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PAHAL Program

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(January- March 2016)
FY 2016**

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Acronyms

CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CFUG	Community Forestry User Group
CDO	Chief District Officer
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
DC/PC	District Coordinator/ Project Coordinator
DCHA	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
DDC	District Development Committee
DDRC	District Disaster Relief Committee
DHM	Department of Hydrology and Meteorology
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
D/VWASHCC	District/Village Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee
FFP	Office of Food for Peace
FG	Farmer Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIC	Tufts University's Feinsein International Center
FY	Fiscal Year
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
HH	Household
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
iDE	International Development Enterprise
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KII	Key Informant Interview
KISAN	Knowledge-based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition

LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoAD	Ministry of Agricultural Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUS	Multiple Water User System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNFSS	National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRM	Natural Resource Management
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PAHAL	Promoting Agriculture, Health and Alternative Livelihoods Program
PAL	Pre-Authorization Letter
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report Safe Use Action Plan
SAPQ	Standardized Annual Performance Questionnaire
SBCC	Social Behavioral Change Communication
SUAAHARA	Feed the Future Nutrition Program: ‘Good Nutrition’
SUAP	Safe Use Action Plan
SWC	Social Welfare Council
SWOT	Strength Weakness Opportunities and Threats
TESP	Training and Employment Service Providers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WDO	Women Development Office
WUG	Water User Group

INTRODUCTION

The Promoting Agriculture, Health and Alternative Livelihoods (PAHAL) program is a \$37 million, five year United States Agency for International Development (USAID) initiative designed to achieve food security among vulnerable populations in 14 districts in the middle and high hills of far-west and mid-west Nepal. PAHAL is a Development Food Assistance Project under the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)/Office of Food for Peace (FFP) that takes a multi-dimensional, systems-based approach to address underlying socio-political, economic and ecological constraints, and the related shock and stress exposures that drive food insecurity in Nepal. The program's sub-purposes form the resilience pathways, which would enable people of the vulnerable communities to:

1. Better cope with and absorb shocks and stresses;
2. Adapt to better health and livelihood strategies in order to effectively reduce exposure to an impact of shocks and stresses; and
3. Recover quickly and 'bounce back better' through transformed systems in the face of shocks and stresses.

This report covers activities conducted within Quarter 2 of the U.S. Government's fiscal year (FY) 2016 (January 1, 2016 – March 31, 2016). The quarterly financial report is an attachment to this narrative that is submitted directly through Mercy Corps headquarters.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

PAHAL has now established two Regional Offices, one based in Dadeldhura for the Far-West Region, and the other based in Nepalgunj for the Mid-West Region. Through these regional offices, PAHAL aims to work with 167 Village Development Committees (VDCs) of 14 districts, namely: Accham, Bajhang, Bajura, Darchula, Doti, Baitadi and Dadeldhura of the Far-West Region, and Dailekh, Jajarkot, Surkhet, Salyan, Pyuthan, Rolpa and Rukum of the Mid-West Region. In the second year, the PAHAL program has planned to implement its activities in 76 VDCs across 14 districts. Of the planned 76 VDCs, 20 VDCs and one municipality were reached within this quarter through the agriculture component (see *Annex 3* for the list of VDCs). The Project will scale up in Year 3 to cover the remaining targeted VDCs and by Year 4 it will have reached all of its 167-targeted VDCs.

In this quarter, the 14 Local Non-Government Organizations (LNGOs) that had been identified and selected in the previous quarter were provided technical and management orientation session. The 14 LNGOs then developed working relationships with their respective government (GoN) line departments in order to thoroughly plan and coordinate for the start-up activities in their respective districts. This quarter, Mercy Corps initiated a Pre-Authorization Letter (PAL) mechanism to disburse funds to the International and National consortiums partners, so that LNGOs could hire staff and initiate certain targeted activities. This quarter, PAHAL began working on capacity building for of 53 Farmer Groups (FGs) through 25 demonstration sites and

by conducting 23 events around group management training, two events on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training and 35 events on nursery growing and crop management. Similarly, all the technical thematic sectors have conducted their respective baseline assessments, which were a requirement prior to initiating their respective areas of work. It is anticipated that full-scale implementation of activities will begin in the next quarter.

SUB-IO 1: INCREASED ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES AND INFORMATION

1.1 Farmer Groups Trained on Nutritious Food Production Practices for Household Consumption

1.1.1 Conduct participatory assessment of current production, availability and consumption of nutritious foods at HH-level in collaboration with local community focusing on women and disadvantaged

A participatory assessment at the household (HH) level was conducted to understand the current production, availability and consumption of nutritious foods and the current situation of kitchen gardening and gaps in the PAHAL areas. To conduct this assessment, two focus group discussions (FGD), and three key informant interviews (KII) with related district government offices were conducted in each of the 14 districts. For the FGD's a mixed group (M: 109; F:116) and a women's group (F: 154) were chosen. Through the data collection sessions, it was revealed that a majority of the households in the target area have been practicing kitchen gardening for their own consumption using traditional methods. Similarly, the major cereal crops grown in the area (such as rice, maize, wheat, barley and finger millet) are on average sufficient for only 3-4 months. To address these gaps, PAHAL has designed activities on crop production such as improved kitchen gardening techniques, crop variety recommendation, demonstration of high yield varieties, technology transfer, promotion of micro-irrigation system so that beneficiaries will have access to nutritional vegetables and foods for year around.

