

NEPAL AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND  
LIVELIHOODS PROJECT

Operational Plans as a Policy Instrument for  
Second Generation Community Forestry:  
Guidelines for Preparing 'Integrated' OPs



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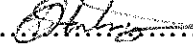
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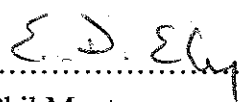

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## CONTENTS

<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Context</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 Policy Issues</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4 Developing Second Generation OP Guidelines</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5 Essential Features of the Second Generation OP Guidelines</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6 Results—CFUG Mini Rural Development/ Livelihood Improvement OPs</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>7 Incorporating Second Generation OP Guidelines into the Revised Community Forestry Development Program Guidelines</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>8 Scaling up CFUG Production of Second Generation OPs</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>9 Endorsing the Second Generation ‘IOP’ Guidelines Nationally</b>	<b>18</b>

## ANNEXES

Annex 1: The NACRMLP Process for Developing Second G-OP Guidelines

Annex 2: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Annex 3: Towards a Self-reliant CFUG

Annex 4: Gantt Chart of Major Tasks in Preparing a Second Generation OP

Annex 5: List of Annexes to the Second Generation OP Guidelines

Annex 6: Estimated Costs and Time to Produce a Second Generation OP

## Acronyms

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BDS	Business Development Services
BP	Business planning
CAP	Community Action Program
CF	Community Forest
CFD	Community Forest Division
CFDP	Community Forestry Development Program
CFUG	Community Forest Users Group
COFSUN	Community Forestry Supporters Network
DDC	District Development Committee
DFO	District Forest Office®
DoF	Department of Forestry
EC	Executive Committee
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal
FSPSES	Final Stage Plan & Sustainable Exit Strategy
Second G-OP	Second Generation Operational Plan
GPSE	Gender Poverty and Social Equity
HRD	Human Resource Development
I/ NGO	(International) Non-government Organisation
IOP	Integrated Operational Plan
KP	Kabhrepalanchok (District)
LIP	Livelihood Improvement Program
LRP	Local Resource Person/ people
MFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
NACRMLP	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihoods Project
NACRMP	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project
NR	Natural Resources
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Product
OP	Operational Plan
PIP	Policies, Institutions, and Processes
SL	Sustainable Livelihoods
SNRM	Sustainable Natural Resource Management
SL	Sustainable Livelihoods
SP	Sindhupalchok (District)
TA/DA	Travel/ Daily Allowance
VDC	Village Development Committee
WEP	Women's Empowerment Program

## Glossary

Facilitator	Local Service Provider
Local Resource Person	Local Service Provider (sometimes referred to as a facilitator or animator)
Sub-blocks	Blocks are normally divided into relatively homogeneous sub-blocks and inventory results and prescriptions are made according to these units. A sub-block is the smallest management unit of a forest and they tend to be less permanent than blocks because forest conditions change over time.
Tole	Small cluster of households (combination of tole makes a ward)
Working circles	In order to provide for managing different community forest areas according to different objectives community forests are sometimes subdivided into working circles. Working circles tend to be relatively large units and to include a number of blocks and sub-blocks. Working circle boundaries are normally set along existing block or sub-block boundaries.

# 1 Introduction

The need for this policy feedback paper was identified in the Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihoods Project (NACRMLP) Final Stage Plan and Sustainable Exit Strategy (FSPSES), under result area 4. Specifically, the intention was to contribute a paper that described NACRMLP's best working approaches, or best practice work. As the Project drew to a close, NACRMLP staff identified the second generation operational plan (OP), or integrated operational plan (IOP), guidelines as the most outstanding working approach made by NACRMLP. The main criterion for identifying this working approach was that, by definition, it integrated virtually all other working approaches and best practices, notably those involved in forest management, business planning, and livelihood improvement planning.

The second generation OP guidelines were also identified by AusAID as the Final Stage Plan's second milestone document. Milestone 2, which was produced in mid March 2006, consisted of three separate documents.

Part I, 'Guideline Development', described the participatory, field practitioner-driven, "action learning," consultative process that NACRMLP followed in developing the second generation OP Guidelines. The process included extensive field testing in pilot Community Forest Users Groups (CFUGs).

Part II, 'Second Generation Community Forestry Operational Plan Guidelines', provides the actual guidelines. The 60 pages of guidelines, written as far as possible in a simple, user-friendly style, are supplemented by 30 annexes of illustrative formats/ templates, criteria, indicators, and worked examples of outputs and products to include in a second generation OP document.

Part III provides one best practice example second generation OP, produced through NACRMLP's action learning approach by Shree Hile Jaljale Ka CFUG in Janagal cluster of Kabhrepalanchok District.

## 2 Context

The Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihoods Project (NACRMLP) represented the culminating phase of over three decades of Australian support for community forestry development in Nepal. The past few years have witnessed huge growth in the community forestry sector to the point where there are some eight million members of CFUGs nationally, an increasingly strong federation of CFUGs at national, district, and range post levels, and the emergence of “second generation” community forestry (CF) issues—basically to do with sustainable forest/ natural resource management, community-managed forest product-based business development, and equitable utilisation of forest products and business revenues for broad-based livelihood improvement in communities.

Community forestry in Nepal is at a major turning point, especially in areas where significant plantation forests were developed. CFUGs are poised to reap huge benefits from their many years of investment. But they can only realise the potential benefits through addressing the second generation CF issues, including institutional strengthening for good governance to ensure socially equitable livelihood improvement for their members.

