MID TERM EVALUATION

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF WETLANDS IN NEPAL (CSUWN)

PROJECT ID: 00049898 (GEF/TRACK)

Evaluation Team

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November 20th, 2011
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<thead>
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Bikram Sambat (Nepali calendar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>Buffer Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZMC</td>
<td>Buffer Zone Management Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNA</td>
<td>Capacity Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPA</td>
<td>Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFUG</td>
<td>Community Forest User Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSUWN</td>
<td>Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>Chief Technical Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDC</td>
<td>District Development Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFO</td>
<td>District Forest Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDG</td>
<td>Deputy Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIO</td>
<td>District Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNPWC</td>
<td>Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoA</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoF</td>
<td>Department of Forests</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoI</td>
<td>Department of Irrigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSCWM</td>
<td>Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAC</td>
<td>Field Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMC</td>
<td>Field Management Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPMU</td>
<td>Field Project Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td>Ghodaghodi Lake Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GON</td>
<td>Government of Nepal</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSI</td>
<td>Gender Sensitive Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>Invasive Alien Species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>The World Conservation Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JV</td>
<td>Joint Venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KT</td>
<td>Koshi Tappu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTWR</td>
<td>Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>KTWRMP</td>
<td>Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFSC</td>
<td>Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLD</td>
<td>Ministry of Local Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoA</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoLD</td>
<td>Ministry of Local Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoWR</td>
<td>Ministry of Water Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTE</td>
<td>Mid-Term Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARMA</td>
<td>Centre for Natural Resources Management, Analysis, Training and Policy Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPD</td>
<td>National Programme Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>National Programme Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTFP</td>
<td>Non-Timber Forest Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWC</td>
<td>National Wetland Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Payments for Environmental Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMC</td>
<td>Program Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMU</td>
<td>Project Management Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUG</td>
<td>Resource User Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Technical Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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</table>
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal (CSUWN) Project, conducted between October 12\textsuperscript{th} and November 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2011. The evaluation was conducted by an independent Team comprised of Dr. Gonzalo Castro de la Mata (Team Leader), Dr. Sagendra Tiwari, and Dr. Dhruba Raj Gautam. The scope and context of the evaluation is presented in Chapter 2, and the full Terms of Reference are presented as an Annex.

The project’s main goal is to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of wetland biodiversity and environmental goods and services for improved local livelihoods in Nepal. Its immediate objective is to strengthen national and local capacity in ecosystem management and sustainable use of wetland biodiversity in Nepal. The project envisions three major outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Wetland biodiversity conservation values integrated into national policy and planning frameworks;
- **Outcome 2:** Strengthened national institutional, technical and economic capacity and awareness for wetland biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; and
- **Outcome 3:** Enhanced collaborative management of wetland resources for conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

The CSUWN is a joint undertaking of the Government of Nepal, the Global Environment Facility, and the United Nations Development Program. The project is executed by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC), with the Department of Forests (DoF) and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) as major partners. Demonstration sites for the project include two Ramsar sites within Nepal: Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) and the Ghodaghodi Lake Area (GLA).

The MTE Team found that the CSUWN has proceeded well despite the significant delays in the approval process and the slow start-up due to the necessary redesign of the log-frame. The project entered the GEF Pipeline in February 2001, but the first disbursement did not occur until mid-2008, with full implementation occurring only as of early 2009.

Project performance has been satisfactory to date, as measured by the steady disbursements during the last 3 years, as well as the achievement of most of the targets under its planned outputs. The project has already achieved 100% of the outputs under Outcome 1, 80% under Outcome 2, and 92% under Outcome 3. The project is likely to achieve the totality of its outputs at the time of the project’s end date.

The CSUWN has set up the foundations for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of wetlands in Nepal successfully. The MTE Team recognized examples of both Good and Best practices\textsuperscript{1}, as follows:

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\textsuperscript{1} Definitions of Best Practice and Good Practice in Section 6.
The Project reviewed its Log-frame and adopted a new one at inception (Good Practice)
The Project emphasizes Mainstreaming at the Policy Level (Best Practice)
The scientific and methodological basis to design the livelihood interventions was sound (Best Practice)
There is a strong emphasis in women empowerment (Good Practice)
There is an emphasis in developing productive partnerships with local groups and Community Forestry User Groups (Good Practice)

At the same time, there were some opportunities missed and weaknesses which could have been prevented if the project had made a better use of previous experiences, both nationally and internationally.

The MTE Team concludes that the likelihood that the project will achieve its Outcomes at the end of the project is high for Outcome 1, very high for Outcome 2, and high for Outcome 3. At the same time, the likelihood that these outcomes will be sustainable over the long-term are not as strong: moderate for Outcome 1, Moderate-high for Outcome 2, and Moderate-high for Outcome 3. The difference between achieving these outcomes and their sustainability arises from the open question as to whether or not the Government of Nepal, at all levels, will be able to maintain and strengthen the level of mainstreaming achieved.

The MTE Team believes that very significant progress has been achieved, and considers it imperative for these achievements to be cultivated, maintained, and strengthened. In this context, the MTE Team does not recommend any major departures from the current implementation modalities and strategies. Instead, it develops recommendations and specific actions that can be taken in the immediate term (i.e., until the project ends), and beyond (i.e., follow-up activities after the project ends) that will increase the probabilities that these achievements will be sustainable.

In the short term, the MTE Team recommends the development of an Exit Strategy, and the optimization of the use of remaining resources along the following strategic lines: (i) Reinforce and maintain progress with mainstreaming and collaborative management at all levels (National, District, and Local), (ii) Seek the achievement of specific milestones (i.e., enactment of Wetlands Act and regulations, etc.), (iii) Continue monitoring socio-economic impacts, building from the good socio-economic monitoring system already in place, and (iv) Strengthen biodiversity monitoring by identifying additional monitoring protocols for habitat changes, measuring responses to management interventions, etc.

In the mid- and long-terms, the foundations already built for mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands in Nepal need to be maintained beyond the project’s end. The following elements have been identified as key features of the desirable follow-up activities, whether as part of a new project, or as mainstreamed activities within existing structures: (i) Continue monitoring socio-economic impacts beyond the project’s end date, (ii) Strengthen the wetlands management tools available to the GON, (iii) Develop and implement a comprehensive biodiversity monitoring protocol for wetlands in Nepal, (iv) Share good practices and lessons with other countries (both ways), (v) Integrate wetlands conservation and sustainable use in the broader landscape through landscape-level incentives, and (vi) Link future activities and wetlands conservation with broader and relevant natural resources management issues.
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT OF THE MTE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal Project (CSUWN) is a joint undertaking of the Government of Nepal (GON), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The project is executed by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC). In addition, the Department of Forests (DoF) and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) are its major partners. Demonstration sites for the project include two Ramsar sites within Nepal: Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) and the Ghodaghodi Lake Area (GLA).

The CSUWN Project Document anticipated the carrying out of at least two independent external evaluations during the project period, including a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) by the end of the second year of the project implementation. This document presents the results of such Evaluation.

The MTE is expected to determine the progress made towards the achievement of the project outcomes, and to identify appropriate correction course when appropriate. According to the TORs of the MTE (Annex 8), “it will focus on addressing the effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness of project implementation; highlight issues requiring decisions and actions; and present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. The findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the remaining period of the project duration.”

2.2. PROJECT CONTEXT

The project is the first of its kind in Nepal in that it is providing support to the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation to create an enabling policy environment and to achieve enhanced technical, economic, and institutional capacity so that all relevant sectors recognize the value and importance of wetlands. This mainstreaming approach promotes the incorporation of economic assessments into sectoral project analyses, as well as investment appraisal procedures and the development of models of collaborative management of wetlands resources that contribute to improved local livelihoods.

The project has been designed to address policy gaps, build capacity (both human resource and technical levels), and promote public-private partnerships for wetland management, thus ensuring the continued provision of environmental goods and services for improved local livelihoods. The project has been formulated with the aim to replicate its best practices and lessons to other wetlands sites in order to promote conservation and its wise use potential in other wetlands in Nepal. The project supports the objectives of Millennium Development Goal Number 7 “Ensure Environmental Sustainability.”

The official launch of the CSUWN took place on 19 March 2008, with the hosting of an inception workshop held in Kathmandu. Nevertheless, full field implementation only began with the opening of its field office in March 2009. The inception workshop identified design shortcomings
and recommended the need for a thorough review of the project document, including the development of a new logical framework (LF) and its implementation modalities.

The CSUWN is a five-year project, beginning on January 2008 and ending in December 2012.

2.3. PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The overall goal of the project is to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of wetland biodiversity and environmental goods and services for improved local livelihoods in Nepal.

The immediate objective of the project is to strengthen national and local capacity in ecosystem management and sustainable use of wetland biodiversity in Nepal. The project envisions three major outcomes:

A. Wetland biodiversity conservation values integrated into national policy and planning frameworks;

B. Strengthened national institutional, technical and economic capacity and awareness for wetland biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; and

C. Enhanced collaborative management of wetland resources for conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

2.4. PROJECT AREA

The project outcomes are expected to occur at the national level. In addition, there are two demonstration sites for testing collaborative management approaches for wetland management:

A. Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) and its Buffer Zone. KTWR is in the East end of the country and represents the lotic river floodplain type ecosystem under the protected area (PA) system. It covers 16 VDCs that spread across three districts of Sunsari, Saptari and Udayapur, with a population of over 93,000 people living in the buffer zone and covering over 16,000 households.

B. The Ghodaghodi Lake Area (GLA), located in the Far-west of the country and representing an interconnected mosaic of lacustrine oxbow lake types of 20 lakes with large ecological, biological, cultural, economic and aesthetic values. GLA falls within the management regime of the District Forest Office in Kailali. The area covers three VDCs of the Kailali District, including a population of over 57,000 people from over 8,200 households.

Out of the total number of households, 463 HHs (KTWR-308 & GLA-155) of "Wetland Dependent Communities (WDCs)" from both the project sites have been classified as Wetland dependent communities and are provided with different programmes to...
strengthen livelihood opportunities to improve household income by 15% by the end of project period.

2.5. PROJECT WORKING STRATEGY

The project aims at addressing the root causes of wetland degradation and loss by:

A. Strengthening national policy, capacity and awareness on wetlands,
B. Linking national actions at two demonstration sites,
C. Employing existing inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder structures and mechanisms wherever possible,
D. Planning activities to influence wetland policy and practice,
E. Using existing structures and mechanisms,
F. Focusing on wetland conservation and Wetland-Dependent Communities (WDCs) livelihoods improvement,
G. Forging partnership for synergistic effects,
H. Fostering a strong doing, learning and adaptive management culture, and
I. Sharing lessons and experiences.

In this context, the CSUWN project has provided technical and financial support to the MFSC to help establish a top-level multi-sectoral policy and coordination body for mainstreaming wetlands issues and concerns (i.e., the National Wetlands Committee or NWC). The NWC incorporates high level representation from Ministries that have influence and impacts upon wetlands. The NWC has been formed and is operational. Likewise, a nine member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been set up to provide support to the NWC on technical matters. The TAC has been instrumental in providing guidance to the review and revision of cross sectoral and economic policies, as well as in the revision of Nepal’s National Wetlands Policy of 2003.

As part of the capacity enhancement and increase awareness of the importance of wetlands, the project has developed various tools, manuals, and resource books, including a Communications, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) Strategy and materials. The project has also implemented activities to test the relevance of its approaches and tools in other wetlands, particularly in mid-hills and high mountains. It is expected that best practices and lessons learned will be captured and scaled-up.

The project aims at fostering a “learning-by-doing,” and an “adaptive management” culture to better understand and capture “on-the-ground” realities related to wetland management. The project is supporting community-based user groups with targeted interventions to strengthen livelihood opportunities. Equal attention is being paid to address conservation and development issues by involving women, the poor, and Wetland-Dependent Communities (WDCs). Promotion of traditional knowledge and practices has also become an important aspect of its strategy. As far as possible, the project aims at using and strengthening existing structures and mechanisms to forge synergistic and collaborative management approaches for sustainable wetland management.
2.6. **PROJECT PARTNERS**

The GEF project Document identifies the following major partners:

A. Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC),
B. United Nations Development Program (UNDP),
C. Global Environment Facility (GEF),
D. Department of Forests (DoF),
E. Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, and
F. Local bodies (DDCs/VDCs).

2.7. **DEPARTURES FROM ORIGINAL PROJECT DESIGN**

As explained above, at the inception workshop in March 2008, it was decided that the project logical framework would be re-designed, with the consequent identification and definition of alternative targets at the output level.
3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE MID TERM EVALUATION

According to the Terms of Reference of this Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE, see Annex 8), the overall objective of the MTE is to evaluate “the effectiveness of the project in attaining its objectives.” The MTE “will assess project performance and the implementation of planned project activities and its expected outputs against actual results.” It will also “identify and document lessons learned, and make recommendations in charting future course of actions in a list to achieve the intended results.” The MTE findings will be integrated in order to improve management processes for effective delivery of project results in the future.

Specifically, it is expected that the MTE will:

A. Assess and evaluate the progress of the project towards achieving its results and impacts, including an assessment on sustainability based on the three outcomes of the project,

B. Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use including human resources, and

C. Based on the assessment review, provide a basis for decision making for future course of actions for the remaining years of the project.

The Mid-term Evaluation Team was chosen by UNDP in early October 2011 following a procurement process of competitive bidding. The MTE Team selected included Dr. Gonzalo Castro de la Mata (Team Leader), Dr. Sagendra Tiwari, and Dr. Dhruba Raj Gautam.

The methodology utilized by the MTE focused on assessing progress towards achieving specific targets at the output level, as well as assessing the likelihood of achieving the project outcomes at the end of the project and beyond. The MTE team also analyzed and documented relevant lessons-learned, and drew specific conclusions and recommendations for the short, medium, and long-terms. The methodology required the following specific activities and analyses:

A. Document Review, including both internal project documents as well as the review of external but openly available information,

B. Interviews with key stakeholders at all levels in Nepal (Project Unit, Funders, National and Local Governments, and Local Beneficiaries at the Pilot Sites),

C. Data analysis for socio-economic results at the local level,

D. Assessment of robustness of data quality for ecological variables,

E. Benchmarking against similar projects globally,

F. Identification of lessons-learned, good and best practice, and gaps, and

G. Assessment global-benefit indicators (GEF Strategic Priorities).

Details regarding the dates, schedule and locations visited, and people interviewed by the MTE can be found in Annex 4.
4. PROGRESS AT THE OUTPUT LEVEL

The first approximation towards understanding the degree to which a project can be successful in delivering its objective (and therefore in achieving its outcomes) is to understand the degree to which such project is able to achieve its expected outputs in a timely fashion. This section describes the progress made so far by the project in delivering its expected outputs, as measured against targets in the project’s log frame.