1.2. Vulnerable Populations Reached with Nutrition Messages

1.2.1 Coordination meetings within consortium members of PAHAL and with SUA AHARA

In January, PAHAL partners, Mercy Corps, iDE and PLAN held a coordination meeting with the SUA AHARA team to identify possible areas of collaboration for integration of nutrition messaging. During the meeting, SUA AHARA agreed to provide printable copies of Social Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) materials, which will be used by PAHAL in disseminating nutritional messages through different community groups.

SUB-IO 2: BETTER ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE SERVICES, STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES

2.1 Improved Safe Sanitation Services and Facilities

In January, PAHAL participated in a DWASHCC meeting in Salyan District of the Mid-West Region in which Kubindedaha and Laxmipur VDCs were approved to implement open defecation free (ODF) activities. PAHAL's M&E and Regional WASH Coordinators conducted a joint orientation on the WASH Rapid Assessment Tool and its usages to seven WASH Officers (M: 6; F:1) working for our LNGO partners. The event was held in in Nepalgunj. In March, an awareness-raising event was organized at a local primary school in Laxmipur VDC of Salyan District to sensitize communities on sanitation and toilet use, along with an overview of the benefits to communities when they adopt ODF practices. A total of 55 participants (M: 23; F: 32), representing community groups, mother groups, community forestry user groups, and community income generation groups participated in the sensitization meeting. One of the PAHAL beneficiaries during the event stated that the lack of access to water keeps them from constructing and using toilets. MUS activities are designed to address the issue.

The activities under Output 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 of Sub IO 1 will be initiated from the next quarter.



Photos 1 and 2: Local Communities during the sensitization event facilitated by Program Coordinator in Salyan District

SUB-IO 3: IMPROVED ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES, STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES

3.2 Functional Early Warning Systems (EWS) Established

3.2.1. Support Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) and district level EWS committee under District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) to establish hydro/meteorology stations

3.2.1.2 District level assessments to map existing and recommend new hydro/meteorological stations

PAHAL's DRR team members met with key personnel from the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) in Kathmandu and the Regional Offices in Surkhet and Banke districts in February. During those meetings, PAHAL requested permission to establish a team to assess the feasibility of establishing Early Warning Systems (EWS) in all of PAHAL's 14-targeted districts. The assessment team conducted the study in Surkhet, Jajarkot, Dailekh, Salyan and Rukum districts of the mid-west region in March. The Team met with the district stakeholders to document the area's history of flooding events, and also assessed the existing resources that PAHAL can leverage such as the District Emergency Operating Centre, which PAHAL's EWS can utilize as a communication hub in the event of floods. See *Annex 4* for the terms of reference of the assessment.

DHM officials were not available to partner on further assessments this quarter. However, PAHAL has confirmed their commitment to participate and finalize the remaining assessments in the next quarter.



Photos 3 and 4: PAHAL meeting with DHM officials in Surkhet District and conducting field assessments in the same area.

3.4 Disaster Response Capacity Strengthened

3.4.2 Sign a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC)

3.4.2.2 Conduct meetings at national and district level with the government DRR offices

PAHAL met with each of the Chief District Officers (CDO) and the Local Development Officers (LDO) of the 14 districts to orient them on the DRR component and the contents of the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for this program. During the meeting, PAHAL received feedback and recommendations from the DDRC members on the documentation, and incorporated their feedback accordingly. In all of the 14 districts, the MoUs are in the final stages

of being signed and are expected to be fully executed by the next quarter. Furthermore, PAHAL's LNGOs will request similar meetings with DDRC officials in their respective districts to sign their respective MoUs in the next quarter.

3.4.4 Provide Disaster Risk Reduction training and support to DDRC providing response and relief items

3.4.4.3 Provide DDRC response and relief items

PAHAL's Dadeldhura regional office provided response materials to Bajhang and Dadeldhura districts, based on requests made by those districts' DDRCs. These materials consisted of search and rescue items and first aid kits.

3.5 Household DRR Planning Campaign Implemented

3.5.1 Develop DRR related Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and disseminate through local DRR committees

3.5.1.1 Collection of existing DRR and CCA related IEC materials

PAHAL collected the existing DRR/CCA related IEC materials from existing platforms, such as the Disaster Preparedness Network, the Association of International Non-Government Organization Task Group for Disaster Management, and from the ongoing USAID project Hariyo Ban. These materials will act as the baseline documents for producing related IEC materials for PAHAL program.

3.5.1.2 Sub Contract to the printing committee for Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) material development

During this quarter, PAHAL drafted the terms of reference for a consultancy service and published an expression of interest for developing SBCC materials. Applications were screened and interviews conducted to select the best consultancy. PAHAL plans to develop SBCC materials for disaster risk reduction and has pre-selected a firm to do the research and develop a set of SBCC materials. The selected firm will be awarded a contract to develop materials early next quarter.

