

***Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation***  
***People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living***  
Program 2015-2018



**Final Report**

1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

**Bird Conservation Nepal**

*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

**Abbreviations:**

BCN:	Bird Conservation Nepal
CBO:	Community Based Organisation
DFCC:	District Forest Coordination Committee
DOF:	Dansk Ornitologisk Forening/ BirdLife Denmark
FECOFUN:	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
IBA:	Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas
IGA:	Income Generating Activities
LCG:	Local Conservation Group
LFA:	Logical Framework Analysis
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAG:	Program Advisory Group
PIP:	Program Implementation Plan
PMC:	Program Management Committee
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SSG:	Site Support Groups
ToR:	Terms of Reference
WWF:	World Wide Fund for Nature

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**1. Summary of Phase I**

***Provide overall analysis (not details of activities) of the first phase of the programme, including your assessment of the Programme set up, steering, DOF's role (management, coordination, supervision), your overall success and failures in implementation a.o.***

The three years programme has been able to capture enough areas focusing on project's objective adequately. The provision of Project Management Committee (PMC) that physically meet once in a year on a rotational basis in each partner country has been extremely important in knowledge enhancement as well as strengthening the programme. The supervision visits carried by DOF twice in a year has also been very helpful in getting good guidance and also transparency in implementation. The bimonthly skype meeting setup by DOF has been also useful in keeping the programme output as well as finance on track. Apart from this DOF has also supported in various technical aspects also like the socio economic survey designed by DOF's Socio Anthropologist and the Locally Based Monitoring.

At the National level, the Project Advisory Group (PAG) setup has been very useful in sharing at the national level and also good guidance and support to the programme. At the local level, BCN being a member of the District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC) sharing of the programme to all the district line agencies and other stakeholders is done through the DFCC meetings.

There were a number of activities implemented during this period. The programme also included diverse groups of beneficiaries. Preliminary biodiversity assessment and socio economic survey was conducted to collect baseline information that helped in planning of activities. In order to better conserve the biodiversity, monitoring system was developed with the assistance of DOF. Community forest user groups started locally based monitoring of the indicator species and ecosystem services identified as locally important.

Three village development committees (VDCs) – Paralmi, Balithum and Jubhung (presently recognized as wards) of Resunga forest IBA were focused in the first phase of the programme. All the groups, committees and schools were engaged in the different activities of the project. Farmers, deprived of vegetable farming-skill despite having required land were trained and supported with vegetable seeds and seedlings. Some of them possessing dry agriculture land were also supported with drip irrigation tools. An assessment of the intervention evidenced the remarkable progress of the supported farmers. On one hand, they earned money by selling vegetables while on the other hand, they no more, had to purchase vegetables from the market hence saving significant amount of money to run their home and family. Similar, exemplary activity is the support for bee-keeping. Resunga is well-renowned as the pocket area of honey production. Traditional practice of bee-keeping was progressed providing modern bee-hives to the needy farmers. In order to assist in commercializing their product, two thousand piece of honey-bottles were supported to the bee-farmers with the brand name 'Resunga pure honey'.

Conservation intervention included awareness programme for school students, farmers and community forest user groups. Cupboards for libraries and extension materials related to climate change, birds and biodiversity were supported schools. They have been used as teaching materials by the teachers. In order to reach the broader community and leave long term impact in the conservation field, 'non-formal coaching class' on climate change and biodiversity conservation were conducted. Trained local facilitators conducted the coaching class. A book named 'Hamro Prayas' (Our Attempt) was prepared and published for the local participants as a learning material.

Resunga forest is a touristic place bedecked with natural beauty and holy places. Bird Conservation Nepal collaborated with Resunga Conservation Committee, a local NGO, to keep

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the natural environment clean. Trash bins were placed in the temple area and along the walking trail. Similarly, bird watching programmes for students and communities were organized on the special days to connect them to nature.

Furthermore, two community forest of Resunga were selected as a pilot site to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services in their operational plan. A detail information about local biodiversity and ecosystem services were discussed and identified from the meeting with the forest users to incorporate in the operational plan. This has been found beneficial by district forest office and has aimed to include them in the OPs of other CFUGs also.

Media were also equally used to share conservation message and project's activities to reach into the wider mass. Relevant radio jingles were played by the local f.m. radios to make the public aware about the potential threats along with mitigation and adaptation measures. Environmental journalist and representative from FECOFUN visited the project site and published an article/reported about the project progress. A project video documentary has also been developed.

