

PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT PROJECT (PFMP)

Phase II July 2007 to June 2013

Partner Social Forestry and Extension Division, Department of Forests and Park Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

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Geographic Coverage The project covers all 20 districts of Bhutan.

The overall goal of the project is to contribute to the improvement of rural livelihoods by empowering local communities to manage forests resources allocated to them as community forests on a sustainable basis.

Objectives:

- Existence of an enabling environment for the establishment of community forests throughout the country;
- Capacities built at all levels for effective implementation of the community forestry programme and to ensure sustainability;
- The community forestry programme contributes to poverty reduction.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Today, community forestry is a key component of Bhutan's forest policy and an important movement in the country. Community forestry was first explored in the late 1990s, but faced considerable initial resistance. Following the adoption of a more decentralised and people-centred approach to forestry, the number of community forests and community forest management groups (CFMGs) has increased rapidly since 2007. Since the start of the project in 2002, the PFMP has contributed substantially to the development of community forestry in Bhutan.

The challenges for the community forestry programme now revolve around quality assurance of the community forestry approach, issues of consolidation of community forestry, harmonisation with other relevant policies and approaches to forest management, pro-poor income generation from marketing forest produce and services, improving group and local governance and capacity development, mainly of CFMGs and foresters supporting the groups.

OUTLOOK

The PFMP continues to be engaged in efforts to make the regulatory framework for community forestry more enabling. Furthermore, the project contributes to the further development of capacities of member households of CFMGs, foresters and other stakeholders for community forestry, facilitates cooperation between the groups and supports active forest management and income generation from forest management.

The community forestry programme has made significant progress to date. But it will take several years before the gains can be consolidated. Most of the CFMGs have just started the process of evolving into mature local institutions that are empowered and able to manage their forests for both biophysical and socio-economic outcomes.

