livestock and small and cottage industries.

Additional activities planned:

1. A South Asia Regional EbA symposium to share project's learning and promote collaboration with EbA community at the regional level. The symposium is planned for September /October 2024(subject to availability of the resource).
2. Model EbA curriculum framework development for community schools. The timeline is second quarter 2024.

Programmatic and Operational Exit

2024 is the last year implementation of the Project. According to the project document and its amended documents the project will phase out in December 2024. Hence, the implementation modality of the project is planned accordingly to complete Programmatic and Operational Exit by the end of December 2024. A full-fledged implementation is planned for the first half of 2024. During third quarter, the project will consolidate and compact its activities.

The terminal evaluation is planned for October-December 2024. An external audit of the project for 2024 will be carried out in first quarter of 2025 and the entire project business will be wrapped up with the closure of the financial transactions and hand over of assets.

The proposed schedule of the exit plan is presented below as:

Implementation Modality	Jan–Jun 2024 (Fiscal Year 2080/81)						Jul-Sep 2024			Oct-Dec 2024			Jan-Mar 2025			Apr-May 2025	
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M
Full Implementation	Full fledged																
Consolidation							Consolidate & wrap-up										
Evaluation										Terminal Evaluation							
Financial & Operational													Financial & Operational closure				
Handover																Handover	

Exit of the human resources i.e. individual experts, NPM, M&EO and AFO will be made accordingly to align and adjust with the exit strategy and handover process.

For handover, the inventory list of the assets and goods will be developed and verified by both executing and implementing agencies. The final handover will take place after the financial audit of 2024 as stipulated in the exit plan.

Full-fledged implementation:

- Implementation of planned activities in the field of fiscal year 2023-2024 (GoN fiscal year 2080/2081),
- Monitoring and evaluation of field activities
- Monthly, quarterly and half yearly progress report collated, compiled and report preparation,

Consolidation and wrap-up:

- Consolidate field level activities and documentation of information.
- Closure & wrap-up of field implementation & handover meetings at the district level.

Terminal Evaluation:

- Selection and onboard of TE mission and plan for field evaluation
- Central and field level consultations
- Submission of TE report

Financial and Operational Closure:

- Collate & compile project expenditure,
- Financial closure information to stakeholders,
- Closure of financial transaction,
- Closure of bank accounts
- Preparation of Final financial report
- Completion of Final financial audit
- Operational closure

Handover:

- Documentation of files & reports
- Documentation of knowledge products
- Documentation of Expendable equipment (supplies)
- Documentation non-expendable equipment
- Ownership transfer of project assets i.e. vehicles, motorcycles& other assets