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Terai Arc Landscape
Annual Report
10/01/2007 - 09/30/2008

for

World Wildlife Fund

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Acronyms

BISEP – ST	Biodiversity Sector Program – Siwalik and Terai
BNP	Bardia National Park
BZCF	Buffer Zone Community Forest
BZCFUG	Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group
BZMC	Buffer Zone Management Committee
BZUC	Buffer Zone User Committee
BZUG	Buffer Zone User Group
CBAPO	Community Based Anti-Poaching Operation
CBO	Community Based Organization
CFCC	Community Forest Coordination Committee
CFOP	Community Forest Operational Plan
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
CNP	Chitwan National Park
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forest Office
DNPWC	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
DoF	Department of Forests
EHEC	Eastern Himalaya Eco-Region Complex
FY	Fiscal Year
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GCP	Global Conservation Program
Ha	Hectare
HH	Household
IGA	Income Generation Activity
INGO	International Non Government Organization
IPGRI	Institute of Plant Genetic Resources
LIBRD	Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development
LRCP	Local Resources Persons
MFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
NARC	Nepal Agriculture Research Council
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
NTNC	National Trust for Nature Conservation
PA	Protected Area
PWR	Parsa Wildlife Reserve
RCA	Root Causes Analysis
SNV/N	Netherlands Development Organization - Nepal
SWR	Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve
TAL	Terai Arc Landscape
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WWF NP	World Wildlife Fund Nepal

1. Project Overview

The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) encompasses one of the most biologically diverse habitats on Earth and is part of the Terai-Duar Savannah and Grasslands Ecoregion. The alluvial grasslands and subtropical deciduous forests of TAL support 86 species of mammals, 550 species of birds, 47 species of amphibians and reptiles, 126 species of fish, and over 2,100 species of flowering plants. TAL covers the only natural habitat remaining on the southern slopes of the Himalayas for the Royal Bengal tiger, Asian elephant and one-horned rhinoceros. The vision for long-term conservation of biodiversity in the TAL is a single functioning landscape through the restoration and maintenance of forest corridors connecting 11 protected areas¹ from Parsa Wildlife Reserve and Chitwan National Park of Nepal to India's Rajaji National Park, covering an area of approximately 49,500 km.

The Nepalese portion of the TAL extends from the Bagmati River in the east to the Mahakali River in the west on an area of 23,129 km. TAL – Nepal includes over 75 percent of the remaining forests of the Terai and the foothills of the Churia Range, a network of 4 Protected Areas and 3 Ramsar sites. This alluvial plain of TAL is the rice bowl of the country, and is also home to 6.7 million people from various ethnic and indigenous groups. Conservation of the Churia forests is crucial for preventing soil erosion, flash floods, and for recharging the water table of the Terai, which is the most productive land in the country. Therefore, sustainable management of the TAL will help to maintain biological diversity and also to meet the national demand for forest products and food supplies for its rapidly growing human population.

The Terai Arc Landscape – Nepal Strategic Plan (2004 – 2014) was prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC) and endorsed in 2004 by His Majesty's Government of Nepal. This broad strategic plan is key to developing coordination among the agencies and organizations working in the Terai Arc Landscape for the conservation of biodiversity in this vast and complex geographical area. However, these agencies have differing and sometimes conflicting agendas, objectives and working modalities. In order to coordinate these various interventions, the Terai Arc Landscape – Nepal Implementation Plan was developed in coordination with WWF and endorsed by the Government of Nepal. The Plan provides a more detailed framework for implementation in harmonization with various partners working in the region. Currently, WWF's efforts are focused on establishing a mechanism for efficient implementation of this plan in collaboration with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and other partners such as USAID, UNDP, DFID and SNV Nepal.

