

Eastern Himalayas Ecoregion: Terai Arc Landscape



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Strategic Goals & Objectives

The goal for the entire Eastern Himalayas ecoregion is to conserve representative facets of biodiversity within habitat areas that are large enough to support the natural ecological and evolutionary processes that maintain the ecoregion. The Terai Arc Landscape program was launched in order to restore and maintain wildlife corridors that link 11 protected areas between Nepal's Parsa Wildlife Reserve and India's Rajaji National Park in order to meet the larger vision of the ecoregion. The objective of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) is to conserve the biodiversity, soils and watersheds of the Terai and Churia hills in order to ensure the ecological, economic and socio-cultural integrity of the region. Forests connecting these protected areas are in various stages of degradation and fragmentation due to human population and poverty pressures. Restoring wildlife corridors will facilitate the dispersal and genetic exchange of wildlife populations, ensure the long-term survival of key endangered species, and provide ecological and socioeconomic services integral for the well being of local communities.

The proposal submitted to USAID focused on seven components of this objective:

1. Forest Regeneration through Protection
2. Community Forestry
3. Enhanced Livelihoods (Community Development)
4. Anti-poaching Activities
5. Improved Management of Protected Areas
6. Transboundary Agreement
7. Establishing Monitoring Methodology

Collaborators/Partners

- USAID
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)
- Integrated Centre for Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- Department of Forests, HMG Nepal
- Department of National Parks and Wildlife, HMG Nepal

National and community level organizations that WWF partners with include:

- King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC)
- Women in Environment
- Environmental Camp for Conservation Awareness (ECCA)
- Buffer Zone Councils
- Village Development Committees
- Local User Groups
- Community Based Organizations including women's groups

Partnerships to work on the Terai Landscape are being sought with:

- DFID
- CARE

Summary – Period 04/01/02 – 09/30/02

Despite the political unrest throughout the country during this reporting period, TAL program has successfully implemented set activities in the field through full participation from local communities and community based organizations including Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), Community Forest Coordination Committees (CFCCs), and women's groups.

Activities that were carried out in full strength include the establishment of thirteen nurseries, which produced 330,000 mixed seedlings that were planted in 212 ha of community forestlands in corridors and bottlenecks in TAL during this reporting period. During this period, 5 community forests, covering 299.5 hectares of degraded forest area were handed over to local communities in Dovan. In addition, 4 community forest operational plans were prepared, while 18 CFUG constitutions were prepared and registered in respective district forest offices. Anti-poaching efforts were successful with 17 Anti Poaching Units (APUs) operating in four protected areas in TAL and 3 community-based APUs operating along forest corridors. To support these efforts, an anti-poaching strategy meeting was held in Chitwan in September to formulate a national level anti-poaching strategy.

TAL program continued to focus on increasing participation of local stakeholders and concentrated on disseminating information. Products included a conservation newsletter, *Kael Pahura*, which is being published and distributed on a quarterly basis, a TAL fact book, brochure and video, all of which were distributed to community-based organizations, VDCs, NGOs and government agencies. TAL program focused on awareness building with results including the formation of 36 new eco-clubs, 2 eco-club networks at Basanta and RBNP Buffer Zone, as well as 4 literacy classes for 125 local livestock herders. Educational materials were developed including audiovisual programs for conservation awareness, various training manuals, and environmental education kits known as *Sampada Sandook*, which were prepared and distributed to schools in project sites. Awareness raising efforts also included workshops on forest management training and income generation planning, and street theatre shows with wide outreach.

Community development activities were carried out in various communities of Bardia, Banke, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Dang and Palpa, including installation of improved cooking stoves in 906 households, promotion of stall feeding alongside corridors and bottlenecks, construction of 53 biogas plants, and the handing over of health post materials in the buffer zone of Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP).

