



FORWARD Nepal

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FORWARD Nepal's Bulletin

This 27th issue of FORWARD Nepal's Bulletin provides a general cumulative brief update on project implementation progress with some of the institutional activities/events for the first four months of the fiscal year 2079/80 B.S. i.e. 15th July to 15th November 2022. During this period, we continued with four projects. Of these four projects, a contract agreement was made with the University of California UC-DAVIS to organize a Regional Horticulture Workshop in Nepal under the USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab. In the project, 3 days' workshop was successfully held from 12 to 14 September 2022 in Lalitpur followed by a visit of participants in the workshop from USA, Bangladesh and Nepal Government Officials to the University of Agriculture and Forestry (AFU) Rampur and FORWARD Nepal on 15th September 2022. Apart from this, several project concept papers and proposals have been submitted to various donor agencies for project partnerships/funding. Participation in meetings, seminars, and training with different donors and development agencies and internal regular meetings at both project and institutional levels were held. The annual audit of FORWARD Nepal for the year 2078/79 was accomplished. Renewal of FORWARD Nepal with the DAO, Chitwan for the FY 2079/80 was completed. A new USAID SAM registration number has been obtained.

Major project activities conducted

1. Regional Programme for Scaling up the Multi-sectoral Approach for Nutrition Smart Village in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal-Phase II

Regional Nutrition Program Review: On behalf of WHH partners working in three countries, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, FORWARD Nepal was privileged to host a Regional Nutrition Project workshop in Nepal from 6-12 November 2022. 17 participants (WHH partners and WHH senior management team plus staff from all three countries) attended the workshop. The review was a five-day event including a field visit, travel, and the workshop. The day-wise sessions have been described in brief through photo documentation.

Participants' arrival/Travel: All the participants from Bangladesh and India arrived at Kathmandu on 5th November and traveled to Chapur, Rautahat, one of the project districts of NSV II by bus. The Nepal team warmly greeted the participants and welcomed them

to Nepal. Mr. Deependra Chaudhuri (Program Coordinator, Welthungerhilfe) and Ms. Archana Gupta (Project Coordinator, FORWARD) gave an overview to the participants on the field visit itinerary.

Field visit: To facilitate peer learning and understand the Nutrition Smart Community in Nepal and the scale-up strategy, the team visited 3 villages (Jhingadwa, Tejapakad, and Bhedyahi) of the Paroha municipality in Rautahat. The participants were divided into three groups to observe the status and impact of the 5 best practices, implementation methodology, convergence with the government, community engagement, and more. An exhibition was organized to display some of the achievements and project updates against the planned activities. Several excellent innovations were shared by the participants from the three countries and the scope of replication of these innovations was brainstormed. Finally, the phase-out strategy and fund utilization status were discussed. The following day, all the participants traveled to Pokhara by bus for the workshop.

Workshop: The three-day annual review meeting at Pokhara started with a warm welcome and a fun introduction round facilitated by the host team. Nivedita Varshneya (Country Director WHH India,) and Shakeb Nabi, Country Director WHH Nepal), together with coordinators and partner representatives lit the lamp. Sweta Banerjee (Nutrition Specialist, WHH) briefed the participants on the workshop agenda. The partners presented result-wise project updates and creatively displayed models, achievements, case studies, and photographs from the project villages.

2. Procurement of services for Providing Training on Agricultural Value Chain to Small Farmers

On-the-spot training to farmers: On-the-spot training on agriculture and livestock sectors was provided to 250 farmers who were members of Sana Kisan Agriculture Cooperatives (SFACs). Training topics included vegetable, banana, and mushroom farming; Goat, pigs, buffalo, cattle, poultry, aquaculture, and rabbit farming. Many of the trained farmers have recently been engaged in agro-livestock enterprises.

Selection of farmers for Level 1 Skill test: A total of 188 farmers have shown their interest to appear in the Skill Test organized by the National Skill Test Board (NSTB) as per their annual schedules. A certificate of training

attendance and accomplishment by the trainees was provided to them. They are in the process of applying for the Level 1 skill test. FORWARD Nepal is coordinating with NSTB for organizing the SKILL test. NSTB has indicated its willingness to take the skill test through the normal procedure whenever the call for such test opens across the NSTB testing centers.

