

CAPABILITY STATEMENT



VISION

ANSAB has a vision of rural South Asia built on rich biodiversity and prosperous communities. This vision includes rich, healthy and productive ecosystems actively managed and sustainably used by formerly poor local communities. It also features adaptive people and resilient ecosystems able to cope with global climate change.

MISSION

Generate and implement community-based, enterprise-oriented solutions that conserve biodiversity and improve the livelihoods of the poorest of the poor while bolstering national economic development and addressing climate change.

ABOUT ANSAB

ANSAB is a civil society organization committed to biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement in South Asia.

Since its establishment, it has been putting community empowerment and economic incentives at the heart of its approach, believing that as people benefit from natural resources they become more motivated to conserve them. ANSAB generates knowledge and results through applied research and studies to implement innovative solutions in line with this core conviction as creating enterprises based on the sustainable use of natural resources, and establishing payment-schemes for environmental services.

ANSAB has a focal position in the field through its work for more than two decades in ecological, technological, economic, and socio-cultural fronts associated to people-centered conservation, management, and use of biodiversity, especially NTFPs and high value agricultural commodities. ANSAB has been consistently evolving, consolidating, institutionalizing and advancing the approaches and strategies for the promotion of community-based enterprises and value chains, natural resources management and biodiversity conservation, enabling policy environment and multi-stakeholders collaboration.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ANSAB has adopted the following guiding principles and approaches while planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating its program activities:

- **Measurable Impact:** ANSAB interventions have been widely tested and applied on the ground. Outcomes are meticulously quantified and compiled through a thorough Impact Tracking System (ITS).
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):** ANSAB programs contribute to the United Nations key objectives for development, more specifically towards “Zero Poverty”, “Zero Hunger”, “Gender Equality”, “Decent Work and Economic Growth”, “Climate Action” and “Life on Land”.
- **Innovation:** ANSAB believes in continuous learning and is constantly testing new ideas, approaches and methodologies to better achieve its mission.
- **Sustainable Implementation:** ANSAB builds partnership with local NGOs/CBOs that will be able to pursue the work once national and international funding comes to term. It also mobilizes Local Resource Persons (LRPs) to build the capacity of local communities.
- **Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge:** ANSAB values indigenous knowledge and combines both traditional and modern scientific methods when implementing projects on the ground.
- **Community-Private-Public Collaboration:** ANSAB works through a multi-stakeholders approach involving all relevant actors (local producers, harvesters, entrepreneurs, traders, companies, service providers, government line agencies, donors, etc.) in program planning and implementation. It believes in creating hybrid community-private-public ownership structures and achieving objectives through joint partnerships and collaborations.

PROGRAM FOCUS

- **Pro-Poor Economic Development:** Natural products and services based value chain development incl. SMEs, Ecosystem-based Commercial Agriculture (ECA), Biomass-based energy, One health, Drinking water and Education
- **Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Climate Change:** Sustainable forest management incl. forest certification, Payment for ecosystem services incl. forest carbon, Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- **Networking, Policy and Research:** Enabling policy environment through studies, networking and multi-stakeholders platforms, collaboration, evidence-based policy analysis, socio-economic and bio-physical research and studies
- **Capacity Building and Services:** Training, study tours, technical assistance, market information, business planning, publications

PRO-POOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This program aims to create or strengthen environmentally sustainable markets that benefit the poorest of the poor while promoting social equity, justice and good governance. It supports the entire value chain of targeted natural resource products through a comprehensive range of activities, including:

Entrepreneurship Development: organization of individual and groups; facilitation to identify and develop appropriate leaders; training to develop entrepreneurial skills; establishment of partnerships with local leaders and organizations.

Enterprise Planning and Development: provision of technical expertise to help targeted groups identify enterprise opportunities, undertake feasibility studies and develop sustainable business plans; training on enterprise development, business planning, marketing and enterprise management; development of enterprise management systems for effectiveness and good governance; assessment of technological options; provision of technical advices on product development.

Business Development Services: facilitation of access to different Business Development Services (BDS), such as local experts, community resource centres, commercial banks, micro-finance institutions, etc.; provision of technical expertise to help BDS providers develop and market effective service packages.

