Consultant Report

Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP)
(NEP/99/013)

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
Kathmandu, Nepal

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

ACA	=	Annapurna Conservation Area
ACAP	=	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
APPA	=	Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action
BZMP	=	Buffer Zone Management Plan
BZUG	=	Buffer Zone User Group
CBO	=	Community-based Organisation
CO	=	Community Organisation
DFID	=	Department for International Development
DDC	=	District Development Committee
DNPWC	=	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
FET	=	Final Evaluation Team
FG	=	Functional Group
FWEN	=	Federation of Women Entrepreneurship of Nepal
GoN	=	Government of Nepal
ICIMOD	=	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
KCA	=	Kanchenjunga Conservation Area
KCAP	=	Kanchenjunga Conservation Area Project
KMTNC	=	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
LNP	=	Langtang National Park
MANSTOP	=	Marketing Assistance to Nepal for Sustainable Tourism Products
MLD	=	Ministry of Local Development
MoCTCA	=	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
NATHM	=	Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management
NGO	=	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	=	National Planning Commission
NPD	=	National Programme Director
NPM	=	National Programme Manager
NTB	=	Nepal Tourism Board
PMO	=	Project Management Office
PMU	=	Programme Management Unit
PQTP	=	Partnership for Quality Tourism Programme
PSC	=	Programme Steering Committee
PWC	=	Programme Working Committee
RTDD	=	Rural Tourism Development Division
SM	=	Social Mobiliser
SNPBZ	=	Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone
SNV-N	=	Netherlands Development Agency Nepal
SPCC	=	Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee
SRT	=	Sustainable Rural Tourism
STDC	=	Sustainable Tourism Development Committee
STDF	=	Sustainable Tourism Development Fund
STDS	=	Sustainable Tourism Development Section
STN	=	Sustainable Tourism Network
STDU	=	Sustainable Tourism Development Unit
STVF	=	Sustainable Tourism Village Fund
TAG	=	Technical Advisory Group
TIDF	=	Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund
TMI	=	The Mountain Institute

ToR	=	Terms of Reference
ToT	=	Training of Trainers
TRC	=	Trekking Registration Certificate
TRPAP	=	Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme
TURGAN	=	Tourist Guide Association of Nepal
UNDP	=	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	=	United National Environment Programme
VCF	=	Venture Capital Fund
VDC	=	Village Development Committee
VTA	=	Village Tourism Advisor
WEAN	=	Women Entrepreneur Association of Nepal
WWF	=	World Wide Fund for Nature, Nepal

Executive Summary

This is the report of the UNDP Final Evaluation Team (FET) of the Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP). The TRPAP is a joint undertaking of the GoN Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), jointly funded by DFID, (Department for International Development UK), SNV-N (Netherlands Development Agency Nepal) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The programme is managed by UNDP Nepal.

TRPAP started in September 2001 and is to be completed by 31 October 2006. The complex and ambitious programme pilots a range of development approaches in the six districts of Taplejung, Solukhumbu, Rasuwa, Rupandehi, Chitwan and Dolpo.

The final evaluation (ToR in Appendix 1) was undertaken by a three-person team between 15 September and 14 October 2006. Over 500 stakeholders were consulted in Kathmandu and in four of the programme districts (Dolpo and Taplejung were excluded for logistical reasons). The unfortunate Kanchenjunga helicopter accident and the Dashain holidays impacted on the consultation process.

This report outlines and evaluates the project concept and design. The programme results are evaluated by their contribution to:

- Demonstrating sustainable tourism models
- Demonstrating mechanisms for sustainable tourism development
- Supporting sustainable tourism policies

This report outlines key findings, lessons learned and makes a number of recommendations.

The TRPAP's task was defined in the Project Document:

"The overall development objective of the programme is to contribute to the poverty alleviation objective of the government through review and formulation of policy and strategic planning for sustainable tourism development, which are pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-women and pro-rural communities.

The three immediate objectives of TRPAP are:

1. To demonstrate sustainable tourism development models for policy feedback;

2. To develop institutional mechanisms for sustainable tourism development in Nepal; and

3. To support the government in reviewing and formulating sustainable tourism development policies and strategies, in tune with wider conservation objectives"

The Final Evaluation Team (FET) found that, despite the downturn and fluctuations in tourism in Nepal (490,000 visitors in 1999 to a low of 275,000 in 2001 and 375,000 in 2005) and the considerable impact of civil disturbances and security concerns, the programme made considerable progress. Specific outcomes were found to have been largely achieved. They included:

- Appropriate pilot village-based tourism models developed through community consultation / social mobilization approach with focus groups and supported by the institutional framework;
- Training packages developed;
- Sustainable Tourism Development Committees (STDC) established in programme VDCs and tourism development activities incorporated in the Village Development Planning (VDP) process;
- Sustainable Tourism Development Sections (STDS) established within the DDC and tourism development activities incorporated in most of the District Development Planning (DDP) processes;
- Backward and forward institutional linkages established for Sustainable Tourism Development;
- The Tourism Venture Capital Micro Enterprise Programme was successfully launched;
- MoCTCA's and NTB's expertise in developing community-based pro-poor tourism enhanced;
- MoCTCA's expertise enhanced in developing appropriate policies and strategies for community based pro-poor tourism development;
- District tourism plans prepared;
- NTB's capacity to promote new rural tourism products and services;
- NATHM's expertise in providing training and education in sustainable tourism, ecotourism and conservation considerably enhanced;
- Policy and strategy planning documents developed for the promotion of sustainable tourism in Nepal;
- Sustainable tourism policy and strategic planning that is pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-rural communities and pro-women is adopted by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA); and
- Revised Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone Management Plan produced.

The programme achieved a considerable amount of progress in all key outcomes specified above. Some desirable work is still to be completed.

The key findings of the FET include:

- The TRPAP is a well thought out, ambitious (nearly US$ 5 million) pro-poor tourism programme. It is experimental by nature. It has had some considerable successes, especially with:

  - Socially mobilizing a strong cadre of target groups to work for the programme, and successfully applying participatory planning tools.
  - Developing a wide range of rural infrastructure, e.g. trail development, bridges, signs, rubbish collection, alternative energy systems, community lodges, and water schemes.

- o Developing appropriate institutional support in the respective districts that provides direction and ownership of the TRPAP principles. TRPAP's work with DDCs, VDCs and STDCs in most cases has been successful, despite difficult conditions. DDCs, VDCs, BZMCs, BZUGs and STDCs have made progress in institutionalizing the issues, and some activities will be sustained (e.g. STDC activities and infrastructure development)
  - o Providing capacity enhancement, both in Kathmandu and in the districts has in most cases been effective. A wide range of stakeholders (over 13,000) were given skills training.
  - o Providing small business access to capital through the Venture Capital Fund (VCF).

- The TRPAP was delivered by a "stand alone" project office within the Nepal Tourism Board. This has considerable advantages as it provided strong GoN linkages and also enabled TRPAP to stay focused on delivering results. Good communication linkages and support within NTB were well maintained throughout the project period.

- Whilst the programme was designed in times of buoyant tourism (1999-2000), TRPAP was delivered (2001–2006) during a period of struggling tourism due to the serious civil unrest in many parts of the country, including all TRPAP sites. This was particularly relevant in Taplejung, and Dolpo districts. The difficulties in these areas led the aid programme partner, SNV-N, to withdraw their eco-tourism projects in these areas due to the challenges faced in implementing their work. The lack of tourism to these two districts also severely impacted on achieving the goals of the programme. In some sites TRPAP is perceived to be "the face of government". It is a real credit to all stakeholders, especially the TRPAP team, that the programme survived and, in many areas, even flourished.

- A large part of the first two years of the programme were focused on administration, establishing an office, recruitment and training of over 70 staff. This was followed by period with a strong focus on social mobilization and organization. This latter process included the highly successful Tourism Environmental Awareness Programme (TEAP).

- The TRPAP Project Management Unit (PMU) is an efficient, output-focused organization with good stakeholder support, strong leadership and transparent management systems.

- The mid term evaluations by DFID and UNDP provided sound advice. A key concern was the need to: "draw clear distinctions between the two basic development strategies implicit in the TRPAP concept:

i. Fostering participation in tourism by poor and disadvantaged groups, and

ii. Fostering styles of tourism that are pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-women, pro-community in the rural Nepal context".

- Whilst the TRPAP team addressed these issues, the lack of sufficient strong tourism expertise early on in project implementation has hampered the tourism planning processes, particularly with pilot products in project sites. The result has been the development of a number of small businesses that often did not have sound tourism market or product development rationale. TRPAP has achieved strong rural development, micro finance and social mobilization capacity and successful institutional enhancement, but it has failed to create many small flourishing tourism-related businesses.

- Whilst some efforts were made by TRPAP to take services and products to the markets (e.g. successfully linking Lumbini Handicrafts with Kathmandu retailers and exporters), greater focus could have been given to generating indirect benefits. There are many success stories in Asia of rural communities developing goods for tourism markets beyond their villages.

- Partnership funding involving three donors (DFID, SNV-N and UNDP) was conceptually sound. In reality, at times the different expectations, cultures and inputs created some tensions, especially in the area of advisory services. On hindsight, the provision of technical advice should have been more focussed to the needs of the programme. The crucial balance between social processes and technical tourism support could have been provided at different times and in varying amounts. Focused tourism business and marketing advice at an early product development stage would have increased the possibility of more successful small tourism businesses and greater engagement by Nepal's tourism industry.