1.1 Description of Sites

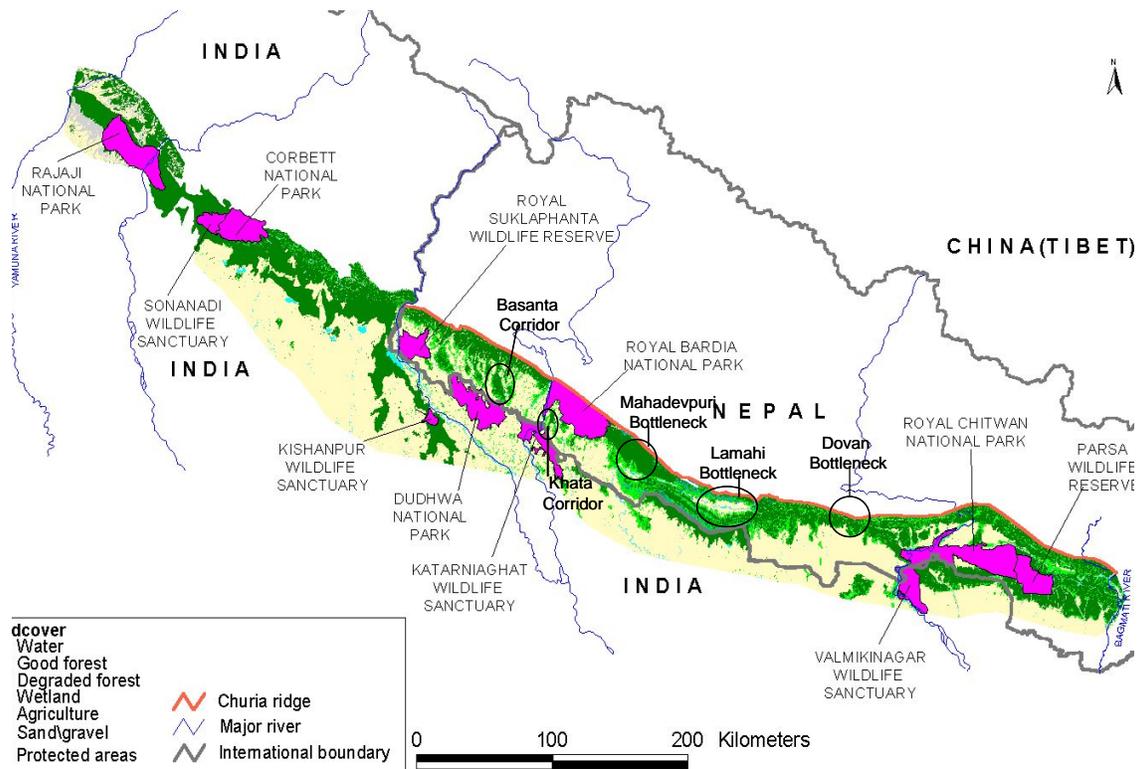
The activities for this project are focused on five critical areas:

- **Basanta Corridor:** National Forest land in Nepal. Corridors serve as important links between currently distinct populations of tigers and other species.
- **Khata Corridor:** This corridor connects Bardia National Park (BNP) in Nepal with Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India. Rhinos and elephants are known to move between the two protected areas through this corridor. The area of Khata corridor is approximately 160.58 sq km with the width of the corridor varying from 0.5 to 4 km. The corridor has five Village Development Committees (VDCs).
- **Lamahi Bottleneck:** This area consists of a narrow and degraded piece of forest that connects a larger continuous stretch of forest.
- **Chitwan National Park (CNP) and Buffer Zone:** Chitwan National Park is the first National Park of Nepal. The Chitwan National Park Buffer Zone initiated the practice of Buffer Zone management in Nepal. Mobilization of community participation in conservation is still an

¹ Chitwan National Park, Parsa Wildlife Reserve, Bardia National Park, and Suklaphanta National Park in Nepal and Corbett National Park, Rajaji National Park, Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, Dudwa National Park, Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary and Valmikinagar Wildlife Sanctuary in India.

important challenge in this area. Management of buffer zone forests is very important since the buffer zone forests play crucial role as extended habitat of wildlife such as rhinos and tigers. It also play crucial role in enhancing natural capital of the residents of buffer zones. Therefore, promotion of community forestry and capacity building of community forests and buffer zone institutions will be key interventions of GCP funded project in TAL.

- Parsa Wildlife Reserve (PWR) and Buffer Zone:** Parsa Wildlife Reserve forms a contiguous protected landscape with the eastern boundary of the Chitwan National Park. The Reserve is dominated by Chure Hills (sal with chir pine) and Bhavar (sal forest and mixed sal forest) where soil is erodable and water is scarce, resulting in poor habitat conditions for wildlife. The recently declared Parsa Wildlife Reserve Buffer Zone urgently needs to form and mobilize the participation of local buffer zone institutions. Promotion of community forestry and capacity building will be key interventions of GCP in buffer zone of PWR>



Map 1: Project Areas in TAL – Corridors, Bottlenecks, and Protected Area Buffer Zones

1.2 Threats

The ecological landscape of the Terai is faced with an array of immediate threats endangering the very existence of its wildlife species and habitat. Not only is the long-term viability of wildlife species and their habitat at stake, but also the sustainable future livelihoods of local communities. A Root Causes Analysis (RCA)² conducted in 2002 – 2003 identified seven direct causes and seven indirect causes of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss in TAL. These causes were then analyzed and used to form the TAL-Nepal Strategic Plan. Taking into account the strengths of WWF, along with available

² RCA is an analytical and logical tool that enabled TAL to identify a set of factors that are the main drivers or causes behind environmental degradation and biodiversity loss in the landscape.