Marketing Information Services: collection, analysis and dissemination of marketing information on NTFPs and High Value Crops (HVCs) to collectors, local traders, entrepreneurs and development facilitators through electronic, print and audiovisual media. These services were developed through multi-stakeholders interactions and include price lists, directories, manuals, market study reports, online databases and market strategies. Their net result is to increase the bargaining power of local collectors, who can get higher prices for their products, thanks to better information.

Value Chain Promotion and Market Linkages: analysis of targeted natural products' value chains in order to find new markets, promote fair benefit sharing mechanisms, improve governance structures, develop trust among stakeholders, promote product standardization and quality improvement, and generate value at the local and regional levels. These interventions help improve relationships between producers and traders and create sustainable linkages between producers and end markets.

Product Certification: promotion of internationally recognized accreditations (FSC, Organic, Fair Trade, Wildlife Friendly) to strengthen enterprises' commitment to environmental conservation and social equity while facilitating marketing of local forest products worldwide.

Ecosystem based Commercial Agriculture: Towards transforming conventional agriculture and forestry into climate smart, attractive and socially prestigious business in Nepal

Nepal has a comparative advantage in developing sustainable agriculture; and the existence of some good practices that are scattered across the nation can be an asset to this direction. But efforts are still lacking to consolidate these good practices into a viable system of value chain. There is no any appropriate agribusiness model to apply under such situation. The sector is still mainly dominated by subsistence farming, traditional farming practices, land fragmentation, and low level of knowledge and suffers with low productivity and production. The sector is struggling to catch up with rapid changes in terms of new technologies, viable products, emerging markets and business possibilities. There is a widespread negative perception among the local people towards farming as menial, tedious and an un-prestigious employment partially due to small remuneration and the use of traditional farming practices. These factors have led the rural people, especially youths, to migrate to urban areas and abroad in search of better livelihood opportunities and higher incomes, thus leaving their children and elderly family behind. This has been negatively affecting the technological up-gradation, which would increase production and the success of rural entrepreneurial activities.

In order to tap the huge potential that exist in Nepal's agriculture sector and address the challenges of resource degradation, fragmented land holdings, erratic climate systems, poor market linkages and labor shortages currently being faced by this sector, ANSAB has envisioned a new program named Ecosystem-based Commercial Agriculture (ECA), which aims to transform the traditional forestry and agriculture into climate smart, attractive and socially prestigious business. A climate smart ECA system, as envisioned by ANSAB, increases the production and productivity in a sustainable way; improves the resilience of agro-ecosystems and people to climate change; reduces/removes green house gases; and attract youths and make it socially prestigious generating better remuneration. The ECA builds on the good results and best practices gained through ANSAB's programs aimed at building prosperous communities through farm and forest based enterprises.

With financial assistance from blue moon fund (bmf), ANSAB has started some of the initial key components of ECA that are crucial to test its effectiveness, make a ground for efficiency testing and develop a program for scaling-up. With the bmf support, we have a) conceptualized the ECA system with two major components – farming systems with appropriate inputs, technologies and practices; and community-based capitalism with fair and green value chain – an agri-business model; b) established an experimentation center for developing and testing technologies, and demonstration, c) identified and oriented a lead firm, which has a long-term commitment for promoting ECA value-chain; d) piloting the farming and business model with the lead firm and communities in peri-urban areas of Kathmandu and Nawalparasi districts.

Creating an Urban Market from Scratch for Community-Made, Eco-Friendly Products

Bio-briquettes are a promising source of alternative energy made out of plants not used for any other purposes, including invasive alien species. They liberate significantly less carbon emissions and harmful smoke over their lifecycle than kerosene or traditional coal briquettes for the same amount of energy. Over the past three years, ANSAB helped establish five local enterprises in Dolakha and Sindhupalchok to provide innovative models for the production of such briquettes in Nepal. ANSAB first worked with scientists in Kathmandu to improve the stoves and the briquettes production technologies traditionally used in villages. It then helped interested communities raise capital, select leaders, establish enterprises organizational structures, buy needed equipment and train future staff. An experimentation phase followed, in which ANSAB suggested several changes to bring quality and efficiency up to the required level for mass production: the ratio of char and binder was adjusted, communities started to use pit rather than charring drum, new mixer machines were delivered, grinders were improved, etc.