The section is organized under each of the 3 project outcomes. For each outcome, outputs are ranked against achievement at the time of the MTE following the following key:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Achievement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no Progress so Far</td>
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</table>

4.1. OUTCOME 1. WETLAND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION VALUES INTEGRATED INTO NATIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK.

The following table summarizes the progress made by the project at the time of the MTE towards achieving the targets for outputs under Outcome Number 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/Outputs</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME 1:</td>
<td>1. By 2009, National Wetland Policy 2003 reviewed and forwarded for endorsement by 2010.</td>
<td>1st year was fully dedicated for PMU set-up, Inception workshop, clearing the Operational Modality, and LFA Revision and GEF-UNDP alignment. NWP approved; NWC established; wetlands issues integrated into plans and programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. By 2011, NWC established as consultative/decision making body for wetland related issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. BY 2011, wetland issues integrated into national periodic plan and program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersectoral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>co-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ordination mechanism for wetland management strengthened

2. By 2010, NWC formed, operational & supported by technical committee & 2 national networks of stakeholders.


Output 1.2: Wetland values & management principles integrated into national policy and planning frameworks


Achieved.


Achieved.

3. By 2009, policy disincentives & perverse incentives of 4 key sectors impacting wetlands reviewed.

Achieved.

4. By 2010, economic policy guideline prepared & forwarded to respective Ministries.

Achieved.

The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC) has taken full ownership of the revised National Wetlands Policy (2011), and forwarded it to the Cabinet for approval after translation to Nepali. The revised NWP 2011 will become a binding policy document across all sectors of government. The eleven-member National Wetland Committee (NWC) is fully operational and the nine-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Specialist Network formed to support NWC are also operational. So far, two NWC, seven TAC, and several specialists meetings have taken place, suggesting that these bodies are fully operational. The project contributed to review the National Wetlands Policy of 2003 based on specific sectoral policy review recommendations.

Because of good coordination among project players, the project has received adequate attention and guidance by the Project’s Executive Board meetings (which are held quarterly). The project has greatly benefitted by periodic feedback and suggestions from the PEB meetings and monitoring visits of government agencies and officials, UNDP, and the National Planning Commission.

As a result of the project’s influence and continuous advocacy, the Government of Nepal has recognized the importance of wetlands in its Three-Year National Periodic Plan (2011-2013). In such document, Working Policy 2.3 highlights the importance and conservation needs of wetlands for the first time.
In summary, at the time of the MTE, the project has already achieved 100% of targets for its outputs under Outcome Number 1.

4.2. OUTCOME 2. STRENGTHENED NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CAPACITY AND AWARENESS FOR WETLAND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE.

The following table summarizes the progress made by the project at the time of the MTE towards achieving the targets for outputs under Outcome Number 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/Outputs</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME 2</td>
<td>1. By 2010, sustainable management practices of wetland resources promoted.</td>
<td>CFOP, LIP and Resource Use strategy prepared and under implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 2.2: Institutional capacity of key sectoral Ministries on wetland management strengthened</td>
<td>1. By 2010, focal desk of MFSC and key sectoral Ministries trained on wetland conservation.</td>
<td>Focal Desk established and properly trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. By 2011, sectoral planners selected &amp; training provided.</td>
<td>EV and WIAM tool training provided to 25 officials/sectoral planners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. By 2011, major wetland issues are identified and forwarded to MFSC &amp; key sectoral Ministries for endorsement.</td>
<td>Issues are identified &amp; being forwarded as per policy recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 2.3: Awareness on wetland values and issues amongst decision</td>
<td>1. By 2009, training package &amp; information materials on wetland conservation developed.</td>
<td>GESI training packages developed and imparted to both the sites, biodiversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thanks to the project’s activities, the GON has for the first time allocated budget for ten important wetland sites across the country, which is a significant step towards mainstreaming. Sectoral Ministries such as Irrigation and Industry have agreed to integrate wetland issues and concerns in their policy review process to make them wetland-friendly.

Despite being a party to the Ramsar Convention in 1987, the GON did not have a Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) Strategy as per its obligations. Upon a request by DNPWC, the CSUWN Project supported the preparation of a CEPA Strategy and its dissemination framework (2011-2015) and strengthened the awareness and outreach program of the Department.

Wetland-related technical knowledge base products have been published and disseminated to a wide spectrum of audiences from policy makers to practitioners. The MTE Team observed that participation of local bodies (such as DDC, VDCs, NGOs and CBOs) on wetland conservation has increase significantly. As a result, communities have started contributing voluntarily towards wetland restoration and management. Different print and electronic media, including audio-visual media, have increased their coverage on wetlands and enhanced their understanding about wetlands dynamics.

Issues related to the conservation and its importance for present and future generations is further cultivated by the implementation of school based extracurricular activities. In addition, the celebration of occasions like Wildlife Week, World Environment Day, and Wetlands Day, and the organisation of conservation awareness campaigns (e.g., Teej festival celebration) have greatly helped promote awareness.

In term of institutional capacity and awareness, many initiatives are undertaken through orientation, training, sensitization, etc. A total of 70 sensitization programs conducted to sensitize more than 350 people from Ministries, Divisions and Departments. Similarly, 2,136 people were reached at the local level. The knowledge base is further cultivated as a result of 13 exposure visits for policy makers, planners and media representatives.

The MTE Team finds the project successful in the generation and dissemination of a wetland technical knowledge base. A few examples include the development of specific tools, including a Wetland Inventory, Assessment and Monitoring (WIAM) Tool. In addition, tools for Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Management Guidelines were formulated, as well as a Wetlands Indigenous Knowledge (WIK) Documentation Methodology developed. An Economic Valuation Tool was
also developed. Guidelines for Wetland Management Planning were prepared following participatory interactions.

*In summary, at the time of the MTE, the project has already achieved 80% of targets for its outputs under Outcome Number 2.*

**4.3. OUTCOME 3. ENHANCED COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT OF WETLAND RESOURCES FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS.**

The following table summarizes the progress made by the project at the time of the MTE towards achieving the targets for outputs under Outcome Number 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/Outputs</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME 3:</td>
<td>1. By 2009, livelihood strategies prepared &amp; implemented in 2 demo sites by 2010</td>
<td>Livelihood improvement Plan and Livelihood Need Assessment for both the sites prepared, 463 WDC HHs tagged and provided with different livelihood activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. By 2010, major wetland issues to be addressed by local bodies are identified &amp; forwarded to respective district development committees (DDCs)</td>
<td>Wetland issues identified and forwarded to Kailali DDC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. By 2012, more than 90% of recommended wetland issues are incorporated in district periodic plan.</td>
<td>Issues identified and in the process of being incorporated in district periodic plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3.1: Model collaborative management system for conservation and sustainable development established</td>
<td>1. By 2010, an inclusive multi-stakeholder forum with representation of 33% of WPSE group formed &amp; operational</td>
<td>MSF formed and operational; however, the 33% of WPSE to be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. By 2010, BZ guideline &amp; CFUG's constitution revised &amp; endorsed with the provision of 50% representation of WPSE group in general member with at least 2 key positions in its executive committee.</td>
<td>15 female Chair, out of 35 CFUG at GLA; all secretarial positions occupied by females in 9 UCs at KTWR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3.2: DFO, Reserve &amp; local partners implement collaborative conservation programs</td>
<td>1. By 2009, GT integrated catchment plan prepared.</td>
<td>Plan prepared and endorsed by DoF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. By 2010, critical wetland sites at 2 demo sites identified &amp; mapped.</td>
<td>A total of 7 (2 at KTWR, 5 at GLA) Identified and restoration activities underway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. By 2010, 50% reduction in number of feral cattle from KTWR.</td>
<td>Joint monitoring, strategic field visit, district level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3.3 BZMC &amp; CFUGs implement sustainable development &amp; livelihood programs</td>
<td>Stakeholder/advisory meetings, CBAPA, sweep operation held and feral buffalo completely evacuated from KTWR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. By 2012, management action implemented for restoration of 35% of identified critical wetland area.</td>
<td>Target exceeded, as about 50% of identified critical wetland areas have been restored.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. By 2012 local bodies and local institutions allocate resources for wetland conservation.</td>
<td>Till date matching grants have been provided for different conservation and development activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding collaborative management, new institutions have been formed and existing ones strengthened following specific capacity building initiatives. In KTWR, a Buffer Zone

2 The project has focused on most indigenous people like Bantar, Mushar, Jhangar, Majhi, Tharu, and Mallah. They are poorest among the poor, instead of a focus on “pahadiaya”, or hill people—Aryan and Mongolian migrants from the hills—who can also be recognized as prime members.
Management Committee ("apex institution") has been reformed after a five years period that has federated 506 Buffer Zone User Groups into 9 User Committees and a Buffer Zone Management Committee. In GLA, 38 Community Forests Users Groups have been strengthened and institutionalized and four Buffer Zone Community Forests at KTWR and one Multi-Stakeholders Forum has been formed and strengthened at GLA.

The project has initiated innovative programs for conservation awareness and outreach at the local level. Some examples of activities include the Celebration of Bird Festivals, World Wetlands Day, Biodiversity Day, Environment Day, and Wildlife Week. The project also supports the enhancement of Cultural Heritage by supporting Lwangi Puja in GLA and Jhangar attire and other local festivals in KTWR. Conservation friendly youth football, cycle rally, conservation folk song competition, media visits, Weekly Radio Sandesh from local FMs and documentary shows from Nepal TV are other initiatives for increased conservation awareness.

Seven critical wetland sites were mapped for habitat restoration, and management initiatives are underway (refer to Table below). The project has supported nursery establishment for large plantations. Similarly for biological monitoring, five indicator species identified and periodic monitoring undertaken, Limnological apparatus installed for DO, water level, pH and temperature monitoring at GLA. Weeding and cleaning of wetland sites is in place and maintenance of floating islands for water birds.

**Habitat Management Activities at KTWR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wild Water Buffalo</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamp Francolin</td>
<td>33 breeding pairs</td>
<td>36 breeding pairs</td>
<td>57 breeding pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Pygmy-goose</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh Mugger</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Rice Area</td>
<td>3.6ha</td>
<td>12.42ha</td>
<td>15.57ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Project Records, 2011*

Support was provided to community based anti-poaching initiatives by mobilizing user groups, teacher’s networks, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and Wetland Clubs have generated positive results. The incidence of poaching in GLA was reduced by 30% in one year (Source: Project record, 2011). In KTWR, the erection of solar electric fencing along the high impact zone has substantially reduced the incidence of crop depredation by wild animals by up to 90%, thereby fostering a better relationship between reserve authorities and local people. The MTE was informed that because of the solar fencing, crop productivity increased from 20 quintal to 30 quintal thanks to the crops being safeguarded.

The project has significantly contributed to test new livelihood initiatives. In KTWR, the project has supported “quick impact” programs for 2,094 families affected by the floods of 2008, from 57 BZUGs. A total of 463 families (GLA-155 families and KTWR-308 families) have been tagged as “Wetland-Dependent Communities” (WDC) to provide appropriate income generating activities at both sites.

Wetland based small enterprises have also been established. A total of 25 Bantar Women are benefitting from a Pater Processing Enterprise at KTWR, and 22 Tharu Women run a Munj based
Enterprise at GLA, both of which are run through women led cooperatives and are very successful. In order to increase the likelihood of attaining sustainability, these enterprises are linked through Joint Venture Companies (JVC) such as Organic Village and Knot Craft at both sites.

*In summary, at the time of the MTE, the project has already achieved 92% of targets for its outputs under Outcome Number 3.*
5. ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

5.1. HISTORY OF THE PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS

The project first entered the GEF Pipeline on February 1st, 2001 under the Focal Area of Biodiversity and Operational Program Number 2 (Freshwater and Marine Ecosystems). The project contributes to the GEF Strategic Priority Number 2 under Biodiversity: Mainstreaming of Biodiversity within Production Landscapes.

The following Table shows the key dates in the approval process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEF / UNDP Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pipeline Entry</td>
<td>February 01, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDF-B Approval (Project Preparation Grant)</td>
<td>July 19, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Approval</td>
<td>September 27, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEF CEO Endorsement</td>
<td>May 18, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEF Agency Approval (UNDP)</td>
<td>March 14, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness (First Disbursement)</td>
<td>June 4, 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time of PDF-B approval, it was envisioned that the World Conservation Union (IUCN) would act as an Executing Agency. Co-financing for PDF-B execution was expected from the Ramsar Convention (US$24,000) and from IUCN (US$22,000). The total project size was envisioned at US$9 – 12 Million (US$3-4 million from the GEF, and US$ 6-8 million in co-financing).

By the time the project was approved in 2007 (6 years after its entry in the Work Program), its size has been reduced dramatically to US$4.0 Million, representing less than half the lower estimate at the time of Project Preparation.

The approved budget is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/Agency</th>
<th>Amount in US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEF</td>
<td>1,964,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>533,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN (Cash and In-Kind)</td>
<td>423,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Nepal (In-Kind)</td>
<td>1,139,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,061,969</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2. PROJECT INCEPTION

The project was officially launched in March 2008 at an inception workshop. Two important decisions were made at this time: (i) an adjustment in the logical framework (explained above), and the establishment of an Implementation Unit within the GON instead of utilizing the IUCN as the Executing Agency. With these changes, the final budget in cash available to the project is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/Agency</th>
<th>Cash Available to the Project in US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEF</td>
<td>1,964,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>533,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2,501,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3. PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS

The graph below shows the project disbursements since its inception in 2008. Disbursements during the first year were slow but rapidly achieved the steady yearly disbursement of approximately US$550,000 in 2010 and 2011. The figure presented for 2012 is an estimate assuming that disbursements continue following a similar rate of expenditure.

Project Disbursements in US$ (2012 is an Estimate)

If indeed disbursements for 2012 are kept at US$550,000, then at the time of the project end in December 2012 there will an unspent balance of ca. US$300,000. The MTE makes specific recommendations regarding proposed expenditures in 2012 and the use of the balance in section 8.
5.4. CONTRIBUTION TO GEF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The project contributes directly 37,363 hectares under GEF Strategic Priority Number 2 for Biodiversity. The total impact under SP2 will probably increase as replication occurs at additional wetlands. Nevertheless, most project participants were unaware of these strategic priorities and for the most part these GEF global benefit targets are not noticeable as important and explicit targets at the local level.

5.5. PROJECT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The project’s approval process took almost a decade from the time of its first entry into the GEF Work Program until the first disbursement occurred. This very long lag required an adjustment in the logical framework to better reflect the current realities facing the project.

