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

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Climate Change Adaptation in Gandaki Province: Reporting Demonstration Activities

In Nepal, a forest management system known as Community Forestry has been adopted since the 1990s. Under this system, the restoration and conservation of national forests—degraded by illegal logging and conversion to agricultural land—are entrusted to local Community Forest User Group (CFUG). In exchange, these national forests are designated as Community Forest (CF), and CFUGs are granted the rights to utilize their forest resources.

On the other hand, due to its geography, Nepal is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; forest fires, landslides, and floods frequently occur in local living areas, making the implementation of adaptation measures an urgent priority. In August 2026, massive debris flow caused by glacial melting resulted in extensive damage, further heightening the need for such adaptation measures.

This Project is a technical cooperation project aimed at promoting climate change adaptation measures utilizing forest resources in Community Forest. It consists of two main activities: Component 1, which focuses on revising policy tools at the federal level, and Component 2, which conducts demonstration activities for adaptation measures in CF. In newsletter vol 3, we introduced the details of Component 2.

This newsletter continues to report on the progress of Component 2 activities. In December 2025, federal and provincial stakeholders jointly conducted monitoring of the demonstration activities, as well as the expansion of the Project's target sites. It also highlights Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)-related activities conducted from August to December 2025.

1.EXPANSION OF DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES TO KASKI AND LAMJUNG DISTRICTS

1.1 JOINT MONITORING AND REVIEW MEETING

Based on the decisions made at the 4th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting held in August 2025, federal and provincial government officials visited the demonstration sites in Syangja and Parbat districts on December 15, 2025. The monitoring visit was carried out by the JICA expert team together with the District Forest Offices (DFOs) and the Soil and Watershed Management Offices (SWMOs), who reviewed progress to date, good practices, and lessons learned. Subsequently, on the same day, a "Joint Review Meeting" was held on December 15 in the conference room of the Ministry of Forestry and Environment (MOFE) in Gandaki, bringing together representatives from the federal government, the Gandaki Province government, and JICA. At the meeting, the achievements to date at the three existing sites were summarized, and important agreements were reached regarding the continuation of project activities and the expansion of these activities to other districts.

1.2 EXPANSION OF TARGET AREAS: ADDITION OF KASKI AND LAMJUNG DISTRICTS

Based on the monitoring results, to further spread the positive outcomes achieved through the existing demonstration activities, Kaski and Lamjung districts were approved as new target sites, and it was decided to expand the demonstration activities. This marks one of the most significant developments since the Project started. On the same day, a kickoff meeting for the expansion to both districts was held to discuss the resources and other requirements necessary for implementing the activities.



Photo 1: Joint monitoring in progress
(Thamtaletro CF, Syangja District)



Photo 2: Joint Review Meeting
(MOFE, Pokhara, Gandaki Province)

1.3 COMMUNITY SELECTION IN KASKI AND LAMJUNG DISTRICTS

In selecting communities (demonstration sites), SWMO Tanahun, DFO Kaski, and DFO Lamjung, who oversee both districts, compiled a list of candidate sites and jointly conducted on-site surveys to evaluate them based on criteria such as "high vulnerability to climate change," "community motivation," "degree of promotion of GESI," and "potential for activities." As a result, Thotnekhola CFUG in Kaski district and Kalika CFUG in Lamjung district were selected and approved by all stakeholders at a joint meeting. In the newly selected CFUGs, activities such as shiitake mushroom cultivation, compost marketing training, and support for formulating a comprehensive forest fire management plan have already commenced.

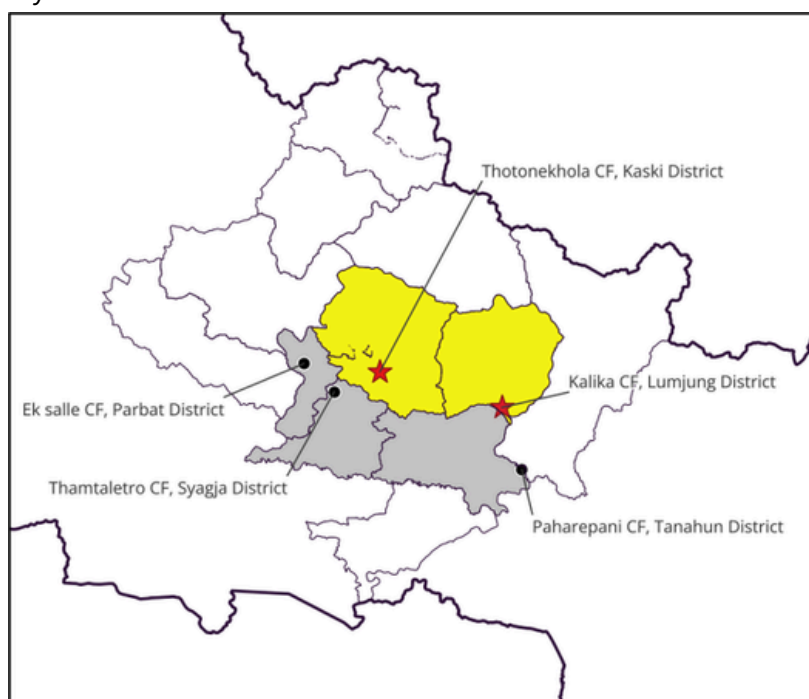


Figure 1: Location map of the demonstration site
(★ indicates the new project site)

2 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE GESI (GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION)

As introduced in the previous newsletter, the Project has established a GESI Task Force (TF), comprising officials from relevant government agencies, as the implementation mechanism responsible for promoting GESI in the target communities and monitoring the Gender Action Plan (GAP). The following sections introduce the capacity development activities conducted for members of the target CFUGs through on-the-job training provided to the GESI TF members.

