

news letter.



Government of Nepal

Japan International
Cooperation Agency

PROJECT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN NEPAL (CASFOM)

**PERIOD: OCTOBER 2022 ~
SEPTEMBER 2027**

'The amendments to the Guidelines on Community Forestry have been officially approved.'

1. WHAT IS COMMUNITY FORESTRY?



Community Forest adjacent to farmland and dwellings, Parbat District, Gandaki Province.



Meeting with Community Forest User Group in Tanahun District, Gandaki Province

Community forestry has been legislated in Nepal since 1993. This system conditionally permits the use of forest resources within Community Forest User Group (CFUG) to meet the basic needs of local residents, instead of entrusting the restoration and conservation of national forests that have degraded due to illegal logging or decreased in area due to conversion from forest to agricultural land and other land use systems.

According to the Annual Progress Report published by MOFE in 2024, there were 23,682 CFUGs registered across the country, managing about 2.5 million hectares (ha) of national forest as Community Forest (CF) out of about 6 million ha of forest in Nepal (MOFE, 2023/2024)(1). As a result of conservation policies through community forestry and other measures, forest cover has recovered from 29.7% in 1994 to 43.4% in 2022 (FRTC, 2024)(2), and local people have been able to meet their basic livelihood needs through the use of firewood, wood, fodder, fruit and medicinal plants in the CF.

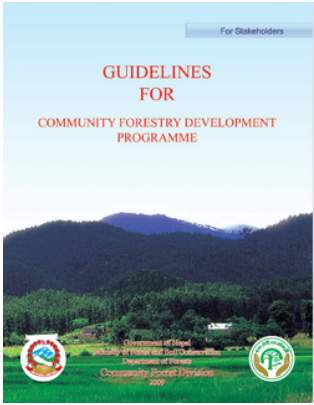
However, the situation surrounding CFs in rural areas has changed significantly due to changes in the socio-economic situation caused by a decline in the working-age population and an increase in migrant remittances, the spread of infrastructure such as roads, gas and electricity, and the increase and severity of natural disasters such as forest fires and landslides. As a result, local people's interest in and dependence on forests is said to be declining significantly. For example, CF management plans must be updated every five to ten years in order to manage CFs and utilize forest resources, but it is estimated that nearly 30% of management plans have not been updated in recent years(3), and how to resolve this situation has become a major issue.

(1) MOFE(2023/2024). Annual Progress Report 2080/2081. Ministry of Forests and Environment,
<https://www.mofe.gov.np/uploads/documents/annual-report-208081pdf-6786-852-1740046582.pdf>

(2) FRTC(2024). Nepal National Land Cover Monitoring System, 2020-2022. Forest Research and Training Centre, Ministry of Forests and Environment.
https://frtc.gov.np/uploads/files/NLCMS_2020_22.pdf

(3) Project research. Interviews with Provincial Forestry and Environment Ministry officials.

2. WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY FORESTRY GUIDELINES?



The original Community Forestry Guidelines were developed in 1995 and most recently revised for the third time in 2014 before the transition to federalism. The guidelines provide guidance for the proper implementation of community forestry as stipulated in the Forest Act and Forest Regulations, which take precedence over the guidelines, and mainly include rules and procedures for the formation and registration of CFUGs, the formulation/updating of CFUG constitutions, CF management plans, annual activity plans, and their implementation. It also covers the participation of women and socially disadvantaged groups in community forestry and equitable benefit sharing. These guidelines are therefore one of the most important guidelines for the proper and sustainable implementation of community forestry.

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY FORESTRY GUIDELINES



In this project, in order to promote the implementation of the climate change adaptation measures in the field, Component 1 focuses on revising existing policy tools (manual, guidelines, etc.) at the federal level aligning with the changing social circumstances, while Component 2 involves conducting pilot activities in CF related to adaptation measures through sustainable forest management at the provincial level.



As mentioned above, the Community Forestry Guidelines, which were revised before the transition to federalism, needed to be revised as soon as possible, taking into account the current federal system, the socio-economic situation, natural conditions including climate change, and the changing relationship between local people and forests. Accordingly, it was decided to revise the Community Forestry Guidelines. The following activities were carried out together with the CP from March 2024 to April 2025 (refer to the Figure 1).

Task Force Workshop in Godawari

Provincial consultation meeting in Koshi Province

In particular, to hear the opinions of CFUGs that actually manage and utilize CFs on-site, Division Forest Offices that oversee CFs, and local governments, which are the administrative bodies closest to the community, the Project members visited all seven provinces to hold consultation meetings and gathered various opinions based on on-site perspectives. Additionally, administrative bodies from the federal, province, and local government levels gathered to exchange opinions on issues related to CFs. At the federal level, the consultation meeting was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Forestry and Environment (MOFE), including the Secretary, NGOs, and development partners, and a diverse range of opinions were provided based on lessons learned from other projects. A total of over 260 participants took part in all seven provinces and one national level consultation meeting.