Once the project started, however, disbursements proceed well and activities were rapidly implemented in line with the targets for outputs in the revised logical framework (see Section 4). The organizational structure, technical expertise, and roles and responsibilities of the various project structures have functioned well. The MTE Team attributes the successful and rapid implementation of the project to the strong professional capacity of the PMU, as well as to the support provided by the GON through its officials involved in the project.
6. MAIN FINDINGS, LESSONS LEARNED, AND DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICES

This section summarizes the main findings of the MTE Team. It also summarizes some of the lessons-learned so far, and when appropriate, identifies both Good Practices and Best Practices observed with the CSUWN Project. The MTE Team makes a distinction between best practices and merely good practices as follows:

A “Best Practice” is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark. A best practice can evolve to become better as improvements are discovered. In contrast, a “Good Practice” is simply a process or a methodology that represents an effective way of achieving a specific objective. Good practices are used extensively, whereas Best practices represent constant improvement.

In the context of the CSUWN, the MTE Team compares project practices with approaches attempted in similar contexts elsewhere, and classifies practices as “best” or “good” when those used at the CSUWN fit the definitions above.

The section is divided in four parts: (i) Policy Level Issues, (ii) Socio-Economic, Institutional, and Local Livelihood Issues, (iii) Ecological and Biodiversity Issues, and (iv) Cross-Cutting Issues.

6.1. POLICY LEVEL ISSUES

6.1.1. The Project adopted a new Log-frame at Inception (Good Practice)

Delays in approval of GEF projects have plagued the system for years. Indeed, the average time from Project Entry into the GEF Work Program until Project Approval during GEF-3 was an average of 66 months (5.5 years). The GEF’s Independent Evaluation Office has stated that “GEF cycle management lags international good practice, and the excessive length of the GEF Activity Cycle erodes the GEF’s credibility as an attractive partner. This underperformance is due to a complex set of interlinked issues involving virtually all actors in the GEF. The uneven disclosure of information and a lack of transparency in the GEF aggravate these root causes.”

The MTE Team considers that the redesign of the project and the adoption of a revised Log-frame at the inception workshop represent Good Practice. It ensured that the planned activities and expected outputs were still sound, current, and reachable, as well as a way to re-engage key stakeholders in project design and to make them “own” some of these targets.

6.1.2. Emphasis in Mainstreaming at the Policy Level (Best Practice)

Wetland issues, by virtue of their nature, are multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral. It is crucial that all sectors responsible for managing assets such as land, forest, soil and watershed, agriculture, tourism and environment, industry, water (irrigation, energy and other uses) and

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local development agencies join hands for the effective conservation and wise use of wetlands. Efforts from relevant sectors could be meaningfully coordinated and become effective only if the mainstreaming takes place at the policy level.

Nepal’s National Wetlands Policy formulated for the first time in 2003, had realized the needs and significance of collaborative and community-based wetlands management to facilitate an integrated approach to wetlands management. Yet this policy could not bring key policy level stakeholders together to collaborate and promote an integrated effort towards wetlands conservation. Since 2004, the GON had enacted many new policies that interfaced with natural resources conservation and use related policies. The political and socio-economic context of Nepal has also been changing in a fast pace. Key challenges facing Nepal’s wetlands (i.e., unabated degradation of wetland habitats, loss of unique species diversity, over-exploitation of products and services, people’s declining concern towards wetland functions and services, and often contradicting sectoral policies and legal provisions constraining collaborative and synergetic efforts for wetland conservation) were yet to be addressed adequately. A meaningful partnership among the stakeholders for effective management of wetlands was totally missing and was a main reason for the lack of mainstreaming despite the existence of the 2003 Policy. A consultative process followed for the review and revision of the NWP 2003, revised 60% of its provisions, giving due focus on mainstreaming at policy and execution levels. Therefore, the revised policy became an almost new policy and therefore, was named National Wetlands Policy 2011.

The NWP 2011 is attributed for creating an ownership of wetland-relevant line departments on wetland-related issues and challenges of multi-sectoral nature. It allows relevant stakeholder line-ministries to develop a meaningful partnership and work together for wetland conservation and sustainable use, keeping intact the intent of their individual sector-specific policies and institutional frameworks. Nevertheless, the NWP, like any policy, is only as good as its implementation and this highlights the need of the follow-up activities highlighted in section 8. In addition, the impact of the new NWP at the local level requires substantial decentralization in addition to mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming at the policy level has enabled the institutionalization of a multi-stakeholder “National Wetlands Committee (NWC)”. It has its own Secretariat, housed-in and supported by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. The NWC comprises all relevant government stakeholders of wetlands in Nepal including the National Planning Commission (NPC). The mandate and functioning modality of the NWC has been developed and is being followed by member line departments. To assist the NWC on technical issues, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprising wetlands experts and professionals from wetland impacting line departments have also been institutionalized. The TAC provides technical inputs and policy recommendations on issues constraining the effective implementation of the NWP as and when required by the NWC. Two national level networks have also been established to identify and advocate for the successful approaches to managing all aspects of wetlands. The Wetlands Specialist network comprising members from Nepal’s conservation partners (e.g. WWF, BCN, Himalayan Nature, Nepal Tourism Board, IUCN), and Research and academia (Tribhuvan University) focuses on specific wetlands issues and conservation actions and approaches. A second network is the “Wetlands Indigenous Communities Network” which has members from different wetland-dependent occupational and cultural communities. This network is mandated to bring up the cultural and livelihoods issues of the people for policy consideration and works
for people’s empowerment. Both of these networks feed into the assessment process of the TAC, and ensure that the policy decisions are well informed and sensitive to site-specific issues while dealing with national priorities for wetlands.

The GON plans to formulate a Wetlands Act and its related regulations, with the realization that approximately 21 sector-specific Acts and Regulations interface and deal with wetland relevant issues. The MTE finds it both timely and relevant to enact such Act and regulations to further strengthen mainstreaming and reduce conflict.

The MTE Team found that the NWC, the TAC, and the two networks are well institutionalized and functioning. The GON is committed to channel required resources for the management of the NWC, though presently the CSUWN is covering the cost of its functioning.

The GON’s three year Interim Plan (2010/11 to 2012/13) has incorporated wetlands in its forestry sector policy. The working strategy (article 2.3) of the forestry sector in this policy document emphasizes the conservation of wetlands of Nepal for their biodiversity, ecological and livelihood significance. This could be considered a good example of the policy mainstreaming of wetlands issues as it opens the door for the relevant line departments to prioritize wetland issues interfacing with their development initiatives, allocate resources and collaborate with the MoFSC on these issues.

6.1.3. **Mainstreaming at the Local Level is Proceeding Well but there are still Challenges Ahead**

At the district level a “District Forests Coordination Committee (DFCC)” has already been institutionalized by the GON to support district-level ownership and governance of the forestry sector programs. The Chairperson of the District Development Committee (DDC) and the local development officer (LDO) working as the member secretary of the DFCC take a lead role and coordinate the inter-sectoral collaboration, particularly for the forestry sector programs that include wetlands. In the case of the GLA, however, a Multi Stakeholder Forum (MSF) chaired by the LDO, and with membership from relevant stakeholders, has been established and is operational. It guides and steers the management and implementation of field activities of the CSUWN on the ground. The MTE was informed that this arrangement ensures that the piloting activities are implemented in a smooth manner and fall within the mainstream of the DFCC arrangement.

The experiences of the MTE Team at GLA indicate that the line department agencies (DFO/Park authority) of the MoFSC would still require to take a lead role in conceiving wetland issues and priorities, informing and educating the DDC and other relevant line department agencies and communities, planning, facilitating and coordinating for effective implementation of wetland conservation initiatives at the district and site level.

6.2. **SOCIO-ECONOMIC, INSTITUTIONAL, AND LOCAL LIVELIHOOD ISSUES**

6.2.1. **The Scientific Basis and Methodology to Design Livelihood Interventions was Sound (Best Practice)**
The methodology to identify and involve local people was sound. A Livelihood’s Needs Assessment was performed, and based on its results, livelihood improvement plans were prepared. A total of 463 wetland-dependent households were identified. Thanks to this approach, there is no controversy regarding beneficiaries.

6.2.2 There is Good Diversification of Livelihood Approaches

There is good diversification of livelihood approaches which increase their likelihood of sustainability and provide alternative income. Some of these activities include natural fiber-based cottage industries, fisheries, vegetable farming, training in animal husbandry techniques, production of leaf plates, mushroom production, poultry introduction, pig raising, off-farm skill-based enterprises such as radio maintenance, carpentry, blacksmith support, etc.

Local people are encouraged to invest in small-scale enterprises so that they can translate the skills they acquire into action, and generate income. These improvements in skills will further build the capacity of local people and help them diversify their livelihoods away from farming. The project’s provision for regular technical assistance will help them address problems and scale up their efforts.

6.2.3 The Long-Term Benefits of these Activities to Local Communities Vary Greatly

The long-term benefits of these activities to local communities vary and need to be monitored. Some of these activities provide clear and immediate benefits such as those related to natural fiber-based enterprises, bare-foot veterinarian and carpentry activities, etc. At the same time, most of these opportunities are off-time and cannot stand-alone as full income replacement options. In other cases, some of these may actually become burdens (such as pig-raising) because they demand more feeding which poor people cannot afford.

In the case of the natural fiber-based enterprises and the barefoot veterinarians, the clear income-generation potential makes these activities likely to be sustainable on their own. In other cases, sustainability prospects could have been enhanced by the existence of “social threads” linking together the users and thus providing self-insurance mechanisms. Some of these approaches could follow a cooperative model that would provide support to the members. Another approach may have involved building bridges with micro-credit institutions operating on these sites.

6.2.4 There is a Strong Emphasis in Women Empowering (Good Practice)

A visible feature of the local interventions is the strong emphasis placed on women empowerment. In the GLA, out of 35 community-forestry user groups, women chair 15 of these groups; in all 9 User-Committees (UC) in KTWR, the Secretary and vice chair positions are occupied by women. The impacts of this empowerment are already visible as women are starting to participate in household-level decision making processes and their voices are better heard in their communities and districts.

6.2.5 The MTE Found no Evidence of Systematic Learning from Previous Experiences
On the socio-economic and livelihood pilots, and with the exception of cooperatives, the MTE Team found no evidence of learning from previous projects at KTWR such as the Parks and People project (PPP), or the Participatory Conservation Project (PCP). These projects supported the enhancement of local livelihoods and the experiences, both successes and failures, could have strengthened the design of livelihood options in this project.

6.3. ECOCLOGICAL AND BIODIVERSITY ISSUES

6.3.1 There is Good Implementation of Habitat Management and Ecosystem Restoration Activities at GLA.

The GLA is a complex of 20 small and big ox-bow lakes covering an area of 2,726 ha., surrounded predominantly by Sal forests and associated species. Designated as a Ramsar site, GLA holds a unique diversity of 140 bird species, 29 species of fish, 10 species of amphibians, the Indian Rock Python, and the Marsh Mugger. The Marsh Mugger, the Cotton Pigmy Goose, and Wild Rice have been identified as indicator species in GLA.

Approximately 8,249 households residing in 59 settlements of 3 village development committees (VDCs) depend directly or indirectly on the GLA resources for fuel wood, fodder, timber, grasses, fiber, fruits, fish, water and more. Approximately 3,700 households (37%) of the total population of 57,000 are dependent on wetland resources of GLA, out of which the project has tagged 215 households as acute poor exclusively dependent on wetland resources.

Despite continued conservation efforts since the late 1990’s in the GLA, encroachment of forests, illegal cutting of trees and over exploitation of forest and wetland resources had remained unabated. Consequently, the GLA was exposed to an “open access” situation due to heavy pressure from adjoining populations for diverse products, the lake area was shrinking, eutrophication was rampant in lakes, and all surrounding marshy areas were exposed to heavy grazing pressure. Once known for the Marsh Mugger, the Golden Monitor Lizard and a rich population of Cotton Pigmy Goose, the GLA was rapidly losing its unique biological significance. In addition, the unscientific land use in the upstream of GLA was increasing the silt load in the GLA. Some communities in the downstream (south of the highway) which depend on the GLA for irrigation water have been experiencing continued scarcity of water. The Ghodaghodi Lake along the highway was slowly drying until a couple of years ago.

The collaborative wetland management activities initiated under the CSUWN during the last two years has significantly changed the situation, and the conservation status of the GLA seems to be significantly improving. For the improvement of the natural habitat of the GLA, the project has worked in partnership with:

- **Godhaghodi Samrakchhan Manch** (a local NGO committed to protection of biodiversity) for institutionalizing community based anti-poaching,
- 38 CFs in GLA community forest user groups (CFUGs) for conservation awareness, women empowerment, group based income generation activities (e.g., poultry, fishery, goat rearing, forest products based item production and marketing), alternative HH energy e.g. biogas and effective management of community forests,
TAG households (215) in different settlements for organizing them into groups and developing the skills of their interest for their livelihoods improvement,

VDCs for overall conservation awareness and collaborative management of forest and wetland resources,

DDC for coordinating and integrating the efforts of relevant stakeholders located in the district for conservation and development in GLA.

Under the habitat management activities, the project has worked with local communities for:

- Eradication of the invasive weeds e.g., *Ipomea cornea* from the wetland area,
- Removal of water hyacinth from the water bodies at different places,
- Construction and maintenance of sluice gates in three critical wetland sites (Ghodaghodi, Nakrodh & Tengwa) of the 5 mapped wetland sites of GLA to augment the water level in all these lakes,
- Control of grazing in and around the wetland areas,
- Development of sand bunds in the banks of major lakes where the Marsh Mugger are mostly seen,
- Improvement of the habitat of the cotton pigmy goose at various places, and the first breeding record of cotton pigmy goose in GLA and the common moor hen in Nepal.
- Construction of trails at various places in the lake area.

The Project has also supported rehabilitation activities in various wetlands chosen by local communities, in order to increase their support for the biodiversity conservation of GLA. The project has developed productive collaboration with the CFUGs of the area by supporting them in forest management and livelihoods improvement activities.

The project monitoring records provide preliminary evidence of improved habitat of the GLA as follows:

- Improved water level,
- Gradually reducing eutrophication in the water bodies,
- Frequent citing of Marsh Mugger and the evidences of their egg laying and hatching on sand bunds
- Increased area of the effective water body in the lake area,
- Reduced grazing pressure visible,
- Increase in the area coverage of the wild rice in wetlands (a 20% increase from 12.42 to 15.23 ha), and
- Slight increase in the number of Cotton Pigmy Goose.

6.3.2 There is a Need to Better Understand the Landscape-Level Ecological Implications of Management Practices

The successful implementation of these management practices, and the initial and preliminary evidence that positive results may be on their way, need to be carefully monitored through a specific ecological-monitoring protocol which the project currently lacks.

As mentioned above, the changes in water flows through management interventions observed at GLA can be effective in reducing eutrophication, increasing water availability for irrigation for
local people, increase the area of open water for recreation activities, etc. At the same time, some of these changes have implication upon specific micro-habitats within the lake that need to be closely monitored to understand the ecological implications.