The most innovative part of the operation, however, was the development of an urban market for the bio-briquettes produced by the new enterprises. ANSAB worked with the five communities and other interested individuals to establish a national company based in Kathmandu: the Himalayan Naturals. It then worked with this new entity to create a network of department stores ready to retail the product in the city and to produce an appealing packaging for consumers. It also supported extensive marketing activities, for example by setting-up 40 one-day kiosks throughout Kathmandu to demonstrate the product and its multiple uses. Development agencies were also encouraged to start using bio-briquettes to heat their offices. As a result of these promotional efforts, Himalayan Naturals now stands as the main briquette marketing company in Nepal. The whole project has so far provided direct employment to 94 people (52 men and 42 women, income: US\$ 24,934/yr) and indirectly benefited 1,155 CFUG members. The five community enterprises produced and marketed a total of 500,000 briquettes and 2,000 improved stoves in 3 years, serving about 10,000 Kathmandu families (50,000 people). The project has so far successfully limited the expansion of Banmara (*Eupatorium adenophorum*), an alien invasive plant representing a threat to local biodiversity and economic development, and prevented the emission of an estimated 43MT of CO₂.

BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

This program aims to conserve the rich biodiversity of South Asia, which ranges from tropical forests to alpine meadows. It supports a variety of community-led efforts to manage natural resources and bolster climate change adaptation and mitigation, including:

Enterprise-Oriented, Community-Based Forest Management: capacity building of local communities in forest resource assessments, sustainable harvesting, equitable distribution, good governance, and linking conservation with economic development; technical assistance for the development and implementation of sustainable forest management plans that take into consideration the existing status of forest resources and focus on their conservation.

Forest Certification: support to Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) interested in obtaining the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification and bringing the environmental management of Nepal's forests up to the highest international standards. Since the group certification model is unique in the world and new to Nepal, the program works both to raise awareness among non-certified forest managers CGUGs and to build the capacities of those who are already certified. The program also collaborates with other international organizations on the expansion of FSC certification to other ecosystem services at the landscape level.

REDD-plus: provision of social and technical assistance to local forest stakeholders to bring various forest management regimes under REDD mechanisms. The program plays a prominent role in strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders through the conduction

of training and workshops, the elaboration and dissemination of guidelines and other informative publications as well as on the ground implementation of pilot projects.

Climate Change Adaptation: strengthening of communities, species and ecosystems' ability to cope with the impacts of climate change. The program creates or develops local forest stakeholders groups, promotes good governance and facilitates activities to enhance ecological and social resilience. It further supports the diversification of livelihood options for poor and vulnerable groups by increasing food production and income through the establishment of long-term linkages with scientific and adaptive forest management schemes as well as incentives-based biodiversity conservation projects.

Agroforestry and Conservation Farming: promotion of suitable agroforestry practices with a focus on poor and landless individuals. These practices help conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem services, sustain land productivity/care and reduce poverty. They also contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Biodiversity Conservation: identification of rare and endangered plant species and their critical habitats as well as establishment of conservation measures at various levels. The program notably develops participatory biodiversity monitoring tools to promote community-based conservation practices.

Putting the Poorest of the Poor in Charge of Their Own Development through CFUG Subgroups

1. ANSAB has been pioneering the concept of Community Forest User Group (CFUG) subgroups for over a decade. The main idea is to enrich disadvantaged people and increase their motivation to conserve biodiversity by handing them exclusive control over specific areas and/or income generating activities within a given community forest.

2. After having recently experimented the approach in partnership with ANSAB, the executive committee of Thangsadeurali CFUG is now planning to provide other patches of degraded community forest to more subgroups. Krishna Bahadur Karki, Chairperson of the CFUG, proudly explained the reasons: "The amount of efforts put on the conservation of forests and plantations of Argeli (*Edgeworthia gardneri*) in the areas devolved to 4 subgroups is impossible for the committee to organize at the CFUG level." He added: "Members of subgroups are highly motivated because of the clear link between their responsibilities and their benefits, which are detailed in the subgroups management plans developed thanks to ANSAB's support. Most of the people in the subgroups are ultra-poor and were never effectively organized under the CFUG framework before, rather acting as a major threat to the community forest. Now they are the first to come to CFUG meetings and to participate in the community's conservation activities."

Similar successes have been realized by 100 subgroups in 47 CFUGs, representing 2,252 households. Most subgroups currently have monthly saving and credit systems, the value of which now reaches US \$33,436. Subgroups mobilized the funds to invest in their members' forest and agriculture based enterprise activities, generating US \$67,028 in additional income. Major improvements are also seen in the conservation of the patches of forest allocated to them, as they control grazing, ensure regeneration, sustainably harvest firewood and protect from CFUG rules encroachment and improper harvesting of forest products.