A national level sharing workshops were held at times with project advisory group to share project progress and receive feedback.

***Describe the main contacts established in Phase I and the key achievements and learning from your advocacy efforts?***

Bird Conservation Nepal is a nationally well-recognized organization for its work on bird and biodiversity conservation. It collaborates with department of forest, department of national park and wildlife conservation, FECOFUN to implement activities effectively. PPN project has been coordinating with these agencies from the beginning. Any progress made and challenges faced during the project implementation are shared with them to receive feedback and suggestions. They are also the members of Project Advisory Group, that acted as an advocacy forum to make the Resunga forest recognize as protected forest. Similarly, district forest office, district soil conservation office, FECOFEN – Gulmi, local media were the partners in the district level. Interaction was done for planning, implementation and monitoring of the project work. Establishment of Chiuri mill was successful due to the coordination with district forest office. Local media played important role in dispersing conservation awareness messages into the wider audience.

***Describe what you consider the overall key learning from Phase I***

Commendable participation of all the people made the project activities happen possible. Involvement of local people in each planning and decision making process of project activity is must. More collaboration is necessary with organisations working in development and nature conservation sector both at local and national level. Synergies between district line agencies and key stakeholders are essential in sustaining the livelihood and conservation activities for the long-term. Networking with government staffs was maintained. Project advisory group (PAG) meeting found as a nice platform to seek valuable comments and suggestions. Regular meetings and communication is highly beneficial for bringing good results at programme level.

Most of the IGAs are seasonal rather than all-the-year-round source of income. Diversifying the IGA could help forest users and farmers to have regular income. Similarly, well-being of community individuals is not uniform. While addressing poverty, well-to-do farmers also have some sort of expectation. Good governance training has developed a knowledge of equity on community people. Also, involving community in each event builds ownership on them.

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It is very important to educate the local communities to understand to benefit of being in useful networks. Support and engagement of all civil society group in conservation related activities is must to bring changes in the community.

## 2. The Partner

***Describe if any new capacities have been developed in your organisation? What is the key learning and how has the capacity of a) the organisation, and or b) individual staff been built? How will raised capacity influence your future work?***

During the project period, BCN staffs received opportunity to participate in various capacity building trainings. Three staffs of BCN (Communication officer, Policy and advocacy officer and Project staff) participated in a 4 days long workshop (28-31 August 2017) in Denmark "Communication Workshop-2017" that was held with an aim to strengthen the partners' capacity in interpersonal and mediated communication through the social media, enabling the participants to conduct effective information on biodiversity targeting young from middle class people. It was organized by Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF), a Birdlife Partner in Denmark. Their knowledge was later shared among all the BCN staffs.

Similarly, three project staffs participated in a five days' training workshop (10 – 14 October 2017) on "Strengthening Civil Society Capacity to Advocate for Mainstreaming Biodiversity" held in Singapore. Group work on how partners can engage in national process, contribute to biodiversity conservation and coordinate with local to national stakeholders was a beneficial session. BCN shared about its action taken to mainstream biodiversity in community forestry in Nepal.

Additionally, an annual staff planning and review meeting was conducted on 16-18 December 2017 in Kathmandu. Twenty-eight participants including field staffs, executive members, advisors and headquarter office staffs were present in the meeting. Staffs of BCN headquarter office and EC members shared their expertise regarding GIS, bird and biodiversity, species and habitat monitoring methods to all the participants.

BCN's participated in PMC meeting and training workshop organized in each partner country and finally in Copenhagen. A training on 'Theory of Change' facilitated by Ian Dickson from BirdLife International was received that would help in developing the project plan for the second phase. It was an interactive workshop. BCN also participated in the 'forest workshop' where many conservation organization of Denmark working in several part of the world on birds and biodiversity, climate change presented their stories and findings.

Also Lars Earmark, Head of Finance from DOF also trained our finance staff on MANGO tool for effective financial mechanism.

With the help of this programme BCN has better communication and coordination with Department of Forest which was lacking before.

***Describe any changes that have taken place in your organisation that may have been affected by or affected programme implementation (e.g. change of staff, government regulations etc.)***



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Bird Conservation Nepal achieved a success to be officially recognized as BirdLife's partner organization.

There had been some changes in the organization and project staffs during phase I. There was a change in the Chief Executive Officer of BCN. Changes in important staff caused some delays and loss of knowledge but the new Programme staff had been able to catch up quickly.