Similarly, the reduced grazing pressure at KTWR as a result of the exclusion of cattle inside the Reserve has immediate positive results for grass regeneration. At the same time, it is well understood from other similar settings elsewhere that grazing pressure is in many cases a necessary and natural feature of ecological succession in many grassland and wetland ecosystems. Although it is clear that over-grazing is damaging to the habitats at KTWR, it is also true that some level of grazing may actually help the regeneration processes and the natural ecological succession responsible for creating and maintain specific micro-habitats within the wetland. These implications need to be better understood, and corrective measures incorporated if found appropriate.

Finally, the project could have better considered the potential conservation value of land use practices in the surrounding landscapes as envisioned by GEF Strategic Priority Number 2. The most obvious opportunity lies with the recognition that rice fields are an extension of waterfowl habitats. In many locations around the world, rice fields are successfully used as habitats for migrating waterfowl and specific management practices are adopted to increase the ir habitat value. Some of these management practices can be as simple as flooding the fields to coincide with peak migratory seasons, as long as no negative impacts upon the rice are produced. In the Midwest of the US, “Flooding of Rice Fields is Tantamount to Keeping up Waterfowl Habitats.”

In California, the California Wildlife Agency manages 175,000 hectares in such a way, with farmers adopting faster-growth rice varieties to decrease competition with waterfowl. Such practices can be implemented voluntarily or through a scheme of payments for environmental services. Wetlands International (an international NGO specialized in Wetlands issues) has recently issued two separate Manuals for Rice management as waterfowl habitats.

6.3.3 There is Serious Habitat Fragmentation and Risk of Erosion of Genetic Variability of Key Species

The severe habitat loss already suffered in the lowland areas of the country, coupled with the very high population densities surrounding the two key sites visited, produce a situation in which these wetlands are now isolated from each other and the habitats are fragmented.

This situation, coupled with the implementation of necessary management practices enacted to avoid large wild animals (mammals) from causing crop damage outside the protected area (e.g., solar electric fences in KTWR, see below) further restricts the free movements of these species and confines them inside the sites.

This situation is not unique to Nepal, and indeed this type of habitat fragmentation has become one of the major challenges to modern conservation. Given that no practical option exists to extend the area of these sites, what is required is to carefully understand the implications of such isolation in order to take corrective measures if needed. In particular, it is important to understand the genetic viability of Key Species that now have reduced mobility (i.e., Water Buffalo, Hog Deer, Elephants, Mud Mugger, etc.). This requires a genetic study of population variability and viability, in order to determine whether or not more extreme measures are
necessary to ensure the survival of these populations. Such measures in the future may involve translocation of individuals, introduction of fresh genetic material through importation of outside individuals, etc.

6.4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

6.4.1 There are various examples of synergies between ecological, biological and socio-economic benefits

- **Solar Electric Fencing.** For many years, farmers in the buffer zone of KTWR have been the victims of extensive crop depredation by wild elephants visiting every year seasonally from the adjoining Indian areas of Assam and West Bengal. Severe crop depredation was also taking place during the dry season when the wild buffalo from the reserve area could cross the Koshi river and come for grazing in the rice fields of the eastern part of the reserve.

Likewise, many efforts of the reserve authorities to check the unabated heavy grazing of domestic cattle from the buffer zone area into the core areas of the reserve were unsuccessful. To solve the problem, and in close consultation with the buffer zone communities and with support from the CSUWN, solar fencing was erected in approximately 5+ km of the most critical area of KTWR buffer zone in Prakash pur VDC. After the solar fencing was erected, the buffer zone communities have been greatly relieved from crop depredation. It has significantly contributed in their food security and also contributed in bringing a supportive attitude among local communities towards the reserve. In the KTWR area, every single individual met by the MTE Team made a point to mention the improved food security achieved due to the solar fencing. They claimed that thousands of tons of their crops have been saved since the last two cropping seasons. The CFUGs in the buffer zone have taken responsibility of managing the solar fencing and its monitoring. As opposed to this, in the past, every single pole and the barbed wire erected by the reserve used to be dismantled and stolen.

Reserve staff also claimed that there has been significant reduction in the grazing pressure in the reserve area after the solar fencing. However, with the reduced grazing pressure, the changes that have been occurring in the habitats of the core reserve area are not being adequately monitored and recorded. As mentioned earlier, the MTE Team believes that a proper habitat monitoring mechanism should have been in place.

- **Use of Invasive Alien Species (Water hyacinth in KTWR and Ipomea in GLA) for Sustainable Livelihoods.** From a conservation perspective, it is necessary to eradicate IAS; at the same time, people can benefit from harvesting them. This could be a win-win situation even though a dependency could be created.

Water hyacinth in KTWR and Ipomea in GLA are invasive plant species that have done extensive damage to the wetlands and water bodies. They grow in fast pace, invade habitats, increase eutrophication intensity, and gradually destroy habitats of aquatic life. In GLA, people have started using dried Ipomea twigs as fuel wood. Local people have worked with the project team in GLA to eradicate Ipomea from wetlands. Ipomea could also be used as raw material for bio-briquette production (which unfortunately does not have a market in
the GLA and adjoining areas of the district). Widely found munj and other natural fiber grasses in GLA have traditionally been used to produce small containers of different size and shapes for various household and other uses. CSUWN, in collaboration with private companies called Organic Village and Knot Craft, has provided training in specialized skills with emphasis in the “wetlands dependent, acute poor” for the production of various articles that are in demand in Kathmandu and international markets. Women’s groups in GLA are now engaged in producing and supplying a range of such items for these companies and making most productive use of their leisure time for income generation in a sustainable manner.

In the KTWR area, Water hyacinth, Pater and some other grasses grow in wetlands in abundance. Traditionally, pater, munj and other grass species with high natural fiber content have been widely used by local people, particularly by the wetland dependent poor to produce mats and various other products of daily use in the households. They have been a sustainable source of livelihoods and household income for almost 40% of poor people in the KTWR. With the initiation of the CSUWN, a more technical approach to producing various items, including mats, are slowly becoming institutionalized. The project supported skills training of women groups in collaboration with the Organic Village and Knot Craft. The trained women groups have formed a cooperative of their own, and also established a small workshop and factory of the cooperative. Women members of the cooperative harvest and collect pater, Water Hyacinth, process them for fibers, color them as required and produce various items in their workshop. As mentioned earlier, the Organic Village and Knot Craft has provided them access to market and CSUWN is facilitating the establishment of Joint Venture Company at both pilot sites. In talking to these women and men in their workshop, the MTE Team found out that the income of these people has increased considerably, thus giving them better livelihood security.

Water hyacinth holds a high level of nitrogen and could be a good organic fertilizer for the rice fields if a layer of water hyacinth could be spread as mulching after the first plough. CSUWN has piloted the use of water hyacinth in the preparation of compost manure as well as in the form of mulch in KTWR. Similarly, the project piloted the use of Water hyacinth as raw feed material for the biogas plant. It was found successful for biogas production. The cost of installing the plant however, did not make it economically feasible.

From a biodiversity conservation perspective, the likely negative impacts of IAS on plant communities, their habitats and ecosystems is well documented. Little is known about any possible positive impact on the habitats and biodiversity with different intensity of the harvesting or eradication of such IAS. The MTE Team believes that pilot sites with various intensities of harvesting and eradication of some widespread IAS should have been carried out and monitored to understand both the positive and negative impact of harvesting and eradication of these IAS.

6.4.2 With Fisheries, Use of Commercial Species that Are not Native Could Bring Strong Social Benefits But with High Ecological Risks

Supporting local communities to undertake fish farming in wetlands for income opportunities has been widely taken up by CSUWN in both pilot sites. Native fish species are good for local wetland habitats as they have evolved over time within the existing food chain of the ecosystem.
and thrive in synergy with other wetland species. They don't need significant supplementing or fertilizing to grow, and neither do they need any significant alteration in the wetland habitat. At the same time, they are relatively less lucrative as income, since they are generally not quite as fast growing species compared to commercially farmed ones.

For commercial fish farming, there are many non-native, fast growing fish species (e.g. silver carp, grass carp, etc.) supported by the Department of Fishery and many private fish trading entrepreneurs. The ecological and biodiversity impact of such commercially viable fish species is not well understood. For instance, grass carp digs holes and takes out soil and mud from the banks of the water bodies. Snakes, frogs, lizards, and other amphibian are mostly unwanted species for commercial fish farming. Supporting commercially viable fish production does not seem to go hand in hand with either the aquatic biodiversity or the ecological health of the wetlands and water bodies. The Project therefore could have considered undertaking case studies and document the ecological and biodiversity risks attached to fish farming in wetlands in general and commercially viable fish farming in particular.

6.4.3. Development of Productive Partnerships with Local Groups and Community Forestry User Groups (Good Practice)

Relatively poor local community groups strive for sustainable livelihood security and improved living condition as an end result. Conservation of plants and biodiversity resources is generally a means for them to move towards the livelihoods security and income opportunities. On the other hand, for integrated conservation and development projects such as CSUWN, biodiversity conservation is the end result. Developing a right balance between the biodiversity conservation and livelihood enhancement remains a key challenge for the development of a productive partnership between stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project.

A key feature of the CSUWN is seen in its on-going efforts to pilot, demonstrate, and understand how best achieve a right balance between conservation and livelihoods. The CSUWN has been working closely with people to understand their needs, making it possible for people to get employment and realize some income from conservation activities at the sites. The project has therefore attempted to help local people by creating awareness, empowering them, building their individual skills (e.g. making various items out of natural fiber) and institutional capacity (e.g., CF management training, providing support for community based anti-poaching activities, parking lot and picnic spot development etc.), helping them to access alternative energy measures (e.g., biogas) or income opportunities (e.g. fisheries, poultry, piggery, goat raising, natural fiber based income and enterprises) helping them safeguard their cultural significance (support in cultural activities) and many more. The MTE Team considers all these activities as efforts to develop a productive partnership with local groups and communities and for creating a win-win environment for the right balance of conservation and sustainable use of natural and biological resources. The manner in which the CSUWN has achieved such balance is viewed by the MTE Team as Good Practice.

6.4.4. The Project has Implemented Additional Activities that Help Local People and Facilitates their Buy-In in Collaborative Management

The project has involved people in a series of awareness activities such as picnic and parking lots, trails, community forestry, anti-poaching groups, cultural support, and others. Awareness is
key to: (i) enable people to realize the economic incentives and income opportunities embedded in conservation initiatives that also help conserve local culture and tradition, (ii) preparing school children as the conservation advocates for the future, and (ii) helping women use their traditional wetlands based indigenous knowledge and skills. The CSUWN has built its awareness and communication strategy based on these parameters. The MTE team met with women in women’s groups and school teachers and students engaged in wetland clubs who were articulate and positive towards the conservation significance of wetlands as they realized by engaging in the project supported wetland festivals and various sport competitions.

Therefore, there is strong and visible communication and awareness as a result of the project.

6.4.5. Recreation and Nature Watching Skills and Opportunities Need to be Developed Through Training of Local Youth

Nature based tourism is yet another new area which the CSUWN needs to consider as an important area for developing productive partnership with local communities. Local youth should be trained as bird watchers and in nature watching skills. Nature watching trails should be developed in areas wherever they are feasible. Local communities could develop facilities for eco-tourism supplemented by the specialized services of nature guiding. This would not only enable local people appreciate the nature but also bring them in come from nature based tourism, both local and national.

6.4.6. The Benefits of Biogas Are Not Universal Because They Cannot Reach the Poorest People

The CSUWN has emphasized the promotion of biogas in both of its pilot sites. A pre-requisite for installing biogas, however, is the availability of dung and the willingness of also attaching toilets to biogas plants. Despite the fact that most farmers in rural settings raise 4-5 domestic cattle to support and sustain their agriculture, the majority of them are either land poor or land less who largely depend on common property and government-managed natural resources for their farming and household needs. Such small or tenant farmers get excluded from project’s support for biogas as they do not have sufficient dung (manure) or cash to install biogas and benefit from it. In this sense, the promotion of biogas does not reach a considerable segment of an important target population.

At the same time, the main intension of biogas promotion is to reduce the consumption of fuel wood and pressure on forests and wetland resources for fuel wood collecting and grazing. Biogas requires people to “stall feed” their cattle so that the manure can be collected and become available for running the biogas plant. An integrated approach to biogas promotion requires that stall feeding is practiced, farmers raise nutritious forage and fodder grasses in their private property and common property lands or community forest areas, and that open grazing in forest and wetlands is totally controlled. Proper monitoring mechanism should also be in place to see if this integrated approach is being followed, whether the open grazing practices are declining, to what extent the project investment is contributing in reducing the fuel wood demand, and whether it is contributing in wetland habitat restoration.
6.4.7. The Project Could Have Benefitted Through Learning From Other Experiences Both Locally And Globally

As mentioned above in Section 6.2.5., the MTE Team found no evidence of learning from previous projects at KTWR for socio-economic experiences.

The MTE Team found a similar pattern with the biodiversity and wetlands management aspects. Indeed, there is very substantial global experience and expertise with issues related to sustainable resource use of wetlands, eradication of IAS, implications of changing in grazing pressures on various wetlands habitats, etc. A review of these experiences could have helped identify the options available to the project, and would have saved time through the implementation of techniques and methodologies that have been successful in other countries.

For example, the database maintained by Wetlands International allows the download of over 200 publications with practical experience in dealing with IAS, grassing pressure, water management, etc.
7. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

The previous sections have carefully considered the progress made by the project under the following dimensions:

- Project performance as measured by its implementation progress to date (i.e., disbursements),
- Progress towards achieving the targets under each project output, and,
- Identification of the main findings and documentation of lessons-learned, Good Practices, and Best Practices.

With these results in mind, this section now analyzes the two fundamental question of the Mid-Term Evaluation:

(i) Is it likely that the project will reach its outcomes at the time of project end?, and,
(ii) If the answer is yes, will these results be sustainable beyond the project life?

The MTE Team uses expert judgment to rank the likelihood of achieving each outcome using the following considerations: (i) speed of disbursement to date; (ii) percentage of targets achieved to date; (iii) difficulty in achieving the remaining targets; (iv) whether the supporting structures to achieve remaining targets are in place or not; and (v) presence or absence of supporting institutions required to achieve the remaining targets.

These questions are analyzed separately for each of the 3 Project Outcomes.