Facilitation of Business plan/ REF Loan: FORWARD Nepal facilitated a total of 518 farmers applying for Rural Enterprise Financing (REF) loan. As of October 2022, loans requested by 262 farmers have been approved and many of them have already utilized it in various farming enterprises as per their approved business plans.

3. USAID/FtF Innovation Lab for Horticulture Regional Workshop

FORWARD Nepal in coordination with Agriculture and Forestry University, Rampur organized a regional workshop in Kathmandu in presence of experts in Horticulture and its related disciplines from Nepal, Bangladesh, and the United States.

Desk review: The desk study was mainly concerned with reviewing the existing studies and publications on the horticulture sector in South Asia, particularly in Nepal and Bangladesh. The findings of the desk review and recent studies on different topics of fruits and vegetables sub-sectors were presented by different experts in the regional workshop. Each presentation in the workshop was followed by a discussion, and the knowledge as well as suggestions from the workshop participants (experts).

Collection of the Primary Data: The study considered both qualitative and quantitative data collected through the use of different social research tools such as household surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and field observations. Six assistant professors of AFU's constituent colleges were selected as enumerators, trained, and deployed to conduct the surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews with key informants in the study districts of Nepal. Similarly, in Bangladesh, SAARC Agriculture Center, Professor from Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), and Senior Scientist from Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) were engaged in the research task including the field study (focus group discussion, key informant interview, and household surveys).

The project Manager, technical team lead, and other experts were involved in field data collection, and compilation and ensured the data quality and consistency. A total of twenty-nine FGDs (17 in Nepal

and 12 in Bangladesh) were conducted for obtaining both qualitative and observational data. For the household survey, 62 sampling units (farmers), in Nepal and 25 in Bangladesh, were identified during the focus group discussion, and data was collected accordingly. The Key Informant Interview (KII) was also conducted to obtain the sub-sector/topic-specific information from different experts, including policymakers, researchers, academicians, technicians, and the private sector (entrepreneurs/producers, traders).

Consultation meetings with the stakeholders: The project team had rigorous meetings with the designated officials such as the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Dean of Agriculture and Forestry University, Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Director General of the Department of Agriculture, Executive Director of NARC, and Chiefs of different programs and relevant societies (Nepal Horticulture Society, Plant Protection Society Nepal) and individual experts for buying in their cooperation and coordination together with ensuring the expert views in the research.

Regional Workshop: Horticulture Innovation Lab conducted one regional workshop during 12-14 September 2022 in Kathmandu, Nepal to identify and prioritize real challenges and potential opportunities of the horticulture sector in the South Asia region. The workshop aimed at including local and regional leaders in academia, the private sector, and Civil Societies/NGOs in Nepal and Bangladesh. This helped to develop a comprehensive report consisting of an assessment of the horticulture sector in the region, which could be addressed through research or capacity-building activities in the near future. The workshop was held on the following 12 themes for the successful identification and progress of the project initiatives for inclusive horticulture sector development in South Asia.

Based on the themes, the working group was formed to contribute in the respective area of expertise, who identified the different topics of the presentation, and the explored respective presenter in the area from government, research, and academic as well as social and private sector for the south Asian regional horticulture workshop. The presentations were focused on the current status, opportunities, and ways forward for the sustainable growth of the fruits and vegetable sector in South Asia with perspectives from food and nutrition security, insect, pest, and disease management, farm mechanization, biotechnological improvements, vegetable seed production, marketing and value chain, post-harvest management, extension, indigenous fruits promotion, organic horticulture in South Asia. Besides these, the cross-cutting themes of Gender

Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Youth Entrepreneurship, Climate Change, Pollination, and Food Safety and quality were also presented in the workshop after which a thorough discussion among a diverse group of participants was allowed for getting inputs, suggestions, and feedback that was recorded by a Rapporteur, compiled and reported to the project manager. The workshop session consisting of 3 presentations was moderated by the session chair.