A new local level administrative structure was established by Nepal government. During the next phase, coordination will also be done with village councils and municipalities to implement the activities.

### 3. Project Implementation

***Describe and reflect on relevant context related issues that have influenced on implementation (new policies, elections, climate/weather related issues, new opportunities (for instance invitation to participate in official delegations)***

All the planned activities were attempted to accomplish within the proposed timeframe. Because of the longer rainy season, two different national and local level elections held in the same year and mourning incidents in the society delayed few activities, which was managed to complete within the project period.

In 2015, the year when project was just launched, Nepal faced one of the most destructive earthquakes. The continuous after-shocks and its fear on Nepalese people hampered their daily routine and also the project activities.

Additionally, BCN worked closely with district forest office, Gulmi who also monitors the works in the field regularly. District soil conservation office and FECOFUN, Gulmi chapter also assisted in monitoring and providing inputs. Resunga Conservation Committee, a local organization responsible for the management of the core religious forest had not enough coordination with the district forest office. During the project period, this project bridged their coordination gap and also became successful in preparation of the religious forest management plan.

Similarly, the project intervention was able to charm the secretary from the ministry of forest who made a visit to Resunga and even inaugurated the Chiuri Mill established at Balithum. This has greatly helped in raising organizational profile. BCN staffs got an opportunity to meet and explain the project work with him in person.

Through the project, BCN has received a platform to interact at the meeting of district and central government officials (DFCC and PAG meetings). Since, BCN has been working on forestry sectors, several invitations related to forest and biodiversity have been received to participate and contribute the knowledge and experience. This project has helped to diversify the partnership with various institutions.

***Describe how stakeholders (target groups) have been involved in the intervention and how they have responded to involvement and benefits***

The project activities have been implemented in coordination with a various stakeholders depending on the nature of the activities, including government line agencies, local authorities, CBOs and local forest user groups/committees. The government line agencies were made responsible in conservation programme by providing various technical assistance and knowledge through exposure visits. GIS training to forest officials, exposure visit to Madane protected forest and vulture restaurant of Nawalparasi district encouraged them to replicate the learnings in Resunga forest. They have contributed in making technically well forest operational plan of

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People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

community forests. They have also supported in the management of cow-sheds and vulture sites of Resunga.

The forest user groups were involved in improving their forest operational plan and sustainable forest management as well as forest based enterprise like Chiuri. The forest user groups were also trained in good governance and Locally Based Monitoring.

The women group was institutionalized and also supported IGAs. The farmer groups were supported with new farming technology as well as climate smart technics. They have highly benefitted through this kind of supports mainly on organic vegetables and honey production.

***Describe and assess the achievement of outputs and the key learning hereof***

To meet the three major components of the project, activities were designed and implemented. Good outputs of the project were achieved. In order to strengthen BCN, staffs' capacity on forest and biodiversity were enriched through various trainings. The organization itself conduct it's staffs capacity strengthening programme annually. Additionally, DOF also provided communication and advocacy training, Theory of Change training to its partner organization. BCN is able to develop annual advocacy plan now. It has also build the capacity to implement any project with success through skillful planning process.

Similarly, the project has been able to bring some change in the livelihood status of the local disadvantaged community through income generation activities. They were rich in natural resource, but due to lack of knowledge of its proper utilization, no any advantages were gained. After the establishment of Chiuri mill, not only the people of that particular locality but also the people from adjacent region have benefitted. Supports on vegetable farming, mushroom farming, revolving fund establishment, bee-keeping have helped to generate money and make them self-dependent.

It needs a joint effort to conserve biodiversity and improve livelihood of the local people. So, coordination was done with district forest office, department of forest, FECOFUN and other relevant organization. District forest coordination committee platform was used at district level and Project Advisory Group was established at central level to share, discuss regarding the issues of the project.

The project has been able to implement almost all of the planned activities by achieving good outputs during phase I.

**4. Assessment of changes and results**

***Describe and assess to which extent and how expected change has taken place and whether these have left to desired impacts***

The declaration of Resuga forest as the protected forest has given importance in terms of biodiversity. For its better conservation, trainings provided to forest officers are now able to revise operational plan of community forest user groups using GIS technology for area mapping which used to be done manually in the past. Biodiversity and ecosystem services have gained enough space in the operational plan.