Highlights

▪ **Transboundary Meeting Held**

A national level transboundary meeting between the governments of Nepal and India was held from the 13th to the 15th of September. The meeting was hosted by HMG Nepal, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and supported by WWF Nepal Program. Outputs include a 12 point resolution with the agreement to set up a joint Transborder Consultation Committee to monitor the progress on landscape based conservation, particularly the restoration of migratory corridors for megaspecies such as the tiger, rhino, elephant and swamp deer in the Terai Arc. Information sharing was highlighted in the resolution and will involve quarterly field level meetings, identification and

implementation of research programs and the establishing of a transboundary level mechanism that involves all relevant government agencies.

▪ **TAL Partnership Coordination Continued**

A series of meetings were held in September with key international institutions including USAID, DFID, SNV, CARE and UNDP, all of which work on forest and natural resource management and sustainable development issues in the Terai Arc Landscape Nepal. The meetings were initiated to propose a process of coordination, particularly where there is overlap amongst institutional strategic objectives and interests in TAL, led by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC). These partners or potential partner agencies have been invited to provide input into the planning of the Terai Arc Landscape Strategic Plan and participate in all TAL planning exercises and workshops, including the upcoming Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss Research Training Workshop that will be held in December 2002.

▪ **TAL Policy Pursued**

A field level stakeholder interaction workshop was held in Nepalgunj, Banke District in September to address the need for a clear TAL policy document. Participants were asked to review a document developed by Dr. Uday Raj Sharma, Chief of the Environment Division in MFSC, “Draft Policies and Strategies to Implement the Terai Arc Landscape in Nepal” and provide their feedback. A total of 59 participants including community based organizations, local NGOs, community leaders, journalists as well as representatives from MFSC, Department of Forests (DoF), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Ministry of Agriculture and WWF Nepal attended the workshop. Comments and feedback were all incorporated into a draft document, which will be ultimately submitted to the Government of Nepal for endorsement following additional consultation.

Results by Objective and Activity

Despite continuing political upheaval in Nepal, fieldwork was carried out successfully in the Terai during this period. Some activities were minimized given the practical limitations caused by the continuation of conflict and the State of Emergency in the country on movement and large assemblies. These include activities involving capacity building of park and other government staff and the collection of data on forest cover and wildlife for biological monitoring purposes. However, activities that were led by field staff based in local communities have continued to be greatly successful. Feedback from communities was overwhelmingly positive with appreciation voiced to field staff who choose to be present in the field even in this political instable remain in many areas of conflict and direct appeals for their continued presence.

Result (Activity) 1: Description: Forest Regeneration through Protection

Forest regeneration activities continue to surpass the set objectives for this reporting period. 13 nurseries including 2 agro-forestry nurseries were established to produce and distribute 330,000 mixed tree seedlings, including 20,000 NTFP seedlings for community and private plantations. In addition, another 10,000 mixed species tree seedlings were purchased from private nurseries. Plantation was carried out in 212 hectares (ha) using 340,000 seedlings. During this reporting period, 586 ha of forest corridor was restored through a combination of community plantation and natural regeneration in degraded areas along corridors and bottlenecks.

To set up the research and monitoring component of the TAL program, GIS data on land use, local level administrative boundaries, contours, roads and settlements that were digitized and stored in the TAL GIS system. In addition, 8 satellite images covering the entire TAL area were procured and vegetation classification and analysis initiated with a completion target set for March 2003. The

satellite data will be used to develop Vegetation Monitoring Protocol for TAL and establish permanent growth plots for regular vegetation monitoring in future. The satellite information will also be used as baseline data to assess the impact of the TAL program on forest corridor restoration for a given timeframe.