- Nepal has been to the forefront of rural tourism development in Asia in areas of mountain tourism, ecotourism, community-based tourism, pro-poor tourism, using tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation. It is therefore desirable that the TRPAP lessons learned, both good and bad, are shared in the districts (and with local government), with the Kathmandu industry, and with the international ecotourism community. The agreed production of a book on TRPAP "lessons learned" (see DFID Summary Milestones) is a crucial output that was under preparation during the FET study.

- Nepal is at the forefront of the Asia Pacific region with its experience of using tourism as a development tool to reduce poverty, using a range of approaches to ensure tourism delivers rural benefits. These are used as models elsewhere such as in Lao PDR, Vietnam, Fiji, Samoa etc. The success of TRPAP means that

Nepal is now firmly positioned as a sustainable tourism pioneer, with even more valuable experiences to share.

The following recommendations are aimed at; "capitalizing on the programme direction and the resources already developed including businesses and institutions."

1. To prepare a publication "lessons learned from the TRPAP programme 2001–2006" as agreed by the steering committee and described in the DFID Summary Milestones.
   Action: TRPAP and UNDP (with national and international consultants)
   Budget: within TRPAP. UNDP to support technical expertise,
   Timing: 2006

2. To run a series of awareness programmes, locally, nationally and internationally, to showcase and disseminate pro-poor lessons learned from TRPAP and other relevant Nepal programmes.
   Action: UNDP
   Budget: within TRPAP
   Timing: February – May 2007

3. To continue to provide support for targeted small tourism businesses in the lower Solukhumbu, Rasuwa, Chitwan, and Rupandehi sites. This support would include capacity enhancement, business advice, marketing support from NTB and the private sector, and the continuation of the Venture Capital Fund with advice from TAG.
   Action: TRPAP
   Budget: within TRPAP
   Timing: by June 2007

4. To phase out all TRPAP activities in the Dolpa and Taplejung districts.
   Action: TRPAP and UNDP
   Budget: within TRPAP
   Timing: as soon as practicable and no later than June 2007.

5. To ensure mechanisms are in place at a district level for infrastructure funded by TRPAP to be maintained by DDCs and VDCs on an ongoing basis.
   Action: TRPAP, PMU and STDC
   Budget: DDC to address
   Timing: by December 2006

6. To strengthen linkages with the six DDCs in project sites (including infrastructure maintenance, micro credit, training and tourism business support) and to ensure that all TRPAP core district functions are absorbed into the DDCs.
   Action: DDCs, TRPAP and LDC
   Budget: Within TRPAP
   Timing: by June 2007

7. That the DNPWC continue the close collaboration and partnerships with the tourism industry that have been strengthened through this programme.
Action: DNPWC and MOT
Budget: not applicable
Timing: ongoing

8. That the DNPWC and SMNPBZ institutions complete the Park Visitor Centre development. the Lukla micro hydro project and ensuring the DNPWC tourism unit is functional, with support from TRPAP, as soon as possible.
Action: By DNPWC and SNPBZ management institutions
Budget: As allocated
Timing: as soon as practicable and no later than June 2007

9. To reorganise and strengthen the current STDU within the NTB to provide the sustainable tourism advisory functions, and to absorb TRPAP's core roles.
Action: NTB to lead restructuring exercise (with assistance from a tourism organizational expert.)
Budget: UNDP to support technical expertise. NTB to support the strengthened STDU.
Timing: early 2007

10. To develop an agreed exit plan for TRPAP that:
- Reduces the PMU staff to reflect the exit strategy by December 2006.
- Reduces the PMO staff to reflect the Sagarmatha component exit strategy by December 2006.
- Allows for the managed change of TRPAP responsibilities to the relevant agencies (STDU and DDCs)
- Completes the recommendations 1-10
  Action: UNDP, NTB, restructured STDU and TRPAP
  Budget: UNDP and TRPAP to prepare a detailed budget utilizing current under allocated.
- Timing: by June 2007

11. To ensure the strengthened STDU is fully functional within the NTB by mid 2007, and responsible for coordinating all the GoN pro-poor tourism activities, including linkages with supporting donors.
Action: NTB, TRPAP, STDU
Budget: NTB. To be addressed
Timing: by June 2007

12. That Development Partners can learn lessons from this programme, particularly in the areas of: working in conflict situations, listening to the needs of the GoN's lead agencies and in the provision of technical support.
Action: Development Partners (DFID, UNDP, SNV-N)
Budget: Not applicable
Timing: On programme completion

13. That the GoN carefully address the immediate sustainability of TRPAP's objectives and future activities into district and governmental institutions.
Action: MoCTA and MLD
Budget: Not applicable
Timing: within the next six months

14. UNDP to consider supporting the preparation of a project document that provides (for 2-3 years) ongoing rural tourism development support to Nepal. The new project will build on TRPAP work, support the pro-poor policy and plans, and consider the successes and failures of TRPAP. The clear focus of the new programme is the provision of technical support (product development, marketing, and access to capital) for current and future rural tourism businesses that benefit the community, the poor, women and other target stakeholders. The programme would be focused on supporting the private sector in developing products that support propoor tourism. The programme would need strong support from the private sector, the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and the District Development Committees (DDCs). This new project would compliment the proposed UNEP MANSTOP Kathmandu-based national marketing programme. A project design study would be required to prepare a focused programme and terms of reference.
Action: UNDP and NTB and the strengthened STDU
Budget: to be addressed
Timing: 2007

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1. Introduction

This is the report of the UNDP Final Evaluation Team (FET) of the Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP). The TRPAP is a joint undertaking of the GoN Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), jointly funded by DFID, (Department for International Development UK), SNV-N (Netherlands Development Agency Nepal) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The programme is managed by UNDP Nepal.

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The review was to assess the effectiveness of the programme in terms of its contribution to i) rural poverty reduction in the six pilot areas and ii) promoting sustainable rural tourism in the project sites.

Based on the lessons learned, the team was to make forward-looking recommendations for future programming in the field of sustainable rural tourism development in Nepal.

The Final Evaluation Team (FET) consisted of one international consultant and two national consultants. All consultants had complementary relevant skills but were chosen on the basis of no previous direct involvement with TRPAP.
Acknowledgements

The FET wishes to thank and acknowledge the valuable contributions to this final evaluation by many stakeholders. The evaluation occurred during both a busy and tragic time in Nepal. Just prior to the Dashain festival, a helicopter with 24 key conservation personnel on board crashed in the Kanchenjunga area. Given the nature of the TRPAP programme focus on the environment, many of the staff were affected by the accident. The FET greatly appreciates everybody's assistance, given the circumstances. The key supporting agencies of UNDP, DFID, SNV-N, the Programme Manager and all TRPAP staff went out of their way to assist the FET to complete its assignment. Their help is gratefully acknowledged. The Evaluation Team's sincere thanks also go to the LDOs, VTAs, SMs, COs, FGs and other individuals who shared their ideas and views with the field mission. The FET is hopeful that their evaluation, recommendations and the summary of lessons learned will make a significant contribution to sustainable tourism development in rural Nepal and elsewhere.

2. Approach

The FET were guided by the ToR. The team undertook an open participatory approach, meeting with over 500 stakeholders and running several evaluation workshops in the districts. FET used a standardized assessment sheet for field work and the ToR guided the team's research.

The Final Evaluation Team visited four programme areas (lower Solukhumbu, Rasuwa, Rupandehi and Chitwan) to gain first-hand knowledge of the programme activities. The team divided into three teams and were joined by TRPAP staff representatives from Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), the National Planning Commission, The Village Tourism Advisors (VTAs), and District Social Mobilisers. (Appendix 2: Work programme and key personnel meet) The specific activities of the Final Evaluation Team included: -

- Reviewing all relevant documentation for reference purposes.

- Consultation with the senior staff of TRPAP, MoCTCA, DNPWC, NTB, NATHM, LDT, UNDP, DFID, and SNV Nepal.

- Consulting with the local district partners (including DDC, VDC, National Park, CO, Buffer Zone User Groups, Buffer Zone Management Committee) in project sites.

- Consulting with other government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector stakeholders in tourist destinations, and travel trade associations such as TAAN, FWEAN, HRA, NMA, TURGAN, and WWF.

- Making recommendations regarding institutional issues concerning TRPAP and NTB, including future inputs from donor partners, particularly UNDP.

- Debriefing and discussions on team findings to the concerned government institutions, donors, private sector and programme staff. The draft findings were discussed with UNDP before finalizing the report.

- Preparing a "Final Evaluation Report".

- Assessing over 80 reports and key documents, including project documents, DFID and UNDP mid-term reviews, and key TRPAP reports. The key documents are listed in Appendix 3.

3. Project Concept and Design

a) Context

The driving force behind this programme is to address poverty in rural Nepal by using tourism as development tool.

In 1996[1], 42 percent of all Nepalis were living in poverty. In 2001 an estimated (National Planning Commission – Project Document) 38 percent and in 2004 31 percent.

In general, poverty in Nepal continues to be a rural phenomenon (95 percent of poor in rural areas). The more remote the area, the more likely the higher incidence of poverty.

The goal of the millennium development goals reducing poverty from 42 percent to 21 percent appears to be achievable. Despite this optimism in addressing and achieving poverty reduction goals, there are still many obstacles and challenges ahead including urban migration land ownership and impacts from the civil unrest aggravate the poverty issues.

b) Nepal Tourism as a Poverty Alleviation Tool.

Tourism has long been considered by the Government of Nepal and its citizens as a useful development tool for providing a range of livelihood benefits.