The activities under Output 3.1, 3.2 and 3.43 were planned for this quarter but since PAHAL was not able to sign sub-awards with the LNGOs, activities were postponed to next quarter. The Program has made strategies and plans to speed up the activities in next quarter to address this delay. Activities under Output 3.7 and 3.8 are planned for the next quarter. Output 3.3 and 3.7 are planned for Y3. The earthquake risk reduction related activities under 3.9 will start once GeoHazard International is approved as a consortium member through the Y2 Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal.

SUB-IO 4: IMPROVED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE AND DIVERSE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

4.3 Informal Savings and Loans for Off-Farm Livelihoods Established

4.3.1 Mapping Village Savings and Loan Associations' (VSLA) capacities and conducting vulnerabilities and capacity assessment (VCA) study

In February, PAHAL completed a mapping of all available and functional financial institutions within the 167 VDCs in all 14 districts. This information was collected from the secondary data provided by District GoN agencies. The data indicates that for the seven mid-west districts, there are 83 VDCs, 1,660 VSLAs, 204 cooperatives and 40 microfinance banks. In the far-west districts, there are 84 VDCs, 1,397 VSLAs, 115 cooperatives and 14 microfinance banks.

As a next step, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA) were then conducted in four randomly selected VSLAs in each of the 167 VDCs (668 total) to ascertain the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats posed to each. Before conducting the VCA, 21 local enumerators (M: 14; F: 7) and seven LNGOs Alternative Livelihood Officers were trained on VCA processes during a three-day training organized in Nepalgunj. The VCA data will be analyzed and recommendations will be made to identify a strategy for engagement with financial institutions.

The activities under Output 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4, to 4.9 of Sub IO 4 will be initiated in the next quarter.

SUB-IO 5: IMPROVED ACCESS TO DYNAMIC AND RESPONSIVE AGRICULTURAL AND NON AGRICULTURAL MARKETS

5.1 Linkages to Profitable Off-Farm Markets Established

5.1.1: Training Needs Assessment

A three-day orientation workshop on Rapid Market Analysis (RMA) was held for 14 LNGO partner staff, during which a Terms of Reference was drafted on the trainings for needs assessments that will be conducted in each district.. The training needs of the target groups will be assessed during the next quarter as planned. This workshop was followed by a one-day planning session attended by central, regional and district teams from Alternative Markets and Financial Services agency.

5.1.5: Facilitate linkages to profitable markets (jobs, employment)

In the quarter, PAHAL held, meetings with major training institutes and industry associations. During those meetings, PAHAL received feedback that there is a high demand for skilled and semi-skilled labor in the construction sector followed by garment, hospitality and electrical/electronic and mechanical trade sectors. However, market assessment conducted by PAHAL indicate that the major challenge in linking target beneficiaries with profitable income and employment markets is to bridge the gap between the demand of the market and the preference or perception of target beneficiaries. PAHAL plans to address this challenge by building the skills of the beneficiaries through the existing training institutes and linking them to employment markets.

5.2 Marginalized Groups have Increased Access to Markets and Shared Decision Making over Productive Resources

5.2.1: Market assessment/KAP study on GESI barriers to goods, services and employment opportunities; and on daily wagedworkers, migrants and returnees and protection mechanisms

A study titled “*Assessment of Income and Employment Opportunities in relation to Social, Gender and Economic Barriers and Perceptions in Mid and Far West Region of Nepal*” was carried out in three districts each of the mid-west and far-west region representing PAHAL working areas. The study assessed the demand and supply side opportunities and challenges of the off farm market. The assessment also looked at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of the participating training service providers. The study provided recommendations on strategies to work with market stakeholders, as a result of which PAHAL is in the process of identifying potential private sector training and employment service providers at the regional level.

The findings from the field were shared with private sector training and employment service providers in Dhangadi and Nepalgunj regional market centers and feedback from these participants have been incorporated in the report.

5.3 Linkages to Agricultural Buyers and Export Actors are Strengthened

5.3.1 Market assessment of crop and livestock potential

PAHAL has recognized the importance of understanding the current market status before promoting the commercial crop and livestock production in each working district. In order to identify the gap and opportunities in marketing, a market assessment through KIIs with district level GoN and private sectors stakeholders. The report is in preparation.

5.9 Improved Business Development Services

5.9.1 Map and review technical training service providers in business development of private sector and government services at the district level

In this quarter, PAHAL collected basic information on the technical/vocational training institutes currently operating in all target districts. The information includes the name of the service provider, address and type of training offered. This information will be used to locate and identify potential local training service providers for trainings, linking with regional large training institutes, and networking with stakeholders.