Result (Activity) 2: Description: Community Forestry

Strengthening and institutionalization of Community Forestry Users' Groups (CFUGs) is critical for the restoration of degraded forest areas along corridors and bottlenecks. During this reporting period, a total of 5 community forests, covering 299.5 ha of degraded forest area were handed over to the local communities in the Dovan bottleneck. In addition, 18 CFUG constitutions were prepared and registered in the respective DFOs of Basanta and Katarnia corridors and Lamahi bottleneck while 4 CFUG operational plans, 2 in Basanta and 2 in Katarnia, were prepared and are currently being submitted to respective District Forest Offices (DFOs) for endorsement. Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of people's participation in conservation, with the support from TAL program 4 Community Forest Coordination Committees (network) in Basanta, Katarnia, Lamahi and Dovan were formed and registered in respective district forest offices. In addition, TAL program has been strengthening and implementing its activities from the existing community forest user group network formed by EFEA (USAID supported project). The Community Forest Coordination Committees (CFCCs) play a key role in networking, empowering, sharing experiences and mobilizing various CFUGs within and outside their network for conservation and implementation of Integrated Conservation and Development Programs.

During this reporting period, four study tours were organized for 116 (27 women and 89 men) members of CFUGs. The participants visited areas where successful community forest management practices have been promoted through the initiative of local people. The participants also visited protected areas within TAL to learn more about effective forest management and biodiversity conservation in buffer zone areas. During this reporting period, a total of 16 community forestry management trainings and workshops were organized for 307 participants including 96 women from various CFUGs and government line agencies in TAL. The trainings and study tours were useful for effective and efficient forest management by local communities and to motivate CFUG members about plantation, forest regeneration and patrolling activities in their respective community forest area.

Result (Activity) 3: Description: Enhanced Livelihoods (Sustainable Development)

The success of landscape level conservation programs depends on the cooperation and participation of local communities in conservation programs. Participation of local people, who in the case of TAL are mostly poor farmers dependent on forest resources, are enabled if they receive immediate benefits from conservation programs. Activities such as income generation activities, livestock improvement and capacity building continued during this reporting period. While these activities were developed partly as a means of fostering a trusting relationship, they were also designed strategically to lead to biodiversity conservation in the region.

Stall-feeding ultimately reduces open grazing in forestlands, thus minimizing forest degradation while simultaneously enhancing income generation potential of local farmers through increased productivity of their livestock. Distribution of improved livestock breeds increase productivity of livestock, diversify household income, promote stall-feeding and thus, minimize grazing in national forests. During this reporting period, various improved breeds of livestock including female goats (65), chickens (550), 4 male breeding buffaloes and 20 male breeding goats were distributed in local villages. To support improved livestock programs, three livestock management training sessions and cow shed management as well as a poultry farming training were organized for 142 participants (42 women) in Basanta and Katarnia corridors as well as 52 households in Mahadevpuri. Community awareness on livestock stall-feeding was generated through training, tours, and workshops. In addition, stall-feeding was promoted through the distribution of 36 feeding troughs in Katarnia corridor. Stall-feeding, which

greatly reduces pressure of grazing on forests was also indirectly promoted through the production of fodder-tree seedlings in multi-purpose nurseries for private plantation (Activity 1).

Continuing efforts to minimize local dependence upon fuelwood gathered from national forests, 53 bio gas plants with attached toilets and 906 improved cooking stoves were installed in corridors and bottlenecks during this reporting period. In addition, a month long training was organized for 3 persons from Basanta area on bio gas plant installation and maintenance to both localize capacity training and provide alternative income generation for the 3 households. Similarly, three improved cooking stove installation trainings were organized for 35 local people (14 women and 21 men) along the Basanta corridor.

Forest plantation goals were combined with the need for alternative income generation and two NTFP nurseries were established in Katarnia Corridor and Dovan with the financial and technical support from the TAL program. A total of 20,000 NTFP seedlings were produced and distributed for plantation, consisting of Harro (*Terminalia chebula*), Barro (*Terminalia belerica*), Banana (*Musa sp.*), bamboo (*Dendroclamus sp.*), and cane (*Calamus sp.*) In order to protect crops from wildlife predation, two *Machans* (Watchtowers) were constructed with the support from TAL program in RBNP buffer zone.