These benefits have been felt in Nepal since the early seventies. The industry makes a solid financial contribution, despite the decline from US$167 million in 2000 to US$148 million in 2005 (MoCTCA). However, this reflects a limited amount of benefits delivered to the rural communities with the exception of wages on the major trekking routes (Sagarmatha, Langtang and Annapurna), Pokhara and Chitwan.

UNDP has worked continuously since 1971 with the Government of Nepal on a range of tourism-related programmes. Originally the focus was capacity building, followed by institutional and private sector partnerships with the Partnership for Quality Tourism Programme (PQTP) 1993 – 1998.

The PQTP led to the establishment of an important long-term private/public institutional mechanism for guiding Nepal's tourism industry into the twenty-first century – the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB).

In addition to UNDP support, a wide range of other sectoral and support programmes with tourism links has been delivered in Nepal. These are described in the TRPAP project document and include support from ADB, DFID, GTZ and SNV-N. Many NGOs in Nepal assisted tourism development, often through conservation, and include programmes with CCoder, EcoHimal, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), the Mountain Institute (TMI) and World Wide Find (WWF).

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[1] Nepal Millennium Development Goals, Progress Report 2005 – GoN Nepal and UNDP.

c) Tourism in Nepal

The TRPAP period 2001-2006 has been characterised by political turmoil and uncertainty. Tourism and the economy in general have suffered greatly. At its lowest point, tourism arrivals dipped by 44 per cent from 491,504 total arrivals in 1999 (when TRPAP was designed), to 275,468 in 2002. However visitor arrivals have recovered (up to 385,297 in 2004 and 375,398 in 2005) with similar prospects for 2006 (3.3 percent increase for the first three quarters of 2006 over the same period in 2005). Available statistics indicate that foreign exchange earnings dropped 12 percent from US$168 million in 1999 to 148 million in 2005 (MoCTCA).

Patterns of tourism have changed. In response to the Maoist insurgency operators and travel advisories are concentrating visitors only to the safe and proven products in the Annapurna, Langtang, Sagarmatha, Chitwan and Pokhara areas beyond Kathmandu. While the downturn has hit all of the industry, much of the decline has been in the high-yield Western pre-booked markets. Nepal has been dropped from influential international tour and trek wholesalers brochures. Hotels have been reporting low occupancy levels and lowest-ever average room rates. Significantly for TRPAP, trekkers and mountaineers have dropped from 26 percent of all visitors to Nepal in 2000 to only 16 percent in 2005. DNPWC reports that visitors to Langtang National Park have declined 75 percent from 10,917 in 2000 to only 2,735 in 2005. SNPBZ has fared better with a 28 percent drop (from 26,683 to 2000 to 19,284 in 2005) (DNPWC). Numbers to upper and lower Dolpa remain low with 281 visitors in 2005 (down 76 percent from 1,190 in 2000 (Central Immigration Office)). Thus opportunities to spread tourism benefits and create new attractions beyond the traditional tourism areas of Nepal have been severely constrained in recent years, both by the security situation and the limitations of tourism operators fighting for survival.

Marketing by NTB and the private sector in crisis management mode has turned to short and medium haul markets to compensate for the loss of the high-yield long-haul visitors. Traditional ecotourism segments that could be expected to pioneer new pro-poor tourism products have declined - for example, the USA and German visitors. The markets have changed and by 2005 Asian countries provided 61.3 percent of all Nepal arrivals (up from 50 percent in 2000), whilst Europe / North America / Australasia accounted for 36.6 percent in 2005, down from 48.4 percent in 2000.

d) Development Objectives of the TRPAP

The project document builds on previous initiatives of the Government of Nepal (GoN) with help from donors to address poverty alleviation.

In the GoN Ninth Plan 2002-2007 objectives concerning tourism include:

- To assist poverty alleviation by making this sector a part of the all-round economic development of the country;

- To establish backward and forward linkages of the tourism sector with the national economy so as to develop it into an active sector of the total national economy.

- To establish Nepal as a premium destination in the world tourism market through effective publicity and promotion; and

- To enhance employment opportunities, income generation and foreign currency earnings from the tourism sector and push these benefits down the village level. It is desired to develop one village in each of the fourteen zones of Nepal as a model tourist village during the period of the Tenth Plan.

The Tenth Plan, as the country's foremost policy and planning document, provides the context for the Programme. The development objective set for this Programme was:

To contribute to the poverty alleviation objective of the government through review and formulation of policy and strategic planning for sustainable tourism development which are pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-women and pro-rural communities.

e) Project Overview

The Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP) is a joint undertaking of GoN's Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), UNDP, DFID and SNV Nepal. The programme is for a five-year period 2001-2006. It is jointly funded by DFID (US$4,044,270), UNDP (US$523,568) and SNV-N (US$493,893). SNV-N's contribution is in parallel funding of advisory services.

Since September 2001, the TRPAP was implemented to varying degrees in six tourist destinations of Nepal. These six tourist destinations include seven Village Development Committees (VDCs) in the Dolpa district (the land of the snow leopard), seven VDCs around Lumbini (birthplace of Lord Buddha) in Rupandehi district, four VDCs in Chitwan (the land of the Chepangs), nine VDCs in Rasuwa district (including parts of Langtang National Park), fifteen VDCs in Solukhumbu district (including Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone) and thirteen VDCs in Kanchenjunga (Nepal's easternmost mountain trekking destination).

The project was reviewed in 2003 by DFID, and then UNDP. The two reviews provided clear recommendations to the Programme Steering Committee. The key recommendations were focused on ensuring that tourism businesses were trialled and that the social mobilization aspects of the programme be kept in proportion to the key tourism outputs of the programme.

f) Discussion – The Project Document and Design

The project document clearly outlines the concept and design for addressing the situation. TRPAP aimed to build on the broader principles of pro-poor tourism, to provide more equitable benefits to stakeholders, and to mainstream pro-poor tourism theory. Nepal is an ideal location for this pioneering experiment, being in the forefront of the Asia Pacific region when it comes to the use of tourism as a development tool to benefit the environment, local communities and women. This pro-poor ecotourism approach is well proven in the Annapurna Conservation Area Programme (ACAP), in Chitwan National Park and Sagarmatha National Park amongst others, and is generally considered to have been very effective in achieving conservation results and improving rural livelihoods.

The TRPAP approach of focused social mobilization, relevant rural development capacity building, awareness programmes, financial support, promotion and marketing, pro-poor policy development and tourism plans was comprehensive and experimental. As the UNDP mid-term evaluation noted "TRPAP is in a pioneering position to a much greater extent than the project document suggests".

The TRPAP design objectives of demonstrating tourism development models for policy feedback, developing institutional mechanisms for sustaining tourism development in Nepal, and supporting the government to review and formulate tourism development policies and strategies and integrate them with wider conservation objectives were, and still are very sound. These can be long-lasting country objectives.

The project document may have benefited from a more explicit objective that aimed at delivering successful rural tourism businesses that reflected the four mandates of pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-women and pro-community.

The project document and log frames were developed during a time of strong tourism numbers and a positive tourism outlook. By 2001, due to drastically tourism reduced to arrivals in Nepal, the main focus for Nepal tourism operators was on survival mechanisms. This meant the tourism engagement and delivery side of the programme was difficult. Whilst programme stakeholders continued to remain optimistic, the situation has been very difficult for the last five years. Tourism numbers have recovered slightly, but the situation and strength of the industry during implementation has been very different from the time when the programme was designed. This has impacted on TRPAP's ability to demonstrate sustainable tourism modules in the six areas.

The project document is more complex than it needed to be to achieve the objectives, and it is a credit to all stakeholders and especially the Project Management Unit (PMU) that it was clearly interpreted and widely understood.

The project document provided guidance and was the basis for detailed log-frames. In the first two years the rigidity of adhering to the project document were criticised by the mid-term reviews for not adapting implementation to changing circumstances. The social mobilization processes dominated and infrastructure development often took precedent. The TRPAP mid-term evaluation (MTE) commented:

> "As they are, the log-frames are a very sound starting point. If TRPAP was to continue in a straight line as a tourism-development-through-social-mobilization style Programme, then the Programme log-frames would be fine. However, the Evaluation Team wishes to steer the Programme back to the Project Document's focus of experimenting with pilot sustainable tourism development models. In this context, if left as they are, the Programme log-frames will lead to difficulties".

Subsequently the TRPAP team successfully revised the log-frames to focus the efforts of the stakeholders.

Also noted by the UNDP MTE team, and supported by the Final Evaluation Team was that:

> "A belief has arisen that a straight line exists between programmes to involve the poor and disadvantaged in tourism and the development of new rural tourism products. For the sake of those not familiar with tourism, these two strategies need to be carefully disentangled when the revised Programme log-frames are produced and at any other time when the TRPAP's plans and policies are being articulated. A clear distinction needs to be drawn between the two basic development strategies implicit in the TRPAP concept:
>
> - Fostering participation in tourism by poor and disadvantaged groups, and
> - Fostering styles of tourism that are "pro-poor, etc" in the Nepal context.

Until these two strategies are disentangled there will be endless debate. The potential for confusion is greatest at field level. VTA's, in particular, need to understand the difference and to be able to explain the differences to SMs and village stakeholders. Irrespective of whether the Project Document meant it this way or not, fostering participation by disadvantaged groups does not automatically lead to developing tourism. Developing tourism is the other aspect of TRPAP's agenda".