5.9.2 Participatory capacity review/assessment of Technical Vocational and Educational Training in relation to job market and off farm employment opportunities at the regional and national levels

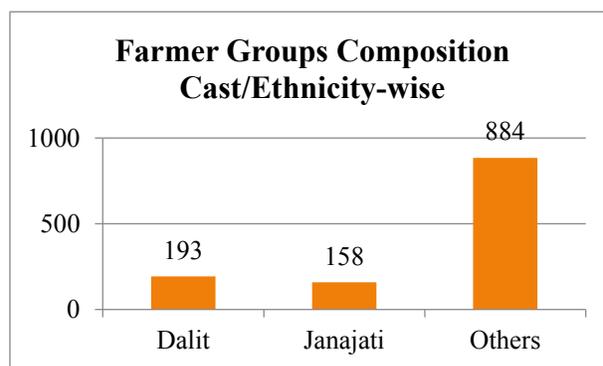
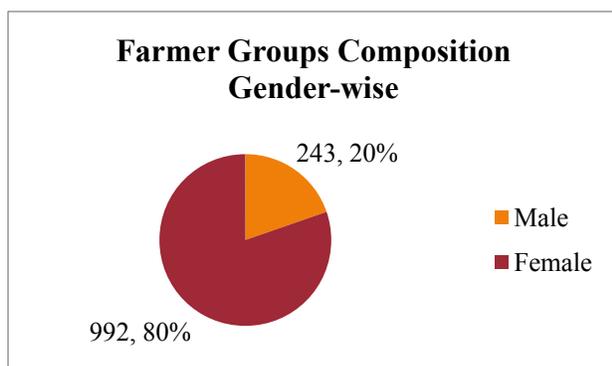
PAHAL conducted a capacity review and assessment of the large and medium Training and Employment Service Providers (TESPs) in February. The process was conducted in two stages: In the first stage, large TESPs based in major market hubs, including Dhangadi, Surkhet and Nepalgunj, were listed and key information on their management, technical and financial capacities were recorded. This assessment helped inform the market assessment in the last quarter on the key regional market stakeholders in the training and employment component. In the second stage, and in the course of the study, the representatives from 34 TESPs were invited to a consultative workshop where a more focused Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was carried out. *See Annex 6* for a summary of the SWOT.

5.11 Improved Agricultural Extension and Production Technology

5.11.5 Promote and improve high value vegetable, cereal and goat production through capacity building activities, meanwhile developing and supporting local service providers

5.11.5.1 Farmer group (FG) formation and social mobilization with focus on women and marginalized groups

A sensitization event was conducted with the farmers on the importance of vegetable farming, which were then followed up by forming farmer groups. A total of 53 farmer groups were formed during this reporting period. In total, 1,235 farmers (M: 243; F: 992; of which Dalit: 193; Janajati: 158 and others: 884) are currently involved with the group. Following the group formation, the members were informed of the objectives of the PAHAL program and its objectives and activities. During this meeting, the designation of the group members and their roles and responsibilities were also discussed. *See Annex 2* for the participants tracking list.



Figures 1 and 2: Farmer group member composition by sex and caste/ethnicity.

5.11.5.2 Farmer Group (FG) capacity building training (group management, leadership development, account keeping, production planning)

During this quarter, 23 one-day training events were held on group management, leadership and good governance for farmer groups in Dailekh, Jajarkot, Pyuthan, Rukum Salyan and Rolpa districts. Altogether, 572 farmers were involved in the training (M: 172; F: 400 of which Dalit: 89; Janajati: 101 and others: 382). These trainings were focused on capacity development of the group members so that the groups are sustainably managed in terms of proper record keeping, governance and leadership issues.

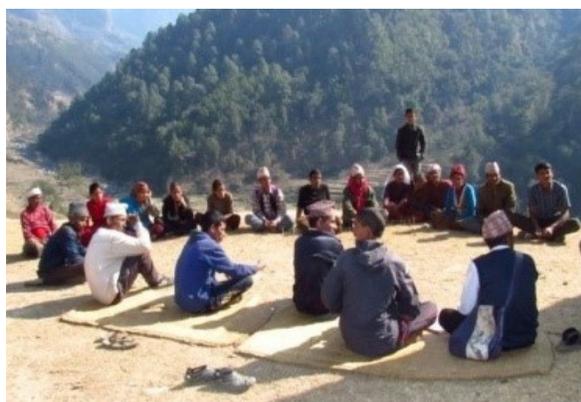


Photo 5: Farmer Group Formation in Dailekh District



Photo 6: Group management and leadership development training in Salyan District

During this quarter, two events on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plant protection training were delivered to farmer groups in Rolpa District. The training was focused on delivering IPM technologies for plant protection to control insect pests in cucurbitaceous crops. The participants were also informed of the available bio-pesticides in the market and their preparation and application methods. Altogether 41 farmers participated in the training (M: 5; F: 36; of which Dalit: 1 and Janajati: 40).

Following the group formation, a total of 35 events on nursery growing and crop production management trainings were organized. The trainings mainly focused on two cucurbitaceous crops: cucumber (Variety of Malini / Bhaktapur Local) and bitter gourd (Variety Pali). A theory session was followed by a hands-on practical session in one of lead farmer's plots where farmers learned techniques on healthy seedling production techniques, along with the major horticulture operation after seedling transplantation. Altogether there were 781 farmers (M: 206; F: 575; Dalit: 91; Janjati: 133 and others: 557) that participated in these trainings.