Since 2003, NACRMLP has invested in a range of interventions designed to realise the full potential of second generation CF. Interventions included programs in livelihood improvement planning (LIP), women’s empowerment (WEP), community awareness (CAP), business planning/ enterprise development, known later as business development services (BDS), and various scientific forest management/sustainable natural resource management (SNRM) approaches. An important mandate of the 2005-2006 Final Stage Plan and Sustainable Exit Strategy (FSPSES) was to consolidate implementation and learning in these interventions. NACRMLP has achieved consolidation in three ways: spatially, conceptually, and operationally.

For spatial consolidation, NACRMLP focused and integrated its resources in clusters of CFUGs. The Project identified cluster areas by criteria, including previous NACRMLP interventions, forest resource potential, and security. NACRMLP field staff--social (community development), economic (business development), and technical (SNRM)--relocated to live in inter-disciplinary teams in the cluster areas, supported by specialist visits. This was done in order to help the focus CFUGs to fully implement and integrate all the elements of second generation CF. In a nutshell, the CFUG's aim is to achieve the following:

- Sustainable, 'active' or 'intensive' forest management that yields optimal production of forest products while conserving forest biodiversity.
- Feasible, economically viable business enterprises to market forest products and raise revenues at CFUG and sub/ interest group levels.
- Re-investment of business revenues in other livelihood enhancing activities that meet the socio-economic priorities of all CFUG members equitably, especially the poor and socially excluded.

To consolidate conceptually, NACRMLP formulated a framework for second generation CF. The main elements of the framework are: Sustainable Livelihoods, Rights, and Decentralisation. These elements are discussed below in outlining the second generation OP guidelines.

Operationally, all the elements of second generation CF were consolidated in the process of preparing a 'second generation' or 'integrated' OP (IOP, or second G-OP). The OP is a CFUG's basic legal document that defines how it manages its CF resources. Historically, most CFUGs paid more attention in their OPs to the technical aspects of forest protection. During NACRMLP Stage I, some 26 CFUGs formulated 'LIPs'. The LIP process encouraged CFUGs to identify pro-poor livelihood improving activities. These might include certain SNRM activities, such as forage blocks or land use management practices intended for socially excluded groups, small enterprises, such as lapsi candy production, or social or human capital enhancing programs. NACRMLP also encouraged CFUGs to start up various forest-based business ventures needing a 'business plan' (BP).

The second generation OPs were deemed to be 'integrated' because they consolidated, in one seamless document, an up-to-date SNRM plan, a 'LIP', and a BP. Moreover, the three aspects of the 'integrated' OP were merged within the framework of Sustainable Livelihoods. Thus, the second G-OP is actually a CFUG's overall, broad, and true 'business plan' that shows how, in a self-reliant way, the CFUG will manage forest resources, and raise and reinvest business revenues to enhance livelihood assets for CFUG members strategically and equitably.

### 3 Policy Issues

Besides reflecting CFUG livelihood priorities, OPs are also an important policy tool that the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC) can use to regulate and invigorate the community forestry development program. Previously, MFSC goals emphasised the effective establishment and protection of CFs. Now, in the second generation stage, these goals embrace technical, economic, and institutional, social, and good governance aspects. Being exactly what they are called—the operational plan of the CFUG—the OP is a vital policy instrument for guiding CF into its second generation stage.

In practice, however, as NACRMLP studied the issues DFOs faced as they attempted to support and monitor CFUGs preparing and revising OPs, the Project identified with them a core policy issue—*"the OP revision backlog."*

At the start of the final stage, the Project found that in the two NACRMLP districts of Kabhrepalanchok (KP) and Sindhu Palchok (SP), the backlog in getting OPs revised was 45% and 39% of the districts' 410 and 422 CFUGs respectively. Legally, a CFUG whose OP has elapsed loses government permission to harvest, market, and raise revenue from its CF resources. Further, the high backlog in OP revision severely constrained DFOs from being able to promote the wide-ranging benefits for CFUGs of second generation CF.

Upon analysing the OP revision backlog, the Project found that it reflected several inter-related issues:

- Scale, in terms of the sheer size of the CF sector and volume of work to service the needs of CFUGs.
- Cost, in relation to limited DFO and CFUG resources.
- CFUG ownership of their OP.
- Capacity--in technical, business, and social/ institutional aspects.

With the Community Forestry Division, DFOs, and other stakeholders, it was agreed that the CF system needed an OP revision process with the following features:

- Cost-effective.
- Decentralised, and CFUG empowering.
- Integrating SNRM, BP, and LIP.
- Simple, 'user-friendly'.
- Using partnership/ co-production service delivery arrangements.

In other words, to move CF fully into its second generation, the policy issue involves finding a cost-effective, 'user-friendly' approach—in terms of process, methods, technologies, and institutional arrangements—that enables a CFUG to take full ownership of producing its own second G-OP, in partnership with the DFO and other public, private, and NGO partners or stakeholders in the CF business.

## 4 Developing Second Generation OP Guidelines

The idea of guidelines for OP preparation and revision was not new. The CF Division has its own ‘CF Development Program Guidelines’, although they address the whole cycle of CF and therefore treat OP preparation and revision only briefly. They were last revised in 2002, and do not adequately reflect second generation issues in CF. A number of DFOs have worked on their own, and with NACRMLP, NACRMP, and other projects, to produce various elements of guidelines specifically for OP revision.