Whilst TRPAP endeavoured to address this issue, and to create appropriate successful tourism models, it was difficult. Assumptions and expectations by the rural stakeholders were created, tourism numbers were depressed and in many project sites, civil unrest continued (e.g. Dolpa, lower Solukhumbu and Taplejung) meant that achieving tourism successes under these conditions was, and still is, a challenge.

Despite these issues the programme concepts are still sound.

The work plans detailed in the original document were appropriate at the time.
The performance indicators of the Project Document's Workplan activities, the progress made, and FET's evaluations are in Appendix 4.

4. Project Results

The assessment of the TRPAP results by the FET was based on their relevancy, impact and sustainability. Efficiency and effectiveness were also addressed. External circumstances such as political uncertainties and the decreased flow of tourism numbers were factored into the assessment.

Using these criteria, an evaluation matrix was developed to assist in articulating the results of the programme's key outputs. The following matrix is the framework for the final evaluation team's findings.

Assessment	Code
Highly Satisfactory	HS
Satisfactory	S
Marginally Satisfactory	MS
Marginally Unsatisfactory	MU
Unsatisfactory	U
Highly Unsatisfactory	HU

The key questions that the final evaluation team addressed (based on the ToR) were:

General Results

1. To what degree have the project objectives and outputs been achieved?
   Comment
   > The three objectives and the 13 key outputs have all been achieved in an effective way. The success indicators in the project document (Policy for Sustainable Development 2001) have largely been met (Appendix 4 – Success Indicators). The biggest external influence on the overall result has been a combination of the civil unrest and the general decline in tourism, particularly in rural areas. The most significant weakness of TRPAP project document was in a focused tourism business objective and the lack of measurable indicators and suitable baseline data.

   Results
   > Satisfactory

2. Has the programme achieved the key results as outlined in the project document?
   Comment
   > The key results outlined in the project document are discussed and evaluated in the specific questions below.
   >
   > In general, the key outputs have all been addressed, and in virtually all cases considerable progress has been made. In some areas, such as

capacity building and infrastructure, considerably more results were achieved than expected (project document page 13). Some of the indicators were vague and non-specific (e.g. "increased level of knowledge of tourism and conservation benefits"). The annual plans set more specific targets, and these were often exceeded. Training targets are an example, with the project document asking only that "a wide range of training will be carried out" and in fact over 13,000 participants attended courses.

Results

Satisfactory

3. Have the recommendations made by the DFID review and UNDP mid-term evaluation missions been appropriately implemented?
Comment

The two relevant studies, the DFID mid-term review (March 2003) and UNDP mid-term evaluation (August 2003) made many (26) pertinent and focused recommendations. These recommendations became a crucial "check list" for TRPAP, DFID and UNDP. The TRPAP Steering Committee endorsed these recommendations. They have been combined into one table (Appendix 5 – Achievement against mid-term evaluation team recommendations) with the FET findings alongside to assess progress.

Both the DFID and UNDP mid-term reports encouraged TRPAP to focus on tourism districts that were likely to be successful in tourism terms. In June 2004, the DFID Review Mission Report strongly recommended with justification that TRPAP focus their efforts on Chitwan, Rasuwa, Rupandehi and upper Solukhumbu, and withdraw from developing tourism models in lower Solukhumbu, Taplejung and Dolpo.

The DFID June 2004 Review Mission proposed, due to project implementation challenges, a "no budget increase extension of the Programme to enhance the prospects of successes for this innovative Programme" (Page 1 June 2004 DFID Review).

The DFID Summary Milestones, which were agreed by the Steering Committee at the end of the DFID monitoring activities in 2005, have largely been met (Appendix 6 – TRPAP Summary of DFID Milestones by Final Evaluation Team 2006). Exceptions include some outstanding National Park Tourism activities and the Lessons Learned book, which has not yet been achieved in a satisfactory manner.

Results

Marginally Satisfactory

4. Has the programme and the implementation strategy adopted by the programme been relevant in the changed political situation of the country and to what extent the programmes have been adaptive to the changing context?
Comments

The political situation during the project period has been extremely difficult. The impact of Maoist activities throughout rural Nepal, the Royal family massacre in 2001 and ongoing difficulties with democratic processes, has meant that the TRPAP implementation has been very difficult. Whilst the major stakeholders continued to monitor the security situation (e.g. UNDP, SNV, DFID internal reviews), the programme was never suspended. This was not the case with other Nepal donor programmes.

Given the difficult situation in some of the districts (e.g. Taplejung, lower Solukhumbhu and Dolpo) it is surprising that TRPAP did not "cut its cloth" to suit and re-prioritize its outputs. SNV-Nepal in 2004 withdrew their programme support in the Dolpo and Taplejung areas due to the difficulties., the DFID and UNDP review teams both encouraged programme flexibility to allow TRPAP to withdraw from these areas.

The strong rural development expectations may have made it difficult for TRPAP activities to be withdrawn in some sites. However these were not justified by a tourism rationale under the circumstances.

Results:

Marginally Unsatisfactory

5. How far have the strategies adopted by the programme been conducive for institutional embedding the programme in Nepal Tourism Board, DDCs and VDCs?

Comments

TRPAP has had a clear focus on institutionalizing the programme at village district and national level. From the Social Mobilisers (48) to seven Village Tourism Associates to the Sustainable Tourism Development Committees (STDCs) within the six DDCs, TRPAP has been participatory with all stakeholders to give "ownership" of the programme. It has taken time and in some cases, often due to personalities it has had its difficulties. In principle, the process is in place at a district level and has also worked at a national level. TRPAP has been housed in the Nepal Tourism Board. NTB has provided three staff in the last two years to man the Sustainable Tourism Development Unit (STDU). This Unit has worked as the "bridge" between TRPAP and NTB and plays a crucial role of institutionalizing the programme.

A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has provided useful ongoing advice to the TRPAP team.

As TRPAP is UNDP-managed under NEX guidelines, one potential issue slowing down the integration of TRPAP core functions and staff into NTB is the employment terms and conditions of TRPAP staff. These are more desirable than NTB employment conditions.

Results

Satisfactory

6. To what extent has the programme been able to develop effective partnership for implementation with the various agencies and institutions?
Comments
> The project document was supported, approved and signed by six partners. In addition to them, TRPAP has forged a range of effective partnerships with a range of government departments e.g. MLD and MOF, and with NGOs e.g. KMTNC, TMI and WWF. Other organizations were engaged including HRA, NATHM, NMA, TAAN and individual private sector operators (e.g. Dream Nepal, Explore Group, Tiger Mountain etc.).
>
> There has been a strong participatory approach to the partnerships. In some cases the expectations between the partners have required considerable discussion and compromise. With the majority, the relationships have been straightforward and in many cases will continue.
>
> Managing the closure of the programme will require effort by all partners to ensure an easy transition of processes into other agencies and organizations, including with the private sector and media.

Results
> Marginally Satisfactory

7. What are the main outcomes and benefits produced by the programme and to what extent have the programme benefits reached the intended beneficiaries and how?
Comments
> The main outcomes and benefits produced by the programme include:

1. Social Mobilisation
   Throughout the six sites there has been a strong programme of community involvement in the assessment of developmental needs, the current community situation, and awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of tourism. The Tourism Environmental Awareness Programme (TEAP) was very effective in delivering this component of the project.

   Over 16,000 individuals were involved with over 750 community organizations (50.6 percent women)

2. Capacity Enhancement
   The focus of the training courses has been to assist individuals to start new tourism businesses. Courses included: cooking, baking, tourism entrepreneurship, guiding rescue skills, waste management, health, hygiene, sanitation, HIV/ AIDS, gender awareness, energy alternatives such as bio-gas and solar energy. Over 13000 attended course in the six project sites.

3. Capital

The Venture Capital Fund (VCF) was initiated in six districts to assist entrepreneurs start sustainable businesses. About US$150,000 was utilized in "revolving" loan programmes. Over 570 new enterprises involving over 2,500 people took up the loans. Over 70 percent of the loans have been paid back, which under the economic circumstances, is very good.

4. Infrastructure Development
Community-driven infrastructure development occurred extensively in all districts. Infrastructure included: trails, new and upgraded, bridges, water schemes, toilets, incinerators, rubbish and waste management schemes, signage, visitor centres etc.

5. Tourism Products
Tourism products developed included: the Limbu Cultural Trail and Pathibhara Pilgrimage Trail in Taplejung; Dudhkunda Cultural Trail and Pikey Cultural Trail in lower Solukhumbu; Eco-trek in Phortse, Sagarmatha National Park; Chepang Hills Trail on Chitwan; Lumbini Buddhist Circuit Tour in Rupandehi; Tamang Heritage Trail and homestay tourism in Rasuwa; the Dolpa Experience Trail of Dolpa; and cultural programmes (eg Sherpa, Limbu, Chhepang).

6. Marketing and Promotion
These activities have included: agents and media familiarization trips, websites, exhibitors, posters, product brochures etc.

7. Policies, Plans, Guidelines, Studies and Reviews
At a senior policy level there is a strong commitment and belief in tourism as a poverty alleviation tool for rural Nepal.
Several key documents have been provided with support and direction from TRPAP including:
- Pro-Poor Tourism Policy, 2002
- Tourism Strategic Plans
- The Nepal Tourism Marketing Plan 2005-2009
- The District Tourism Development and Management Plan
- The Sagarmatha National Park Management and Tourism Plan 2006 - 2011

The intended beneficiaries were: the Poor
Women
Community Groups, and
The environment.

