



The Second Year of ForestAction  
in '*Action*'

## Annual Report 2002

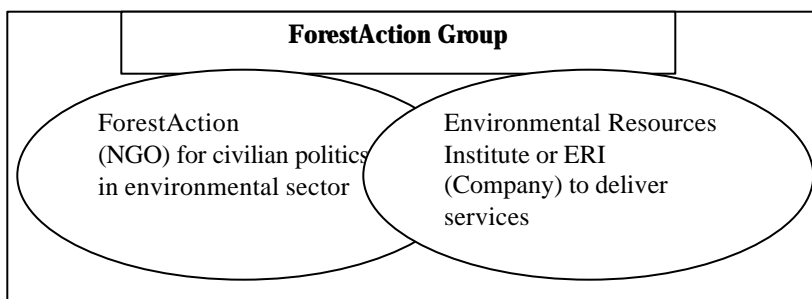
### Introduction

#### About the Report

Forest Resources Studies and Action Team (ForestAction) has completed the second full year since its establishment in 2000. This report summarizes the ForestAction's activities in 2002 in all aspects of its life— organizational, project, networking and alliances, and the indication of possible future directions. This is aimed at communicating the experiences with a range of stakeholders, who are committed to sustainable management of natural resources and enhancement of livelihoods in Nepal. We anticipate feedback and suggestions in exchange, and hope to strengthen our alliances with people sharing similar visions and missions in the days to come.

#### ForestAction Group

ForestAction Group is a self-governed civil society organization specializing in the field of community based natural resource management, including community forestry, as a strategy of strengthening environmental management and rural livelihoods. Started with an HMG registered NGO (July 2000) called Forest Resources Studies and Action Team (ForestAction), the ForestAction Group has recently (December 2002) expanded its formal institutional structure to include a for-profit company called Environmental Resources Institute (ERI) with a view to respond to ever increasing national and international demands for quality scientific, educational and consulting services. The two organizational entities of ForestAction Group allow itself to engage in both the civilian politics of the environmental sector (through ForestAction), as well as deliver competitive intellectual products and services (through ERI). This makes the institutional structure of ForestAction Group look like this:



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***This report is about ForestAction (not ERI).***

## **Our Mission**

Established in 2000, ForestAction has a vision of forest dependent communities, particularly the poor and marginalized groups, taking control and active role in, and equitable share from, the management of forest and natural resources. Our mission is to accelerate the process of change through policy, institutional and technical innovations that ultimately benefits and empowers these groups. Our mission is based on the premise that devolution of power, democratization of institutions, and participatory governance can facilitate sustainable, efficient and equitable management of natural resources.

## **The Results we Strive to Achieve**

ForestAction strives to bring concurrent changes in policy, institutional and technical aspects of natural resource management. We will continue to achieve the following results through our future actions in Nepal's forestry and livelihood sector:

- ❑ Enabling policies for community/participatory forestry
- ❑ Improved participation of the poor in forest related decision-making
- ❑ Clearer definition of roles, relationship and responsibilities of civil society, forest bureaucracy, communities and private sector
- ❑ Effective linkages across micro-meso-macro levels of resource management
- ❑ Analysis of contemporary policy issues and documentation
- ❑ Improved management of forest including biodiversity
- ❑ Strengthening of national service delivery capacity through training and information dissemination
- ❑ Development of innovative methods, process, tools through participatory action research

## **Activities and Progress in 2002**

Our key activities in the 2002 include: research, training, publication of scientific resources, networking and alliances building, technical support to GOs and NGOs in community. These activities are briefly outlined below:

### **Research**

We have conducted several research studies on key issues of forestry and livelihoods using participatory action research approach in collaboration with several research/academic institutions. These include:

- ❑ **Promoting community action for biodiversity conservation.** With financial support from Whiteley Awards Foundation, UK, a pilot action research project initially planned to set up in two community sites in Baglung district (and later shifted to Nawalparasi because of security reason). Three expected outputs of the project include: a) improved biodiversity plans and practices of communities incorporating the values of economic and non-economic plants, b) development of guidelines to assist field facilitators to incorporate biodiversity issues in forest management operational plans, and c) identification of policy issues and options as regards incorporation of biodiversity in community forestry. Now we are completing one-year project and preparing for reports.
- ❑ **A Survey of the priority problems perceived by the four FRP focus groups and other stakeholders of research - dependant poor people in the management of forest and tree**