As the Project entered the final stage, it realised that stakeholders in the CF system badly needed comprehensive, yet simple, ‘user-friendly’ guidelines that would meet the requirements of an integrated OP preparation/ revision process as outlined above. Over the period April 2005 to February 2006, the Project facilitated a process in which a range of CF system stakeholders—notably DFOs and their range post staff, CF Division, FECOFUN, CFUG leaders, CFUG ‘facilitators’<sup>1</sup>, and NACRMLP field and specialist staff—participated in developing and field testing such second G-OP guidelines.

Brief details of the process undertaken in developing the second G-OP guidelines are provided in Annex 1. Full details of the process are recounted in NACRMLP, March 22, 2006. Milestone 2: Part I – Guideline Development.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NACRMLP provided training for CFUG members as local resource people (LRPs), or facilitators, in OP revision, LIP, WEP, business planning, and NR-related technical fields.

<sup>2</sup> The NACRMLP website will shortly have copies posted of English and Nepali versions of these second G-OP guidelines, the full ‘Milestone 2’ document, and the second G-OP training curriculum.

## 5 Essential Features of the Second Generation OP Guidelines

The second G-OP guidelines provide all the concepts and practical steps a CFUG and supporting partners need to know in the process of preparing a second generation OP. The guidelines are written in a ‘user-friendly’ style.

### *Introduction*

The guidelines start with a brief introductory section that does the following:

- Sets OP preparation and revision within the longer-term CF program cycle.
- Defines what an OP is.
- Explains why it’s important for a CFUG to ‘own’ its OP, and why the guidelines aim to make the challenging task of preparing a second G-OP easier.
- Identifies the target audience for the guidelines.

### *Conceptual framework*

The second main section covers the conceptual framework for second generation CF. The framework includes the following ideas:

- **Sustainable Livelihoods**—the key elements determining a household’s or community’s ability to sustain an adequate livelihood, or good quality of life. The elements include:
  - Vulnerabilities at household or community level.
  - The ‘5 capitals/ assets’—natural, human, social, financial, and physical resources.
  - Policies, institutions, and processes influencing the CFUG and its asset distribution.
  - Livelihood strategies/ occupations, including equitable business development.
- **Rights**—the legal and human rights of citizens to make a sustainable livelihood, together with awareness, participation, and voice to exercise their rights.
- **Decentralisation**—re-assigning appropriate rights, roles, and responsibilities for providing services at the district, VDC, and community levels to central government line agencies, local bodies, the private sector, NGOs, and community-based organisations—including CFUGs and their federations.

The ‘Rights’ and ‘Decentralisation’ parts of the framework indicate to a CFUG and its partners and stakeholders the following. Firstly, that the CFUG is entitled to develop its own second generation OP to respond feasibly and equitably to its members’ priorities, and in a sustainable manner. Secondly, that given the size of the CF sector, the CF system needs to develop decentralised, ‘co-production’-based institutional arrangements for delivering OP (and related) services to CFUGs. The guidelines provide essential conceptual guidance on these ideas.

The Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) part of the framework provides the most obvious guidance for preparing a second generation OP. Later, the guidelines even suggest a CFUG to organise its OP intervention strategy and investment budget specifically around the ‘five capitals/ assets’ of the SL framework.

The beauty of applying the SL framework to second generation CF is that—derived as it is from decades of experience in socially inclusive, pro-poor, NR-based, rural/community development programming—the framework comprehensively covers second generation issues in today’s community forestry. In essence, the framework instructs a CFUG to:

- Discuss with especially poor and socially excluded groups (within its membership) their vulnerabilities as a basis for designing uplifting and empowering livelihood improvement strategies.
- Explore with all interest groups within the CFUG membership their livelihood status and opportunities in terms of natural, physical, human, social, and financial resources and assets.
- Consider the present and potential impact on interest groups’ livelihood assets and strategies of ‘policies, institutions, and processes’ (PIPs). CFUG initiatives and investments in PIP, along with others in good governance and gender and social equity, can provide important ways to transform social processes to reduce ‘elite capture’ of CF.

A diagram of the SL framework is provided in Annex 2. An obvious entry point in community forestry is forest management—i.e. management of *natural capital*. The 5-asset pentagon helps us to see how, through a well prepared second generation OP, a CFUG can first invest in natural capital. Through business development, it can transform the natural capital into financial capital. The CFUG can then re-invest the net revenue earned from forest-based business into other livelihood assets, such as human capital, social capital, and physical capital. Some of the re-investment can be made back into natural capital, through further improvements in forest management, such as planting of new tree or fodder species. In this way, the SL framework encourages a CFUG to plan its operations within a self-reliant model, as depicted in the diagram, Annex 3.

### *Operational framework*

The Guidelines’ third main section moves to the practical steps in preparing or revising a second generation OP—the operational framework. This section explains in a user-friendly style *what* to do and *why* the tasks are important, *who* to involve in the process, *how* to do it (processes and methods), and the *output* to produce (how to present the data or plans). This is done for all the steps and tasks in five phases of OP preparation—1) Preparatory, 2) OP review and institutional assessment, 3) Data collection (technical, business, and social), 4) Planning, and 5) Writing and endorsement.

Annex 4 of this paper provides an overview of the entire process—a Gantt chart of the major tasks that tend to be involved in second generation OP preparation<sup>3</sup>. This overview shows the five phases, and the main tasks the CFUG may need to undertake in each phase. Outlined broadly, the tasks are.

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Tend’ to be involved because a CFUG’s OP will reflect the amount, quality, and scope of its resources. In particular, not all CFUGs will need to prepare a business plan to the same degree/ scope.

