



FOREST and FARM FACILITY Country achievements



Nepal



HIGHLIGHTS OF IMPACTS

- **Policy outcomes influenced** by Forest and Farm Producer Organizations (FFPOs) with **important implications for improving livelihoods and forest sustainability** through direct dialogues between FFPOs and the government, with support from Forest and Farm Facility (FFF).
- **FFPO enterprises improved capacity** to manage finances and to demonstrate economic viability, leading to increased investment, access to finance – **particularly for women**.
- **Greater economic empowerment among women entrepreneurs**, who demonstrated new skills, including confidence as business managers negotiating credit access despite such traditional challenges as lack of ownership of assets for collateral.
- **Entrepreneurship, investment catalysed for women's enterprises through alliance of FFPOs**. Central Women Entrepreneurs Committee (CWEC) of the Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI) took a central role in successfully lobbying for establishment of the Women Entrepreneurs Development Fund (WEDF) within the Ministry of Industry.



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS BY THE NUMBERS

- **Very substantial number of FFPOs supported** indirectly via FFF work with umbrella organizations to which those FFPOs belong; for example, 18 000 community forestry user groups reached via the Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN).



A NEPALESE SUCCESS STORY

“The Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) work, through a need-based approach, was very effective. From my exposure visit to SEWA, I learned that there arise various barriers and difficulties in doing any work by our single effort, but if we do the same task in a group, it becomes much easier and chances of success increase. On my return back home, I made plans to make a group of women as per their needs and work accordingly. Then I shared my learning with my 35 group members. During our exposure visit to SEWA, I was very impressed by seeing SEWA Bank and now am so keen to start a SEWA Bank in my own region. But there are 28 commercial banks in Nepal so we are not getting permission to open a cooperative bank here. After returning, I registered a cooperative in the name of ‘Hario Van Krishi Sahakari Sanstha’ and there are 150 shareholders in it. This cooperative is running various activities like savings and credit for agriculture and forest, etc.”

Ms Pancha Maya Sangtang, Chairperson of District Makawanpur, FECOFUN



LESSONS LEARNED

Collective action organized within FFPO federations can rapidly shift policy, as seen through large umbrella federations and unions such as FECOFUN.

FFPOs, working through a cross-sectoral platform and with representation from government agencies, demonstrated a very effective approach to raising issues important to producer organizations. Through the platform, discussions and resolutions were found at local, regional and national levels. Feedback was also provided through this platform for planning and budgeting by government agencies.

Focused exposure visits combined with regular coaching and peer-mentoring of young business groups, especially led by women, will give more sustained results.



GENDER/YOUTH IMPACT

Exchange visits and training with the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) were very successful. The capacity-building initiative encouraged women entrepreneurs to create momentum and bring more innovative ideas to upscale and promote their small enterprises.

FNCSI’s Central Women Entrepreneurs Committee (CWEC) supported the lobby for the Women Entrepreneurs Development Fund, established in 2015 to provide women entrepreneurs at district levels with collateral-free loans for up to 500 000 rupees (almost USD 5 000) with low interest rates (six percent).

Partners: Association of Family Forest Owners Nepal (AFFON); Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN); Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI); National Farmer Group Federation (NFGF); Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA).

Government counterparts: Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.