funding and long-term goals, we identified the direct and indirect threats that we can most effectively tackle in this GCP project. The direct causes we are addressing include:

- Forest conversion due to agricultural expansion and encroachment
- Unsustainable harvesting of timber
- Unsustainable extraction of fuel wood and other forest products
- Overgrazing in public and private forests
- Wildlife poaching

The indirect causes we are addressing include:

- Lack of off-farm livelihood opportunities
- Inadequate access to and management of forest resources
- Cross border issues

The trans-boundary issues involved in TAL are of special concern in this project. Since Nepal and India have an open border, cross border issues such as timber smuggling, wildlife trade, poaching and cross border grazing are rampant. However, there is currently no effective mechanism to regulate and monitor cross border illegal activities in Basanta and Suklaphanta.

1.3 Strategic Goals and Objectives

The goal for the entire Eastern Himalayan Eco-region Complex (EHEC) is to maintain ecological integrity in the larger geographical area that encompasses various micro and macro ecosystems in harmony with the local human environment. Ecological integrity in the eco-region is maintained through conserving representative facets of biodiversity within habitat areas that are large enough to support the natural, ecological and evolutionary processes.

The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Program is a pioneering initiative in eco-region conservation in Nepal. Since 2001, the Government of Nepal and WWF have jointly taken initiatives for conservation and sustainable livelihoods in the Terai Arc Landscape – Nepal. The Terai Arc Landscape that links 11 protected areas between Nepal’s Parsa Wildlife Reserve and India’s Rajaji National Park has an objective “*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 these 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 socio-economic services integral for the well being of local communities.

The major thematic areas of WWF’s work in the Terai Arc Landscape are as follows:

1. Forests
2. Species
3. Sustainable Livelihoods
4. Conservation Education and Awareness
5. Coordination and Partnerships
6. Research, Monitoring & Learning

GCP2 funds for FY 08 were mainly focused on the forests and learning components.

1.4 Collaborators/Partners

In order to meet this objective, WWF Nepal is working with a number of partners from the government, donors, donor-supported projects and civil society organizations. Some of these partners are:

- Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC), Government of Nepal
- Department of Forest (DoF), MFSC
- Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), MFSC
- District Forest Offices and Protected Area Offices
- USAID Nepal
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- BISEP - ST (SNV)
- Livelihood for Forestry Program (DFiD)
- Western Terai Landscape Complex Project (UNDP/Global Environment Facility - GEF, SNV Nepal, WWF Nepal, Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development – LIBRD, International Plant Genetic Resource Institute - IPGRI and Nepal Agriculture Research Council – NARC)

National and community level organizations that WWF partner with include:

- National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)
- Nepal Red Cross Society
- Buffer Zone Management Committees (BZMCs)
- Community Forest Coordination Committees (CFCCs)
- Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs)
- Eco clubs and eco club networks

2. Summary – Period 10/01/07 – 09/30/08

WWF TAL Program implemented activities to address threats to forests, focusing on protection, management and restoration. The major intervention in forest protection in corridors and bottlenecks outside the protected area was the capacity building of existing Community-Based Anti-Poaching Operations (CBAPOs) and formation of new CBAPOs. Mobilization of CBAPO involves the local community members in anti-poaching activities in an organized way. It includes strengthening already organized or existing CBAPOs and also forming CBAPOs in new sites to involve more people in anti-poaching activities. CBAPOs were provided with financial support to meet their expenses incurred in day to day operations such as patrolling, meetings, and transportation. Likewise, technical support was provided for formation of CBAPOs, orientation on *modus operandi* of CBAPOs and on conservation issues. The primary objective of mobilizing the CBAPOs was to foster community stewardship of natural resources and biodiversity thereby reducing illegal activities such as forest encroachment, illegal logging, illegal harvesting of forest products and wildlife poaching. Currently, there are 22 functional CBAPOs in corridors, bottlenecks and buffer zones. Although there is no quantitative baseline to measure reduction in illegal activities, the local communities have perceived significant reduction in illegal activities. For example, there was not a single case of rhino poaching outside the protected area in Chitwan and Khata corridor in this fiscal year. This can be attributed mainly to the active involvement of the local communities in patrolling and being vigilant of poachers under the leadership of the CBAPOs. Furthermore, illegal logging, the smuggling of timber, and the illegal harvest of forest products have been effectively controlled in the project sites where CBAPOs are mobilized. During this reporting period, an assessment of CBAPOs in corridors and bottlenecks was conducted, and institutional, legal, financial and operational aspects of CBAPOs were assessed. The assessment also analyzed successes and effectiveness in reducing illegal activities and showed that establishing a measurable baseline is difficult because occurrences of illegal activities were not well documented and reported. However, the assessment has analyzed the trend of illegal activities based on local people's perception. In this reporting period, the WWF Nepal field team provided support to 22 existing CBAPOs to effectively combat illegal activities, while 4 additional CBAPOs were formed and supported in 4 additional sites. Standardized guidelines were implemented to streamline the function and structure of CBAPOs across all project sites.