The programme has engaged with these groups and been pro-environment. Social mobilisers and Village Tourism Advisors have actively sought ways of involving these groups in recruitment, business start-ups, training, micro-financing and infrastructure development. Without clear measurable programme indicators, it is hard to evaluate the benefits other than numerical attendance at workshops, gender

ratios, loan applicants and the use of the development wheel. Attendance at the final evaluation meetings in the field (e.g. Chitwan, lower Solukhumbu and Rasuwa) indicated that progress had been considerable with the three target groups i.e. women, poor and communities.

The benefits to the environment are considerable and include: stronger environmental and tourism policies and plans e.g. Sagarmatha National Park Management Plan 2006-2011, the development of infrastructure e.g. metal prayer poles instead of pine trees, active waste management systems (e.g. village rubbish and incinerators) and alternative energy sources e.g. solar power.

Results
Marginally Satisfactory

8. Has the programme adopted adequate exit strategies and a phase out plan?
Comments
TRPAP and the STDU jointly prepared a succinct exit strategy on the basis of the programme possibly closing in October 2006. The exit strategy does not fully recognize the considerable work still to be completed by TRPAP and STDU by October 2006.

The FET was left with the clear impression from most stakeholders that TRPAP should be continued for between one and five years. There was, with the exception of some donor representatives and international advisors, very little critical comment was received on how TRPAP could be strengthened or refocused.

The FET found that there were considerable expectations by stakeholders that TRPAP would be continued. These expectations, along with the late timing of the final evaluation, seemed to delay the apparent need to confirm an exit strategy and plan.

This final evaluation was undertaken within less than a month of TRPAP's completion date. Whilst the DFID final evaluation (May 2005) recommended an extension to the programme, within the budget available, this has not happened. On hindsight, undertaking the UNDP final evaluation at least three months prior to the official project deadline would have been desirable from both the programme and stakeholders' perspective.

Results
Marginally Unsatisfactory

9. Has the programme monitoring and evaluation system been effective?
Comment
The TRPAP established clear monitoring systems. These were based on the detailed work programme and log frames.

The evaluation systems were predominantly carried out by TRPAP staff but with strong participatory processes in evaluating activities.

The limitations in the monitoring process were a lack of clearly accountable indicators and outcomes in the project document. Phrases such as "demonstrated evidence of improved conservation practices" or "a large number of the trainees will be capable of…" are very imprecise. However many outputs, such as district level tourism plans, the SNP management and tourism plan, new product development, policy development can and were measured. (See Appendices 4, 5 and 6)

Result

Marginally Satisfactory

10. Has there been any unintended outcome (positive or negative) of the project?
Comments

TRPAP was by nature ambitious, complex and far reaching. The programme was prepared in a time of buoyant tourism growth in Nepal and did not foresee the significant impacts of the civil unrest, the difficulties with democratic processes, resulting tourism downturns and the evolution of the implementation processes. A key unexpected outcome was the considerable success of the programme in delivering rural development benefits (e.g. self reliance, capacity building, small scale infrastructure development and alternative power sources (biogas and solar)) during the serious disruptions to civil society. TRPAP survived despite these issues. The widespread support by Nepal stakeholders throughout the project areas may not have been expected.

The challenges in exiting the programme, and building on the strengths and weaknesses of TRPAP without just replicating it, may have been underestimated.

Result

Not Applicable

11. What are the key factors requiring attention in order to improve prospects for future sustainability of the programme outcomes?
Comments:

Due to the strong stakeholder support and the challenges TRPAP donors and partners faced in articulating problems with the programme, there us a reluctance by many stakeholders, especially TRPAP staff, to accept that the "experimental" nature of the programme must result in some unsatisfactory results.

With this in mind, the FET believes that an extension of the current programme, within a defined period, is required. That the focus for this work be on:

- Institutionalizing core TRPAP functions into DDCs, VDCs, Buffer Zone management institution groups and the restructured STDU;

- Ensuring that at a district level the ongoing maintenance of infrastructure is addressed;
- That current tourism businesses at the project sites continue to receive focused business, product development, marketing skills training, and capital assistance (VCF) and advice;
- Sharing lessons learned from TRPAP.

Results

Not Applicable

12. What are the prospects for future programming in the area?
Comment

The FET, along with many stakeholders, have a strong belief that tourism can be a positive development tool for alleviating poverty in Nepal. TRPAP and many other programmes have created useful models and examples. Future Nepal based programmes could build on the successes of this TRPAP with a focus on:

- The four modules of pro-poor, pro-gender, pro-community and environment;
- Sharing successful models;
- Focusing all programmes on areas that have genuine tourism market potential, rather than community aspirations for tourism (e.g. select villages sites within reach of current or prospective markets);
- Ensuring that there are strong tourism private sector linkages with the programme development and implementation from the start;
- Ensuring institutions at all levels i.e. village, district and national government departments are committed to the programme;
- Build on the recently developed pro-poor tourism "policies" and ensure their inclusion in the Nepal Tourism Master Plan that is currently under preparation;
- Enhancement to those involved with rural tourism product development;
- Focus infrastructure development to key tourism assets and their future maintenance;
- Continue the tourism VentureCapital Fund model.

Specific Questions

A To demonstrate sustainable tourism development models for policy feedback (Objective 1)

1. Has the programme implementation been effective at district and community levels (especially related to community groups, functional groups)?

There have been over 750 communities organisations involving 15,973 people (50.6 percent women) developed in the six districts. These

organisations along with the four Village Development Committees, District Development Committees, Buffer Zone Management Committees, Buffer Zone groups and Sustainable Development Committees have, in most cases, worked well. The three formal groups (DDCs, STDCs and VDCs) are crucial to the success of the programme and in most cases have embraced it. Where DDC's and STDCs have not been effective, this may have been personality-driven. As mentioned above, civil unrest in some areas (i.e Taplejung, lower Solukhumbu and Dolpo) slowed down programme implementation considerably.

Result: Satisfactory

2. To what extent has the programme implemented gender sensitive pro-poor approaches and what have been their impacts at the local level?
Comment

Programme implementation at all levels was pro-women. At a focal group level, of the 2,271 people involved, 960 were women. The effective TEAP programmes were attended by 27,304 people, of whom 12,270 women. The programme has a policy of having woman as chair of the committees, and a minimum 40 percent ratio on project committees. These examples are indicators of the proactive role the programme took with its pro-gender, pro-poor approach and how women successfully embraced the programme.

To a certain degree, the programme challenges reflected the wider Nepal context regarding gender and pro-poor issues. There is still a lot of work to be achieved.

Result: Marginally Unsatisfactory

3. How far has the tourism related micro-enterprise development work has been effective in the rural areas?
Comment:

Whilst a considerable amount of preparatory micro-enterprise work has occurred in tourism awareness, business training, loans and more recently marketing of rural tourism products, the results have yet to be delivered in terms of business cash flow.

The focus of the TRPAP's work has been in assisting those wishing to enter the markets in developing products. Marketing support has then been provided. The approach has been one of aiming to bring tourists to the products. The Venture Capital Fund has been very successful model for assisting small businesses.

Insignificant attention was given by TRPAP and its advisors to which products would be suitable for the markets. The question of "will people buy this guesthouse, guiding service, shower facility, handicraft ?" was not asked enough. Too many of the new products are too similar. Given that the tourism flows are still weak in many of the sites, it has proven too much of a challenge to effectively launch these

products. Insufficient attention was given to developing indirect products e.g. handicrafts / fresh food that could be sold to the tourism sector in Kathmandu. Only time will tell as to which products survive. It is likely that some will collapse and new unplanned but market-driven products (e.g. teashops, lodges at Nagthali Ghyang on the Tamang Heritage Trail) will appear.

Result: Marginally Unsatisfactory

4. Are the rural tourism models developed by the programme still relevant?
   Comments:

   The development of sustainable rural tourism models was a key objective for TRPAP. The mid-term evaluation clearly encouraged the TRPAP team to put more effort and focus into the development of models in each of the six districts. Within the following year, the TRPAP developed a range of new products. (See 1.7 above)

   Whilst the models were developed within the communities and at a district level, they lacked sufficient practical tourism business advice from qualified experts.

   For example, in some cases, e.g. the Chepang Trail, there are considerable quality and marketing challenges to overcome in order to successfully develop this product. In other areas there is an oversupply of products (e.g. over 20 home stays at Briddim on the Tamang Heritage Trail competing with already existing guest house with a market of less than 100 trekkers a year).

   Whilst most of the tourism models are still relevant, further assistance is needed to those products and services that have a good chance of surviving. Sharing the reasons why some of these products are struggling would be a useful outcome (e.g. over supply, poor location, competition, and / or lack of markets). The role of some of the models and their positive impact on the domestic market (eg. Tatopani hot springs and Lumbini handicrafts) is highly relevant for the industry. The role of the domestic tourism market should be explored in any future rural tourism programme.

   Result: Satisfactory

5. How far has the small-scale tourism related infrastructure work supported by the programme been effective?
   Comments:

   TRPAP's work in the six districts with tourism-related infrastructure has been effective. Development occurred with the local communities, facilitated by TRPAP staff, VTAs and social mobilisers through the DDCs and the Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund (TIDF).

   The original project document was working on the appropriate assumption that the planned ADB Nepal Ecotourism Project would support rural tourism infrastructure. In the event, this did not happen.

The TRPAP subsequently carried some of the extra small-scale activities in this area. The challenge now is to ensure that maintenance of the facilities is sustainably embedded in the DDCs, VDCs and various buffer zone and community groups. There are positive signs that this is occurring.