Capacity building is a major component of the TAL program that will ensure long-term sustainability of the program and provide the foundation of local community participation in conservation and development activities. Trainings, workshops and study tours were designed for local people and CBOs on forest management, species conservation, income generation and awareness building activities. During this reporting period, four *gothala* (livestock herders) education classes for 125 livestock herders were completed and 36 new ecoclubs formed to foster environmental awareness. Two ecoclub networks were also formed at Basanta and Bardia. Finally, two gender sensitization trainings were carried out for 34 participants including 13 women, belonging to CBOs and government field staff at Bardia and Lamahi respectively.

Result (Activity) 4: Description: Anti-poaching Activities

Anti-poaching efforts have continued including general patrolling for poaching activities in all protected areas within TAL, operation of the 17 Anti-Poaching Units (APUs) in protected areas and 3 Community Based APUs in forest corridors. While poaching figures have risen sharply in the last year, the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) and protected area staff worked as a team to conduct patrolling in and around the protected areas. However, sweeping operations (in Royal Bardia National Park) could not be conducted due to the State of Emergency first declared in November of 2001.

Following the anti-poaching strategy meeting at Royal Chitwan National park in February of 2002 organized by DNPWC, which reviewed anti-poaching activities and strategies in parks and critical areas, a meeting was held in Chitwan on the 3rd of September, 2002, to formulate a national level anti-poaching strategy. Efforts included 5 anti-poaching training sessions organized for the units patrolling the forest corridors and the construction of four APU posts are coming to a completion. The two APU posts in Arjuni, situated at the eastern sector of RSWR and the other two posts in Hattisar and Parewawodar at RBNP were started in April of this year. These posts will serve to monitor rhino and wildlife movement as well as watch for illegal poachers in areas that are vulnerable to wildlife poaching.

Result (Activity) 5: Description: Improved Management of Protected Areas

The TAL program supported the construction of 4 waterholes in RBNP and RSWR, without which wildlife would not have enough water for the dry season. Additionally, 250 hectares of grassland was placed under management in RBNP and RSWR where invasive species were removed, unwanted bushes cleared and grasses burned by the park authorities.

Management training was provided to DNPWC and DoF staff on habitat and wildlife management. In coordination with TAL program, 80 rangers and game scouts were provided training in anti-poaching and biodiversity conservation. Educational materials published by DNPWC was distributed to the trainees. The materials included 1600 copies of "CITES Manual", which were also distributed to park staff, DoF staff, conservation partners. Furthermore, DNPWC also published 700 copies of the CITES poster and 5,000 copies of booklets on CITES implementation with the support from TAL Program. These materials are particularly useful to park staff who use it in the buffer zone areas to generate conservation awareness and prevent poaching.

Result (Activity) 6: Description: Transboundary Agreement

Most of the illegal activities such as wildlife trade, poaching, illegal timber trade and collection of endangered species of orchids and other plants occur along the Nepal and India border. To achieve the objectives of TAL, transboundary cooperation and collaboration is necessary. Unfortunately, previous attempts to set up a transboundary meeting failed due to the political unrest in Nepal. However, the third Nepal –India transboundary meeting was held in Kathmandu between the 13th and 15th of September. Based on the need of transborder relations, the third Nepal-India government level trans-boarder meeting was held in Kathmandu on 13-15 September 2002. The meeting was organized jointly by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and WWF Nepal Program and was facilitated by WWF Nepal. Participants from India included Mr. SC Sharma of Ministry of Environment, staff from the Indian Embassy in Nepal, Chief Conservator of Forests from three bordering states; Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, as well as three WWF India representatives. Nepalese participants included representatives from Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Department of Forests and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, park wardens, District Forest Officers and WWF Nepal staff. The delegates signed a resolution to coordinate activities from both countries on TAL and set up a joint committee to monitor progress on regular basis.