The program made significant achievements in promoting sustainable forest management. This was done through the formation of Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), as well as building the capacity of pre-existing CFUG executive members and local institutions to support the networking of different CFUGs. WWF Nepal field team provided basic logistical support for office management to 34 newly formed CFUGs and Buffer Zone CFUGs. This support was provided to establish and institutionalize a system of practices in the initial phase. During this reporting period, 3 Community Forest Coordination Committees and 15 Buffer Zone User Committees were provided with institutional development support, while more than 700 executive members of CFUGs, Buffer Zone CFUGs, CFCCs and Buffer Zone institutions were provided with training in sustainable forest management, account keeping, good governance, and leadership development. Local Resource Persons (LRPs) were instructed how to train and support the local CBOs in institutional development and management. These training activities were solely funded by GCP2. The original target of training 300 CBO executive members was exceeded because the trainings were conducted in a more cost effective way. This allowed the allocated budget to accommodate training more persons.

During this reporting period, 34 CFUGs and Buffer Zone CFUGs were mobilized and supported in their preparation of Community Forest Operational Plans (CFOPs). CFOPs are currently being reviewed by District Forest Offices and Protected Area offices. After CFOPs are approved by District Forest Offices and Protected Area Offices, 2,000 ha of forest will be handed over to 34 CFUGs and Buffer Zone CFUGs. Since, review of CFOPs is still under process the TAL Program expects completion of hand over of community forests by December 2008. Likewise, WWF Nepal field team exceeded the FY08 target of supporting 20 pre-existing CFUGs in their revision of the CFOPs. With additional investment outside of the GCP2 budget, WWF Nepal field team supported 34 pre-existing CFUGs in the preparation of CFOPs, which allows them to continue to manage 1,700 ha of community forests (1,000ha was the FY08 target).

The TAL Phase II document is still in progress during this reporting period. In-house workshops of WWF staff members were held to identify biological targets and analyze threats to targets in the changed political situation and socio-economic context. Since the restoration of peace in Nepal in the past couple of years, the restructuring of the government; federalism; and right of local and indigenous people on natural and biological resources have become prominent issues. Therefore, TAL Program needs to carefully analyze these issues and craft strategies to be tuned with changed context and issues. Likewise, program development for TAL Phase II needs to consider the WWF Network priorities and programs such as Network Initiatives. The development of the conceptual model for the program was also initiated. The TAL Phase II document is expected to be completed by December 2008.

WWF TAL Program has strengthened the monitoring of its activities at various levels, ranging from field-level activities to landscape level outcomes. WWF has planned case studies to document successes, best practices and lessons in 4 major intervention areas. These case studies will be completed by October 2008. These studies will be published in compliance with USAID's branding policy.

3. Progress by Target and Activity

By early September 2008, nearly 90% of the activity targets have been accomplished in this fiscal year. Since the program implementation is still ongoing, the rest of the target will be met by the end of this fiscal year. Details of progress by target and activities are as follows:

Objective I: Protect, manage and restore forests through community participation

WWF's strategy to address forest threats consists of three activities - protect, manage and restore. Our efforts to protect forests focus on fostering community stewardship of natural resources and biodiversity. CBAPO is one of the major interventions to control illegal activities such as

encroachment, illegal logging and illegal harvest of forest products. Our efforts to sustainably manage forests involve active community participation to reduce pressure on the resource. Our efforts to restore degraded forests focus on replanting and natural regeneration (this component was covered by GCP2 funds in this fiscal year). At the heart of each activity is the mobilization of communities through community forestry initiatives that actively involve them in the restoration of degraded wildlife corridors and in helping to reduce and monitor illegal activities. Activities to protect, sustainably manage and restore forests were implemented through partnership with CFCCs, CFUGs and Buffer Zone institutions in close coordination with DFOs.

Objective I.1: Protect Forests - By October 2008, trend of illegal activities (e.g. felling trees, encroachment, poaching, over grazing) reduced (based on trend analysis through participatory exercise with the local communities) in the national forests through mobilization of Community Based Anti-Poaching Operations.