7.1. OUTCOME 1. WETLAND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION VALUES INTEGRATED INTO NATIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK

At the time of the MTE, the project had achieved commendable achievements under Outcome 1. A new National Wetland Policy (2011) is in the process of approval. A National Wetlands Committee NWC is constituted and functional as a consultative policy and decision making forum of relevant sectors impacting and likely to be impacted by the wellbeing of wetlands. In order to support the technical aspects of policy decisions to be taken by the NWC, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is also institutionalized. The TAC benefits from the input of two national networks, i.e., a Wetlands Specialist Network, and the Wetlands Indigenous Communities Network. The project Executing Agency has decided to formulate a national Wetlands Act and appropriate regulations for the effective implementation of the NWP 2011 before the phasing out of the project. These achievements are key milestones and represent sufficient progress to believe that Outcome 1 will be achieved in its totality.

A second crucial indicator of achievement of this outcome requires that wetland issues are integrated into national periodic plans and sectoral plans and policies. The MTE Team found that for the first time in Nepal, the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands has a place in the National Interim Periodic Plan (NPC 2010) under the working strategy 2.3 of the forestry sector plan. It is yet difficult at this stage for the MTE Team to articulate when exactly wetland issues
will find their places in the sectoral plans and policies of the Land, Agriculture, Energy, Irrigation, and Tourism sectors. The CSUWN and the MoFSC have documented that 23 different sectoral Policies and Acts have a bearing on wetland conservation issues. Unless these sectoral policies and acts are revised with the perspective of wetlands, it will not be justified to conclude that wetland issues have been effectively integrated into sectoral plans and policies.

The recently institutionalized NWC has an approved working procedure. It meets as scheduled and takes policy decisions as required. Questions that need consideration at this point are: (i) Will the MoFSC be able to allocate staff and resources for continued functioning of the NWC after the project has phased out?, (ii) Will the relevant Line Ministries and Departments associated with NWC and TAC will feel a sense of ownership towards this institution which is basically outside their bureaucratic and working environment?, (iii) Will the relevant line departments review and revise their acts and policies to give due priority to wetland conservation issues that might conflict with their sectoral mandates?

The MTE Team concludes that the project has successfully accomplished its first milestone under this outcome by establishing an institutional framework - the NWC. This seems to be a relatively easy task compared to what lies ahead of NWC as a challenge. This institutional framework needs to be formalized and functioning, mandatory for all relevant line ministries to keep it alive and functional. Yet another challenge for the NWC is to ensure that the sectoral policies and plans integrate wetland issues. This is not likely to be achieved within the couple of years of the life of the project, given its nature. This requires concerted efforts and hard work from NWC member line ministries even after the phasing out of the project.

Will the stakeholders interfacing with wetlands give priority to wetland issues over their sector specific priorities, channel resources and implement or contribute in implementation of wetland conservation initiatives accordingly? The MTE Team understands that the new Wetlands Policy was formulated through a consultative process and hopefully is owned by relevant sectoral line departments. It is well in line with the overall development policy of the country and makes room for accommodating the key basic national priorities e.g., (i) linking conservation with development, (ii) ensuring people’s participation, livelihoods security and inclusive growth, and (iii) promoting local governance. The NWC, TAC and two networks have been institutionalized within this broader policy framework. This arrangement provides adequate justification at this stage to be assured that different relevant sectors will take care of the wetland issues in priority and with resources. Yet the NWC as a new institutional arrangement might require to be legally formalized for its sustainable and effective functioning.

7.2. OUTCOME 2. STRENGTHENED NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CAPACITY AND AWARENESS FOR WETLAND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABLE USE

There are good indications that this outcome can also be achieved. The GON has allocated budget for important wetland sites across the country. Technical knowledge related to wetlands have been published and disseminated to a wide spectrum of audiences. The MTE Team documented the participation of local bodies such as DDC, VDCs, NGOs and CBOs on wetland conservation increasing. Communities have started contributing voluntarily towards wetland restoration and management.
For institutional capacity and awareness, several initiatives have been undertaken through orientation, training, sensitization, etc., at the level of Ministries, Divisions and Departments.

Finally, the MTE Team finds that the project is successful in the generation and dissemination of a wetland technical knowledge base.

Nevertheless, and even if this outcomes is achieved, strengthening capacity for sustainable wetlands management is an ongoing process that requires constant reinforcing at all levels, as well as the continued preparation of knowledge materials to keep up with the latest developments in wetland management. For these reasons, the likelihood that these results will be sustainable after the project ends is in the “moderate-high” range only.

7.3. OUTCOME 3. ENHANCED COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT OF WETLAND RESOURCES FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

As mentioned in earlier sections, relevant institutions have been formed and strengthened through the capacity building initiatives. There are good examples of sustainable wetland resource exploitation for sustainable livelihoods. In terms of conservation, the project has initiated innovative programs for awareness and outreach. In terms of livelihood promotion, the project has initiated a wide range of livelihood initiatives based on livelihood assessment (the proven experiences, local resource available, interest of the people and markets). Livelihood improvement plans have been formed to support income generating activities. In terms of conservation awareness, the project has contributed significantly and all the initiatives are in the right direction; nevertheless, the livelihood initiatives are at the initial stage and more efforts and resources are required for the rest of the project tenure to demonstrate higher benefits.

Regarding long-term sustainability of this outcome, the following observations are pertinent:

- Formulation of a long-term management plan for resource sharing. The preparation and roll out of the management plans will ensure long-term conservation and management of local resources. As a result of the project continuous efforts, some of the wetland based development programs are already built in the Government’s Red Book (Government plans and programs) which ensure the right implementation of the program. Wetlands became a national importance and widely discussed issues in the recent years. DDCs are positive for resource sharing in the execution of management plans.

- Cultivate the culture of co-funding. Local bodies (DDCs, VDCs and few NGOs) have mobilized their own resources for wetlands conservation. Private sector entrepreneurs have extended their cooperation for producing handicrafts, souvenirs and marketing of products made from invasive alien species. Similarly, DDC Sunsari has contributed matching grants for installing biogas plants for disadvantaged communities at KTWR. Project has been working very closely with Nepal Tourism Board, Himalyan Nature and Wetlands International in pooling their knowledge, expertise and resources for tourism promotion and biological monitoring of indicator species at the project sites.
Paradigm shift in occupation. Ancestral occupation has been switched over by some of the Mallah communities at KTWR for livelihood improvement. Those fishing communities are now earning their livelihood through poultry farming. For fishery promotion, pump set and other accessories and fuel support provided to Mallah cooperative for hatchery centre management. However, it is still not clear whether these enterprises will actually deliver more income sustainably.

Management of additional resources. The project has been able to leverage resources even from small NGOs to implement small scale conservation and development activities at both sites. The resource was utilized to create a matching grant to develop foot trails in GLA to promote tourism in and around the lake. The project has created an enabling environment to leverage funds from private sectors for enterprise development at KTWR. Plans are underway to create a JV company to bolster the Pater (natural fiber) based enterprise. Support is being provided for community product outlet construction. With these structures, it is likely that natural fiber based enterprises will run sustainably.

Increased encouragement for animal husbandry. In KTWR, local youths have been provided with 35 days long Village Animal Health Worker training with equipment and medicine support to establish their private vet clinic. Community Vet Centers have been established for instant support to local people in case of need. Because of the instant service, the use of animal husbandry has increased. In the project sites, animal husbandry can become a source of permanent income.

Increased irrigation potential in the downstream of GLA. In GLA, though there is abundant ground water and many opportunities to install treadle pumps and boring or artesian wells to provide year-round irrigation, locals have not exploited these opportunities. The GLA is maintaining the ground water recharge at the south-east part of the Kailali. It will directly contribute to increasing productivity of crops. Before the project, people had little interest to invest in increasing farm productivity or, because 30% of the land is non-registered parti land. Despite the poor irrigation facilities, the GLA as a whole produces a surplus of cereals, mainly rice, wheat, maize, and oil seed but a deficit of pulses and vegetables (GLA Social Survey Report, 2010).

Use of skill acquired from capacity building initiatives. Of the total trained through various training, orientation, more than 67% people in GLA and 56% in KTWR (Source: Project records, 2011) used those acquired skills in income generating activities. All the capacity building initiatives are found skill oriented which are linked with technologies, finance and markets.

Promotion of local resource-based enterprises. Though people could make handicrafts like woven baskets, mats and fans from local grasses and bamboo, few do. The only exception is a “hat-like” umbrella, called a chaatari that is woven for household use. Five forest and five wetland products with potential for enterprise development are identified in GLA (see Table below). These products, through sustainable management, add value through processing and could significantly improve the livelihoods of the people.
Forest and wetland products and their potentialities for enterprise development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Wetland products</th>
<th>Forest products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Bet</td>
<td>Bamboo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Processing and sale</td>
<td>Processing and sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Dhodia sag (leaf)</td>
<td>Malu/bhorla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct sale</td>
<td>Processing and sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Dadari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farming and sale</td>
<td>Processing and sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Lahare sag</td>
<td>Mango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct sale</td>
<td>Processing and sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Shingada</td>
<td>Sal leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct sale</td>
<td>Processing and sale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NARMA Consultancy, 2009

To boost the income of the poorest people in KTWR, the following activities were implemented: 18 fish ponds to support over 540 HHs (135 tagged HHs), goat keeping for 90 HHs, pig rearing for 48 HHs, fruit seedling plantation for 100 HHs, fiber base souvenir products for 25 HHs, natural resource based enterprise (Duna Tapari) established at Tapeshwori, poultry farm established for 39 HHs at three places (Tapeshwori, Pathari and West Kushaha), but more resources and efforts are required to generate additional income.

- Increased trend in revenue collection. In KTWR, revenue is being collected from the reserve’s resources and services like annual thatch grass selling, fishing license to Wetlands Dependent Communities, drift wood collection, eco-tourism promotion, and penalties. Fifty percent of the total revenue collected from the various means is allocated for conservation and livelihood promotional activities within the buffer zone area.

- In KTWR, a feral cattle evacuation program is in place through patrolling by camping inside the reserve. A Kanjihouse (animal tamed house) is constructed for controlling feral cattle inside the reserve. A campaign of 21 days for sweep operation resulted the earning of NRs 300,000 from feral as well as domestic cattle grazing penalties. The reserve was successful for evacuating feral buffalo by 95% and feral cattle (cows) by 60%, a large success rate.

The description of revenue collection from different source in fiscal year 2009/2010 in KTWR is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year</td>
<td>2010/11 2009/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendering business</td>
<td>14,700.00 6600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalty</td>
<td>22,440.00 7320.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry fee for visitors</td>
<td>308,890.00 260780.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle entry</td>
<td>104,450.00 50760.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat entrance fee</td>
<td>60500.00 52800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing permit</td>
<td>23,150.00 10752.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephant riding</td>
<td>46,800.00 45902.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass/hay harvesting</td>
<td>158,620.00 94900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of drift wood</td>
<td>51,258.00 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>950.00 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,175,153.00 674,396.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Buffer Zone Management Regulations (1996) and the Buffer Zone Management Guidelines (1999) define the specific policy framework for implementation of activities within the buffer zone. Activities are found by choosing giving local community’s user rights over the resources and revenue sharing from the protected area to promote a good relationship between the park authority and the neighboring buffer zone communities.

- Promotion of eco-tourism. Eco-tourism could be an important source of income for the local people as it generates local employment opportunities in transportation and communication and at camp sites, lodges, and restaurants. If managed systematically, local youths could serve as tourist guides, waiters, and the like. The lakes and the GLA landscape; the existence of wild rice, the pigmy cotton goose and marsh crocodile; the cultural, historical and religious significance of the area; the fact that it serves as a wildlife corridor; the good communication facilities; and the year-round accessibility are some of the key attractions for promoting the GLA as an eco-tourism site. It has scenic beauty, rich flora and fauna, and religious and cultural sites. Because it is a Ramsar site and close to India, the GLA can attract international as well as domestic tourists. However, very little effort has been made to develop this sector.

The fact that the management plan calls for providing special trainings to locals in hospitality, cooking, guiding, choreography, handicraft development, information centre management, small hotel management, and home stay management will add to the number of sustainable income sources for GLA residents. The relationship between tourism and the wetlands is complex and sometimes tourism may have negative impacts including habitat loss, water and solid waste pollution, the over-consumption of water, and visual or noise pollution. Therefore, these aspects need to be carefully considered while implementing the activities.

- The Ghodaghodi Temple is popular for carrying out religious and ritual functions. It has immense spiritual value for the local Tharus, but people from far and wide visit this temple and its surroundings during various annual festivals. Maghi, a local festival of Tharu people, is celebrated in Magh (the middle of January). At which they perform khojani bujani; is the most important festival in the Tharu culture. For rural Nepalis who live in villages scattered across the country, life is highly ritualized, and dance is an integral part of it. Religious rituals influence and enrich folk songs and dances, and the Nepalis sing and dance to please their deities. In Tharu society, sakhiya, hurdunga, mugra, jhumara and mayer dances are popular while Magars perform the sorathi and garra dances.

In KTWR, the numbers of visitors (foreigners and local) has increased. The data revealed that in the last fiscal year (2009/10) only, 4,660 people have been visited to watch birds. Apart from these, some 9,000 people have visited (free entry to school students and group members).

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4 A local festival of Tharus celebrated in Magh (the middle of January)
5 An annual meeting convened by farmers’ organisations, usually on the first of Magh. In Nepali, “khojani” means ‘to find out’ and ‘bujani’ means ‘to understand’. The phrase suggests that the meeting is a dialogue about whether the incumbent office bearers should continue in their current posts or be replaced.
Reduced rate of seasonal human migration. In GLA, the rate of seasonal migration was high before the project. Generally, people migrate to urban areas as well as to Indian cities to perform seasonal labour during the agricultural off-season. They earn on average Rs 16,000-20,000 in six months of time. The people of the GLA practice natural resource management because they need natural resources, including timber, fuel wood, fodder, wetland products\(^6\), and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), of their subsistence livelihoods. The project is quite successful to reduce the rate of seasonal migration by 20% through the careful selection of wide variety of livelihood options after skill based trainings (data from project databases). The WDCs, by virtue of their long-standing history in the area, are especially resourceful. They collect different wetland products such as fish, wild edible foods, birds, grass and thatch, reed and cane, driftwood, sand and soil, medicinal plants, and molluscs, etc.

Increased women empowerment and social inclusion. Women are the primary collectors, users, and managers of natural resources but the fundamental relationship between women and natural resources has not been adequately recognised in the development activities of the past, which were gender-neutral and failed to address the special circumstances and needs of women, disadvantaged groups and the poor. Women lagged behind men because of their heavy workload, poor access to resources, low literacy rates, and the entrenched gender taboos and patriarchal attitudes of the society. Even though some CFUGs are all-women, the condition of women is still difficult.