Result: Highly Satisfactory

6. To what extent the various training packages and manuals developed by the programme are useful?
Comments:

A good range of training programmes were undertaken. Courses included: guiding, hospitality, small business, marketing and waste management. In addition to the training workshops, a wide range of substantial, supporting manuals and practical material (e.g. price lists, menus etc) were delivered. Over 13,000 people attended the 348 training courses.

During the training courses evaluations and to the FET, stakeholders were positive and enthusiastic about the quality of the training courses and materials.

There are some good TRPAP training manuals that can be distributed to other relevant projects in Nepal.

Results: Satisfactory.

7. Has the various development tools (like Development Wheel, TEAP, APPA) used by the programme been effective?
Comments:

The three key development tools used by TRPAP were APPA for community planning, the Development Wheel for participatory assessments, and TEAP which was a comprehensive educational programme on tourism and the environment at village level.

During the commencement of TRPAP in 2002 and 2003, these three tools were used extensively throughout the villages and districts. Over 27,300 people attended TEAP workshops. In some districts, over 80 percent of the villages were involved with APPA and Development Wheel workshops. Participants attended were actively involved with the Development Wheel, which in some cases, continues to be a monitoring tool.

Whilst the tools have been successful, concern was expressed by the mid-term evaluation team, the DFID monitoring team and endorsed by the FET that the processes used have had the effect of creating high expectations by the communities. The lack of realistic tourism development planning, including product and marketing assessments at the time of social mobilization, has led to the expectation of tourism benefits that have yet to, and may never, be realises.

Results: Highly Effective

B. To develop institutional mechanisms for sustainable tourism development in Nepal. (Objective 2)

1. How far are the STDCs functional in programme VDCs capable of planning and implementing tourism activities by integrating them into village development plans?
   Comments:

   > The concept of institutionalizing TRPAP activities into Sustainable Tourism Development Committees (STDCs) in the VDCs has been fundamentally sound. In many villages, e.g. in the Rasuwa area, the process has been reasonably straightforward. In some districts, the Maoist impact on the democratic planning process has curtailed the effectiveness of the STDCs to a significant degree. This is particularly so in Taplejung, lower Solukhumbu and Dolpa. The integration of tourism activities into district development plans has been patchy and further institutional strengthening in this area is required.

   Result: Satisfactory

2. How far are the STDS functional in the DDCs in mainstreaming rural tourism and development activities in the district development planning process?
   Comments:

   > The six districts all have Sustainable Tourism Development Sections (STDSs) planned for their DDCs. In Dolpo and Taplejung, the STDSs are not properly functioning. In Lumbini, where there are strong tourism flows especially from the domestic market, the STDC is effective. In Chitwan, Rasuwa and upper Solukhumbu, STDSs are operating, but the STDC has yet to be effective in the lower Solukhumbu.

   Result: Marginally Satisfactory

3. How far has the program been able to establish linkages with the private sector for product development and marketing?
   Comments:

   > TRPAP's product development process, as mentioned above has been predominantly led by community development aspirations. Linkages with the private sector for both product development and marketing were, in most cases, not strong. Only in a few cases such as at Lumbini, the tourism advisory services from SNV-N provided focused advise which created new markets in Kathmandu and offshore. Some Lumbini handicraft producers have secured reasonably sustainable new markets.

   > The product development linkages with the private sector should have been stronger at the start of the product cycle. Too many "copy-cat" products have been developed e.g. homestays and treks. Whilst the Kathmandu trekking and travel agencies have been generally supportive of TRPAP (e.g. attendance on familiarization trips), it has

been very difficult for them to test new products in a constrained tourism environment. They have been challenged even to keep the traditional Nepal treks (e.g. Everest and Annapurna) in international travels agent brochures, let alone introduce new areas and products. Further work in product revitalization and marketing is required.

Result: Unsatisfactory

4. Whether MoCTCA's capacity to formulate and mainstream pro-poor tourism policies and strategies into government's development policies and strategies has increased?
Comments:

The programme had several initiatives to assist MoCTCA in this area. The programmes technical support from UNDP and SNV - N assisted in preparing four key policy documents – including the pro-poor tourism policy, a 15-year Nepal Tourism Marketing Strategic Plan (2005 – 2020), District Tourism Development & Management plans and assisted with the Tourism and Management Plan for Sagarmatha National Park. MoCTCA and other relevant government departments, the National Planning Commission have actively promoted pro-poor concepts in the Nepal Tourism Development Plan 2007 – 2017 and the 10th GoN strategic plan (2002 – 2007). There are considerable opportunities, resources permitting for MoCTCA to continue to strength its pro-poor tourism advise into other districts and agencies.

Results: Marginally Unsatisfactory

5. Whether NTBs capacity in planning and developing sustainable rural tourism has increased?
Comments:

NTB capacity has increased, but primarily through the Sustainable Tourism Development Unit (STDU). The STDU is staffed (3) and serviced by the NTB, designed as "the bridge" between TRPAP and NTB to institutionalise the planning and development of sustainable rural tourism. Although the STDU is only two years old, it already has the potential and opportunity to enable NTB to provide rural tourism product and marketing input across the nation. It can also be the link to tourism donors. The STDU is a direct result of TRPAP's work and, as such, is a successful outcome of the programme. If the functions of STDU are to continue effectively, there is a need for the STDU to be strengthened considerably.

The proposed United Nations Environmental Programme's (UNEP) marketing assistance to Nepal for Sustainable Tourism Products (MANSTOP) would most logically be housed in the strengthened STDU.

Results: Marginally Satisfactory

6. Whether NTB justifies providing marketing and promotional services to the six tourist destinations?
Comments:

NTB in the last two years, have helped launch and actively market TRPAP products in six districts. These activities have included: familiarization trips for trekking and travel operators, the production of brochures, posters, videos, media releases, and booklets, and support at international trade shows. TRPAP have worked closely with NTB to deliver these marketing and promotional activities.

The effectiveness of the marketing has yet to be confirmed. Tourism markets are slow and products are new. Promotional material for Dolpo, and Taplejung products may not be effective due to the perceived security issues, competitors and the remoteness of these areas.

Results: Marginally Satisfactory

7. Whether collaboration with NATHM in conducting training and extension activities has been satisfactory?
Comments:
NATHM, the GoN's tourism training institute, has from the start of TRPAP been the main provider of training programme as prescribed in the project document. A wide range of programmes has been delivered by NATHM with over 13,000 individuals receiving training. The relationship between TRPAP and NATHM evolved during the implementation period. As the UNDP MTE mentioned, there was a need to transfer NATHM skills to a local level. This has occurred with the use of local providers such as the Himalayan Rescue Association training national park staff in rescue skills. TRPAP has also been working with a range of private sector training organisations.

Results: Marginally Satisfactory

8. Whether tourism market linkages initiated by the programme have been effective?
Comments:
The issue of tourism market linkages have been discussed in section A3 above. Whilst linkages do exist, there has been a general lack of strong tourism markets. District tourism products have had limited success, with some products such as the Lumbini handicrafts, and vegetables from the lower Solukhumbu reaching markets in Kathmandu and upper Solukhumbu respectively. However, not enough effort was made in creating successful models of these "products to the markets" approach

Results: Unsatisfactory

C. To support the government in reviewing and formulating sustainable tourism development policies and strategies, in tune with wider conservation objectives. (Objective 3)

1. Whether changes in policies and strategies on tourism development are directed towards sustainable tourism development?
Comments:

There have been some clear positive changes in sustainable tourism development.

The proposed MoCTCA's Trekking Registration Certificate (TRC) that will require (as of October 2006) all trekkers to Nepal to trek with a registered trekking agency may not benefit the rural guides and porters based outside of Kathmandu This is of concern to the FET.

At a district level, tourism plans now reflect sustainability issues. The SNP Management and Tourism Plan has strong sustainability approaches. At a national level TRPAP DNPWC's Project Management Office (PMO) and the STDU in NTB both address and promote sustainable tourism development.

There is, and most likely always will be, the need for "champions" for sustainable rural tourism development within government and the private sector. The DNPWC's PMO and NTB's STDU (or its successor) can provide this.

Result: Marginally Satisfactory

2. What is the likelihood of endorsement and implementation of pro-poor tourism policy and long-term tourism and marketing strategy?
Comments:
The GoN's pro-poor tourism policy, along with the Nepal Marketing Strategy 2005-2015, was prepared by two international consultants. Whilst the policies have been circulated at workshops and forums, and have been endorsed by the National Planning Commission, they have yet to be endorsed by MoCTCA. This delay is very unfortunate.

The Nepal Tourism Marketing Strategy Plan was completed in 2004. The strategy has been published by NTB and is being implemented by NTB and the private sector.

Result: for the pro-poor and sustainable tourism strategy – Unsatisfactory
For the Nepal Marketing Strategy 2005 to 2015 – Satisfactory

3. What have been the commitments of government institutions to implement tourism management plan of Sagarmatha NP?
Comments:
The Sagarmatha National Park Management and Tourism Plan was completed by DNPWC with TRPAP's assistance, including the provision of an international National Park tourism expert in 2004-2005. The Plan has been well received by the Solukhumbu stakeholders and DNPWC.

The plan has detailed the rights and responsibilities of the Buffer Zone communities, private sector and government agencies and outlined conservation measures. The Plan has had an Initial Environmental Impact Assessment and is now with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation for approval.