Forests and wildlife in the national forests are highly vulnerable to illegal logging, encroachment and poaching, due to lack of effective enforcement and control mechanisms. In the current state of political transition there is a risk that these illegal activities may increase due to weak enforcement by the government agencies. Therefore, CBAPO has been a helpful arrangement for protecting forests and biodiversity from illegal activities. CBAPOs are currently operational in 22 sites in corridors, bottlenecks and buffer zones. As a result of their participation in CBAPOs, communities are becoming stewards of their natural resources and wildlife. CBAPOs keep vigil on illegal activities in their areas, reporting what they see to District Forest Offices (DFOs) and protected area authorities, and occasionally take action in close coordination with these institutions. Major actions taken by CBAPOs are confiscation of illegally logged timber, evacuation of encroached sites, dismantling traps, confiscation of weapons such as guns used in poaching, and **collecting fines from illegal loggers**. CBAPO members patrol the sensitive areas to safeguard forest and wildlife from illegal loggers and poachers. The CBAPOs also provide information and support DFOs or protected area offices to arrest poachers and timber smugglers. DFOs and protected area offices provide legal back ups to CBAPOs to take actions against encroachers, poachers and timber smugglers.

Along with anti-poaching activities, the CBAPOs maintain records of human-wildlife conflict incidents such as crop depredation, livestock depredation and property damage by wildlife. These records of human-wildlife conflict incidents can be used in systematic analysis of trends of human-wildlife conflict across the project sites. The CBAPOs are also keeping records of sightings of wildlife in their areas. These data can be very useful to initiate community-based biodiversity monitoring in the future.

Although there is still no concrete baseline to measure reduction in illegal activities, the local communities have perceived significant reduction in illegal activities. For example, there was no single case of rhino poaching outside the protected area in Chitwan and Khata corridor in this fiscal year. This is attributed mainly to active involvement of the local communities in patrolling and vigilance against poaching under leadership of the CBAPOs. Illegal logging and smuggling of timber and illegal harvest of forest products have been effectively controlled in the project sites where CBAPOs are mobilized. **In this regard**, in order to fulfill the gap in measurable baseline information, TAL Program has conducted an assessment of CBAPOs. The assessment has analyzed trend of illegal activities in corridors and bottlenecks. Trend of illegal activities will be analyzed through participatory exercise at the community level. Since there is difficulty in establishing measurable baseline of illegal activities, case studies will be conducted to analyze the trend of illegal activities in coming year as a process of monitoring of result of CBAPOs in reducing illegal activities.

Activities:

Train members of the existing CBAPOs to collect, monitor and share information about illegal activities.

During this reporting period, the WWF Nepal field team trained 499 (266 Male and 233 female) new members of existing CBAPOs on methods and principles of CBAPOs. These training activities were

aimed at building capacity of CBAPO members and to orient new members to conservation issues. This training focused on the modus operandi of day to day anti-poaching operations, information collection, policy and legal aspects of enforcement, legal provisions against wildlife crimes in the purview of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act and the Forest Act. The training also covered national and international issues regarding poaching and wildlife trade.

Streamline and consolidate CBAPOs across the project sites, according to an existing manual containing the detailed process of CBAPO formation, mobilization, methods of operation, lessons learned and best practices.

WWF has developed standardized guidelines to institutionalize CBAPOs. The guidelines explain the objectives, functions, roles, structure, *modus operandi* and many other topics relevant to CBAPOs. The guidelines also have references to legal provisions of protection and punishments. The guidelines were distributed to all CBAPO members. CBAPO members were oriented to carry out their activities in compliance with the guidelines. In addition, WWF projects in the field are helping CFUGs to incorporate CBAPO as one of the major components in their CFOP. This has been initiated in Khata corridor. Likewise, CFUGs of Khata corridor have started providing financial support to CBAPOs. CFUGs in Chitwan have also started providing financial support to CBAPO. These are encouraging initial steps toward institutionalizing and sustaining CBAPOs.

Financial support from the TAL program is the major source for meeting day to day operation cost of CBAPOs. Financial supports from TAL program mainly covered meeting costs, patrolling costs, awareness generating activities and transportation. During this reporting period 22 existing CBAPOs were supported to carry out day to day operations and awareness generation activities. Currently, all of the 22 existing CBAPO are functional and actively involved in safeguarding forests and wildlife in their area. They are also working in close coordination with DFO and protected area offices.

Mobilize, shape and institutionalize four new CBAPOs in Lamahi Bottleneck, Parsa Wildlife Reserve Buffer Zones.

4 new CBAPOs were formed in Parsa Wildlife Reserve (PWR) Buffer Zone and Chitwan National Park (CNP) Buffer Zone. Formation of CBAPOs was focused in PWR and CNP buffer zones in order to counteract threats of rhino poaching outside the protected areas. Major activities for formation of new CBAPOs were facilitation of group formation processes; orientation and interactions; and initial financial support for organizational management, logistics, transportation, and meetings. All of the newly formed CBAPOs are functional and actively involved in anti-poaching, forest protection and awareness generating activities.