Gender inequality is deeply rooted in beliefs and socio-cultural norms. Unless the poor, women and disadvantaged groups are liberated from the vicious cycle of mundane activities, their social position will not improve. Women, in particular, have few opportunities for exposure because cultural norms and values preventing them from leaving, much less working outside, their villages. Taking all these aspects into consideration, the project has developed and implemented a GSI strategy that has been prepared in line with MFSC's GSI. A total of 12% of the budget has been allocated for activities targeted only for women in 2011. Dedicated activities have been specially designed and targeted for gender balance such as exposure visit for women members (48) of WDCs and women officials (8) of cross-sectoral Ministries.

Due to consistent lobbying and advocacy, the project has been able to attain a gender ratio 50/50 in BZUGs level at KTWR during the BZ reformation process being held in every five years. Similarly, strong mobilization by the project has increased the number of women chairperson in CFUGs from 7 to 17. Gender Audit is made to assess the current status in terms of GSI and to provide recommendation for future course of actions.

Increased social harmony. The numbers of conflict cases related to crop depredation, encroachment, forest demarcation, etc., have been drastically decreased by 60% in GLA and 45% in KTWR (Source: Project Records, 2011). In GLA, the role of Bhalmansa\(^7\) is highly

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\(^6\) People's dependency on wetland resources is very high. More than four-fifths of all households use one or more wetland resources. Grass and thatch are the main products collected from the wetlands, followed by fish.

\(^7\) A bhalmansa is a traditional Tharu leader or village guardian selected or elected every year during the Maghi festival to run village systems. It is a highly respected position found only in Tharu-dominated villages. The bhalmansa is responsible for maintaining law and order, carrying out including community development work, and managing conflict.
cultivated by the project. The increased awareness, knowledge, and skills in specific areas have fostered feelings of community solidarity and create a culture of working in a group. A well-accepted demarcation between GLA and non-GLA communities should be identified through consultation and meetings as well as through the use of GIS and land-use maps to minimize the likelihood of future conflicts.

- Increased conservation awareness: The project has been using mass, print and electric media for orientation/sensitization for conservation related message. Teacher’s networks and School based wetlands clubs (14 clubs are in KTWR) are mobilized for awareness raising. For cultural preservation, some supports are provided for musical instruments and cultural attire for three groups in KTWR. Similarly, mass media awareness programme on climate change, community-level workshops on climate change and support for mitigation and adaptation action plans, the dissemination of information through leaflet production and distribution, and the establishment of a PES fund have increased the information and knowledge of locals and teach them what to do and what not to do. These activities have increased knowledge about changing climatic conditions in recent decades and its likely impacts and increase the practice of effective adaptation measures and thereby mitigate the likely negative impacts.

- Reduced forest pressure. For the promotion of alternative energy, in KTWR, 46 biogas plants have been installed, which have reduced the fuel wood consumption at the rate of average 8 kg/day/family based on estimations from fuelwood replacement. Two multi-fed biogas piloted using invasive species for trial basis however it was found quite costlier or not feasible. Improved cooking stoves were provided for poorest of the poor families to reduce the firewood consumption, however and as discussed earlier, biogas has limited applicability in these contexts.

7.4. SUMMARY TABLE

The Table below summarizes the results discussed in this section. In short, the MTE Team finds that the project is likely to achieve its 3 Outcomes at the time of project end, but the likelihood that these results will be sustainable are lower.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Likelihood of Achievement by Project’s End</th>
<th>Likelihood of Sustainability Beyond Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME 1. WETLAND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION VALUES INTEGRATED INTO NATIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME 2. STRENGTHENED NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CAPACITY AND AWARENESS FOR WETLAND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION &amp; SUSTAINABLE USE</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Moderate – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME 3: ENHANCED COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT OF WETLAND RESOURCES FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate – High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. CONCLUSIONS

The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal (CSUWN) Project has proceeded well despite significant delays in the approval process and the slow start-up due to the necessary redesign of the log-frame.

Project performance has been satisfactory as measured by the steady disbursements during the last 3 years, as well as the achievement of most of the targets under its planned outputs. In fact, the project has already achieved 100% of the outputs under Outcome 1, 80% under Outcome 2, and 92% under Outcome 3. The MTE considers that the project will not have a problem achieving the totality of its outputs by the time the project ends.

The project has set up the foundations for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of wetlands in Nepal. The MTE Team found excellent examples of both Good and Best practices, as follows:

- The Project reviewed its Log-frame and adopted a new one at inception (Good Practice)
- The Project emphasizes Mainstreaming at the Policy Level (Best Practice)
- The scientific and methodological basis to design the livelihood interventions was sound (Best Practice)
- There is a strong emphasis in women empowering (Good Practice)
- There is an emphasis in developing productive partnerships with local groups and Community Forestry User Groups (Good Practice)

At the same time, there were some opportunities missed and weaknesses which could have been prevented if the project had made a better use of previous experiences, both nationally and internationally. These issues are explained fully in Section 7 and will not be repeated here.

The MTE Team concludes that the likelihood that the project will achieve its Outcomes at the end of the project is high for Outcome 1, very high for Outcome 2, and high for Outcome 3. At the same time, the likelihood that these outcomes will be sustainable over the long-term are not as strong: Moderate for Outcome 1, Moderate-high for Outcome 2, and Moderate-high for Outcome 3. The difference between achieving these outcomes and their sustainability arises from the open question as to whether or not the Government of Nepal, at all levels, will be able to maintain and strengthen the level of mainstreaming achieved.

This challenge is not unique to the project or to Nepal. Mainstreaming biodiversity issues in development is a complex and long-term process that requires time and capacity. The MTE Team believes that very significant progress has been achieved, and considers it imperative for these achievements to be nurtured and maintained. Therefore, the recommendations presented below focus on specific actions that can be taken in the immediate term (i.e., until the project ends), and beyond (i.e., follow-up activities after the project ends) that will increase the probabilities that these achievements will be sustainable.
8.2. RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SHORT TERM (UNTIL PROJECT ENDS)

As explained throughout the report, The MTE Team does not find the need to recommend any strong departures from the current implementation modalities (organizational structure, technical expertise and roles and responsibilities), or major changes to the planned activities. Instead, the recommendations focus around fine-tuning opportunities to maximize the likelihood of achieving and maintaining the project outcomes.

In the short term, the MTE Team recommends the implementation of two parallel lines of action:

8.2.1 Develop and Implement an Exit Strategy

The project’s end date will be December 2012. There is therefore sufficient time left for the project and all its structures to discuss and develop a consensus regarding what will happen after the project ends. These discussions must center on maintaining the sustainability of achievements beyond the project’s end date, and should be catalyzed by the Project’s Management Unit in the context of the National Wetlands Committee (NWC). This is an urgent and “critical path” activity.

In some cases, the project must seek specific and tangible commitments in terms of policy actions and budgetary allocations on the side of the GON so that the mainstreaming gained so far can be maintained. In other cases, the project will need to prepare the beneficiaries, including the resource-use associations at the two pilot sites, to plan ahead so that these local institutions can continue operating beyond the project’s end.

Finally, the project must also engage in a high-level discussion regarding the desirability of follow-up activities beyond the project’s end. These follow-up activities must build from the lessons and experiences gained, and could be financed by a follow-up project (i.e., a CSUWN GEF-2), and/or by the allocation of Government resources. Recommendations for the main elements for such follow-up activities are developed in section 8.3 below.

8.2.2 Optimize Use of Remaining Resources

As mentioned in section 5.3, and assuming that in 2012 the project will invest a similar amount as in 2010 and 2011 (ca. US$550,000), there will be about US$300,000 left at the end of the project. Ideally, it is desirable to allow as much time as possible for results to mature and consolidate by extending Project End Date beyond December 2012, particularly considering the existence of these funds. Indeed, and because of the slow start, by December 2012 the project will have had 4 years of full-implementation only (2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012) as opposed to 5.

To the extent possible and without sacrificing ongoing commitments, the remaining funds (both those planned for 2012 and the left-over funds) should be re-deployed during 2012 and beyond strategically. The MTE Team is not in a position to prescribe precisely the way these funds should be spent and considers it important to allow the existing project structures to make such decisions. Nevertheless, the MTE Team considers that such funds should be allocated to strengthen sustainability, with the following priorities in mind:
Reinforce and maintain progress with mainstreaming and collaborative management at all levels (National, District, and Local).

Seek the achievement of specific milestones (i.e., enactment of Wetlands Act and regulations, etc.)

Continue monitoring socio-economic impacts, building from the good socio-economic monitoring system already in place.

Strengthen biodiversity monitoring by identifying additional monitoring protocols for habitat changes, measuring responses to management interventions, etc.

8.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES NEEDED TO SUSTAIN THE OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

The foundations already built for mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands in Nepal need to be maintained beyond the project’s end. These gains need to be fostered, strengthened, and enhanced.

As mentioned in section 8.2.1 above, and as part of the discussion of the project’s Exit Strategy, a high-level dialogue to define the follow-up activities beyond the project’s end needs to take place. These follow-up activities must build from the lessons and experiences gained, and could be financed by a follow-up project (i.e., a CSUWN GEF-2), and/or by the allocation of Government resources. The following elements have been identified as key features of the desirable follow-up activities, whether as part of a new project, or as mainstreamed activities within existing structures:

- Continue monitoring socio-economic impacts beyond the project’s end date. There is already a good socio-economic monitoring system in place, but given the long-term nature of these interventions, it is very important to better understand the nature of the socio-economic benefits achieved, their sustainability, and the implications for equity and gender within the communities where these activities have been promoted.

- Strengthen the wetlands management tools available to the GON. Technical capacity needs to be strengthened further so that the GON can implement complementary wetland activities at the national level. Some of these activities can include a National Wetlands Assessment, and a study to determine the desirability to establish a National Wetlands Center.

- Implement wetlands conservation and sustainable use activities at additional sites. From the perspective of global biodiversity, replication is a key aspect to achieve impact at a meaningful scale.

- There is a need to develop and implement a comprehensive biodiversity monitoring protocol for wetlands in Nepal. Such monitoring protocol needs to place particular emphasis in issues related to management interventions, as well as the impacts of habitat fragmentation. The monitoring system needs to go beyond indicator species and should pay
particular attention at genetic variability and viability of key species, habitat fragmentation and changes due to wetland management practice, and ecosystem-level phenomena.

- Share good practices and lessons with other countries. This sharing needs to go both ways. Future activities must make a better use of the substantial international experience already existing with wetlands management, including the ecological implications of various management regimes. Similarly, the project can share its rich lessons with similar projects in other countries.

- Integrate wetlands conservation and sustainable use in the broader landscape through landscape-level incentives. There are numerous opportunities to “extend” the habitats beyond the wetlands themselves. As discussed in the report, some of these opportunities include:
  - Use of rice fields as extension of habitats for migratory waterfowl,
  - Planting of tree rows in the buffer zones to enhance habitats for migratory songbirds and enhance opportunities for birdwatching,
  - Implementation of systems of Payments for Environmental Services (PES) related to the use of wetlands resources, water regulation downstream, etc.

- Link future activities and wetlands conservation with broader and relevant natural resources management issues. Such integration must maintain the generation of global benefits as an integrating thread as follows:
  - Integrate wetlands with issues related to water regulation, flood control, adaptation to climate change, and vulnerability at the local level.
  - Better understand ecosystem functions related to water purification and nutrient cycling, and the relations of these functions with health issues related to clean water availability.
  - Better understand the conservation and other environmental significance of interventions, including the positive and negative synergies between biodiversity conservation, habitat interventions, emissions or emission reductions of greenhouse gases, etc.
LIST OF ANNEXES