Despite the delay in approval, the DNPWC, NTB and MoCTCA are all committed to the Plan's implementation. Progress has been slow due to delays in the preparation of the Plan, insecurity issues, DNPWC's priorities and workloads.

Whilst some activities such as the Tourism Forum have occurred, several other recommended activities (e.g. the Monju Visitor Centre in the Solukhumbu and the microhydro scheme at Lukla) have yet to be completed.

Results: Marginally Satisfactory

4. Whether pro-poor tourism concepts are being integrated into ecotourism planning elsewhere?
Comments:
The pro-poor tourism concepts have yet to be integrated into a range of new ecotourism projects. This lack of integration of pro-poor concepts into ecotourism projects reflects the lack of new Nepal ecotourism projects from donors and the private sector. This is probably due to external factors such as the decline in arrivals and constraints on new tourism areas in the last five years. There appears to be a desire by stakeholders to integrate the concepts into future sustainable tourism products.

Results: Unsatisfactory

5. Whether commitments of DNPWC to integrate tourism into conservation planning of all protected areas have been reliable?
Comments:
The DNPWC's integration of tourism into plans and operation has increased considerably over the last five years. The DNPWC, supported by TRPAP, has established a tourism section in their headquarters. Tourism management offices have been established in Langtang National Park and Sagarmatha National Park district offices. Progress on tourism units in the other National Park offices is slow, probably due to the prevailing security situation. Further work on institutionalising the tourism unit within the DNPWC is needed.

Results: Marginally Unsatisfactory?

6. What has been the role of the government, particularly MoCTCA in creating an enabling environment for rural tourism development in the county?
Comments:
Nationally, there is considerable support from politicians, senior public officials and policy makers for rural tourism development. TRPAP has actively championed this cause. TRPAP with support from MoCTCA and NTB has successfully improved the environment for rural tourism development in Nepal.

TRPAP has been widely acknowledged for its rural development benefits, including trails, signs, information centres, improved water sanitation and alternative power projects. Many other districts are seeking to replicate the TRPAP model.

Whilst the tourism livelihood benefits have yet to significantly bring increased income to the rural community, the infrastructure, capacity enhancement and social mobilization benefits are already seen as beneficial.

The TEAP have created supportive communities in the six districts who accept tourism as a means to potentially improve their livelihoods.

Results: Satisfactory

5. Table of Summary of Results

Key Results

Following are the key questions of the final evaluation team and their results:

Assessment Codes:					
High Satisfactory = HS	Satisfactory = S	Marginally = MS	Marginally Unsatisfactory = MU	Unsatisfactory = U	Highly Unsatisfactory = HU

Assessment of Key Questions:	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
General Results						
1. To what degree have the project objectives and outputs been achieved?		�ढ				
2. Has the programme achieved the key results as outlined in the Project Document		▢				
3. Have the recommendations made by the DFID review and mid term evaluation (MTE) missions been appropriately implemented?			▢			
4. Has the programme and the implementation strategy adopted by the programme been relevant in the changed political situation of the country and to what extent the programmes have been adaptive to the changing context?				▢		
5. How far the strategies adopted by the programme has been conducive for institutional embedding of the programme in Nepal Tourism Board, DDCs and VDCs?		▢				
6. To what extent the programme has been able to develop effective partnerships for implementation with the various agencies and institutions?			▢			
7. What are the main outcomes and benefits produced by the programme and to what extent the programme benefits have reached the intended beneficiaries and how?			▢			

Assessment of Key Questions:	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
8. Has the programme adopted adequate exit strategies and phase out plan?				▓		
9. Has the programme monitoring and evaluation system been effective?			▓			
10. Has there been any unintended outcome (positive or negative) of the project?	NA					
11. What are the key factors requiring attention in order to improve prospects for future sustainability of the programme outcomes?	NA					
12. What are the prospects for future programming in the area?	NA					
Specific Results						
A: To demonstrate sustainable tourism development models for policy feedback (Objective 1)			▓			
1. Has the programme implementation been effective at district and community levels (especially related to community groups, functional groups)?		▓				
2. To what extent the program implemented gender sensitive pro-poor approaches and what have been their impacts at the local level?		▓				
3. How far the tourism related micro-enterprise development work has been effective in the rural areas?				▓		
4. Are the rural tourism models developed by the programme still relevant?		▓				
5. How far has the small-scale tourism related infrastructure work supported by the programme been effective?	▓					
6. To what extent the various training packages and manuals developed by the programme are useful?			▓			

Assessment of Key Questions:	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
7. Has the various development tools (like Development Wheel, TEAP, APPA) used by the programme been effective?	�■					
B: To develop institutional mechanisms for sustainable tourism development in Nepal. (Objective 2)			■			
1. How far are the STDCs functional in programme VDCs and capable of planning and implementing tourism activities by integrating them into village development plans?				■		
2. How far the STDS are functional in the DDCs in mainstreaming rural tourism and development activities in the district development planning process?			■			
3. How far the program has been able to establish linkages with the private sector for product development and marketing?					■	
4. Whether MoCTCA's capacity to formulate and mainstream pro-poor tourism policies and strategies into government's development policies and strategies has increased?				■		
5. Whether NTB's capacity in planning and developing sustainable rural tourism has increased?			■			
6. Whether NTB justifies providing marketing and promotional services to the six tourist destinations?		■				
7. Whether collaboration with NATHM in conducting training and extension activities has been satisfactory?			■			
8. Whether tourism market linkages initiated by the programme have been effective?				■		
C: To support the government in reviewing and formulating sustainable tourism development policies and strategies, in tune with wider conservation objectives. (Objective 3)			■			
1. Whether changes in policies and strategies on tourism development are directed towards sustainable tourism development?			■			
2. What is the likelihood of endorsement and implementation of pro-poor tourism policy and long-term tourism and marketing strategy?			■			

Assessment of Key Questions:	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
3. What have been the commitments of government institutions to implement tourism management plan of Sagarmatha NP&BZ?			▓			
4. Whether pro-poor tourism concept is being integrated into eco-tourism planning elsewhere?				▓		
5. Whether commitments of DNPWC to integrate tourism into conservation planning of all protected areas have been reliable?			▓			
6. What has been the role of the government, particularly MoCTCA in creating an enabling environment for rural tourism development in the county?		▓				

6. Key Findings

The key findings of the FET include:

- The TRPAP is a well thought out, ambitious (nearly US$ 5 million) pro-poor tourism programme. It is experimental by nature. It has had some considerable successes, especially with:

  - Socially mobilizing a strong cadre of target groups to work for the programme, and successfully applying participatory planning tools.
  - Developing a wide range of rural infrastructure, e.g. trail development, bridges, signs, rubbish collection, alternative energy systems, community lodges, and water schemes.
  - Developing appropriate institutional support in the respective districts that provides direction and ownership of the TRPAP principles. TRPAP's work with DDCs, VDCs and STDCs in most cases has been successful, despite difficult conditions. DDCs, VDCs, BZMCs, BZUGs and STDCs have made progress in institutionalizing the issues, and some activities will be sustained (e.g. STDC activities and infrastructure development)
  - Providing capacity enhancement, both in Kathmandu and in the districts, has in most cases been effective. A wide range of stakeholders (over 13,000) were given skills training.
  - Providing small business access to capital through the Venture Capital Fund (VCF).

- The TRPAP was delivered by a "stand alone" project office within the Nepal Tourism Board. This has considerable advantages as it provided strong GoN linkages and also enabled TRPAP to stay focused on delivering results. Good communication linkages and support within NTB were well maintained throughout the project period.

- Whilst the programme was designed in times of buoyant tourism (1999-2000), TRPAP was delivered (2001–2006) during a period of struggling tourism due to the serious civil unrest in many parts of the country, including all TRPAP sites. This was particularly relevant in Taplejung, and Dolpo districts. The difficulties in these areas led the aid programme partner, SNV-N, to withdraw their eco-tourism projects in these areas due to the

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challenges faced in implementing their work. The lack of tourism to these two districts also severely impacted on achieving the goals of the programme. In some sites TRPAP is perceived to be "the face of government". It is a real credit to all stakeholders, especially the TRPAP team, that the programme survived and, in many areas, even flourished.

- A large part of the first two years of the programme were focused on administration, establishing an office, recruitment and training of over 70 staff. This was followed by period with a strong focus on social mobilization and organization. This latter process included the highly successful Tourism Environmental Awareness Programme (TEAP).

- The TRPAP Project Management Unit (PMU) is an efficient, output-focused organization with good stakeholder support, strong leadership and transparent management systems.

- The mid term evaluations by DFID and UNDP provided sound advice. A key concern was the need to: "draw clear distinctions between the two basic development strategies implicit in the TRPAP concept:

  i. Fostering participation in tourism by poor and disadvantaged groups, and
  ii. Fostering styles of tourism that are pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-women, pro-community in the rural Nepal context".

- Whilst the TRPAP team addressed these issues, the lack of sufficient strong tourism expertise early on in project implementation has hampered the tourism planning processes, particularly with pilot products in project sites. The result has been the development of a number of small businesses that often did not have sound tourism market or product development rationale. TRPAP has achieved strong rural development, micro finance and social mobilization capacity and successful institutional enhancement, but it has failed to create many small flourishing tourism-related businesses.

- Whilst some efforts were made by TRPAP to take services and products to the markets (e.g. successfully linking Lumbini Handicrafts with Kathmandu retailers and exporters), greater focus could have been given to generating indirect benefits. There are many success stories in Asia of rural communities developing goods for tourism markets beyond their villages.