Establish a baseline for illegal activities such as poaching, encroachment and logging in corridors, bottlenecks and buffer zones.

7 CBAPOs have started maintaining records of illegal activities and actions taken in corridors, bottlenecks and buffer zones. During this reporting period, an assessment of CBAPOs was conducted. The assessment was mainly focused on institutional, financial, operational and legal aspects of CBAPOs include trend of illegal activities after mobilization of CBAPOs. A difficulty was occurred in establishing measurable baseline because of limited availability of quantifiable information on types and frequency of illegal activities. Thus, there was difficulty to streamline spatial and temporal data to establish quantitative baseline. In this regard, a method was developed to analyze trend of illegal activities through participatory exercise with the local communities. The participatory exercise on trend of illegal activity will be largely based on the local peoples' perception. A case study will be conducted annually on the trend of illegal activities through using a participatory trend analysis method as a process of monitoring the result of CBAPOs in reducing illegal activities in corridors and bottlenecks.

Objective I.2. Manage Forests - 3,000 ha of new forest under community forestry management in TAL by September 2008.

Community Forestry has been instrumental to the sustainable management of forests in Nepal. Therefore, WWF's major strategy for sustainable management of forests in corridors, bottlenecks and buffer zones is the promotion of community forestry. Since CFUGs have broad based membership and ownership of forest resources, partnership with them provides a greater opportunity to implement community-based conservation and development activities. Therefore, GCP2 funding was focused mainly on promotion of community forestry. Major activities to promote community forestry included the formation of CFUGs, preparation of CFOPs, revision of CFOPs and institutional capacity building of CFUGs, CFCCs, and buffer zone institutions. Altogether, 2,000 ha of forested area have been brought under community management through this support in this fiscal year. Progress of forest management activities in this reporting period is as follows:

Activities:

Facilitate the formation of 40 BZCFUGs/CFUGs in coordination with DFOs and protected area offices through the provision of financial and technical support for preparation of Community Forest Operational Plans.

During this reporting period, WWF facilitated the formation of 34 Buffer Zone CFUGs and CFUGs. These CFUGs and Buffer Zone CFUGs were provided with financial and technical support for preparation of CFOPs. These activities were carried out with technical support from DFOs and protected area offices. Altogether this initiative brought 2,000 ha of forest areas under community management. Only 34 CFOPs of the original target of CFOPs for 40 CFUGs and buffer zone CFUGs, could be prepared during this reporting period because of the government's policy to limit hand over of forests to community management.

Provide technical and financial support to 30 existing CFUGs for revision of their Community Forest Operational Plans

In FY08, 34 existing CFUGs were supported in the process of renewing or revision of CFOPs. CFOPs are prepared for a 5 year term. After 5 years, CFOPs have to be revised or renewed. Both financial and technical resources are required for renewal of CFOPs. In this regard, TAL Program provided the financial support and DFO provided the technical support for renewal of the CFOPs of 34 CFUGs. The original target of renewing the CFOPs of 30 CFUGs was exceeded because WWF invested additional resources. The renewal of the CFOPs of 34 CFUGs has been instrumental in promoting the community management of 1,700 ha of forest, exceeding the original GCP2 target of 1,000. This activity was implemented in close coordination with and with technical support of the DFOs.

Conduct capacity building training activities on institutional development and technical skills in sustainable forest management for 300 participants from 70 BZCFUGs/CFUGs.

The WWF – Nepal field team conducted capacity building and training of CFUGs and local institutions. During this reporting period, more than 1,431 members and executive members (936 male and 495 female) of 50 CFUGs, Buffer Zone CFUGs, CFCCs and Buffer Zone institutions were trained in sustainable forest management, group management, account keeping, good governance, planning and leadership development. Local Resources Persons (LRPs) were prepared to train and support the local CBOs in institutional development and management. These training activities were solely funded by GCP2. The target of training 300 CBO office workers was significantly exceeded because the trainings were organized in a more cost effective way, which allowed the allocated budget to accommodate training more persons.

Assess the institutional capacity of 15 local CBO partners such as CFCCs and Buffer Zone institutions.

The FY08 goal of livelihood experts and NGOs partners assessing the institutional capacity of 15 CBOs was not completed as of this reporting date. The institutional capacity of only 2 of the 15 CBOs was assessed. An assessment of the remaining 13 CBOs is planned for Fiscal Year 2009 (Please refer GCP Implementation Plan for FY 2009). The capacity assessment of the 2 CBOs was done in a case study format. The studies are primarily focused on their institutional capacity to manage natural resources management and development activities. The primary focus of the studies is on linking integrated development activities with biodiversity conservation.