1. Project Identifiers
2. Revised Logical Framework
3. People and Institutions Consulted
4. Dates and Schedule of the MTE
5. Documents Reviewed
6. Comments Received from Policy Level Stakeholders during briefing of Preliminary Findings (October 25th, 2011).
7. Terms of Reference for the Mid-term Evaluation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Award ID</strong></th>
<th>: 00042939</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Award Title</strong></td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project ID</strong></td>
<td>: 00049898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source of Funds</strong></td>
<td>: GEF/TRAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation Modality</strong></td>
<td>: (NEX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Beginning Year</strong></td>
<td>: 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Ending Year</strong></td>
<td>: 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementing Agency</strong></td>
<td>: Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Sites:</strong></td>
<td>: Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve and Ghodaghodi Lake Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source of Fund</strong></td>
<td>: Total: $ 3.6 m - GEF: $ 1.96 m; UNDP: $ 0.53 m; GoN $ 1.13m (in kind)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Goal: To ensure maintenance and enhancement of wetland biodiversity and environmental goods and services for improved local livelihoods in Nepal
Project Objective: To strengthen national and local capacity in ecosystem management and sustainable use of wetland biodiversity in Nepal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Activities</th>
<th>Indicator of Achievements</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 1.1: MFSC supported to strengthen mechanisms for inter-sectoral coordination</td>
<td>Inter-sectoral coordination mechanism for wetland management strengthened</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1. National Wetland Committee (NWC) at MFSC in place  
2. 2 National level networks of wetland stakeholders (wetland specialists & indigenous people) and technical committee in place  
3. Project experiences from 2 demo sites are tested at least in 2 ecological zones | 1. By 2009, concept paper & TORs of NWC prepared, discussed & finalized  
2. By 2010, NWC formed, operational & supported by technical committee & 2 national networks of stakeholders  
3. By 2012, collaborative management model tested |
| 1. Detailed TORs  
2. Progress reports | No inter-sectoral coordination mechanism in place |
| 1. By 2009, concept paper & TORs of NWC prepared, discussed & finalized  
2. By 2010, NWC formed, operational & supported by technical committee & 2 national networks of stakeholders  
3. By 2012, collaborative management model tested | 1. Wetland biodiversity remains GON priority  
2. GON remains open to innovative approaches for collaborative management of wetland resources  
3. Social, political and economic situation of the country does not deteriorate significantly |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output 1.2: MFSC strengthened to integrate wetland values into national policy &amp; planning frameworks</th>
<th>Wetland values &amp; management principles integrated into national policy and planning frameworks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Guidelines to support implementation of National Wetland Policy developed & disseminated  
3. By 2009, policy disincentives & perverse incentives of 4 key sectors impacting wetlands reviewed  
4. By 2010, economic policy guideline prepared & forwarded to respective Ministries |
| 1. Reviewed sectoral policy documents  
2. Economic policy guideline | Current sectoral plans do not reflect wetland issues |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME 2: STRENGTHENED NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CAPACITY AND AWARENESS FOR WETLAND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION &amp; SUSTAINABLE USE</th>
<th>1. Trained Human Resources &amp; increased wetland management programs in place 2. Community involvement increased by 50% in wetland conservation &amp; management at demo sites &amp; media coverage increased at national level</th>
<th>1. By 2010, sustainable management practices of wetland resources promoted 2. By 2012, 35% of the critically degraded wetlands of demo sites restored</th>
<th>1. Annual progress report 2. Sample survey report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 2.2: Institutional capacity of key sectoral Ministries on wetland management strengthened</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Wetland focal desk in MFSC & key sectoral Ministries established  
2. Focal desk officials trained on wetland management techniques & tools  
3. Focal desk in MFSC & key sectoral Ministries operational with added responsibilities for wetland management |
| 1. By 2010, focal desk of MFSC and key sectoral Ministries trained on wetland conservation  
2. By 2011, sectoral planners selected & training provided  
3. By 2011, major wetland issues are identified and forwarded to MFSC & key sectoral Ministries for endorsement  
4. By 2011, wetland planning guidelines for protected areas & national forests prepared & endorsed |
| 1. Project progress reports  
2. Planning guidelines  
3. Training reports  
4. Focal desk |
| 1. Focal desks do not exist currently  
2. No separate budget for wetland conservation  
3. No wetland planning guideline exists |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Output 2.3: Awareness on wetland values and issues amongst decision makers, local people and their representatives enhanced</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Sectoral Ministries prioritize wetland related activities in respective plans & programs  
2. MFSC & key sectoral Ministries allocate resources for wetland related activities  
3. MFSC & key sectoral Ministries prioritize wetland related activities & allocate more resources  
4. 10 VDCs and all 4 DDCs of the project area allocate budget for wetland conservation  
5. Three-fold increase in media coverage on wetland issues (base year = 2008) |
| 1. By 2009, training package & information materials on wetland conservation developed  
2. By 2010, 200 policy makers/decision makers/planners & by 2012, 2000 local people are made aware of wetland conservation |
| 1. Training package  
2. Resources materials  
3. Press cuttings & news clippings |
<p>| Wetland not a priority area for planning and budgeting |
| OUTCOME 3: ENHANCED COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT OF WETLAND RESOURCES FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS | 1. Wetland issues are integrated into district level plans by local bodies (DDC’s and VDC’s), line agencies (DFO, Reserve, Irrigation, Agriculture offices) &amp; conservation partners (BZMC, CFUG, local NGOs, etc.) | 1. By 2009, livelihood strategies prepared &amp; implemented in 2 demo sites by 2010 2. By 2010, major wetland issues to be addressed by local bodies are identified &amp; forwarded to respective district development committees (DDCs) 3. By 2012, more than 90% of recommended wetland issues are incorporated into district periodic plans | 1. District Periodic Plans 2. HH income survey report | Baseline of HH income of project areas will be created by 2009 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output 3.1: Model collaborative management system for conservation and sustainable use of wetland resources in two pilot sites developed &amp; established</th>
<th>1. Multi-stakeholder forum established &amp; functional as local consultative / decision making body for wetland related issues at 2 demo sites 2. BZMC/CFUGs have WPSE (Women, Poor &amp; Socially Excluded groups) in at least 2 key positions in executive committee 3. More than 75% of BZ &amp; 90% of CF institutions adopt and implement guideline ensuring equitable access to &amp; benefit sharing among wetland dependent communities</th>
<th>1. By 2010, an inclusive multi-stakeholder forum with representation of 33% of WPSE group formed &amp; operational 2. By 2010, BZ guideline &amp; CFUG’s constitution revised &amp; endorsed with the provision of 50% representation of WPSE group in general member with at least 2 key positions in its executive committee</th>
<th>1. Annual reports 2. BZ guideline 3. CFUG constitution</th>
<th>1. No multi-stakeholder forum for collaborative management exists currently 2. Under representation of WPSE at institution &amp; decision making levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 3.3 BZMC &amp; CFUGs implement sustainable development &amp; livelihood programs contributing to wetland conservation</td>
<td>1. 15% increase in income of 75% of wetland-dependent households especially WPSE groups 2. Invasive species used by 10 piloted HHs 3. Sustainable financing strategy applied in 2 demo sites</td>
<td>1. By 2009, livelihood strategy &amp; community action plan including harvesting calendar prepared &amp; implemented in 2 demo sites by 2010 2. By 2009, use of invasive species for alternative energy source piloted at least in 10 HHs 3. By 2010, alternative energy schemes are introduced in collaboration with different agencies 4. By 2010, at least 4 types of income generating activities are planned &amp; implemented for wetland dependent communities 5. By 2011, sustainable financing strategy prepared &amp; implementation process initiated in 2 demo sites</td>
<td>1. Progress reports 2. Livelihood &amp; financing strategy</td>
<td>1. Unsustainable resource use practices exist 2. No livelihood &amp; financing strategy exist currently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 3
PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED

At the Central Level (Project Management Unit)

Participated at the Project Management Office Presentation and Interaction Program. Met with Project Team led by Mr. Top B. Khatri, National Project Manager, CSUWN and with Ms. Shalu Adhikari, Mr. Prem B. BK, and Ganga Gurung, KMO.

At the Central Level (Senior Officials)

1. Mr. Keshab P. Bhattarai, Secretary, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation.
2. Mr. Ram Prasad Lamsal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.
3. Mr. Harihar Sigdel, Joint Secretary, Planning and Human Resources Division/National Project Director, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation.
4. Mr. Krishna Prasad Acharya, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.
5. Mr. Biju Kumar Shrestha, Program Director, National Planning Commission Secretariat.
6. Mr. Annapurana Nand Das, Director General, Department of Forests.

At the Central Level (UNDP)

1. Mr. Jorn Sorensen, Deputy Country Director (Programme).
2. Mr. Vijaya P. Singh, Assistant Country Director, Environment, Energy and Climate Change Unit.
3. Mr. Dinesh Karki, Environment Programme Analyst, Environment, Energy and Climate Change Unit.

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR)

1. Interactions with KTWR and CSUWN field team (Mr. Raju Dahal).
2. Participated in the presentation made by Warden (Mr. Ashok Ram) and Field Manager (Dr. Vivekananda Jha)
3. The following sites were visited and observed the conservation and livelihood related interventions, key outputs and preliminary outcomes:
   a) Sundarpur-9, Belar: Pater based enterprises development
   b) Dhamma/Saptakoshi CFUG: Wetland conservation, livelihood promotion, solar fencing, bio gas
   c) Magar Mahila (women) UC: Piggery, women empowerment
   d) Janajagaran UC Madhuban-7, Sukrabare: Bio gas, solar fencing, micro-credit,
   e) Shree Wetland Club: Extracurricular activities for wetland conservation
   f) Interaction with Badgama Women Group: Goat raising, fishery promotion and poultry farming
   g) Interaction with BZMC members, community leaders and stakeholders
   h) Interaction with former BZMC members, community leaders and stakeholders
Ghodaghodi Lake Area (GLA), Kailali

1. Interactions with GLA and CSUWN field team (Mr. Raj Kumar Poudel, Ms. Situ Neupane).

2. Participated in the presentation by Field Coordinator, CSUWN at Sukhad Office.

3. The following sites were visited and observed the conservation and livelihood related interventions, key outputs and preliminary outcomes:

   a) *Tengnawa CFUG*: More than 30 women and few men presented in the discussion. Discussions were largely focused on picnic, parking spot, wetlands and forest management activities, matching grants, piggery and goat raising

   b) *Janahit CFUG*: Discussions are focused on income generation activities and skill promotion activities in the presence of more than 26 participants

   c) *Tribeni CFUG*: Interactions are largely focused on the benefits of bio gas, fishery and improved cooking stoves in the presence of more than 38 participants (mostly women)

   d) *Janaki CFUG*: Interactions are largely focused on the benefits of bio gas, fishery and improved cooking stoves in the presence of more than 25 participants (mostly women)

   e) *Bindra CFUG*: Interactions are largely focused on community mobilization and forest management, conflict management and initiatives for reduction of forest encroachment

4. Interactions with district level stakeholders at Kailali.

   a) Mr. Mohan Poudel, Local Development Officer, Kailali DDC
   b) Mr. Bijaya Raj Paudyal, Regional Director, Far Western Regional Forest Directorate, Kailali
## ANNEX 4
### ACTIVITY SCHEDULE OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION TEAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 12/10/2001 to Sun. 16/10/2011</td>
<td>Review of Electronic Literature, Travel Preparation, Trip to Kathmandu by Team Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 17/10/2011</td>
<td>Review of literature at the Project Management Office Adamis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue. 18/10/2011</td>
<td>Review of literature, Presentation by NPM, Meet high level officials at MoFSC, Departments and National Planning commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 19/10/2011</td>
<td>Review of literature in the morning, Flight to Biratnagar and drive to KTWR in afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. 20/10/2011</td>
<td>Presentation/interaction with reserve and project staff, visit of different sites and meetings with beneficiary groups/communities (Madhuban, Prakashpur, Badgama, Purva pipra pathari)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 21/10/2011</td>
<td>Meeting with ex and present chairpersons of the Buffer zone committee, Reflection session with reserve/project staff; drive to Biratnagar, flight to Kathmandu, and flight to Nepalganj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 22/10/2011</td>
<td>Drive from Nepalganj to Sukhad (Kailali district) – the GLA site office; Briefing of the project implementation, visit to GL area and habitat improvement activities; visit and meeting with groups/communities in protection and income generating activities at Tengnuwa, Sadepani-Belar, Darakh- Janaki CF and Triveni CF, Ramsikhar Jhala – Bindra CF. Drive to Dhangadhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 23/10/2011</td>
<td>Morning – Interaction with Regional Director of Forest, and Local Development Officer; Afternoon – Flight to Kathmandu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 24/10/2011</td>
<td>Team Reflection discussion at NPM Office, drafting of de-briefing presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue. 25/10/2011</td>
<td>De-briefing presentation i) to the project stakeholders at national level, ii) to the UNDP Nepal officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 26/10/2011</td>
<td>Consultants work on the Preparation of the MTE report first draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. 27/10/2011</td>
<td>Consultants work on the preparation of the MTE report first draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 28/10/2011</td>
<td>Consultants work on the preparation of the MTE report first draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 29/10/2010</td>
<td>National consultants submit their first draft report to the Team Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 30/10/2011</td>
<td>Team Leader compiles and finalizes the first draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 31/10/2011</td>
<td>Team leader submits the first draft to the NPM and UNDP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 5
DOCUMENTS REVIEWED


15. GoN/MFSC; Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal. Simsar Newsletter different volumes; Project Management Office, Kathmandu, Nepal.


18. GoN/MFSC; Far Western Regional Forest Directorate, Dhangadi. Web Site: http://www.fwrfd.gov.np/resources/downloads/1/


ANNEX 6
COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM POLICY LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS DURING DE-BRIEFING OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS (KATHMANDU, OCTOBER 25TH, 2011)

The preliminary findings and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation were presented to the major policy level stakeholders in the chairmanship of the Secretary of MoFSC on October 25. Following the debriefing, the participants raised their comments, queries and questions. They have been responded and incorporated as appropriate in the draft report submitted by the MTE team. Major comments provided by the participants are documented below.

Dr. Annapurna Nand Das, DG, Department of Forest highly appreciated the policy mainstreaming achievements of the CSUWN. He expressed his satisfaction over the findings of the MTE. Noting that the project got delayed by almost a year in the pilot sites, he requested the MTE team to consider recommending for the extension of the project so as to ensure that the project outcomes are achieved as anticipated.

Mr. Narayan Thapa, Ministry of Local Development, raised concerns regarding the institutionalization of the good practices of the project within its short life. A project of such nature according to him must be continued for at least 10 years in order to ensure institutionalization takes place. He also advocated for the extension of the project period.

Mr. Dinesh Karki, Program Officer, UNDP Nepal, enquired whether the MTE team has looked into the organization and staff structure and evaluated whether the human resources are adequate as stipulated in the ToR of the MTE. He also questioned how long a project of this nature would need to be extended?

Mr. Vijay Singh, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Nepal raised two queries and two questions and requested the MTE to incorporate them in the report. They are: Whether the current strategy and intervention of the CSUWN are adequate for achieving its intended outcomes/results? Does the existing policy level institutional set up guarantee the effective integration of wetland issues in the long run?

To what extent could the collaborative management institutions established by the project and its activities sustain in case if the project phases out in December 2012?

A key feature of the GEF funded projects is to ensure that the global biodiversity benefits are achieved – are we in the right track in this project to this point?

Presently several other wetland conservation initiatives are being implemented while this national level project with policy level mainstreaming is also being implemented. What is the likelihood that the GoN will be able to take lead to coordinate with such initiatives? Would the DNPWC and DoF be able to lead wetland conservation within and outside the protected areas? What are the possibilities of replication of the best practices initiated by this project in other wetland sites?

UNDP Nepal’s program cycle ends in Dec. 2012 meaning that whatever funds remain unspent by the end of 2012 would not be available to the project to continue in 2013. As of to-date, UNDP
Nepal is not likely to prioritize biodiversity conservation in its next cycle. Under such circumstances, extending the CSUWN would be difficult. How could we replicate the good practices of the CSUWN after 2012?

Mr. Baburam Bhandari, Training Officer, MoFSC, noted the significance of the floating grass habitats of birds in course of cleaning of invasive plants from ghodaghodi lake during his tenure as DFO Kailali district. He also noted that the MTE must provide specific recommendations for the extension of this project.

Mr. Harihar Sigdel, NPD and Chief Planning Division MoFSC, recalled the request he had made to the MTE team during his first meeting with the team and drew the attention of MTE team once again on those three points. He requested that the MTE report should i) provide justification for the extension of the project up to 2015, ii) explore the possibilities of a follow-up project to CSUWN and iii) emphasize on the needs and justification of a national wetland center. He also pointed out that this project or a follow up project should also accomplish a national level survey and inventory of the wetlands of Nepal.
ANNEX 7
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

Introduction

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal (CSUWN) is a joint undertaking of the Government of Nepal (GoN), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project is executed by Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC). Department of Forests (DoF) and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) are the major partners of the project. The project is being implemented in two Ramsar sites of Nepal: Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) and Ghodagodi Lake Area (GLA) since January 2008.

CSUWN project document has provisioned at least two independent external evaluations over the project periods including a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) by the end of second year of the project implementation. The MTE is expected to determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes and identify course of correction.

It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness of project implementation; will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. The findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation until the remaining period of the project duration.

Project Context

The project is the first of its kind in Nepal that is supporting the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation for creating an enabling policy environment, enhanced technical, economic and institutional capacity at systemic level so as all relevant sectors recognize the value and importance of wetlands and take into account while undertaking economic assessment into sectoral project analysis and investment appraisal procedure and promote a model of collaborative management of wetlands resources which contribute for improved local livelihoods. In a nutshell, the project has been designed to address policy gaps, build capacity both human resource and technical at systemic level and promote public private partnership for wetland management to ensure environmental goods and services for improved local livelihoods. It has been formulated with the aim to replicate its best practices and lessons to other wetlands sites to promote conservation and its wise use potential in other wetlands of Protected Areas (PAs), National Forests and so on.