Result (Activity) 7: Description: Establishing Monitoring Methodology

TAL program hired Dr. Anup Joshi as a consultant in order to develop the TAL biological monitoring at two spatial scales – landscape and site level monitoring. Landscape level monitoring includes GIS and Remote Sensing (RS) information to analyze land cover, land use change, habitat fragmentation, habitat loss, and coarse scale intactness of critical corridors and bottlenecks. 8 satellite images covering entire TAL have been identified and procured. The data has been processed and later on the data will be verified in the field. Dr. Joshi is currently working to rectify satellite images and analyzing data for forest classification with colleagues at University of Minnesota. Based on the satellite images, the aggregate result of the analysis generated 36 classes (28 classes from the original cluster analysis and 8 classes from reclassification of classes 10 and 17). After 36 classes were generated, an analysis of attribute and distribution of classes were done by using similar colors to represent those classes that have similar characteristics. Later on these classes needs to verified in the field. Security situation in Nepal has delayed field verification to analyze data. More rigorous field verification is planned for March 2003. By the end of June 2003 final version of classification will be presented. Due to the security situation in the field, the field verification work has been delayed.

Similarly, site scale monitoring has been planned for habitat structure, disturbance and vegetation compositions, regeneration in restoration areas, focal species (presence or absence, relative abundance, demographic trends) and water quality as an indicator of both aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Department of Forest Research and Survey (DFRS) will carry site level vegetation monitoring of TAL. A detailed work plan with methodology has been developed for vegetation monitoring and establishment of permanent growth plots in TAL. Later, a Vegetation Monitoring Protocol will be developed for TAL.

The satellite data stored in the GIS system can be used as baseline data while monitoring vegetation change over time. In addition, the baseline data can also be used to analyze wildlife dispersal more particularly tigers in Terai Arc Landscape.

Progress and status

<u>Benchmark</u>	<u>Output</u>	<u>Status</u>
1.1. Obtain GIS Mapping and ground truthing results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accurate GIS maps of forest conditions with detailed layers on community forests in pilot sites produced by June 2002. 2. Forest classification cross analysis produced by June 2002. 3. Establishment of database unit by September 2002. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2. On track 3. Completed
1.2. Collect baseline data on wildlife in the Terai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baseline data on wildlife distribution of mammals, birds, and plants in the Terai produced by June 2002. 2. GIS baseline database unit established at WWF office, later to be housed with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation by June 2002. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On track (birds completed) 2. On track
1.3. Establish natural regeneration plots	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mixed tree species seedlings produced for plantations in the Basanta and Katerniaghat corridors for FY02. 2. 250 ha of regenerated forests in the pilot sites during FY02. 3. 100 ha of fallow community and government forests in the two corridors under restoration in FY02. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2. Completed 3. Completed
2.1. Establish and Strengthen Community Forest User Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5 Community Forest User Groups formed and institutionalized during FY02 in the two corridors (Basanta and Katerniaghat). 2. 4 Operational plans developed for community forests in the corridors. 3. Empowerment and participation increased of CFUGs in the local communities during FY02. 4. Empowerment increased to women's participation in CFUGs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2. Completed 3. On track 4. On track
2.2. Build capacity of government implementing agencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 25 government field staff trained successfully in community forestry and gender mainstreaming during FY02. 2. Increase in participation of local communities in planning, managing and developing of conservation activities as a result of better-trained forest officials. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2. On track
3.1. Identify and initiate meeting locally	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local needs identified and pilot programs launched in the two corridors, which will possibly include safe drinking water, health care facilities, alternate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On track