The importance of the **Preparatory Phase** is to get ready for the quite hard work of revising or preparing a second G-OP. This involves mental readiness in terms of assessing the need for a second generation OP. The conceptual framework provides a basis for doing this. It also involves assessing available human and financial resources to undertake the technical, possibly business, and social analysis and planning that the OP may involve. This is the point at which the CFUG consults with DFO staff to see whether the DFO can provide some support, whether organisations exist that can train facilitators (local resource people, or LRPs) in second G-OP work, whether the CFUG should coordinate with other potential service providers, such as FECOFUN, NGOs, private sector business services, or other agencies, and what the likely cost of OP preparation may be, and what sources of finance the CFUG has available to it.

Depending on the outcome of the human resource assessment, the CFUG then formalises arrangements for support with the DFO, facilitators, and other service providing partners. This is done in the form of an agreement document that clearly identifies roles, responsibilities, and schedules for any payments to service providers. After the partnership arrangement is formalised, the CFUG forms an ‘OP task team’. This includes representatives of the CFUG Executive Committee (EC), facilitators, DFO staff, possibly other specialists (e.g. in business planning), and CFUG members. This task team becomes fully conversant with and coordinates and facilitates the whole second G-OP preparation process. The final preparatory step is for the task team to prepare an action plan that includes steps, methods, responsibilities, and a timeframe for all the remaining phases.

The second, **Review Phase**, covers OP review and institutional assessment. Findings from the review phase can provide important indicators for the priorities of the future second generation OP. The review covers all aspects of the current OP—including its history, changes and trends in settlement, employment, livelihood, and business opportunities, forest boundaries and resources, all aspects of forest management, and social issues. It also includes an assessment of CFUG financial management, and an institutional assessment of CFUG performance. The latter explores the quality of CFUG governance, gender and social equity in decision making and benefit sharing, and some 9 other institutional indicators, presenting the results in a ‘COBWEB’ diagram. All the review, financial and institutional assessment work is carried out in a highly inclusive, participatory, lively, and transparent way, using appropriate methodologies.

The third, **Data Collection Phase**, involves a number of specific processes and methods to collect planning information related to technical SNRM, business planning, and the social/ community development aspects of livelihood improvement. The guidelines show how to integrate the various processes so that CFUG members can see the inter-relationships between the technical, economic, and social aspects of livelihood improvement, and the OP becomes one integrated plan. The various data collection inquiries are grouped into four main exercises—an expanded CFUG EC/ task team workshop, the CF baseline survey, interest/ focus group interactions, and resource prioritisation.

The *initial workshop* of the expanded CFUG task team includes tole representatives and other key informants. The guidelines provide a suggested agenda for this workshop focusing on five key tasks. These are to identify interest groups within the CFUG membership, characterise them by well-being indicators, prepare a participatory resource map of the CF area, prepare a seasonal calendar, and assess livelihood-related human

resources available in the community. Identifying interest groups is vital for ensuring social inclusion in the OP preparation process. Annex 4 gives an example of interest groups in the case of one mid-hills CFUG. The participatory resource map and seasonal calendar are well recognised participatory planning tools in natural resource management. Assessing user group human resources provides the basis for later planning decisions on investing in human resources—one of the five ‘capitals’ in a livelihood improvement strategy, and an important element in institutional strengthening and CFUG organisation development.

The outputs of the *baseline survey* are large scale maps suitable for participatory planning, and maps suitable for inclusion in the OP and for inventory planning. The baseline survey defines the legal boundaries of the CFUG, and determines the areas of different management units in the CF. It maps *natural* resources and landscape features, *physical* livelihood/ community-related infrastructure, and *social/* institutional infrastructure. The guidelines indicate how much to invest in baseline surveys depending on the value of CF resources, their environmental services, and potential returns and revenues from forest products.

From a social inclusion perspective, assessing *interest group livelihoods* is one of the most important tasks in the data collection phase. For each interest group, 8 exercises are undertaken. The purpose is to identify livelihood issues, opportunities, priorities, strategies, concerns, and the type and level of forest dependency of all sectors of the user group community that the CFUG needs to pay attention to when formulating its OP. The focus is on both subsistence and small forest-based enterprise opportunities. The 8 exercises include an orientation discussion for the interest group on the livelihood framework and the second-generation issues of CF, transect walks through the forest and across farmland, and exercises in participatory resource mapping and seasonal calendar, current consumption and supply of forest products, trends in resource availability, and a summary/concluding livelihood assessment. The concluding participatory livelihood assessment is a discussion that brings together the findings of all the above interactions, highlighting and summarising the opportunities and priority issues the interest group identifies in an organised way according to the five livelihood resources/ capitals. Finally, if applicable, the interest group can discuss its business development opportunities. The output is a shortlist of potential enterprise opportunities of greatest interest to the group.

*Resource prioritisation* involves four exercises that help the CFUG to identify resources that need to be managed for both subsistence/ domestic or commercial purposes. In the process, the CFUG identifies the potential for forest product-based business development. The first exercise is to identify local traders in CF produce and determine what they are trading, how much they are interested in procuring, and the prices they are paying. The output is a list of CF produce, such as timber and NTFPs, and services, such as water supply, that may include some commercial opportunities. Secondly, the CFUG lists and prioritises resources for possible management. All subsistence needs should be provided for in management planning but ‘potential’ commercial ventures that are identified need to be screened carefully at the pre-feasibility stage in order to avoid unnecessary expenditure on planning enterprises that are from the outset clearly not appropriate.