The official launch of CSUWN took place on 19 March 2008 with the hosting of the inception workshop held in Kathmandu. However, the field implementation began with the opening of its field office in March 2009. The inception workshop identified and recommended for a thorough review of project document including logical framework (LF) and its implementation modality. This is a Five Year Project beginning January 2008 to the end of 2012.

Project Goal, Objective and Outcomes
Overall goal of the project is to ensure maintenance and enhancement of wetland biodiversity and environmental goods and services for improved local livelihoods in Nepal.

The immediate objective of the project is to strengthen national and local capacity in ecosystem management and sustainable use of wetland biodiversity in Nepal. There are three major outcomes:

1. Wetland biodiversity conservation values integrated into national policy and planning frameworks
2. Strengthened national institutional, technical and economic capacity and awareness for wetland biodiversity conservation & sustainable use
3. Enhanced collaborative management of wetland resources for conservation and sustainable livelihoods

Project Area

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) and its Buffer Zone and Ghodaghodi Lake Area have been chosen for demonstration sites based on ecological systems and geographical locations. KTWR is in the East and represents the lotic river floodplain type ecosystem under the protected area (PA) system. It covers 16 VDCs that spread across three districts of Sunsari, Saptari and Udayapur with a population of over 93,000 from over 16,000 HHs.

The Ghodaghodi Lake Area (GLA) is located in the Far-western Nepal and represents an interconnected mosaic lacustrine oxbow lake type of 20 lakes that has immense ecological, biological, cultural, economic and aesthetic values. GLA falls within the management regime of District Forest Office, Kailali. The area covers three VDCs of Kailali District with a population of over 57,000 from over 8200 HHs.

Out of the total HHs, 463 HHs from both the project sites (KTWR-308 & GLA-155) have been tagged as Wetland Dependent Communities (WDCs) to provide livelihood opportunities so as to improve their household income by 15% by the end of project period.

Project Working Strategy

The project attempts to address the root causes of wetland degradation and loss by

1. Strengthening national policy, capacity and awareness on wetlands
2. Linking national actions at two demonstration sites
3. Employing existing inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder structures and mechanisms wherever possible.
4. Planning activities to influence wetland policy and practice
5. Using existing structures and mechanism
6. Focusing on wetland conservation and WDCs livelihoods improvement
7. Forging partnership for synergy effect
8. Fostering a strong doing, learning and adaptive management culture
9. Sharing of lessons and experiences

Accordingly, CSUWN has provided technical and financial support to MFSC to help establish an apex level body for inter-sectoral coordination for mainstreaming wetlands issues and concerns.
A National Wetland Committee (NWC) with high level representation from wetland impacting sectoral Ministries has been formed and operational. Likewise, a nine member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been set up to provide support to NWC in technical matters. This TAC has been instrumental in providing guidance to the review and revision of cross sectoral and economic policies as well as to the revision of National Wetland Policy 2003.

As part of the capacity enhancement and awareness on wetlands, the project has developed various tools, manuals, resource books including CEPA strategy and materials. The project has also explicitly built in activities to test the relevance of its approaches and tools in other wetlands’ particularly in mid-hills and high mountains. Best practices and lessons learnt will be captured and up-scaled for the benefit of local communities as well as for global environmental benefits at the end of the project.

The project is fostering a strong learning-by-doing and adaptive management culture to capture the ground realities. The project is supporting community based user groups with targeted interventions to strengthen livelihood activities. Equal attention has also been paid to address conservation & development issues by involving women, poor & wetland dependent communities (WDCs). Promotion of traditional knowledge and practices has become an important aspect of its strategy. As far as possible, the project use and strengthen existing structures & mechanism to forge synergistic and collaborative management for sustainable wetland management.

Project Partners

As per the project document the following are the major partners:

1. Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC)
2. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
3. Global Environment Facility (GEF)
4. Department of Forests
5. Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
6. Local bodies (DDCs/VDCs)

II. Objectives of the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE)

The overall objective of this MTE is to evaluate effectiveness of the project in attaining its objectives. The MTE will assess project performance and the implementation of planned project activities and its expected outputs against actual results. It will also identify and document lessons learned, and make recommendations in charting future course of actions in a list to achieve the intended results. The MTE findings will be integrated towards improving management processes for effective delivery in future.

Specifically, the MTE will:

1. Assess and evaluate the progress of the project towards achieving its results and impacts including an assessment on sustainability based on three outcomes of the project

2. Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use including human
3. Based on the review assessment provide a basis for decision making for future course of actions for the remaining years.

Suggested Key guided questions for:

For Objective 1:
- Is the project on right track or geared towards that direction in terms of achieving the intended outputs particularly at the policy and planning framework in mainstreaming wetland issues and concerns at the national level?
- Does NWC and its institutional mechanism as an apex body to spearhead inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration towards the conservation and wise of use wetlands relevant?
- Is the contribution of the project towards building the institutional, technical and economic capacity and raising awareness at various levels (national and local level) sufficient enough?
- Has the project’s outreach and dissemination strategy for increased awareness and participation towards conservation and wise use of wetlands effective? and reached the intended beneficiaries (policy, planning and community level)?
- Does livelihoods interventions carried out by the project for wetland dependent communities in improving their well being (through cash income, employment opportunities and other benefits) relevant and effective?
- Does conservation and community development activities implemented with a view to bring positive changes and improving the existing local discords between protected area and buffer zone communities effective?
- Does a multi-stakeholder forum (MSF) an institutional mechanism to foster coordination and collaboration amongst wetland stakeholders to promote collaborative management and wise use of wetland resources relevant and effective?

For Objective 2:
- Is the current staffing structure, numbers, technical expertise; their roles and responsibilities adequate and relevant for the project?

For Objective 3:
- What are the best practices that could be scaled up or replicated elsewhere?
- What are the major lessons learned?
- What are concrete strategic directions and management to follow for strengthening national and local capacity in ecosystem management and sustainable use of wetland biodiversity in Nepal.

III. Scope of the Evaluation
The process of the evaluation will be consultative and participatory. On the basis of the review, the MTE team will draw lessons learned and make recommendations that might improve and
enrich the implementation of project work-plans, methodologies, processes, tools without changing the objectives and value additions made by the project.

IV. Outputs expected from the Evaluation

Final Evaluation Report with findings, assessment of performance, lessons learned recommendations, description of best practices, and “future course of action list” in a certain area of particular importance for the project. (Please refer to Annex II – reporting format and Annex III for a sample outline of an evaluation report

V. Methodology

This MTE will be conducted as an in-depth and independent reflection of project progress and future priority actions. The consultants will liaise with the CSUWN staffs and UNDP on any logistic and/or methodological issues to properly conduct the review in as independent a way as possible, given the circumstances and resources offered. A draft report will be prepared and circulated to MFSC, CSUWN, UNDP (Country and Regional office), to solicit comments and suggestions.

The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

- **Desk review:** of project documents including, but not limited to: (a) The project documents, outputs, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports to UNDP and GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports) and the internal review reports of the project (e.g. Baselines, Biological Monitoring; livelihoods need assessment, gender audits etc). (b) Review of specific products including the website. (c) Notes from the Project Executive Boards (PEBs), and other meetings e.g. Project Outcome Board (POB) meeting.

- **Interviews, discussions and consultations at national and local levels (including donors).** Refer Annex I for the list of stakeholders and Annex II for the Reporting Format.

VI. Duration of the MTE:

A total of six weeks from 12 October 2011 to 16 November 2011 has been allocated for this exercise. Team Leader (International Consultant) will work for 21 days and two team members (national consultants) will work for 14 days until the finalization of the report. A no cost extension of one week may be leveraged for the finalization of the report.

VII. Payment

Payment will be made in two installments. First 50% payment will be made after approval of the inception report and rest 50% after approval of the final report.

The international consultants will be provided two-way economic class international air ticket to travel to Kathmandu, terminal expenses and TA/DA and local transportations during the stay at Kathmandu.
VIII. MTE Team Composition

The MTE will be conducted by one international (Team Leader) and two nationals (team member) evaluators comprising of a natural resource background and a social science background. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project-related activities. The evaluators shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Former involvement with GEF Review Mission will be an asset. The team of consultants having a gender balance will be a comparative advantage.

**Team Leader (TL):**
TL should have at least Masters Degree or a PhD in Natural Resources Management. S/he in particular should have a clear understanding of conservation issues of NRM in general and wetlands and integrated planning; recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies; experience in applying participatory monitoring approaches; experience in impact indicators application and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios; recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy; recent knowledge of UNDP’s results-based evaluation policies and procedures; competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management projects; analytical skills; work experience in relevant areas for at least 10 years; experience in evaluation of multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects including protected area management; project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be an asset; Excellent English communication skills is must.

**Responsibilities:**
Coordinate the overall work and provide guidance and direction to the team members; Maintain close liaison with UNDP (CO and RCU) and CSUWN; Take the lead role in preparing the interim and final report, based on inputs from team members taking into account the results of multi-stakeholder discussions in field and finalize the report. Prepare TORs for the team members.

**Team Members (TMs):**
There will be two national consultants as team members representing NRM and Socio-economic background. The NRM consultant will look after the NRM sector in general and wetlands conservation in particular and the socioeconomic consultant will provide expertise on the social component of the project. Both TMs will have at least 7 years of demonstrated work experience and academic knowledge on their respective sectors i.e. Natural Resource Management, resource use dimension including wetlands and social dynamics. S/he should have at least Masters Degree in Natural Resource Management/Social Science/Development Studies. S/he should have experience of project evaluation and clear understanding on Natural Resource Management sector, environment poverty nexus, NRM based livelihood and gender issues and holistic and integrated planning approach. S/he should have capacity to analyze government policies and plans and must have a clear understanding of the latest contemporary issues on environment. S/he should have at least a Masters Degree in forestry, wildlife biology, ecology, Botany, Zoology or Environmental Science for NRM expert and Masters Degree in Sociology, Rural Development or Development studies/ Economics for social part.

**Responsibilities:**
Major assignment of TMs is to assist the TL based on his/her area of expertise on the followings:
- Review and analyse project document, and other project related reports to collect and collate various information related to the evaluation
- Review and analyse various activities and interventions undertaken by the project including its effectiveness
- Based on the review and analysis concretize findings and recommendations for future course of action in a list for improving or streamlining project activities including the effectiveness of the output produced to achieve the intended results.
- Assist team leader to develop the evaluation report and to carry out presentation of the review findings

The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles:
- Independence
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Ethical
- Partnership
- Competencies and Capacities
- Credibility
- Utility

Annex I. List of stakeholders to be consulted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Dr. Annapurna N. Das</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>MFSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dr. Krishna C Poudel</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>MFSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Director General</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>DOF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Director General</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>DNPWC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mr. Gopal Upadhyaya</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>MFSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mr. Ram Prasad Lamsal</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>MFSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mr. Prakash Pyakuryal</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>DOF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Mr. Barna Bahadur Thapa</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>DNPWC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mr. Biju Shrestha</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>NPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mr. Fanindra Raj Kharel</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>DNPWC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mr. Bijaya Raj Paudyal</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>RDF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mr. Braj Kishore Yadav.</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>RDF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mr. Gokarna Sharma</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>LDO, Kailali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mr. Rajendra Man Singh Bhandari</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>DFO, Kailali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mr. DR Chaudhary</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>GLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>CFUGs Members</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>GLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mr. Ashok Kumar Ram</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>Warden, KTWR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mr. Bishnu Basnet</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>Major, Nepal Army, KTWR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mr. Prem Prasad Bhattarai</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>LDO, Sunsari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mr. Pankaj Mahato</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>KTWR BZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mr. Top B Khatri</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>CSUWN, PMU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ms. Shalu Adhikari</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>CSUWN, PMU</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Annex II. Reporting Format

The report shall be succinct, clear and easy to understand. It must explain; the purpose of the MTE, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used. The report must highlight any methodological limitations, identify key concerns and present evidence-based findings, consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible, retrievable and comprehensible and include an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate clear managerial responses. Evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations should be presented in a complete and balanced way. The Review report shall be written in English, be of not more than 30 pages (excluding annexes),

- An executive summary (no more than 3 pages) provides a brief description of the project, context and purpose of the MTE and overview of the main conclusions and recommendations of the review;
- Introduction and background provides a brief overview of the project, for example, the objective and status of activities;
- Scope, objective and methods highlights the purpose of the evaluation, the assessment criteria used and questions to be addressed;
- Project Performance and Impact provides factual evidence relevant to the questions asked by the evaluator and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section;
- Conclusions outline project implementation success giving the reviewer’s concluding evaluation. This section should present a concise synthesis of main findings in the previous sections of the report and should draw conclusions regarding the relevance and adequacy of the project objectives and design, the efficiency in project execution and effectiveness in reaching the intended objectives (the production of outputs, the probable effects and impact, the sustainability and replicability), strengths and weaknesses of the design and implementation of the project, and the prospects for follow-up. The findings should provide a clear basis for the recommendations to follow.
- Recommendations suggest actionable proposals regarding improvements that can benefit the project in its remaining lifespan. The reviewer shall make clear recommendations that primarily aim to enhance the likelihood of project impacts. Recommendations should be realistic, specific and stated in operational terms to the extent possible. A mid-term evaluation should normally include a suggested work plan as an annex and should summarize major changes required in planned inputs and outputs.
- Lessons learned presents general conclusions from the point of the design and implementation of the project, based on established good and bad practices. Lessons
must have the potential for wider application and use, and the wider context in which lessons may be applied should be specified;

- Annexes: TOR, itinerary, field visits, people interviewed, summary of field visits, documents reviewed, questionnaire used etc.

The length of the mid-term evaluation report shall not exceed 30 pages in total (excluding annexes).

Submission of Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report.

The final report shall be submitted in electronic form in MS Word format and should be sent to the following persons:

Mr. Harihar Sigdel  
Chief, Planning and HR Division  
Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC)  
Singh Durbar, Kathmandu and  
National Project Director – CSUWN

Mr. Top B Khatri  
National Project Manager  
CSUWN  
Babar Mahal, Kathmandu

CSUWN will circulate the report to all project partners and stakeholders.

Annex III

List of relevant documents to be read

1. Project document  
2. APRs  
3. Assessment reports etc....

Annex IV

Tentative itinerary for the MTE- To be finalized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ToR finalization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selection of consultants – international</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contract</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-15 October 2011</td>
<td>Document Review(2) (home based)</td>
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<td>16 October 2011</td>
<td>Travel(1)</td>
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<td>17 October 2011</td>
<td>Arrival of consultant (1)</td>
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<td>17-27 October 2011</td>
<td>Kathmandu &amp; Field Visits (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 October 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 November 2011</td>
<td>Final report (6 days over period of 28 Oct to 16 November 2011) (home based)</td>
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