**resources in Nepal.** The survey was commissioned by the Forest Research Programme (FRP) of the Department for International Development (DFID), managed by Natural Resources International Limited (NR International). The aim of the survey was to list the underlying causes for poverty, as perceived by the poor people who rely on forest and tree resources, as well as different categories of institutions representing government, I/NGOs, bilateral agencies, research institutions and private sector, which seek to reduce poverty. The survey has documented existing problems and their underlying causes, which can be of support in the development of meaningful and targeted action both through research and development projects. It will also help FRP to define future research areas for the benefit of the following principal categories of poor people: (1) poor small-scale farmers, (2) poor landless families, (3) poor artisans, traders and small-scale entrepreneurs, and (4) the urban and peri-urban poor. The survey conclusions could be of interest to other parties in the region involved in analyzing and addressing poverty and forestry issues.

- **Study on Marketing Potentials of NTFPs of Banke and Bardia.** This study was carried out by ForestAction in collaboration with New ERA limited. The main objective of the study was to analyse prevailing situation of marketing and identify the potential for the nine NTFP species identified as potential for commercial production in Terai area of EFFA region. The study report documented and analyzed the marketing trends, potential domestic as well as international markets, legal procedure of NTFPs marketing, quantity, quality, and equity issue in benefit sharing and trade potentials of the selected species.
- **Bibliography of non-timber forest products in Nepal.** This study was carried out by ForestAction in collaboration with Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP). The main objective of the study is to consolidate the existing information and experiences on production management and marketing of the NTFPs in the form of a bibliography/data base presented in user-friendly format. Reviewed documents are categorized into 5 sub headings namely a) general, b) resource management, c) institutional and policy aspects, d) enterprises, processing and product utilization, and e) market and economic aspects. Among these 5 document categories, resource management and general documents contain larger numbers of documents than other categories. General documents contain 105 and resource management contains 93 datasheets out of 310. Only a few documents 12 out of 310 have a focus on institutional and policy aspects. A bibliography/data base is available both in hard copy and CD in CDS\_ISIS software.
- **Field Investigation and Analysis on Inventory Issue in Community Forestry.** In collaboration with the Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP), ForestAction undertook this study to assess the problems, and opportunities relating to the issue of community forest inventory in Nepal in October-November 2002. This report presents the findings of this short review study. The report aims to assist policy makers, forestry projects, researchers and advocacy NGOs, who wish to pursue the agenda of improving the current Forest Inventory Guideline (FIG) of Nepal's Department of Forest (DoF). The main objective of the study is to quantify and assess the field realities in relation to the forest inventory guideline implementation, about which there exist only anecdotal evidences from field. The focus is on identifying scope and avenues for policy decision to resolve the issue. Both quantitative and qualitative evidences have been generated from 40 districts around the country through a field study and telephone survey, covering all the development regions as well as ecological zones of the country, regarding the issue. The sample also captured parts project areas supported by various donors.
- **Common Pool Resource, Poverty and Equity: A Case Study of Leasehold Forestry Policy and Practices in Nepal.** ForestAction is carrying out this study in collaboration with ICIMOD. The main focus of the study is to understand how common pool resource is governed in the prevailing policy and social contexts, and how the governance can be improved for equitable outcomes. It also looks at how institutions at micro and macro level interact to determine the

access of poorest groups on resources and innovate technical options for maximizing benefits to households.

### **Training and workshops**

ForestAction organized various trainings and workshops, and has planned others for the year 2003. Some of them have the national scope. A unique feature of the national level trainings was that the full cost of the training was recovered from the participants or their organizations. A brief description of these trainings are given below:

- ❑ **Design of training package (including manuals and reading materials) on Participatory Action and Learning (PAL) in forest management.** ForestAction in collaboration with IRDD, The Reading University, and Livelihoods and forestry programme (LFP) developed a training manual on Participatory Action and Learning in forest management. This manual is useful to facilitate community forest users groups. The reading materials in this manual are based on the finding and experiences of Forest Users Forest Management Project (FFMP)- a three-year action research on community Forest User Group (FUG).
- ❑ **Training on community based NTFP management.** ForestAction organized in December 23 -30, 2002 for both Foresters and Non- Foresters. The purpose of the trainings was to orient participants on the concepts, approaches, and processes of NTFPs management as well as some practical tools to manage NTFPs at community level.
- ❑ **Forest Rights and Livelihoods Training** .A seven-day training course (two times) on "Forest Rights and Livelihoods" was organized by ForestAction. The propose of the training was to aware participants in various aspects of community forest management policies as well as to orient participants on the concepts, approaches, and processes of community forest so that they can facilitate forest users to claim their rights and responsibilities.
- ❑ **Participatory Resource Inventory in Community Forestry (planned).** A 10-day training course on "Participatory Resource Inventory in Community Forestry" is being organized in collaboration with ERI. The propose of the training is to develop skills of participants in carrying inventory in community forests. The concepts, approaches, and processes of inventory along with current issues of inventory were also discussed.
- ❑ **Self-monitoring System Development (SMS) Training (planned).** A five day training course on "Developing Self-Monitoring Systems at Community based Organizations" has been announced. The propose of the training is to orient participants on the concepts, approaches, and processes of self-monitoring as well as some tools to facilitate SMS at community level institutions.
- ❑ **Inventory Workshop:** An interaction meeting was organized by ForestAction and Center for Agro-Ecology and Development (CAED) on the issue of community forest inventory. It was held at CAED office, Purano Baneshwor, Kathmandu on May 12, 2002. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the issue and share the experiences with the aim of promoting critical understanding among key stakeholder groups on the issue. The need for such discussion was felt through CAED's experiences of working with forest users group and supporting NGO/ CBOs in various parts of the country, and this was further affirmed by some research studies conducted by ForestAction. Number of people from various NGOs, I/NGOs, bilateral forestry projects, government organizations, users' federations and CBOs were voluntarily participated.
- ❑ **Occasional Discussions:** Occasional discussions were organized to share the experiences and enhance the understanding on various topics related to natural resource management. The persons having in-depth topical knowledge were invited as the resource persons to present their views and facilitate the discussion. Anna Lawrance from University of Oxford, UK and George Varughese from The Asia Foundation were the resource persons to facilitate the discussions on impact of biodiversity on livelihoods, and analysis of forest governance in Nepal respectively.

- ❑ **National workshop on Learning from Community Forestry:** ForestAction, along with Nepal Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and other research partners, organized a national workshop on September 10-11, 2002 in Kathmandu. The workshop was participated by over 100 people representing government, NGOs, representatives of forest users, researchers, projects and representatives of international organizations. The workshop deliberated on five interrelated themes of community forestry, namely: governance, adaptive management, gender and equity, livelihoods, and forest sustainability. Working in both plenary and thematic mini-workshops, participants drew lessons and identified future strategic directions to strengthen community forestry in Nepal, with a focus on enhancing the equity impact of community forestry.
- ❑ **A National Conference on Management of Common Property Resources and Equity (planned):** A three-day conference on management of common property resources and equity has been planned to conduct with the collaboration of different organizations. The main objective of the conference is to document case studies incorporating evidences, lessons and insights to facilitate mainstreaming of equity and poverty concerns in the management of CPR, namely community forestry and farmer managed irrigation systems.

### **Documentation/Publications/dissemination**

- Community forestry Video: The Other Side of the Coin (English and Nepali version)
- Journal of Forest and Livelihood Vol. 2 (1) July 2002
- A critical Assessment of Scientific and political Dimensions of the Issue of Community Forests Inventory in Nepal: A Policy Discussion Note, 2002
- Participatory Action and Learning: (a Guidebook) - Nepali
- Innovative Forestry: A Synthesis of small-scale forest management practices from Nepal - Nepali (a Guidebook) - Nepali
- Participatory Action and Learning: a Training Manual - English
- Participatory Action and Learning: A Training Manual - Nepali

### **Website**

ForestAction has managed to share the activities and experiences, progresses through its website-[www.forestaction.org](http://www.forestaction.org). The website has been separated into some subtitles - About Us, Publications, Research, Team, Training & Workshop and What's New. In About Us - the general information of ForestAction has been kept. In publication title - some publications are listed down with abstracts and some are in detail. In Research and Training & Workshop subtitles - already completed and going on researches and list of training & workshops are listed along with the summary of completed researches. In Team - there is list of ForestAction team as well as its volunteer members. In What's New subtitle - every new events are uploaded. It is frequently updated depending on the new events.