The third exercise is to undertake, usually through sampling, forest timber and/or NTFP inventories for priority resources and estimate sustainable yields. The output of this is inventory data—estimates of standing volume and sustainable yields, and a map of sample plot locations. Inventories are a mandatory OP requirement for any CFUG that plans to manage/ harvest natural resources. The last exercise is to collect and analyse data for assessing the feasibility of prioritised enterprises for business development. Business prioritisation provides a comparative advantage analysis, based on market demand, profit margin, raw material availability, required technology and skilled human resources, existing infrastructure, and benefits to the community. The output of this exercise is synthesised data that will allow the CFUG EC to readily understand available commercial opportunities.

In the **Planning Phase**, the CFUG draws on all collected data to produce a draft second G-OP that includes the following elements:

- A CFUG vision and strategy.
- A spatial land use plan.
- A business/ enterprise development plan.
- Estimated future business and other revenues available for reinvestment.
- A sustainable natural resource management plan.
- A plan for non-forest related livelihood improvements.
- A budget that relates total Plan expenditures with revenues.
- Rules and regulations to support Plan implementation.
- A plan for CFUG staffing and human capacity building.

#### *Data analysis and synthesis*

The first step is to compile, analyse, and synthesise all the information from the Data Collection phase. A crucial step in this process is to present and share the analysed technical, business, and other livelihood data in turn at a deliberately ‘inter-disciplinary’ task team meeting. Participants can cross-check information, incorporate feedback, develop new insights, synthesise findings, and possibly identify data gaps that they can quickly fill by follow-up visits to information sources.

The guidelines provide specific processes and methods for social data analysis, forest resource analysis, business data analysis, and data synthesis. From our experience, an effective working arrangement is for the CFUG’s OP task team to work literally in a workshop style and setting to organise the social, technical, and business data, probably for as long as a week. They then present the separate data to a larger group that studies the relationship between the three sets of data within the livelihoods framework. This last ‘data synthesis’ exercise should involve CFUG EC members, interest group representatives, DFO staff, and other key partners/ stakeholders (e.g. in product related businesses). During data synthesis, it becomes clear how, for instance, social information affects forest management, forest management provides opportunities for business, and all kinds of other specific ways in which the data are inter-related or inter-dependent.

### *CFUG vision and strategy*

Building on their synthesised findings, the next step is to develop a shared vision and strategy. The shared vision is by nature one that integrates the key elements of a second generation, livelihoods-oriented plan. One way for the CFUG to develop its vision is to use the Appreciative Inquiry method. The guidelines provide easy instructions on how to do this, and come up with a ‘vision statement’. The strategy shows how to achieve that vision through well-focused, ‘strategic’ interventions and investments in the five resource/capital areas—natural, financial, social, human, and physical. Basically, the Project recommends to CFUGs: ‘Use the Livelihoods framework as your strategy’. If CFUGs do this, they are likely to produce a strategic plan with five result areas, each with a number of key objectives. Alternatively, the strategy can have three result areas corresponding to the 3 elements of second generation CF—technical, business, and ‘social’. Here, ‘social’ covers investments in social, human, and physical capital, or community development.

### *Planning*

The remaining planning exercises include:

- Planning the spatial organisation of the forest.
- Developing a business plan.
- Estimating income and funding available for investment.
- Planning natural resource management.
- Planning CFUG forest protection and forest products distribution benefit sharing, rules and regulations, punishments and penalties.
- Planning CFUG staffing and human capacity development.

The final **Writing and Endorsement Phase** covers three tasks: drafting the OP document, endorsing the OP at the CFUG General Assembly, and gaining DFO approval.

The final section of the guidelines includes some 30 annexes which provide illustrative formats and completed examples of all the outputs a CFUG may need to prepare for the entire second generation OP process. The list of annexes is provided here as Annex 5.

## 6 Results—CFUG Mini Rural Development/ Livelihood Improvement OPs

During the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the NACRMLP final stage, some 17<sup>4</sup> CFUGs prepared second generation OPs using the ‘IOP’ guidelines. One of these—Shree Hile Jaljale ‘Ka’ CFUG in Janagal cluster, Kabhre district—produced NACRMLP’s “best practice” second generation OP after a particularly intensive OP revision process that piloted the guidelines using action research. This OP breaks new ground. It not only includes extremely comprehensive plans for diverse natural resource management (in seven working circles with management prescriptions for different forest utilisation), but it also includes four other result areas for investment activities in social change, physical infrastructure, income generation, and HRD. Annex 6 provides the table of contents of the OP to illustrate how ‘integrated’ this second generation OP is.

The ‘Hile Ka’<sup>5</sup> CFUG agreed upon the following shared vision for managing the CF: *‘Sustainable livelihood improvement through scientific management of community forest and business development with active participation of users’*. Their strategy became to “introduce active forest management such as thinning and pruning that will support the commercial production of high value sawlogs in order to:

- Generate funds for reinvesting in livelihood activities.
- Meet subsistence needs of the CFUG members for forest products.
- Create a suitable forest floor environment and develop much needed fodder and forage supplies.
- [Enhance] the water regulating characteristics [environmental services] of the forest.”