Awareness level of the communities have been found considerably increased. Their participation in every project activities is commendable. They have started recognizing the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

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Similarly, community people are very interested in the biodiversity and climate change as they are actively visiting the community resource center established by this project in two VDCs. They were also regularly participating in the non-formal coaching classes organized at the local level.

The project has considerably focused women group to uplift them in livelihood and conservation sector. Women empowerment and cooperative training programmes have contributed to achieve this change. Moreover, the project has supported in institutionalizing the women group. It has ensured not only their sustainability but also granted them an opportunity to move forward. Similarly, non-formal education focused for women members of CFUGs have enriched their knowledge on biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

A linkage between the local beneficiaries and relevant supporting institutions have been established. For instance; Bee-keeping farmers are linked with Federation of Nepal Bee-keepers – Gulmi chapter. Youth clubs have played favourably supportive role in conservation sector. Resunga forest trail cleaning and conducting public awareness campaign for environmental protection is the cause of responsibility realization by the youth clubs towards nature and environment.

Livelihood improvement is a mechanism to promote the community in conservation action. Therefore, eight community forest user groups have made change in their livelihood status through revolving fund, agriculture farming and skill development trainings to generate income.

The project has been able to create awareness at community level in terms of biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. Establishment of community resource centers, forest and biodiversity related trainings have helped them to enhance their knowledge about the importance of nature they are living in. Youth clubs have played favourably supportive role in every project activity implementation. Celebration of 'Resunga Conservation Festival' in annual basis for conservation awareness and environmental protection is a new initiative by the youth clubs.

### ***Describe and assess the Most Significant Changes from your point of view and in the opinion of various stakeholders/target groups***

Though the programme has contributed a lot but some of the MSC observed are:

*Awareness level increased:* Active participation of local people, especially women, to learn about biodiversity and climate change through the non-formal coaching classes conducted by the local facilitators have changed their life as they adopted the acquired knowledge in their daily routine. Eg: they did plantation around their home area, showed participation in decision-making meetings and gatherings, reduced burning of plastics and started joint vegetable farming.

Several events (eg: tree tagging, forest trail cleaning, training classes to the forest user groups) have developed a good knowledge about the importance environment protection in the community people.

*Threats to Biodiversity reduced:* Portion of the Resunga forest consists of pine forest which suffers from forest fire annually. Unmanaged resin tapping practice used to contribute in the forest fire. After the training provided to the associated CFUGs, a good control over forest fire has been experienced. Not only this, CFUG members have started monitoring of the resin tapping methods adopted by the contractors (Contractors are the businessperson given permission by the CFUG to extract resin from pine trees charging money). They have also extracted resin in a very well defined manner.

*Broader conservation approach:* Similarly, Chiuri (Butter trees) exist over a large area in some community forests. Forest user groups have been benefitting from butter trees in two different ways – a) They have improved their honey production by protecting the trees (flowers) and b)



*Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation  
People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

Seeds are used to extract ghee. These advantages have helped to protect the particular species from loss. So, a landscape level linkage for its sustainable management has been promoted. Chiuri mill, a micro-enterprise has been established in one of the CFUGs but also benefited by all the adjacent CFUGs as well. Bee-keeping practice also involves the joint action between all the CFUGs as bee travels long way to collect nectar.

*Diverse livelihood options promoted:* The project has also contributed in livelihood improvement of the local communities. Establishment of Chiuri Mill, promotion of mushroom farming, joint vegetable farming, honey production are the major income generation activities adopted by the local people.

In order to facilitate for the marketing of the produced Chirui ghee, BCN made their link with a business person from Kathmandu who purchases all the ghee they produce.

*Great leap in conservation field:* The Resunga forest has been declared as the Protected forest by the Ministry of forest and soil conservation. The Resunga forest which is also an IBA helped the government to recognize its biodiversity value.

***Describe in which ways PPN I has contributed to the planning and implementation of better forest management. Describe how the capacity of forest user groups/LCGs/SSGs etc. has been built and how that has translated into improved forest management. Describe how PPN has contributed to increased cooperation between stakeholders (GOV – civil society, networks etc.)***

The revision of the forest operational plans, LBM system establishment and forest governance have contributed in biodiversity conservation. The project supported to implement the reviewed OPs of CFUGs. These plans were able to address the important threats to forest and act necessarily for the conservation.