defined needs in the Basanta and Katarniaghat corridors	energies and education opportunities. 2. New interventions regarding income generation sources will be identified and initiated following rapid assessments held by consultants to identify locally defined priority needs within the pilot sites.	2. On track
3.2. Protection of crops from wildlife in villages bordering the corridors	1. Reduction in incidences of crop damage by wild animals based on 2001 figures.	1. On track
4.1. Establish APUs in wildlife corridors under restoration	1. Two APUs in wildlife restoration corridors set up 2. Two posts established (costing \$6,000 each), one in Basanta forest area and one in Katarnia area. 3. Poaching incidents in pilot wildlife corridors decreased from figures derived from baseline data.	1. Completed 2. Completed 3. On track
4.2. Improve radio communication system and coordinate anti-poaching efforts within protected areas	1. Improved inter-departmental communication system and coordinated anti-poaching effort 2. Trained manpower and better communication system in place	1. On track 2. On track
4.3. Provide training for government officials as well as local communities	1. Government officials and local communities trained in anti-poaching efforts through series of three training sessions during FY02. 2. Developed anti-poaching manual by June 2002.	1 On track 2. Delayed
4.4. Design landscape level anti-poaching plan with coordination system in place for Nepal side of the Terai	1. Regional anti-poaching plan developed for Terai Landscape of Nepal by June 2002.	1. Delayed
5.1. Provide park staff with training and improve communications	1. Three staff trained in GIS and computer courses by June 2002 2. Two guard posts in the Bardia extension area, will be built and handed over (This activity will depend upon the gazzettelement of the area by HMG).	1. Delayed 2 Canceled (shifted to RSWR)
5.2. Manage wildlife habitat in the Bardia National Park extension area	1. Park management strengthened through procurement of vehicles, field gear and survey equipment. 2. Develop buffer zone committees surrounding the extension area where settlements are currently found. 3. Grassland habitat study completed by October 2002.	1. Delayed 2. Delayed 3. Delayed
6.1. Facilitate international dialogue and cooperation between Nepal and India	1. Two consultative meetings held will result in a declaration on collaboration and cooperation regarding Terai Arc management. 2. Signed transboundary agreement between Government of Nepal and Government of India obtained following the declaration. 3. Cooperation on transboundary issues such as illegal trade control gained by 2002.	1. Completed 2. Meeting held and (resolution signed) 3. On track

7.1. Carnivore Survey in TAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft handbook on carnivore survey with illustrations of tracts from survey by December 2001. 2. GIS map showing transects surveyed, location of each tiger tracts and scent-post stations by May 31, 2002. 3. A database of carnivore tracts established during survey by June, 2002. 4. Detailed report with protocols to carry out tiger and carnivore surveys by June, 2002. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delayed 2. Delayed 3. Delayed 4. Delayed
7.2. Monitoring of Birds in TAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A geo-referenced map of bird monitoring transects by July 30, 2002. 2. A list of rare, threatened, and endangered species of birds of TAL by July 30, 2002. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2. On track
7.3. Establish baseline data on socioeconomic conditions in corridor areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Socioeconomic baseline data collected. 2. Use of forest resources monitored. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2. On track

Note: some of the activities were delayed due to field security situation

Next steps

The TAL program, which is jointly implemented by HMG Nepal and WWF Nepal Program took on Large Program Management Planning with the help of a Task Force that consisted of experts from Goldman Sachs and McKinsey, scientists, forestry experts, and socioeconomic experts in this year as a means of developing a large scale plan that would address all the needs and issues of the project on a landscape level. One of the priorities of the plan consists of developing a coordination mechanism with TAL stakeholders at central and field levels that can lead to the successful scaling up and implementation of current activities. Another component involves building partnerships with institutions that work on conservation and development issues in the Terai. Memorandums of Understanding have been signed by WWF Nepal with UNDP, SNV and ICIMOD, all encouraging cooperation on a landscape level. WWF will continue to pursue close relationships with these and other partners, including national NGOs and CBOs. Moreover, mobilization of local people is critical for TAL to be successful and will continue to be prioritized in the following year. More field level stakeholder meetings will be organized in forest corridors and bottlenecks to promote participation of local people, government line agencies and donor agencies in the strategic plans and activities that are drawn up for project sites.