2.1 BACKGROUND TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR THE TARGET CFUGS

During the training on gender analysis methodology conducted in February 2025, members of the GESI TF who participated in this training carried out focus group discussions (FGDs), as part of their fieldwork exercises, with several male and female members engaged in livelihood improvement activities in each target community.

FGD results revealed that most of women in all target CFUGs were participating in livelihood improvement activities based on their own decisions and interests. However, key decisions, particularly regarding the use of income generated from these activities, were still largely made by men. The findings highlighted the need to strengthen women's decision-making power, self-confidence, leadership, and business skills.

In response, the GESI TF members identified the need for an exposure visit to enhance women's self-confidence and motivation, as well as entrepreneurship and financial management training to develop their entrepreneurial mindsets and basic business skills. TF members from the DFO and SWMO in Parbat District quickly identified suitable exposure visit destination and resource persons for the training programs, enabling these activities for members of Ek Salle CFUG in Parbat District to be implemented ahead of those for other target CFUGs.

These TF members also participated in all the activities and conducted participatory observation of CFUG members from a GESI perspective, paying particular attention to changes in the CFUG members' attitudes and behavior throughout the process.

2.2 EXPOSURE VISIT FOR MEMBERS OF EK SALLE CFUG

The first activity implemented for Ek Salle CFUG in Parbat District was an exposure visit in August 2025. The destination was Maya's Eco-Farm, managed by a successful woman entrepreneur in agriculture. The farm utilizes a large area of land for Shiitake mushroom cultivation, agroforestry, goat farming, and the production of goat cheese and other products.

Participants in this exposure visit included members of Ek Salle CFUG who were involved in the Project's livelihood improvement activities, such as Shiitake mushroom cultivation and agroforestry, comprising eight women and two men. In particular, the women participants were inspired by seeing a fellow woman farmer with a background similar to their own who had successfully built and expanded her business through her own initiative, decision-making, and continuous efforts. Recognizing that a woman like themselves had achieved such success increased their motivation and confidence, leading many to feel, **"If she can do it, we can do it too."**



Photo 3: Exposure visit to Maya's Eco-Farm for Shiitake mushroom cultivation (August 2025)



Photo 4: Exposure visit to Maya's eco-farm for goat farming (August 2025)

2.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF EK SALLE CFUG

Following the exposure visit, an entrepreneurship training program was conducted in September 2025 for approximately 20 members of Ek Salle CFUG engaged in the livelihood improvement activities, including those who had participated in the exposure visit.

An official from Kushma Municipality's Enterprise Development Department (working under MEDPA[i]: Micro Enterprise Development for Poverty Alleviation) was invited to serve as the resource person for the training. Through a combination of lectures and practical exercises incorporating role-play, participants learned how value chains and supply chains operate and contribute to business development and marketing.



Photo 5&6: Exercise session in the entrepreneurship training for Ek Salle CFUG (September 2025)

2.4 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF EK SALLE CFUG

Furthermore, in December 2025, a financial management training program focusing on bookkeeping was conducted for participants who had attended the previous activity and training. During this training, participants used actual cost and income data from their own Shiitake mushroom cultivation and agroforestry activities as practical case studies. Through these exercises, they learned the fundamentals of bookkeeping, record-keeping, and methods for monitoring and analyzing income and expenditures.



Photo 7: Lecture session in the financial management training for Ek Salle CFUG (December 2025)



Photo 8: Group work session in the financial management training for Ek Salle CFUG (December 2025)

2.5 CLOSING REMARKS

As a result of the exposure visit and training programs, which were planned and implemented based on the findings of the gender analysis, transformative changes began to emerge among the women of Ek Salle CFUG. In particular, women engaged in Shiitake mushroom cultivation and sales have gained confidence and motivation, while women who had previously relied on men for decision-making reported that they are now able to make decisions and solve problems on their own. These changes indicate the emergence of women's agency (self-determination).

[i] MEDPA is a nationwide program implemented by the Government of Nepal to reduce poverty and generate employment. It provides entrepreneurship development, skills training, business planning, and market access support to local communities, particularly women and socio-economically vulnerable groups. The program is currently implemented in almost all local governments across Nepal through the collaboration of federal, provincial, and local governments. In Kushma Municipality, MEDPA is also being implemented, with dedicated MEDPA staff assigned under the Enterprise Development Department.



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