NRM activities (Activity 1) included thinning of pine plantations<sup>6</sup>, harvesting of mixed forest according to annual allowable cut prescriptions, pruning, nursery construction, seedling production, seedling plantations on CF and private lands, shrub land management, NTFP management (nigalo, cardamom and broom grass, planting and managing bhojo medicinal herb, pear grafting on *Pyrus* species, *Taxus baccata* medicinal plant planting), and a range of forage and fodder development activities. The latter includes establishing community forage plots that will save almost all CFUG households a total of some NRs200,000 that they used to spend purchasing paddy straw for their dairy herds.

Activity 2, social change through CFUG capacity building, includes 7 tasks—including women, landless, and disadvantaged groups in the CFUG EC, making members aware of their constitution and OP, ensuring transparency in CFUG fund management, women’s empowerment, scholarships for children from landless, disadvantaged, and poor families, women’s health program, and CFUG management. Of special interest among these

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<sup>4</sup> These were CFUGs in the focus cluster areas identified for the FSPSES, and which received fairly intensive support from DFO rangers, NACRMLP field and specialist staff, and trained ‘IOP’ and other facilitators.

<sup>5</sup> Local nickname for the CFUG

<sup>6</sup> According to NACRMLP 2005, ‘Thinning guidelines for *Pinus patula* and *Pinus roxburghii* plantations in Nepal’, approved by the NACRMLP PCC.

activities is the priority that the CFUG gave—due to highly proactive women’s involvement in OP preparation—to women’s health issues. Many women suffer from prolapsed uteruses due to heavy workload, lack of post-natal health care, and reticence about discussing the problem. The OP includes provision for enhanced training in safe motherhood for 5 women health workers, through partnership with a local hospital, an NGO, and the district public health office.

Activity 3, physical infrastructure, includes another seven tasks—construction of water conservation ponds, irrigation canal improvement, drinking water supply improvement, toilets, a community building, another 5km of forest roads, and a picnic spot for eco-tourism. Activity 4, income generation, includes activities in log sale business management, training in improved loading and unloading, log transportation equipment, better marketing options, book-keeping and record-keeping, revolving fund establishment, bamboo product promotion business, market linkage or exposure visits for furniture, agricultural tool handles, and wintergreen oil, and training in production of bio-briquettes (made from *Banmara* weeds).

Finally, Activity 5, human resource development, includes 9 different training programs in CF management, CF study tours, vegetable farming, animal health care, women’s health, health and sanitation awareness, metal-working, tailoring, and—thinking ahead to the fourth year onwards—OP review and revision. Of special interest here is the priority the CFUG has given to Kami and Damai households to upgrade their skills in their traditional professions.

As one can readily see, the second generation OP produced by Shree Hile Jaljale ‘Ka’ CFUG is truly a broad-based livelihood improvement plan. The CFUG’s total investment budget for their program of 5 activities over the next five years is almost NRs12 million, which they calculate they can meet from their total revenues, which include an estimated gross income from sales of pine logs alone of an average NRs.1.8million/year. This is big business, and places this CFUG by itself far ahead of the local VDC in financial terms, and in terms of funding of rural/ community development and livelihood improvement.

An analysis<sup>7</sup> of the other 16 second generation OPs concludes that all 17 CFUGs are endeavoring to convert their natural capital into financial capital through forest-based enterprises, i.e. pine log sale business and NTFP enterprises. They all plan to develop social, human, physical, and natural capital by reinvesting the income and business revenue with good governance practices and affirmative gender and social equity action. All the OPs gave top priority to achieving social inclusion of the poor, vulnerable, and socially excluded members. All included special good governance provisions. All produced plans for sustainable forest management, business development, and livelihood improvement based on a similar process of review, and data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Of the 17 CFUGs, only two needed further improvement in market analysis and profit-loss analysis of selected businesses to convert natural capital into financial assets.

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<sup>7</sup> Ghimire, Kalpana, March 2006. Assessment of OPs from the perspective of second generation issues of community forestry

## 7 Incorporating Second Generation OP Guidelines into the Revised Community Forestry Development Program Guidelines

A parallel NACRMLP FSPSES-supported activity is the Community Forestry Division's effort to revise the national CFDP guidelines. NACRMLP supported the CF Division's effort in several ways—by providing a consultant, by participating in a Working Group established to guide the revision process, as well as financial support to the Working Group. The NACRMLP consultancy began in September 2005 by facilitating a strongly field-based practitioner workshop which was also an initial stage in developing the 'IOP' guidelines. With substantial NACRMLP specialist input, the consultant prepared an initial draft of the revised guidelines in English. NACRMLP also arranged for an experienced writer/ editor to convert this draft into an illustrative 'user-friendly' format.

Simultaneously, the Project worked with the CF Division, through its regular, informal CF interaction meetings, to discuss the revision process. One of these interaction meetings formed a task-specific Working Group to oversee revising the CF Development Program Guidelines. Through earlier participation, NACRMLP assisted the Working Group to develop its action plan for field visits, project/ stakeholder consultations, and the final process of updating material and drafting a revised document.

The Working Group's target was to complete work on the new revision by end May 2006, though as of mid May 2006, this target may not be met. Members of the Working Group have completed visits to regions and projects (during a difficult period across the country), and have compiled lists of issues raised by the consultations. Evidently, substantial work remains in reviewing the consultant's initial draft (the draft 2006 revision), and in integrating new material covering second generation, and particularly social exclusion, issues. One approach to the remaining work might be as follows:

- Analyse the importance and implications of issues that were raised during the field consultations. It is suggested that the Working Group uses the conceptual framework given in this paper as a framework for analysis. Issues can be organised, categorised, and analysed accordingly.
- Include other contributions in the analysis. For instance, include issues that FECOFUN raises in its recent 18-point agenda submitted to MFSC, issues raised by a recent NACRMLP-organised interaction workshop on pine forest management and (saw log/ timber) business development, feedback provided to NACRMLP and AusAID on the 'IOP' guidelines<sup>8</sup>, and other contributions.
- Link these analyses with provisions in the consultant's 2006 draft revision of the CFDP Guidelines.