- Partnership funding involving three donors (DFID, SNV-N and UNDP) was conceptually sound. In reality, at times the different expectations, cultures and inputs created some tensions, especially in the area of advisory services. On hindsight, the provision of technical advice should have been more focussed to the needs of the programme. The crucial balance between social processes and technical tourism support could have been provided at different times and in varying amounts. Focused tourism business and marketing advice at an early product development stage would have increased the possibility of more successful small tourism businesses and greater engagement by Nepal's tourism industry.

- Nepal has been to the forefront of rural tourism development in Asia in areas of mountain tourism, ecotourism, community-based tourism, pro-poor tourism, using tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation. It is therefore desirable that the TRPAP lessons learned, both good and bad, are shared in the districts (and with local government), with the Kathmandu industry, and with the international ecotourism community. The agreed production of a book on TRPAP "lessons learned" (see DFID Summary Milestones) is a crucial output that was under preparation during the FET study.

- Nepal is at the forefront of the Asia Pacific region with its experience of using tourism as a development tool to reduce poverty, using a range of approaches to ensure tourism delivers rural benefits. These are used as models elsewhere such as in Lao PDR, Vietnam, Fiji, Samoa etc. The success of TRPAP means that Nepal is now firmly positioned as a sustainable tourism pioneer, with even more valuable experiences to share.

7. Key Lessons Learned From The Government Of Nepal TRPAP Programme 2001-2006

- The development of rural community development initiatives (e.g. health, water, bridges, trails, alternative power supplies etc.) and sustainable small tourism businesses (e.g. guesthouses, teashops, guide services and handicrafts etc.) must be done simultaneously and be complementary. TTRPAP did not engage in focused market-led tourism product development early enough in the development process.

- The success of social mobilization processes in rural tourism development, including the widespread use of Tourism Environmental Awareness Programmes (TEAP) and tools such as Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA), and the involvement of locally appointed social mobilisers, were both strong positive lessons learnt from TRPAP.

- Managing a pro-poor tourism programme in Nepal during a long period of civil unrest that included considerable political uncertainty, the royal massacre (June 2001) heightened Maoist activities that involved an estimated 12,000 fatalities in a decade, and disruption to democratic processes, was difficult (particularly in the Taplejung, lower Solukhumbu and Dolpa project sites). It is a credit to project team and stakeholders that theTRPAP programme did not collapse.

- The significant downturn and fluctuations in international tourism to Nepal during the TRPAP period created very difficult conditions. Visitor arrivals dropped from 490,000 in 1999 to a low of 275,000 visitors in 2001 and 375,000 in 2005. This was particularly hard for the creation of new businesses trying to establish themselves in new destinations away from traditional tourism areas.

- Developing new tourism products in areas with no established tourism flows is extremely difficult and presents formidable promotional challenges, especially in the context of Nepal's geographically constrained tourism patterns. Linking new businesses with established operators from Kathmandu would have increased the chances of success. Undertaking a rigorous market analysis, and providing focused business advice should have been (and often were not) an essential part of any new product development process.

- TRPAP is an ambitious experiment in pro-poor tourism. Whilst the project document captured all the main issues, greater emphasis should have been placed on demonstrating successful sustainable

livelihoods through rural tourism businesses. An additional objective to this effect would have been desirable in the project document.

- The DFID and UNDP 2003 mid-term evaluations expressed the need for TRPAP to have a greater focus on the development of successful tourism business. This was only partially achieved.

- The tourism VentureCapital Fund (VCF) concept is very sound and effective, and has replicability elsewhere in Nepal.

- Organisations and institutions involved in pro-poor tourism activities must have good access to focused tourism business advice. The staff of the DDCS, STDCS and TRPAP often lacked the ability to provide this input.

- It needs to be recognised that reaching out to involve disadvantaged communities and the poorest individuals in direct tourism activities is very difficult.

- The selection by TRPAP of specific villages in project sites lacked sufficient tourism business focus. In some cases, too many villages in a district were targeted for livelihood development.

- A clear and focused exit strategy is required with sufficient time to embed and mainstream programme activities before closing. TRPAP lacked this.

- TRPAP's six programme partners often had different expectations and agendas. The programme would have benefited from closer dialogue between key stakeholders throughout the programme

- TRPAP's capacity enhancement work was effective. The participatory approach to identifying training needs was useful and well conducted. Care needs to be taken that training does not increase expectations of improved work opportunities that may not eventuate.

- It is important that the lessons learned from this programme are shared, locally, nationally and internationally.

8. Recommendations

1. To prepare a publication "lessons learned from the TRPAP programme 2001–2006" as agreed by the steering committee and described in the DFID Summary Milestones.
   Action: TRPAP and UNDP (with national and international consultants)
   Budget: within TRPAP. UNDP to support technical expertise,
   Timing: 2006

2. To run a series of awareness programmes, locally, nationally and internationally, to showcase and disseminate pro-poor lessons learned from TRPAP and other relevant Nepal programmes.
   Action: UNDP
   Budget: within TRPAP
   Timing: February – May 2007

3. To continue to provide support for targeted small tourism businesses in the lower Solukhumbu, Rasuwa, Chitwan, and Rupandehi sites. This support would include capacity enhancement, business advice, marketing support from NTB and the private sector, and the continuation of the Venture Capital Fund with advice from TAG.
   Action: TRPAP
   Budget: within TRPAP
   Timing: by June 2007

4. To phase out all TRPAP activities in the Dolpa and Taplejung districts.
   Action: TRPAP and UNDP
   Budget: within TRPAP
   Timing: as soon as practicable and no later than June 2007

5. To ensure mechanisms are in place at a district level for infrastructure funded by TRPAP to be maintained by DDCs and VDCs on an ongoing basis.
   Action: TRPAP, PMU and STDC
   Budget: DDC to address
   Timing: by December 2006

6. To strengthen linkages with the six DDCs in project sites (including infrastructure maintenance, micro credit, training and tourism business support) and to ensure that all TRPAP core district functions are absorbed into the DDCs.

Action: DDCs, TRPAP and LDC
Budget: Within TRPAP
Timing: by June 2007

7. That the DNPWC continue the close collaboration and partnerships with the tourism industry that have been strengthened through this programme.
Action: DNPWC and MOT
Budget: not applicable
Timing: ongoing

8. That the DNPWC and SMNPBZ institutions complete the Park Visitor Centre development, the Lukla micro hydro project and ensuring the DNPWC tourism unit is functional, with support from TRPAP, as soon as possible.
Action: By DNPWC and SNPBZ management institutions
Budget: As allocated
Timing: as soon as practicable and no later than June 2007

9. To reorganise and strengthen the current STDU within the NTB to provide the sustainable tourism advisory functions, and to absorb TRPAP's core roles.
Action: NTB to lead restructuring exercise (with assistance from a tourism organizational expert.)
Budget: UNDP to support technical expertise. NTB to support the strengthened STDU.
Timing: early 2007

10. To develop an agreed exit plan for TRPAP that:
- Reduces the PMU staff to reflect the exit strategy by December 2006.
- Reduces the PMO staff to reflect the Sagarmatha component exit strategy by December 2006.
- Allows for the managed change of TRPAP responsibilities to the relevant agencies (STDU and DDCs)
- Completes the recommendations 1-10
  Action: UNDP, NTB, restructured STDU and TRPAP
  Budget: UNDP and TRPAP to prepare a detailed budget utilizing current under allocated.
- Timing: by June 2007

11. To ensure the strengthened STDU is fully functional within the NTB by mid 2007, and responsible for coordinating all the GoN pro-poor tourism activities, including linkages with supporting donors.
Action: NTB, TRPAP, STDU
Budget: NTB. To be addressed

Timing: by June 2007

12. That Development Partners can learn lessons from this programme,
    particularly in the areas of: working in conflict situations, listening to
    the needs of the GoN's lead agencies and in the provision of
    technical support.
    Action: Development Partners (DFID, UNDP, SNV-N)
    Budget: Not applicable
    Timing: On programme completion

13. That the GoN carefully address the immediate sustainability of
    TRPAP's objectives and future activities into district and
    governmental institutions.
    Action: MoCTA and MLD
    Budget: Not applicable
    Timing: within the next six months

14. UNDP to consider supporting the preparation of a project document
    that provides (for 2-3 years) ongoing rural tourism development
    support to Nepal. The new project will build on TRPAP work,
    support the pro-poor policy and plans, and consider the successes
    and failures of TRPAP. The clear focus of the new programme is
    the provision of technical support (product development, marketing,
    and access to capital) for current and future rural tourism
    businesses that benefit the community, the poor, women and other
    target stakeholders. The programme would be focused on
    supporting the private sector in developing products that support
    propoor tourism. The programme would need strong support from
    the private sector, the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and the District
    Development Committees (DDCs). This new project would
    compliment the proposed UNEP MANSTOP Kathmandu-based
    national marketing programme. A project design study would be
    required to prepare a focused programme and terms of reference.
    Action: UNDP and NTB and the strengthened STDU
    Budget: to be addressed
    Timing: 2007

9. Conclusions

The TRPAP has made a significant contribution to assisting with piloting tourism approaches, policies and products that are pro-poor by nature.

The programme faced challenges that included civil unrest and the decline in tourism, but policies have been developed, products trialled, communities engaged with rural tourism, and infrastructure developed.

The challenge now is to build on the TRPAP successes, learn from the failures, and create livelihoods for rural Nepal communities that are sustainable.

Appendices