### **Partners with whom ForestAction has worked directly or indirectly**

- Center For International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- University of Reading, UK
- Livelihoods and Forestry Programme of DFID
- Natural Resource International, UK
- University of Oxford, UK
- Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal

- Whitely Awards Foundation, UK
- USAID (through The Asia Foundation), Kathmandu
- ICIMOD, Kathmandu
- DFID, UK
- IGES, Japan
- ActionAid Nepal
- New ERA, Nepal
- Local partners (Local Forest User Groups, Women Group, Irrigation Water User Group, District Level FECOFUN)
- National NGOs: Pro-Public, INSEC, SEACOW

### International networking

- ❑ **Workshop on Identifying Researchable Constraints in Participatory Forest Management:** Hemant R Ojha participated in the meeting organized by Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in October 2002 in U K.
- ❑ **Regional Workshop on ACM:** Krishna P Paudel participated Adaptive Collaborative Management Regional Workshop in September 2002, which was organized by CIFOR in Bangkok, Thailand.
- ❑ Distribution of Journal of Forest and Livelihood (UK, USA, Australia, India, Thailand, China, Cambodia, The Netherlands, Italy, Japan, Indonesia, Switzerland, New Zealand)
- ❑ ForestAction website linked to ETRN
- ❑ Contributions to internet based Participatory Biodiversity Monitoring workshop organized by ETRN
- ❑ Contributions to international Journal articles review and collaborative book writing.
- ❑ We have received feedback that ForestAction has had strong presence in the web with critical and useful information. Our main internet based actions include: facilitation of discussions on forestry profession, Journal abstract in the web sites, participation in the web based discussions and seminars and resources sharing such as articles and reports.

### Human resources at ForestAction

Persons (by category and in alphabetical order)	Positions
<b>Core team</b>	
Basundhara Bhattarai	Core Team Member
Hari R Neupane.	Core Team Member
Harisharan Luintel	Core Team Member
Hemant R Ojha	Core Team Member
Krishna P Paudel	Core Team Member

<b>Field based team</b>	
Arjun Thapalia	Community Organizer
Kamal Bhandari	Community Organizer
<b>Office management team</b>	
Lalit Thapa	Office Assistant
Raju Bikram Shah	Finance Manager
Tara Bhattarai	Office Manager

In addition, more than 10 consultants of various levels were involved in specific projects during 2002.

### **Strategic Plan for the Year 2003**

ForestAction will continue research, field actions and training related activities in various key themes surrounding forest, natural resources and livelihood. Our training, research and development actions will focus on the following areas:

#### **Adaptive management/ conscious learning and monitoring**

- Community Forestry Monitoring Systems at different levels, across various institutions - with a focus on both downward and upward accountability, organizational learning and adaptive management, and follow up study on previously conducted Self- Monitoring Action research is planned.

#### **Community based natural resource management**

- National level trainings
- Biodiversity and livelihoods – developing methods of biodiversity monitoring, assessment and sustainable use at subsistence as well as commercial levels

#### **Strengthening civil society and government accountability**

- Strengthening district level FECOFUN (5-8 districts)
- Civil society networking at different levels
- Micro, meso and macro level processes; participatory governance

#### **Policy analysis and advocacy**

- Policy briefs on various aspects of forest resources and livelihoods (to be identified)
- Cross-institutional strategic alliances
- Issue based sharing meetings and workshops
- Participation in national and international events and processes
- Advocacy for equity oriented, gender sensitive, and pro-poor policy provisions and processes.

#### **Publications, Documentation and Communication**

- Journal of Forest and Livelihood (two Issues - English)
- Hamro Ban Sampada (three Issues – Nepali)
- Issue based discussion papers
- Press releases, articles and interviews in media
- Manuals and guidelines (Advocacy, monitoring and adaptive management of forests)

- Posters, slides and other forms of visuals are also of immense interests to ForestAction
- Participate in national and international level events
- Organize issue based workshops

## **Acknowledgement**

Many individuals and institutions have contributed to the development of ForestAction in different ways. We highly appreciate and acknowledge their contributions.

Bimala Rai Paudel, Cynthia MCDougall, Dinesh Paudel, Dr Bharat Pokharel, Dr Don Gilmour, Dr George Varughese, Hari Dhungana, Keshav Gautam, Dr. Keshav Kanel, Naya Sharma, Netra Timsina, Radhika Regmi, and Narayan Dhital.