5.11.5.5 Demonstration on high yielding variety with recommended package of practice and technology

After the crop production and nursery management training, a total of 25 demonstration plots were established with 25 lead farmers (M: 13; F: 12). While PAHAL supported plastic tunnel houses and Micro Irrigation Technology for each plot, the farmers themselves contributed the local materials and labor. Cucumbers and the bitter gourd were two vegetable varieties selected for this season because of their off season high market value. After this season, farmers are planning to also grow other vegetables such as tomatoes and pumpkins in the same plastic house. After seeing the plastic tunnel house provided by PAHAL, the District Agriculture Development Officer (DADO) in Rolpa worked with PAHAL to also provide a plastic house technology to a farmer in the same village aiming to promote the area as a vegetable production pocket. Similarly, a neighboring farmer in Jumrikanda VDC of Pyuthan District has replicated the plastic house technology on his own after observing the PAHAL demonstration. *See Annex 2* for further participant tracking.

Activities under Output 5.4 to 5.10 under Sub IO 5 will be initiated from the next quarter.

SUB-IO 6: IMPROVED ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

6.1 Community Forest Management Practices are Strengthened

6.1.1 Landscape participatory resource and hazard mapping

In January, PAHAL organized a preparatory workshop in Kathmandu for its consortium partners with the objective of developing tools that would be able to assess and identify key gaps and opportunities for effective management of natural resources within the scope of PAHAL activities.

PAHAL formed assessment teams and conducted the study in five of the 14 districts, namely Doti, Accham, Bajura, Surkhet, Jajarkot. The districts were selected on the basis of:

- i) Ecological zone - high hills/mountains, mid hills, siwaliks (where located); and
- ii) Vulnerability – mapped in the National Adaptation Program of Action.

Two VDCs from each district were selected in a way that covers the clusters that PAHAL is implementing through its program. In each VDC, information with different Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups (CFUG: 2; FG: 1; WUG: 1; Co-operatives:1) were collected using participatory tools, FGDs and KIIs. To capture an overarching picture of each district and to triangulate the information from the VDCs, the assessment team also conducted KIIs with district level GoN line agencies. The information collected will be consolidated and analyzed in the next quarter, which will help the program identify strategies for initiating PAHAL’s natural resource management activities. See *Annex 7* for the details of the assessment work.



Photos 7 and 8: Landscape level natural resource management workshop and field assessment

6.1.2 Facilitate community dialogue on NRM

Before initiating the facilitation of community dialogues, PAHAL wanted to ensure that CFUG categorization tools were in place to help the program map the status of the existing CFUGs and select the user groups that are most in need. The PAHAL NRM team is working to develop this tool. This categorization tool will help to select the groups that it will work with during the next quarter.

6.1.4 Capacity building of CFUGs on sustainable forest use and management

A pictorial training manual has been drafted, which will be used in the next quarter so that users can easily understand the tenets of sustainable forest management and can implement their activities to achieve their goal of having productive forests. The training manual will be shared with USAID/FFP once the draft has been finalized.

6.4 Strengthened Accountability Processes of NRM Services and Information Flows

6.4.1 Review existing NRM's composition and decision-making processes to identify weaknesses

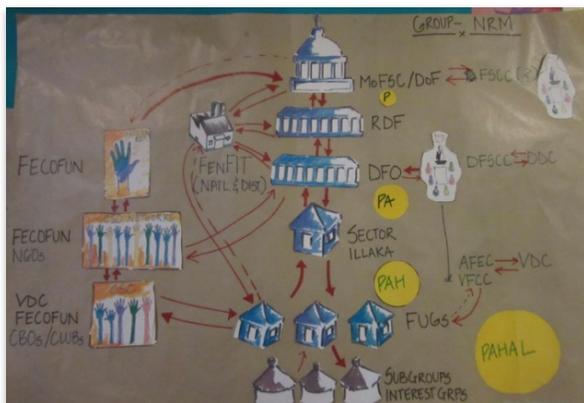
Self-monitoring and evaluation guideline has been drafted. This will be finalized in the next quarter for field implementation. This guideline will help CFUGs pass through the self-reflective sessions where they evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, and further develop a plan to implement with set milestones to develop their forest users groups.

Activities under Output 6.2 to 6.4 were not planned for this quarter. These activities will be initiated in the next quarter once PAHAL identifies and trains the CFUG's and other NRM groups through activity planned under Output 6.1. Activities under Output 6.5 to 6.7 are planned for FY 3.

SUB-IO 7: INCREASED PARTICIPATION, AGENCY AND VOICE OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

7.2 Diverse Civil Society Groups Supported and Strengthened

A Governance and Transformation Workshop was conducted in February for PAHAL consortium partners, which discussed the conceptual aspects of good governance, transformation and its associated components of 3P's (Policy, Process and Practices) and 4I's (Influence, Implementation, Internal Practices and Innovation). Key exercises included institutional mapping, policy mapping, and developing influence goals. Furthermore, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) presented on "Transformative Social Mobilization Approach", which was helpful to the consortium to understand the potential linkages with the GoN's ongoing programs and various levels of institutions.



Photos 9 and 10: Governance and Transformation workshop pictures

The resilience and governance coordination team facilitated a three-day Resilience, Governance and Coordination Induction for the far-west regional team members and District Coordinators in March. Participants' capacities on entry points for resilience, governance and coordination were enhanced. This team also developed a thematic coordination framework for PAHAL.