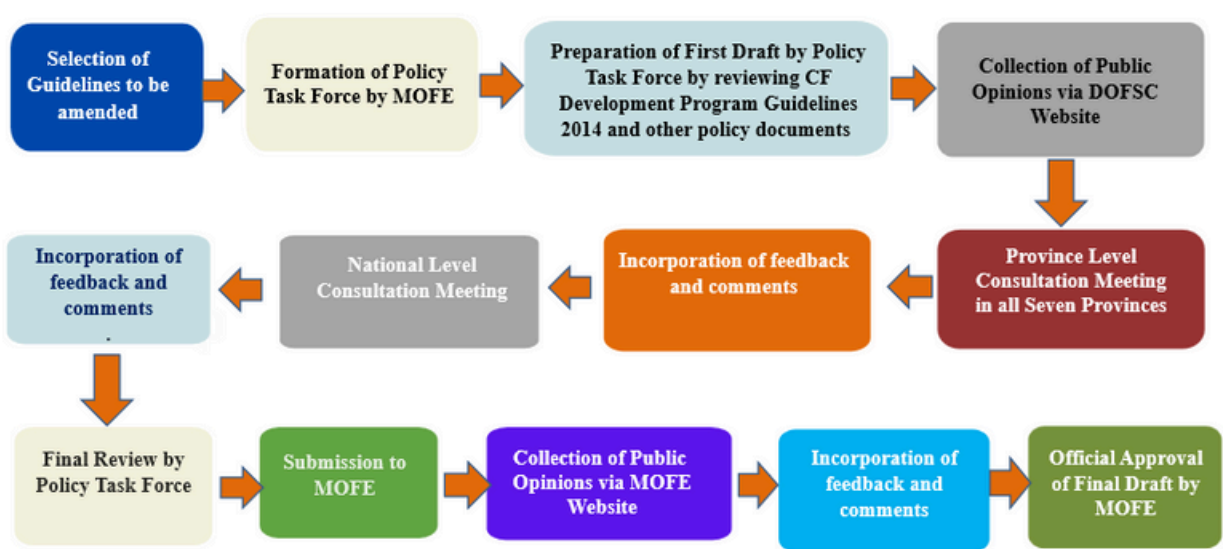


Figure 1 : Key steps followed for updating CF Guidelines 2081

4. CONTENTS OF THE AMENDMENTS

During the revision process, repeated rigorous discussions were held with Task Force members and CPs on how to reflect the inputs gathered through the above-mentioned provincial consultation meetings in the guidelines. As a result, the guidelines were revised primarily with regard to the following points (refer to the Table 1).

Taking into account the findings and lessons learned from the pilot activities under Component 2, our project also provided input on simplifying the CF management plan update process, strengthening cooperation with local governments, expanding and splitting CFs, promoting climate change adaptation measures through forest management in CFs, clarifying standards and procedures for more practical guidelines based on gender equality and social inclusion, and technical knowledge on forest management and soil and water conservation. These inputs were reflected in the revised guidelines. The revised guidelines will be disseminated to each province through the distribution of booklets and other materials.

Table 1: Main Amendments

No.	Former Guidelines	Revised Guidelines	Aim of the Amendment
1	Various surveys, including forest resource inventory are required for updating the CF management plan.	A simplified management plan that omits forest resource inventory and surveys under specific conditions, can be created when updating.	Facilitate the updating of management plans by making it possible to omit costly forest resource inventory and surveys.
2	(Not stated)	Multiple CFs can be merged or a single CF can be divided under certain conditions.	Reactivate CFUGs by integrating multiple small-scale CFs for efficient forest management and strengthen CFUG functions, or by splitting a single CF that is difficult to operate smoothly for some reason.
3	Local administrative agencies (prior to the transition to a federal system) can support the implementation of CFUG forest management and livelihood improvement activities and provide financial assistance to CFUG.	Local governments can participate in discussions on the development/updating of CFUG constitutions and management plans, and can provide financial and technical support for livelihood enhancement activities, agroforestry and other activities.	With the transition to a federal system, strengthen cooperation with the local government closest to the community.
4	CFUGs can develop action plans on community-based climate change adaptation as part of their CF management plans	In developing and updating CF management plans, areas vulnerable to natural disasters and risks are identified, and the necessary measures are incorporated and implemented in annual plans. In addition, action plans on climate change adaptation can be developed (new annex on procedures for developing plans added).	Mainstream climate change adaptation activities in CFs.

No.	Aim of the Amendment	Revised Guidelines	Aim of the Amendment
5	(Not stated)	Stipulates conditions, procedures and profit-sharing methods for the implementation of agroforestry within CFs.	Promote the implementation of agroforestry as defined in higher-level laws and regulations such as the Forest Act and Forest Regulations by clarifying implementation conditions and procedures.
6	Unanimity is required to formulate/amend the CF's constitution at the General Assembly, the highest decision-making body of the CFUG. In addition, one male and one female from each household is encouraged to participate in the General Assembly.	Decisions at the General Assembly on the formulation/amendment of the constitution and the merger/division of CFs are based on unanimity, but can also be made with the agreement of two-thirds of the members. It is also mandatory that one man and one woman from each household must attend and vote at the General Assembly.	The adoption of majority voting enables smoother decision-making, whereas in the past unanimity was the general rule and there were cases where decisions could not be made or were delayed. In addition, women's participation in decision-making is promoted, not just their participation.
7	CFUGs must annually carry out internal monitoring of the activities carried out in the CF and analyze the results and submit them to the respective Division Forest Offices.	In addition to the CFUG internal monitoring described on the left, the respective Division Forest Offices also monitor and evaluate CF operations and activities.	The Division Forest Office also monitors and evaluates in order to identify problems and take measures to improve them.



National level consultation meeting in Kathmandu



Updated Community Forestry Guidelines was published on 2025-04-16



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