Professors from universities in Bangladesh, Nepal, and USA, research scientists, government officials, development workers, and young entrepreneurs presented papers the sessions. The workshop was conducted in a hybrid mode enabling virtual participation together with physical presence. It had the presence of 89 physical participants (63M and 26F) and 51(36M and 15F) virtual participants. The workshop had the gracious presence of the Vice Chancellor of AFU as Chairperson of the opening ceremony and the Vice Chancellor of Gandaki University as the Chief Guest. There was the presence of the Chartered Vice Chancellor of Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU), Chartered Registrar from Agriculture and Forestry University, Dean from Agriculture and Forestry University and Tribhuvan University (TU), USAID, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), National Agriculture Research Council (NARC), Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project (PMAMP), Value Chain Development of Fruits and Vegetables Project (VCDP), Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) and SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC).

Submission of report to UC-DAVIS: The report identified major challenges and way forward for South Asia's horticultural sector. Major challenges were identified as poor production efficiency, a heavy infestation of insect pests, and huge post-harvest loss in fruits and vegetables. The draft report was submitted in October 2022.

4. The Enhanced Rural AI (TERAI) Project for Smallholder Dairy Farmers in Nepal

Detailed Implementation Plan Workshop: DIG workshop was organized by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Nepal for the project staff and other officials (Chairperson, Admin & Finance Officer, and Project Focal Person) of Indreni Rural Development Center (IRDC), and Forum for Rural Welfare and Agricultural Reform for Development (FORWARD Nepal) from 7th November 2022 at Dream International Hotel, Butwal.

The main objective of the program was to inform about the donor of the project, i.e. Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA), roles of ADRA UK, ADRA Nepal, Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society (RJAHs), IRDC,

and FORWARD Nepal in the implementation of The Enhanced Rural AI (TERAI) project for Smallholder Dairy Farmers in Nepal. The working modality, activities to be accomplished in the project period, etc. were also discussed at length. The workshop participants were also briefed on Safeguarding, PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Sexual Harassment), Anti-Fraud Policy, financial compliances and formats, M&E reporting mechanisms and formats, complaints, and feedback response mechanisms, etc.

In the workshop, IRDC and FORWARD Nepal prepared their detailed implementation plan (DIP) and guidelines (DIG) for the effective implementation of the project and shared them in the workshop held during 8-9 November 2022 at Dream International Hotel, Butwal.

Training/Workshop/Meeting

- All Project staff of NSV Project Phase II participated in the Positive Deviance and NERP Training in July 2022 at Hotel Terai Inn, Chapur. Field staff from Rautahat, and newly identified LANN Facilitators participated in the three-day LANN+ Training in September 2022. In addition, LANN+ refresher training was given to all the project staff of the NSV phase II project in November 2022
- Similarly, the RNP (Regional Nutrition Program) review was conducted in Hotel Landmark, Pokhara during 7-11 November with the participation of all the project staff of the NSV-II project. FORWARD Nepal's Executive Director Mr. Netra Pratap Sen, and Board Vice-chairman Dr. Ujjal Tiwari also attended from the Head Office.
- A Pre-Teaming Agreement has been signed with Lutheran World Relief (LWR) for the USAID Nepal Agricultural Transformation project bid on 19 August 2022.
- DIG workshop of the TERA I project was organized at Dream International Hotel, Butwal for 3 days, from 7 to 9 November. Board Chairperson Prof. Dr. Durga Devkota, Program Director Mr. Ram Krishna Neupane, and Sr. Admin Officer Mr. Ram Dayal Tharu also participated in the workshop.

Staffing

- Mr. Promod Gautam was appointed as Project Manager for USAID/FtF Innovation Lab for Horticulture Regional Workshop in July 2022 and later he was substituted by Mr. Krishna Prasad Sapkota due to an urgent plan for Mr. Gautam's visit to Australia. Other staff appointed from this project were; two Technical Research Officers Ms. Srijana Neupane and Ms. Manisha Shrestha.

- Dr. Subhash Chaudhary was appointed as Livestock Development Specialist for the TERAI project on 16th October 2022.
- Mr. Himalaya Subedi, program manager, resigned from the job at FORWARD Nepal on 9th August 2022 and departed Korea for higher study. Mr. Jenish Shrestha, who was previously an intern at FORWARD Nepal, started working as a Technical Officer on August 19, 2022.
- Ms. Srijana Neupane, who was previously the TRO of the Horticulture Innovation Lab project, started working as Agriculture Officer on 16th November 2022. Ms. Manisha Shrestha, TRO of the HIL project left the organization on 4th November 2022 due to the end of the project.
- 14 Local resource persons (LRPs) from the SKBBL project completed their assignments of on-the-spot farmer's capacity building and left the organization due to the end of the project. They were: Mr. Liladhar Pant, Ms. Parbati Kafle, Mr. Sabin Khatri KC, Ms. Rita Rai, Mr. Jitendra Mahato, Ms. Sirjana Regmi, Ms. Anjana Rai, Mr. Karna Bahadur Rana, Mr. Mohit Sah Teli, Mr. Dan Bahadur Ramtel, Ms. Rigi Limbu, Mr. Nirgun Kumar Mahato, Ms. Tara Khadka, and Ms. Bhagrathi Bohara