As a part of institutional capacity analysis, PAHAL will use a tool called "Organizational Capacity Index" for its 14 LNGOs. This tool will look into the 3P's and 4I's of governance and

transformation respectively on an annual basis. PAHAL's governance team is translating the tool into Nepali. This will be implemented in the coming quarter.

Activities under Output 7.1 and, 7.3 to 7.5 of Sub IO 7 will begin in the next quarter.

GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

This quarter, PAHAL's NRM, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Alternative Livelihood teams were provided technical support to integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) specific issues and concerns in their respective assessment activities to explore equity and inclusivity in their respective technical areas. All team members were supported to develop GESI specific lines of enquiries or questions in the assessment questionnaires for FGD and KII tools.

In February, PAHAL submitted the GESI Assessment Report to USAID and received feedback. PAHAL will address the comments and re-submit. This report will be finalized and distributed next quarter. In February, PAHAL hosted the USAID GESI working group meeting for USAID project and collaborating partners to share the preliminary findings of the GESI assessment. At this time, PAHAL and its GESI approaches were also shared with this wider audience.

During the Quarter II review meeting in March, the PAHAL GESI team provided updates on the progress of integrating GESI into the different PAHAL program components. PAHAL also shared updates on the status of the Work Force Diversity for program staff disaggregated by gender, caste and ethnicity.

Similarly, PAHAL's GESI checklist drafted this quarter was shared and discussed in working groups for further inputs. The purpose of this checklist is to provide simple guidelines for program staff to ensure GESI concerns and issues are addressed at different levels of the program.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

PAHAL uses adaptive management as an approach to guide the program to build on successes and learnings. The intention is to capitalize on successful interventions and to improve those that need additional work. The successes and learnings are monitored programmatically using rapid feedback loops, which are used to change strategies and improve implementation timely to meet an overall goal in response to new information. PAHAL conducted the following activities focusing on four different but inter-connected elements of adaptive management:

i) Culture

PAHAL believes that organizational culture is a foundation for, and a product of, people using skills, tools and systems to manage adaptively. Last quarter, PAHAL had formed a Senior Management Team (SMT) comprising of the COP, DCOP and the Country Directors/Executive Directors of each of the International and National Consortium Partners which have met a

number of times this quarter to discuss sub-granting mechanisms and activity implementation. . The two regional offices have also modeled this, forming an SMT of the partner team leaders. For better coordination and cross learning, partners in Kathmandu have formed a “*coordinators team*” which meets weekly to share updates and solve field issues as they arise. Similarly, in each of the regions meet weekly to discuss their field activities, travel plans and plans for technical support to the program on the ground, through the LNGOs. Supervisors encourage staff to think critically, share ideas, provide feedback, inputs, and ask questions to support learning. This quarter, a planning and review meeting was held for all partners to share learnings and field implementation challenges, to develop action plans for the next quarter and to identify progress. The regional office teams make regular visits to the working areas in their respective districts to provide technical backstopping support to all the PAHAL thematic technical areas and related activities.

ii) ***People and Skills***

This quarter, PAHAL invested heavily in structuring, recruiting and equipping its regional teams and supporting the selection and recruitment of LNGO staff, which are all on board now. In order to build the capacity of all PAHAL team, a number of orientations and trainings were provided to the regional and district level staff of the overall PAHAL consortium.

iii) ***Tools and Systems***

This quarter, PAHAL invested time in incorporating TOLA, Mercy Corps’ program monitoring tool to support the financial, procurement and M&E systems of the program. This tool will contribute to a culture of learning, peer review, flexibility, critical thinking and engagement, and focus on objectives, all of which are vital to successful implementation of complex projects such as PAHAL. In addition, each sector has conducted a number of in-house studies, and assessments that will help the program to initiate its sectorial work effectively.

iv) ***Enabling Environment***

Recognizing the importance of stakeholders’ ownership, PAHAL has started its investment by nurturing relationships with stakeholders to build ownership and contribute to the national development goal. Following are some key highlights on stakeholder coordination and collaboration of this quarter:

- A project facilitation committee meeting with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare was held twice to review the PAHAL project document. Based on suggestions from the committee, some changes were made and the document was re-submitted. The Ministry issued a letter of agreement to the Social Welfare Council (SWC) to sign the PAHAL Project Agreement. Formal signing of the PAHAL Project Agreement with SWC is anticipated within the next quarter.
- Nepal Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS) working group under National Planning Commission (NPC) introduced the newly appointed Chief of Social Development Division in NPC. The NNFSS Secretariat organized a handover and sharing

meeting in January. PAHAL introduced its program themes, working areas and working modality to the participants.