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<sup>8</sup> Some of this feedback has re-emphasised the importance of including specific and effective guidance in the Guidelines on approaches to avoid or minimise social exclusion and elite capture in CFUG management and the IOP preparation process, methods for reducing internal, inter-group, and boundary conflict, and methods for ensuring positive discrimination in business planning, operating the CFUG fund, and in micro-credit operations. Feedback has also re-emphasised the objective of making the Guidelines fully user-friendly in Nepali language, and also illustratively and figuratively friendly for the benefit of other linguistic groups.

- Identify sections of the consultant's 2006 draft revision of the CFDP Guidelines that need amending or strengthening in order to provide appropriate conceptual, policy, or operational guidance for dealing with issues raised.
- Integrate into the revised CFDP Guidelines relevant sections, elements, concepts, and methods from the second G-OP/ IOP guidelines.

The Project views the above remaining work as high priority for the CF Division, the sector, and future projects assisting the CF system.

## 8 Scaling up CFUG Production of Second Generation OPs

From experience in piloting the use of these ‘IOP’ guidelines, NACRMLP is convinced that their implementation by CFUGs—through a decentralised, partnership, and, where applicable, business approach—is feasible and cost-effective. The conceptual/ operational framework for a second generation OP, and for the ‘IOP’ preparation process, assumes the following:

- Decentralised arrangements for preparing Ops:
  - The framework offered in these Guidelines indicates that a decentralised mode of ‘IOP’ preparation/ revision is necessary and feasible, involving both vertical and horizontal integration of functions.
  - Suitable candidates for second G-OP training as local resource people are readily available in most CFUGs, and can play an effective role in facilitating almost all tasks involved in social, business, and technical data collection, analysis, and planning.
  - CFUG executive committee members who have been involved in preparing second G-OPs through a well-facilitated and supported approach have demonstrated effective leadership and commitment in tackling second generation CF issues during ‘IOP’ preparation.
  - FECOFUN, at national, district, and range post levels, has also demonstrated its ability to provide effective leadership, facilitation, and support to CFUGs and facilitators in preparing second G-OPs.
  - DFO staff have demonstrated a sound understanding of their changing role in supporting CFUGs and other partners in the OP revision process.<sup>9</sup>
  - There is no shortage in most districts of NGO personnel with the capacity to quickly assimilate second generation CF skills required for ‘IOP’ preparation.
  
- The decentralised arrangements are reasonably cost effective:
  - Estimated costs and time for producing a second G-OP are indicated in Annex 6
  - As would be expected, the total cost of producing the Hile Jaljale Ka CFUG second generation OP through intensive support and an action learning approach was high—some NRs2.7 lakhs. The reason for this was that, together with CFUG members, the Project more than doubled the time taken for most tasks in order to analyse and document the IOP process, along with lessons learned. Also, the approach was relatively inefficient, involving development of the guidelines and training materials on an *ad hoc* basis while the process of IOP preparation was going on
  - For NACRMLP’s other 16 pilot CFUG ‘IOPs’, the actual cost reduced to around NRs1.8 lakh per second G-OP. Here also, for the same reasons, costs were much higher than those involved if other CFUGs replicate the process

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<sup>9</sup> Scaling up will involve MFSC Training Section and RFTCs mainstreaming relevant elements of the ‘IOP’ curriculum so as to enhance their own training staff capability, and that of officers, rangers, and forest guards who deal with second generation CF throughout the DoF.

- The Project's estimate for replicating *the same process followed* to produce a second G-OPs is around NRs 90,000.<sup>10</sup> As noted (footnote) this most likely *over-estimates* actual replication costs that many CFUGs might incur, particularly those with fewer business development opportunities. If costs of project/ NGO and DFO support staff are excluded, and no allowances are paid to CFUG representatives (other than trained facilitators), the cost reduces to c. **NRs 45,000**. A CFUG with a more marginal resource endowment and lower business opportunities is likely to be able to produce a second generation OP for up to *30% less cost than this*.
- The NACRMLP draft IOP curriculum provides an off-the-shelf resource that any agency—DFO, MFSC regional training centers, other training institutions, FECOFUN, COFSUN, other NGOs, CF projects—can use for HRD of their own staff, or for enhancing 'IOP' related skills in local resource people/ facilitators
- Funding should not be a limiting factor, except for CFUGs with very marginal resource endowments and business opportunities. In the NACRMLP districts, where there are significant pine plantation resources ripe for business development, most CFUGs can readily afford the cost of second G-OP/IOP preparation on a self-reliance basis. Many other CFUGs have forest-based business opportunities to support a self-reliant approach. Through sound strategic planning, FECOFUN has the opportunity nationally and at other levels to become a self-reliant, forest-based business organisation able to provide services to its membership. Similarly, our experience indicates that the MFSC could adopt a strategic approach to CF development, which would support FECOFUN and CFUG networks directly on a needs basis.

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<sup>10</sup> This is a 'program total' figure, not necessarily the cost a CFUG would have to bear. Actual NACRMLP pilot figures included 'overhead' investments in curriculum/ materials development, and process documentation involved in community-level 'action learning'. It also included allowances for some key CFUG representatives, and wages and/or daily allowances paid to outside support staff and DFO staff.