The concept of CFUG subgroups is now being replicated by other NGOs and the Government of Nepal, which issued a directive to promote the allocation of degraded forest area to subgroups.

Design and setting up of a governance and payment system for Nepal's Community Forest Management under Reduced Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)

ANSAB, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) implemented a project “Design and setting up of a governance and payment system for Nepal's Community Forest Management under Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+)” in three watershed regions – Kayerkhola of Chitwan, Ludikhola of Gorakha and Charnawati of Dolakha districts of Nepal from June 2009 to May 2013 with the financial support from the Climate and Forest Initiative of the Government of Norway. The main goal of this pilot project was to set up a demonstrational governance and payment system for emission reduction through sustainable forest management intended to benefit local communities in general and indigenous people in particular.

During its implementation, the project strengthened the capacity of civil society actors in Nepal namely Himawanti Nepal, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) and REDD Alliance to ensure active engagement in the REDD+ development process and gaining necessary implementation level experiences. The project also disseminated 190 biogas and 967 improved cooking stoves as the alternative energy systems for the reduction of the community's dependency on forest resources for fuel. Carbon measurement guideline for the community forests was also developed and the local communities were trained for measuring and monitoring carbon in their forest and integrating carbon assessment as an activity in their operational plan of the community forest. A pilot Forest Carbon Trust Fund was developed to disseminate the REDD+ seed grants to the community forest user groups, where the locals also managed FCTF at community level. The main focus of this pilot project was to stimulate performance based forest management through the financial incentive provided in the form of REDD+ payment. REDD+ seed grants of US \$95,000 were provided to the community forest user groups in the three watersheds were provided from 2011 for three years in accordance to the Forest Carbon Trust Fund Operational Guideline. Following criteria were set in the Guideline for the REDD+ seed grants payment: 24% for carbon stock, 16% for carbon increment, 10% for the number of household of indigenous people, 15% for Dalit households, 15% for the women population in forest user groups, and 20% for the population of poor households. This elaborate set of criteria where 40% was given to carbon and 60% on social safeguards was for the purpose of maintaining equity.

The lessons learnt from this pilot project have been used to develop knowledge package on REDD+ and extensively recognized as inputs for the formulation of National REDD Strategy. As there are very few actual on the ground REDD+ payments made, this project offered forestry professionals from different countries to visit the site and learn on how participatory community REDD can be implemented. It also provided a real opportunity for student and researchers to analyze the impacts of REDD+ which otherwise would not be possible had the payments not been made.

NETWORKING, POLICY AND RESEARCH

Through its Networking, Policy and Research program, ANSAB works with key stakeholders from grassroots leaders to national government officials to improve the development and implementation of policies related to community forestry and NTFPs. It also draws on the expertise of leading national and international private companies, public agencies, policy forums and networks as well as non-profits to holistically promote these sectors. More specifically, program activities include:

Networking: coordination of and participation in several important networks, such as the Nepal NTFP Network (NNN), the Private-Public Alliance (PPA), the Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN), the Nepal Herbs and Herbal Products Association (NEHHPA) and the Jadi Buti Association of Nepal (JABAN).

Policy: organization of policy dialogues between NGOs, INGOs, governments and the private sector; evidence-based advocacy to local Village Development Committees (VDCs), District Development Committees (DDCs) and District Forest Offices (DFOs) and national governments on an ongoing basis.

Research: undertaking of researches and studies on all scientific and managerial aspects relevant to ANSAB work, including biological monitoring, biodiversity, community forestry, ecosystem services, sustainable harvesting, gender analysis, value chains, REDD+ and forest carbon stocks methods.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND SERVICES

ANSAB seeks to impart local communities with the knowledge they need to manage the ecosystems on which they heavily depend in a sustainable and inclusive way. As such, it devotes a lot of energy to capacity building in all its projects. More specifically, program activities include:

Training: organization of trainings in all shape and forms, from grassroots mobilization workshops to environmental assessment field courses to technical coaching on NTFPs processing and REDD+. The program mostly targets women, poor and other excluded groups, but several events are also organized at the regional, national and international levels for governmental and nongovernmental organizations, consultants, experts and researchers.