Strengthen 3 CFCCs through registration support and institutional development, such as training and logistical support for office management.

WWF Nepal field team supported the institutional development of 3 CFCCs. The support included mainly assistance with registering CFCCs as NGOs with the District Administration Office. Registration as an NGO ensures the legality of CFCCs. Together with CFUG members, [office managers](#) of CFCCs were provided with a range of training for enhancing their technical and managerial capacity in planning, institutional planning, institution management, monitoring, and leadership development. Physical space and facilities is one of the key ingredients of the institutional development process. Thus, basic office supplies and furniture were provided to CFCCs. All 3 CFCCs are fully functional and actively involved in conservation and development activities.

4. Learning Component and Program Development

GCP2 funding has been highly instrumental in developing WWF's capacity to analyze lessons learned from implementation of programs and to use learning in planning and development of programs. GCP2's support for learning in FY08 was focused on strengthening program monitoring, documentation of best practices, and developing a project document for TAL Phase II. The major achievements under learning and program development components are as follows:

Activities:**Prepare the second phase document of TAL Program detailing WWF-supported activities until 2011.**

Development of the TAL Phase II document is one of the high priority activities under GCP2 funding support. The development of TAL Phase II document is in progress during this reporting period in consultation with program development experts and conservation scientists in WWF US and the WWF Network. In-house workshops of WWF staff members were held to identify biological targets and analyze threats to targets in the changed political and socio-economic situation. Result chains and conceptual models are developed for the purpose of the second phase document. [Development of the TAL Phase II document needs a rigorous analysis of the socio-political context, such as the implications of restructuring the state and federalism in ownership and management of natural resources and protected areas; issues of indigenous communities rights regarding natural and biological resources. In this regard, the TAL team is analyzing the emerging issues and trying to develop strategies along with an implementation modality to cope with likely policy and structural changes in the natural resources and biodiversity conservation sector. Therefore, development of the project document will be completed by the end of this fiscal year.](#)

Conduct regular monitoring of progress, quality and effectiveness of the interventions of the TAL Program, including changes induced by the interventions.

During this reporting period, a systematic monitoring mechanism was established. Field staff was oriented to monitor concepts, methods, and techniques. A system and practice has been established at the project level to document the progress of activities. First, the frequency of field staff visits has increased; second, field offices developed checklists and formats to document information during monitoring visits; and third, local communities were largely involved in participatory monitoring. Likewise, results and outcomes level monitoring is being done regularly by the monitoring unit of WWF in Kathmandu. At the same time, periodic reviews and lessons learned/reflection workshops were instrumental in providing feedback to program management, identifying programmatic and operational issues, and assessing the status of activities. These workshops were helpful in sorting out issues related to implementation, planning and management. These workshops stimulated in-depth discussion among project staff on issues pertaining to planning, implementation and management. Furthermore, such discussions allowed for collective decisions to address the issues, find out solutions and take actions. Several actions were taken to improve planning and implementation as suggested by these workshops. Furthermore, these workshops were instrumental to sharing learning, understanding, and experiences which further helped to develop a common view and understanding on program-related issues.

At least 4 best practices in the TAL Program will be systematically documented through micro-level case studies.

As outlined in the GCP2 work plan, 4 best practices of TAL Program were to be documented and disseminated. These activities were not accomplished as of the reporting date. This activity is planned again for Fiscal Year 2009. (Please refer GCP Implementation Plan for 2009)..

5. Next Steps

In FY 09, GCP2 will focus on the following:

- Consolidation of achievements made to ensure sustainability of program results. More technical backstopping will be provided to ongoing activities funded by GCP2 to help strengthen activities on the ground. It will also ensure better results and sustainability of activities after the end of the project. For example, CFUGs supported for formation and preparation of CFOPs will need capacity building support in the coming year to strengthen community forestry. WWF will also find alternate sources of funding for the additional activities needed.
- Collection of data monitoring results and changes induced by activities implemented with GCP2 funding. Collection of monitoring data will be useful for evaluating GCP2 implementation and developing new conservation programs.
- Analysis of monitoring data and drawing lessons from implementation of conservation activities with GCP2 funding and match funds. An analysis of lessons learned will provide useful insights and information for program development and planning in the future.
- Documentation and sharing of successes, best practices and lessons. There are significant achievements of GCP2 implementation in forest restoration, sustainable natural resource management, livelihood enhancement and conservation. Several best practices in sustainable natural resources and conservation were developed during the implementation of GCP2. These successes, best practices and lessons can provide useful insights about conservation to partners, stakeholders and general audiences. Thus, these successes and best practices including lessons should be shared with partners, stakeholders and national or international audiences.

