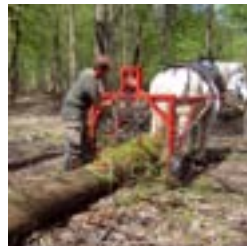
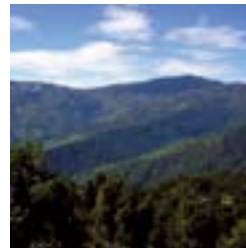
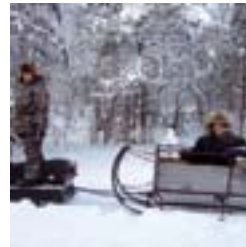
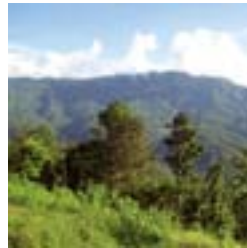




Celebrating success: Stories of FSC® certification



Certification brings the market to the mountains

FSC certification of community forests improves access to international markets for non-timber forest products and leads to better forest management.



Certified forests in the Dolakha district of Nepal
(photo: ANSAB)

High in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal, the Malika enterprise produced the first FSC certified hand-made paper in the world in 2005. Today, FSC certification continues to help improve the management of forests and the livelihoods of communities that depend on them, with 22 forest user groups managing 14,145 hectares of certified forests, and eight enterprises with chain of custody certification.

Beside paper, some 24 non-timber forest products are now harvested and transformed into essential oils, Ayurvedic medicines and health supplements, and a variety of other herbal medicines and beauty products for sale in international

markets. FSC certification has increased community incomes and brought environmental improvements.

A unique partnership for certification

The Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB) introduced FSC certification in Nepal to promote responsible forest management and help user groups develop economically viable and socially responsible forest enterprises. A unique blend of industry, government, NGOs, communities and forest certifiers created the Private Public Alliance (PPA) on the Certification and Sustainable Marketing of Non-timber Forest

High principles in Bitteri Pakha community forests

“Forests are an integral part of local people’s livelihoods as they have harvested fuelwood, fodder, medicinal plants, fruits and more since time immemorial,” says Dhana Lama, executive committee member of the local community forest group. “Introduction of certification made people aware of sustainable forest management. Now they understand that forests and their biodiversity are very important and they should use it in a sustainable manner.” He proudly adds: “Products of our community forests have been successfully marketed, good changes in environment and economy have been observed, and social changes have been felt. Participation of poor social groups in forest management has risen, and even boundary conflicts among groups were resolved,” says Mr Lama, concluding that: “We are proud that we are part of the certification pool that has helped to raise economic impacts on ground level.”

Products. This led to the development of interim FSC certification standards for timber and non-timber forest products, a group certification model, and huge awareness raising and capacity building efforts. The Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) acts as resource manager for the groups and holds the FSC certification on their behalf.

Bringing in the benefits

The chair of FECOFUN, Ms Apsara Chapagain, is more than convinced of the value of FSC certification. “All certified community forests are better in terms of participation, benefit sharing, decision-making and fund utilization”, she says. Governance and transparency in the communities have been strengthened

and “issues of indigenous, disadvantaged people have been well addressed”. Ms Chapagain also highlights the positive environmental impacts, especially on water sources, biodiversity and soil conservation. Economically, she notes, certified products are sold at better prices than before.

Mr Kedar Dahal, District Forest Officer in Dolakha District is happy about the results of the certification. “With the commencement of certification, forests have been managed in more sustainable ways. Technical and scientific management were talked about in past, but we saw it in practice only after certification came into existence in this area. The results are clearly visible, productivity has been increasing, and forest-based industries are now well established in

this district.” He adds: “In addition, social harmony has also been achieved. Pro-poor groups are actively working and their participation in decision-making has increased.”

The only way is up

“Forest certification has brought all government and non-government organizations together,” says Mr Parbat Gurung, manager of the Sustainable Bio-trade Group. However, he concludes that: “It has opened up marketing opportunities in the international arena, but present production is low and we have not been able to meet the demand. So we need to think of increasing production and expanding markets, to make group certification in Nepal more alluring.”



Women cleaning Lokta bark, Dolakha, Nepal (photo: ANSAB)

“After certification, forests are better and changes are perceptible. Now communities are harvesting important non-timber forest products in a sustainable manner – an additional source of income to forest communities.”

**Mr Dhruba Basnet,
Director of Bhimeshwor Forest Product
Processing Enterprise**