Available training packages currently include:

- Enterprise Development Planning
- Entrepreneurship Development
- Business Planning
- Community Forestry Operational Plan Preparation
- Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)
- NTFP Inventory

Study Tours: organization of field visits for national and international researchers, donors, buyers and partners to study successful CFUGs or community-based enterprises. The program also facilitates exchanges between community forests and enterprises in similar situations to disseminate best practices and foster mutually benefitting business links.

Technical Assistance: provision of advices on an ongoing basis to all institutions with whom ANSAB has worked in the past, from local enterprises, CFUGs and DFOs to national partners and exporting companies; support of partners' projects and programs related to biodiversity conservation, forest resource assessment and community-based enterprise development.

Publications: production and dissemination of books, manuals, articles, reports, proceedings, price lists, trade

ACHIEVEMENTS

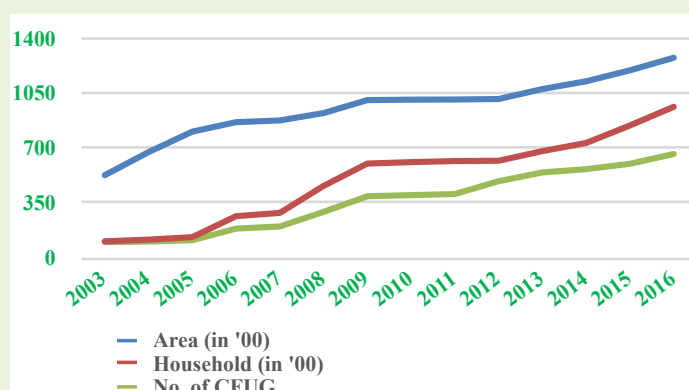
ANSAB measures its effectiveness on the ground through a detailed Impact Tracking System (ITS). Specific outcomes are measured in terms of monetary benefits to primary producers and collectors, degree of economic participation in the value chain, and forest area under improved management.

In 2016, through ANSAB's intervention:

- A total of 1,298 economic entities have been developed and strengthened that engaged 85,270 economic participants generating revenue of NRs 831 million (US \$8.31million).
- 127,700 hectares of forest and meadow areas was brought under the improved management of 663 Forest User Groups, representing 96,400 households.

Countries
where
ANSAB
Provided

Annual Monetary Benefits from ANSAB's Programs



Services

Number of Forest User Groups (FUGs) worked with, Area under sustainable management (in hectares), and Households benefitted through ANSAB's intervention

PUBLICATIONS

ANSAB has published more than 65 publications in the areas of biodiversity conservation, sustainable harvesting of NTFPs, forest based enterprises development, and REDD+; that are useful resources for development planners, field based practitioners, and researchers/academia. ANSAB publications include:

Practical Books & Manuals:

- ANSAB Rural Development Toolkit Series 2010 (8 volumes of toolkits);
- Guidelines for Measuring Carbon Stocks in Community-Managed Forests;
- Local Communities and Natural Products: Manual for Organizing Natural Resource Management Groups for Resource Management Planning, Enterprise Development and Integration Into Value Chains;
- Challenges and Opportunities for Nepal's Small and Medium Forest Enterprises;
- Enterprise Development Manual for Natural Products;
- Community Based forest enterprises in Nepal: Case studies, Lessons and Implications.

Video Documentaries:

- Green Business in the Himalayas –Pioneering Market-Driven Solutions to Improve Livelihoods and Conserve Biodiversity – English and Nepali
- Forest Certification: Steps towards sustainability – English and Nepali
- In Search of Yarshgumba, a Trans-Himalayan Journey

Other materials:

- Monthly Price Lists for 33 NTFPs in 6 key markets of India and Nepal;
- The Himalayan Bioresources, a newsletter published 3 times a year that informs its readers of the latest news, events, opportunities and innovations related to ANSAB's work.

All these publications are available free of charge at www.ansab.org.np.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

Since its foundation, ANSAB has implemented over 100 development projects in more than 30 districts of Nepal as well as in several South Asian countries.

It is governed by an international board of directors, and employs a permanent team of 50 professionals (including over 40 field staff). The organization also has access to a roster of more than 200 experts on which it relies on a project per project basis. ANSAB staff and consultants have thorough expertise in a wide range of fields, including:

- forestry (forest management, carbon quantification, certification, GIS/RS analysis and mapping)
- environmental sciences (biology, biodiversity)
- social sciences (sociology, economics)
- business management (legal, accounting, finance, marketing)



ANSAB

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