Visitors

- Mr. Kiran Ojha, Country Director of Lutheran World Relief (LWR) visited FORWARD Nepal Head Office on 22nd July 2022.
- After the Regional workshop for Horticulture Innovation Lab in Kathmandu, the US participants with some Nepali horticulturists visited FORWARD Nepal. Dr. Elizabeth Mitcham, Director of Horticulture Innovation Lab and Professor at UC-Davis, Janelle Beth Larson, Associate Professor of Penn State University, William Vance Baird, Head of the department for Horticulture at Michigan State University, and Nanda Prakash Joshi, from Michigan State University, paid a visit to Agriculture and Forestry University and Sauraha, a famous tourist destination in Chitwan. A few national visitors accompanied them, among them Basudev Kaphle, Joint Secretary of the National Centre of Potato, Vegetables, and Spices and Professor Arjun Kumar Shrestha, Director of Directorate of Research and Extension, AFU along with FORWARD Nepal staff.
- On 17th October, Chiranjibi Sharma, Vice Chief District Officer from District Administration Office, Chitwan paid a visit to the FORWARD Nepal office and glanced at the projects and activities implemented. He also wished for the successful future of FORWARD Nepal.

Institutional activities/events:

- As in the previous years, 26th FORWARD Day was celebrated on 1st September 2022 in the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Durga Devkota, Chairperson (virtual), and the presence of chief guest then acting ward chairperson Prasuram Paudel, and special guest advocate Jagannath Bhandari, Legal Advisor of FORWARD Nepal. This event was conducted both physically and virtually with the participation of founder members, board members, general members, and staff at the Head Office. In the morning programme held at the head office, the event was inaugurated by lighting a traditional lamp (Panas) and irrigating a plant. A Happy Birthday cake was cut/distributed among participants and wishes of FORWARD DAY to each other exchanged. A greetings message was also issued jointly by the Chairperson and Executive Director on the occasion of FORWARD DAY. Similarly, as in previous years, the FORWARD Nepal team visited senior citizens of Devghatdham. A Saha Bhojan (lunch) with senior citizens of the Bridhashram, DADC was done and a sum of NRs. 100 was given to each senior citizen living in the Ashram.
- FORWARD Nepal registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) of USAID and got the unique SAM number.
- The Annual Audit of FORWARD Nepal's head office for FY 2078/79 and projects account was carried out by the S.H.A. & Associates, Chartered Accounts from September 12, 2022, to October 03, 2022, and produced audit report.

Upcoming institutional major events:

- Literacy Hand Book –Agriculture and Livestock
- Publication of Annual Report 2021/22
- Board Meetings
- Gender in Agriculture Workshop
- Finance and Procurement Training for WHH partners in Kathmandu
- Submission of RFA for Tayar-USAID
- FORWARD Nepal's SMARIKA Publication
- Submission to RFA of Horticulture Innovation Lab
- Submission of Project Completion Reports (PCR) to BMZ/WHH and SKBBL.
- Annual Programme Planning and Review and Reflection meeting.
- Annual programme for 2079/80 and General Assembly of FORWARD Nepal.
- Appointment of Auditor for year 2079/80.
- Project proposal development for Agricultural Transformation project in leadership of LWR for USAID support.

Some Glimpses



DIG workshop of TERAJ Project, Butwal



Celebration of 26th FORWARD day, Bharatpur-2



Regional workshop of USAID/FtF Innovation Lab for Horticulture in Kupandole, Lalitpur



RNP review workshop in Pokhara



On-the-spot training to farmers on nursery management under Agriculture VC Project



Site-seeing by participants from Bangladesh, India and Nepal after RNP review workshop