6. Success Stories

GCP2 funds were instrumental in improving the quality of life for the poor in rural areas of the Terai Arc Landscape. Several GCP2-funded income generating activities were implemented with the objective of improving livelihoods of the poor and marginalized groups and motivating them to participate in conservation activities.

This is a story about how a poor woman's life was changed because of income generating support from GCP2 and how she has become a conservationist.

Parvati Devi Chaudhary is a member of Mohana CFUG in Basanta corridor. Parvati lived in a thatch hut with her small family. They were poor, and it was difficult for the family to make ends meet. When Parvati was selected for pig farming training in 2002, she saw this as an opportunity to raise herself and her family out of poverty and was determined to make this opportunity count. At the end of the training all the participants were provided with a piglet. *"I received the smallest one,"* remembered Parvati, *"It was tiny and weak. I took great care to bring it home safely, but another participant was careless and her pig died on the way. My child used to cover it at night with a*



jute bag to protect it from mosquito bite,” she continued, “and we used to search far and wide to get suitable food for it. It is a useful asset to have and very profitable”, said Parvati. She added, “but you have to know how to raise it properly.”

It was this dedication and care that set the foundation for her escape from extreme poverty. Over a period of four years her pig gave birth five times. The litter size was twice 7, twice 9, and once she sold piglets for 1000 to 1100 rupees (US\$15 – 17). She also earned income from the pig that was raised in *adhiya* [*Adhiya* is a practice of sharing income or profit from livestock between owner and raiser. *The* owner of a pig gets someone else to raise it. Later on, the piglets are shared equally between owner and raiser and later sold for meat]. A few months back she had to part company with the sow that had sown the seeds of her recent turn in fortune. *“I had little choice but to have it killed for meat,”* she said with a hint of melancholy. *“She was getting too old.”*

When asked what she did with the money she replied, *“I bought a sewing machine and I also replaced my thatch roof with tiles”*. Then, pointing to a cow tied in the shed in front of her home she added, *“I bought that cow too and now it has given birth to a calf”*. Parvati also arranged for her daughter’s wedding.

Parvati has also received adult literacy training operated by the Terai Arc Landscape Program. Now she can maintain accounts of her day to day financial transactions. She has also become more aware of the importance of education. Thus, all of her children are enrolled in the local school.

This story is not only about change in Parvati’s economic status, but more about change in her self esteem, dignity and mind set. Now Parvati has a good reputation in her community as a sincere and hard working woman. Parvati is now more confident that she and her family can lead a decent life. Previously, she had to worry always about properly feeding her kids and family. She never thought of participating in community meetings. For her, the forest was only a source of fuel wood, timber and grazing ground. She never knew the importance of forest conservation. But now she has become a member of the executive committee of CFUGs. She actively participates in CFUG meetings and forest conservation activities such as planting trees. Now, the community members trust her and she can think beyond her daily subsistence needs.

7. Lessons Learned

The major lessons learned from GCP2 in this reporting period are as follows:

- Field-based coaching is more effective than organized training events for capacity building of community members in community forest management and institutional development. Field-based coaching is both cost-effective and effective for participant learning. Development and mobilization of Local Resource Persons (LRPs) are effective measures for field-based coaching for community members in forest management and institutional management.
- Mobilization of CFUG funds through cooperatives in micro-credit schemes is an effective measure for sustaining Income Generating Activities (IGA). Cooperatives can ensure mobilization of funds in compliance with micro-finance principles and also ensure legality of operation of credit schemes. On the other hand, idle funds of CFUGs are better mobilized through cooperatives in IGAs. There is a tangible amount of funds in CFUGs which either remains idle or is used in unproductive activities. Mobilization of these funds in IGAs through cooperatives can be instrumental in providing livelihood benefits to CFUG members. Thus, the Terai Arc Landscape Program has begun initiatives to mobilize CFUG funds in IGAs through cooperatives in Khata corridor. These initiatives will be expanded to other project sites in coming fiscal year.

8. Future Challenges

The major challenge for forest conservation in TAL is encroachment. WWF has made significant achievement in restoration of forest corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape, but encroachment has posed serious challenges in safeguarding the achievements. Organized encroachment in the name of freed-bonded laborers and flood victims is rampant. The organized encroachment has strong political backing due to politics of popular vote. WWF has been proactively acting at the central and field level in lobbying, advocacy and on the ground actions to counteract the threats of encroachment. But this continues to be a national problem. Therefore, there is a serious challenge ahead to deal with this issue to safeguard achievements and successes in forest conservation.

Nepal has recently begun the process of recovering from a decade of armed-conflict. Development activities were halted during the conflict period; therefore, the priority of the country's government, stakeholders, and the local communities is development, outweighing conservation issues. There is big challenge ahead to prioritize conservation in the national agenda of the future government.