TAL will continue to be actively engaged in achieving integrated conservation and development activities for biodiversity conservation and community development. WWF NP will draw on its previous experience with ICDPs, particularly the successful implementation of BICP at Bardia. Project activities, particularly those dealing with community services, infrastructure development and income generation must be coordinated with the Village Development Committees, women's groups and youth clubs. Exposure tours, training and workshops will play a vital role for the success of the program. Hence, projects will continue to build the capacity of the local people, particularly on community forest management and income generation activities. The impact of these trainings is apparent in the way that CBOs have been mobilized to improve the forest conservation and confront the encroachment problem. In the meantime, these trainings are also useful among local people specially in promoting income generation activities. Literacy and conservation education programs will also be prioritized since they are very effective in generating conservation awareness among local people and stakeholders. Women's involvement in resource management will be crucial in the long-

term and their involvement will be promoted in every stage of program from planning and implementation to monitoring in the field.

Success Stories

Despite the political situation, the TAL program was enormously successful in gaining the involvement of local people in forest restoration and conservation. It is remarkable to note that the local people contributed approximately forty percent of actual cost in forest conservation and management in corridors and bottlenecks. In FY 02, 13 multipurpose nurseries with 330,000 seedlings production capacity were established where as 7 multipurpose nurseries with 175,000 seedlings capacity per year were planned. These nurseries were established as per the demand of forest tree seedlings from local communities and CBOs. This indicates that the demand for forest tree seedlings has been increasing every year for both community and private plantations.

TAL has received extensive support from district forest offices while planning, implementing and monitoring seedling production, plantation, community forest user groups legalization and institutionalization in corridors and bottlenecks.

Various field level stakeholder meetings and awareness generation programs were organized for governmental and non-governmental line agencies and the local people.

The local people's mobilization for conservation as well as DoF's involvement has been quite successful in the corridors and bottlenecks as a result more work than actual target have been achieve during this reporting period. For example 13 nurseries were established where as 7 were planned and 212 ha area has been restored through plantation where as 100 ha has only been planned in the last monsoon. 586 ha degraded land has been restored through plantation and natural regeneration along corridors and bottlenecks.

A good coordination mechanism has been developed at field level stakeholder and central level to implement TAL program. Furthermore, WWF Nepal Program has also developed good rapport with government line agencies working in the area. The program has also received support from local community, CBOs and NGOs from the local level.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The reporting period has been a period of political upheavals for Nepal. The insurgency activities, that have been going on for over 5 years gained momentum in the rural parts of the country and entered the urban areas. The government of Nepal declared a state of emergency throughout the country from November 26th, 2001 till August 28th 2002. Still the political situation seems volatile in the field. Despite the extreme difficulties in the field brought about by the security situation, the field staffs of TAL program were able to accomplish the most of the target activities for the reporting period. This was possible only because the activities were implemented through local CBOs and government line agencies working at the grass root level.

The political instability and state of emergency provided opportunity for forest encroachment and poaching. Fortunately, the TAL program has been coordinating with District forest offices to remove illegal settlers in Basanta corridors. Illegal settlers of about 4,300 households were removed from eastern sector of RSWR. Royal Nepalese Army at RSWR and RSWR staff started removal of illegal settlers from September 2001 to April 2002 with the financial support from TAL Program.

The extension area of the Royal Bardia National Park was declared by the then Prime Minister G.P. Koirala in November 2000, as a Gift to the Earth. The gazetting of the Extension Area by HMG/N was expected in 2001, however, it hasn't taken place so far. Therefore the activities such as the construction of sub head quarters, roads etc in the Extension Area could not be carried out during this fiscal year. Due to the delay in gazette notification by the HMG Nepal, the infrastructure work has been postponed. The budget was utilized for forest road construction in RSWR.