- PAHAL is anticipating the signing of an MoU with the Ministry of Health and Population. Similarly, to institutionalize the coordination with the MoAD, PAHAL submitted a MOU to the Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture Development in February. The Ministry suggested signing the MoU with the Department of Agriculture since the interventions proposed in the MoU are more relevant to the Department's scope of work.
- A National Project Steering Committee meeting was held in February. High-level GoN officials and USAID partners attended the meeting. During the meeting, PAHAL presented its project overview and progress to date. In the meantime, the Chairperson suggested development partners and Projects to support implementation of the recently approved Agriculture Development Strategy.
- Cross learning sharing meetings with other USAID funded projects have now evolved as regular coordination platforms at the district and regional levels. PAHAL DCs and respective LINGO partners are taking part in these regular meetings at the district levels. In the far west region, PAHAL hosted four coordination meetings (in Bajhang, Doti, Baitadi and Bajura) where lessons learned were shared. In addition, the far-west regional team also participated in the District Agriculture Alliance meeting in Dadeldhura.
- PAHAL's far-west regional team, in collaboration with the Regional Agriculture Directorate, organized a regional kick-off event in Dipayal, Doti in February. The event was attended by the regional and district GoN officials, USAID and PAHAL consortium members. The stakeholders welcomed the PAHAL program in the far-west and suggested that duplication of work be avoided in intervention and initiatives, work with existing groups, focus on most marginalized community and ensure proper coordination with the relevant stakeholders in all phases of project implementation.
- PAHAL, along with other USAID implementing and development partners partnered with DWASHCC in Rukum District to publish the "Total Sanitation Strategic Plan 2072, Rukum". DWASHCC is planning to declare Rukum District as "Total Sanitation District" by 2020.
- PAHAL regional and district team members took part in the District Development Council meetings in this reporting period. As an outcome, PAHAL has been endorsed into the DDC planning process in all 14 districts, which will ultimately be the part of DDC annual plan for GoN FY 2073/74.
- PAHAL's Regional Team Leader and Regional Agriculture Team Leader attended a regional level meeting organized by the Regional Agriculture Directorate of mid-west and far-west regions of Nepal in March and shared an overview of PAHAL and its approaches.
- A stakeholders meeting was organized in March by IPM Innovation Lab (IL). During the meeting, it was agreed that the packages and the technologies verified in IMP IL would be demonstrated and diffused throughout all the PAHAL districts.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

In January, the PAHAL M&E team designed the annual beneficiary survey and post-shock resilience monitoring and analysis, including research design, sampling strategies, sampling

frames, work planning, budgeting, and design of survey and focus group tools. The scope of work for the annual beneficiary survey is currently under review by USAID, and PAHAL will select firms to conduct post-shock resilience monitoring and analysis in mid-April.

In January, PAHAL procured 80 mobile phones for use in field data gathering, trained staff in Kathmandu on the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) Collect to gather survey data on the phones. Most of the phones have since been distributed to local NGO partners as part of PAHAL's field M&E training. PAHAL's Database and GIS Specialist have also been working closely with Pagoda Labs, an external firm, to create an open source, cloud-based data management system with secure data storage, low-bandwidth and offline capability, and GIS mapping. A working version of the database should be completed in late April or early May; meanwhile a temporary Excel-based system is in use.

PAHAL M&E's primary focus over this quarter has been in finalizing the routine monitoring system, which is the bulk of its program data. To begin, PAHAL created a beneficiary registration system, which provides unique identity cards for each participant and avoids double counting of household members when different members of a household register separately as participants. The beneficiary cards include toll free numbers that people can call for questions or complaints; the complaint mechanism was set up this quarter and people can reach PAHAL either by phone or via complaint boxes. Complaints will be catalogued and processed according to standard operating procedures that were finalized this quarter.

In January, PAHAL conducted a rapid assessment of local NGO partner M&E capacity, looking at staff experience, resources, and logistics issues (internet connection strength, distance to travel to project sites, timelines for transferring paper monitoring forms, etc.) In late March, PAHAL conducted extensive field M&E training in Nepalgunj with regional office staff, district coordinators, and local partner technical officers. Attendees worked with PAHAL to finalize procedures for routine monitoring indicators and roles and responsibilities, and received hands on technical training in the beneficiary registration process and using mobile phones for data gathering. In the beginning of the next quarter, PAHAL will conduct a similar training for far-west regional staff. Similarly, in the next quarter PAHAL will follow this training with visits to each of the LINGO offices in their home districts and to provide M&E training for all LINGO staff.

While preparing the routine monitoring system, the PAHAL M&E team also gathered and created several routine monitoring forms, which will be primarily online (for mobile phones) to local NGO partners as part of the follow up to the field M&E training. The data entry system is informed by the data needs assessment the M&E team conducted in February, which found key information needed by PAHAL's technical advisors and included that information in the forms. PAHAL has also begun planning a data quality assessment, to take place this summer, which will check in with LINGO partners and make sure the routine monitoring process is going ahead smoothly.

PAHAL M&E assisted with several other PAHAL research pieces. In February, PAHAL M&E

provided the last touches to report on the PAHAL Strategic Resilience Assessment. *See Annex 8* for the Strategic Resilience Assessment Report. The M&E team assisted with the writing of PAHAL's GESI Field Assessment Report and Assessment of Income and Employment Opportunity Report. The M&E team for the far-west produced two reports, one detailing the time it takes to walk from each VDC to the nearest road head, and another which examined the gender and caste makeup of new LNGO staff and explored ways to increase staff diversity. Finally, PAHAL's regional M&E officers produced a translation of development and resilience jargon, explaining technical terms in both English and Nepali.