Additionally, livelihood improvement activities like bee-keeping and honey production trainings, forest-based micro enterprise 'chiuri mill' establishment support and ghee extraction training have motivated the communities to protect the forest. They realized the advantages they receive through Chirui seeds (for ghee) and Chiuri flowers (for honey) are far better than the fodder and firewood they collect from the trees.

PPN has increased the cooperation between stakeholders by engaging them in various capacities. In some cases the district line agencies were involved in training the civil societies and forest user groups and in other cases they sat in a same meeting to discuss on the issues related to their forest. Some of the events like the world environment day, wildlife week, etc were organized jointly by them supported by the programme.

***Describe how women, poor and indigenous peoples have benefitted and how and if the programme has contributed to increased equity in local communities***

The project duly took into consideration the gender equity and social inclusion issues at the beneficiary level with respect to the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of project activity. In order to ensure that benefits are fairly and equitably distributed among the needy people, particularly the women, marginalized and poor people, joint monitorings were conducted regularly with district officials and meetings were organized for progress sharing.

Main focus were given to women-friendly practices. Especially, support to poor, focusing women were addressed through revolving fund. The fund was used for cattle farming, growing vegetables, poultry to generate income. They also participated in livelihood and conservation related trainings.

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People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

Non-formal coaching classes related to biodiversity conservation and climate change were held especially for women.

Economic empowerment of women was prioritized to improve their livelihood. Cooperative was established and women group was strengthened so that local women become independent and self-reliant.

The participation of women and marginalized people were ensured in every activities being implemented in the field. There are also separate programmes conducted for women group eg: skill development, livelihood improvement and empowerment.

Similarly, each CFUG has categorized its forest users into four section according to their prosperity (well off, medium, poor and ultra-poor). So, any supports provided by the project, first focused to the ultra-poor to improve their livelihood status.

#### **5. Financial issues**

***Assess whether the budget was adequate for the implementation of the programme and its cost effectiveness related to your work***

Project activity plans were consciously designed to be undertaken with existing institutional structures and mechanisms. Service delivery was done through the existing institution rather than creating entirely new one. So, the budget planned was used only for the definite activities especially capacity building, livelihood improvement, coordination and networking for sustainability of the project.

The project intervention also included mostly tried and tested models. The beneficiaries are taken to the exposure visit in advance. The direct learning from the visit are then replicated into the project site. Eg: establishment of Chiuri mill in Balithum is a learning from the exposure visit to Kharbang, Baglung. Mush-room farming is a learning from the exposure visit to Palpa by the farmers and the technical staff of BCN.

#### **6. Materials**

***Describe which materials were produced during the programme (including those that can be uploaded electronically – scientific reports, articles, photos, video, screenshots from social media, TV and radio materials etc.)***

For the awareness purpose, one thousand copies of 'common birds of Resunga' leaflet (in Nepali language) with colourful pictures were published. The leaflets were used to monitor the birds of Resunga forest and also in the process of locally based monitoring system. Similarly, three hundred copies of book named 'our attempt' ('Hamro Prayas' in Nepali language) were published as a teaching material for non-formal coaching class. The book includes information about biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation. An article on Chiuri entitled 'Chiuri became the source of income' (in Nepali language) was published in the "Kantipur" national daily newspaper. One thousand copies of leaflet about the detail information of Chiuri was also developed. Similarly, a short documentary (11 mins. duration) named "Society changed by

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People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living*

the conservation" was produced and broadcasted through local TV and also distributed to 'Community resource centers' established at two VDCs (Paralmi and Balithum). Biodiversity conservation messages were also aired regularly from the local radio FMs of Gulmi in the form of Jingle. Two thousand copies of posters about 'forest fire control' were produced and disseminated to the forest users. Articles on Resunga forest was also published in BCN's quarterly newsletter "Munal".

**7. Key learning and considerations for the next phase/sustainability**

***Describe the key learning that you will build upon in Phase II and how you have addressed sustainability in the implementation of Phase I***

Enhancing forest based livelihood but providing key knowledge on sustainable management that benefits both their livelihood and biodiversity conservation is highly important. Synergy between key stakeholders is very important for better implementation of any planned interventions. Understanding local knowledge and setting will certainly help in bringing success.

The linkage of benefit to the biodiversity and also local income source has been tried to demonstrate in PPN I through the chiuri enterprise which encourage the local communities to conserve the chiuri forest. The chiuri forest is also important for bees as well as preventing landslide also. This kind of intervention may create a win win situation.