The PAHAL M&E team also produced several products for external audiences. In January, PAHAL submitted updated versions of the FY16 M&E plan, IPTT, and SAPQ to FFP for approval. In February, PAHAL provided further targets for several disaggregations in the SAPQ and IPTT. Also in February, PAHAL met with Camris, an M&E support project of USAID Nepal, and made a presentation on resilience and resilience monitoring to USAID, Lutheran World Relief, Save the Children, and other key actors in Nepal's resilience space.

Resilience Shock-Based Monitoring

In January, PAHAL technical staff and Tango International met to design post-shock resilience monitoring and analysis, including research design, sampling strategies, sampling frames, work planning, budgeting, and preliminary design of survey and focus group tools. In February, PAHAL worked with local District Disaster Relief Committees to select VDCs, which are vulnerable to shocks; four of those VDCs will be selected as the focus of post-shock resilience monitoring. The scope of work for the annual beneficiary survey is currently under review by USAID, and PAHAL will select firms to conduct post-shock resilience monitoring and analysis in mid-April. Resilience monitoring is expected to begin in late spring or early summer.

Longitudinal Resilience Research

This quarter involved fieldwork for FIC team members, which included shifting operations to a new site, selection and training of enumerators and research assistants, testing and starting of monthly data collection, and qualitative data collection. The team has cleaned and analyzed the initial data and refined the research approach. Next quarter will see additional fieldwork, the collection of the baseline data for the quarterly survey, the write-up of quantitative and qualitative results and finalization of qualitative and quantitative plans for the rest of the year.

Other Related Activities

International MUS consultation national workshop

A two-day international workshop on Multi Use Water Systems (MUS) was organized in Kathmandu in February. The workshop was inaugurated by the Minister for Population and Environment. There were over 180 participants representing MUS communities, government,

academic institutions, donors, international centers, development organizations, and stakeholders. The workshop concluded with the formation of the Nepal MUS network, which aims to share knowledge and information on different approaches for MUS and to promote MUS across the water sector in Nepal.

Pesticides Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP)

The original Initial Environmental Examination received approval from USAID with the condition that PAHAL builds upon the KISAN PERSUAP for any pesticide and pest management related work. Consequently, PAHAL prepared an addendum to the KISAN PERSUAP updating its information and including an addition section on livestock. The addendum is presently under review by the Mission.

PAHAL Safer Use Action Plan (SUAP)

A SUAP specifically for PAHAL was developed that provides a set of mitigation activities to ensure that the PAHAL program activities related to pest management will have minimal or no significant irreversible effects on the environment. The program's pest management plan is in line with regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Government of Nepal (GoN), and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) best practices.

Pre Award Authorization Letter (PAL)

This quarter, Mercy Corps HQ provided PALs, a form of approval letter, to PLAN, iDE and Rupantaran to cover start-up activities and staff salaries for this quarter. The approvals were provided in two models, as disbursement in the initial phase, and as an advance in the second phase. With this approval, iDE has issued the extension letters to existing PALs to its national partners and local subs with an incremental increase in the budget ceiling. Similarly, PLAN, iDE and Rupantaran have all issued PALs to their respective sub grantees.

Monitoring Visit by USAID/FFP

Two different visits from the USAID Mission and FFP Washington were made to the far west PAHAL districts this quarter namely Dadelhdhura, Doti and Accham districts in the fourth week of February and the first week of March respectively.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Challenges

- During January 2016, insufficient fuel availability in the market had created a challenge to move in the field according to plan. As a result, PAHAL temporarily rented vehicles from the Districts that were bordering India, where fuel was easily available.
- As PAHAL undergoes the standard PREP process, our ability to implement certain activities by the established timeline varies based on the partner and what has been approved. With

each subsequent quarter, PAHAL has worked to mitigate the effects of any delays and a number of activities are underway. The issuance of PALs to partners continues to help with activity implementation. PAHAL looks forward to receiving approvals on all remaining national and local partners so that full-scale implementation of activities can commence prior to the start of the next monsoon season.

Successes

- In spite of PAHAL still being in initial stages of implementation, the program is already beginning to ascertain certain lessons and incorporate positive learnings into the program. Such examples are also being documented along the way.
- To date, PAHAL and all partner LNGOs have established good relationships with all government line agencies and other related stakeholders at district and regional levels. PAHAL has been welcomed in the districts and the VDCs where we are working.
- Each of the 14 districts has incorporated the PAHAL annual plan for their district into the district GoN annual plan.
- PAHAL has established good relationships at the Central level as well and has received acknowledgement as a USAID funded partner in the country to implement the PAHAL Program.
- Several MOUs with all relevant ministries and/or departments have been signed or are in process of being signed.
- Ministry of Social Welfare and Children has approved the PAHAL Project document and SWC is ready to sign the PAHAL agreement.

PLAN FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

For the detailed field implementation plans refer to the April to June DIP under *Annex 1*

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Upcoming Quarter's Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP)

Annex 2: Participant and Resources Tracking Tables

Annex 3: List of VDC reached within this quarter

Annex 4: Terms of Reference for EWS assessment

Annex 5: Summary of SWOT for TESP

Annex 6: PAHAL NRM implementation design framework

Annex 7: Strategic Resilience Assessment Report