## **9 Endorsing the Second Generation ‘IOP’ Guidelines Nationally**

As NACRMLP closes, one objective in preparing this paper is to ‘market the product’—the ‘IOP’ guidelines. It is emphasised that an ‘off-the-shelf’ package is now available that includes:

- The Guidelines
- An accompanying training curriculum
- Several best practice examples

The Project hopes that other partners and stakeholders in Nepal’s CF development program will work swiftly to suggest and make necessary improvements to these Guidelines in both content and user-friendly presentation, and make coordinated efforts to mainstream them nationally. If possible, formal MFSC endorsement would be the greatest way to promote and mainstream their use.

## **Annex 1**

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# **The NACRMLP Process for Developing Second G-OP Guidelines**

## Annex 1: The NACRMLP Process for Developing Second G-OP Guidelines

NACRMLP adopted a fully consultative, 'Action Research' process to develop the IOP<sup>11</sup> guidelines that included the following main steps:

- A grassroots-based, practitioner workshop of key stakeholders in the CF system. In the workshop, practitioners:
  - Visioned the elements of an 'ideal' IOP.
  - Reviewed current CFDP guidelines from a users' perspective.
  - Reviewed actual OPs, SNRM best practices, LIPs, and business plans in the light of current guidelines, and the features of an ideal IOP.
  - Identified approaches and methods to integrate LIP, BP, and SNRM best practices into an IOP preparation process.
  - Discussed institutional modalities and training/ HRD needs.
- Selection of focus CFUGs within clusters for the IOP preparation work.
- Selection of existing or new OP, LIP, and WEP facilitators to receive IOP training.
- Preparation by NACRMLP specialists of draft instructions and formats for processes and methods of field consultation, data collection, data analysis, and IOP content for cluster CFUG facilitators and DFO/Project cluster staff (cluster teams)<sup>12</sup>.
- An iterative process of finalising the IOP (table of) contents, through successive conceptual drafts and continual revisions during final stages of preparing a best practice IOP example.
- Training modules in IOP preparation for cluster teams based on the draft instructions, with CFUG field work in between.
- Intensive coaching of cluster teams by a 'Best Practice IOP consultant' and other NACRMLP specialists.
- Detailed process self-monitoring and documentation by cluster teams facilitated by the consultant, in the field and in reflection sessions (as long as 3 days) during training modules.
- A writing workshop to draft the IOP Guidelines, attended by NACRMLP specialists, cluster field staff, and the executive committee secretary of one 'best practice' IOP CFUG.

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<sup>11</sup> At the time of the September 2005 workshop, NACRMLP was calling second generation OPs 'IOPs'

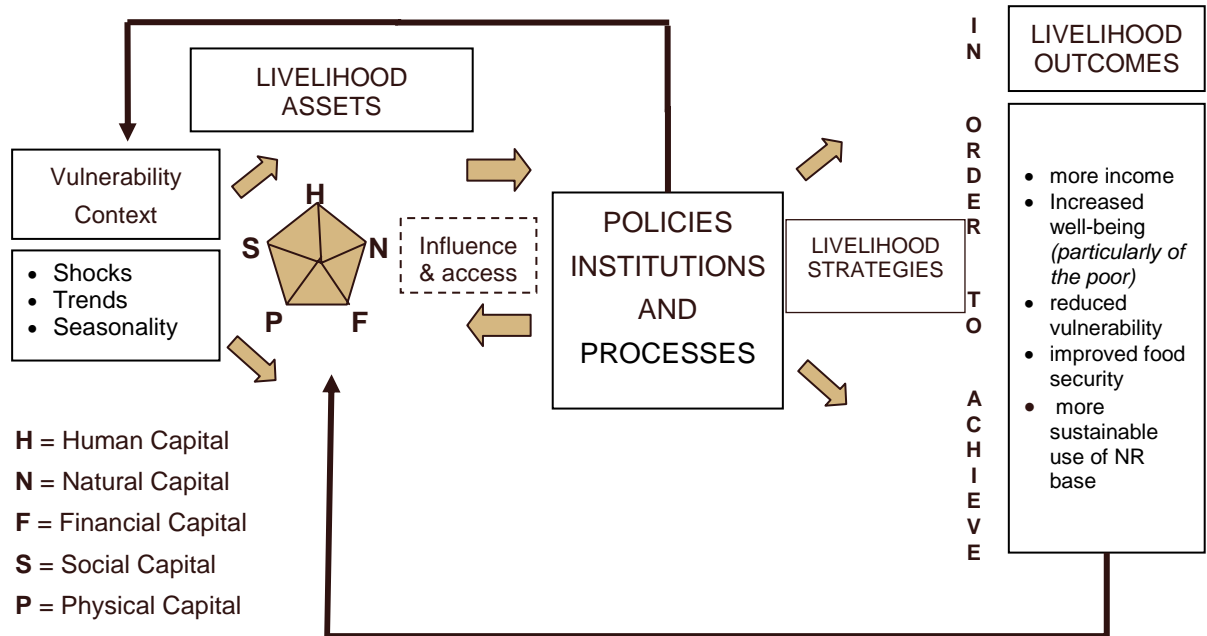
<sup>12</sup> The instructions included materials from the September 2005 workshop, current drafts of the revised CFDP Guidelines, Stage 1 LIP methods, and new materials developed by the specialists' group.

## **Annex 2**

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# **The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**

## Annex 2: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

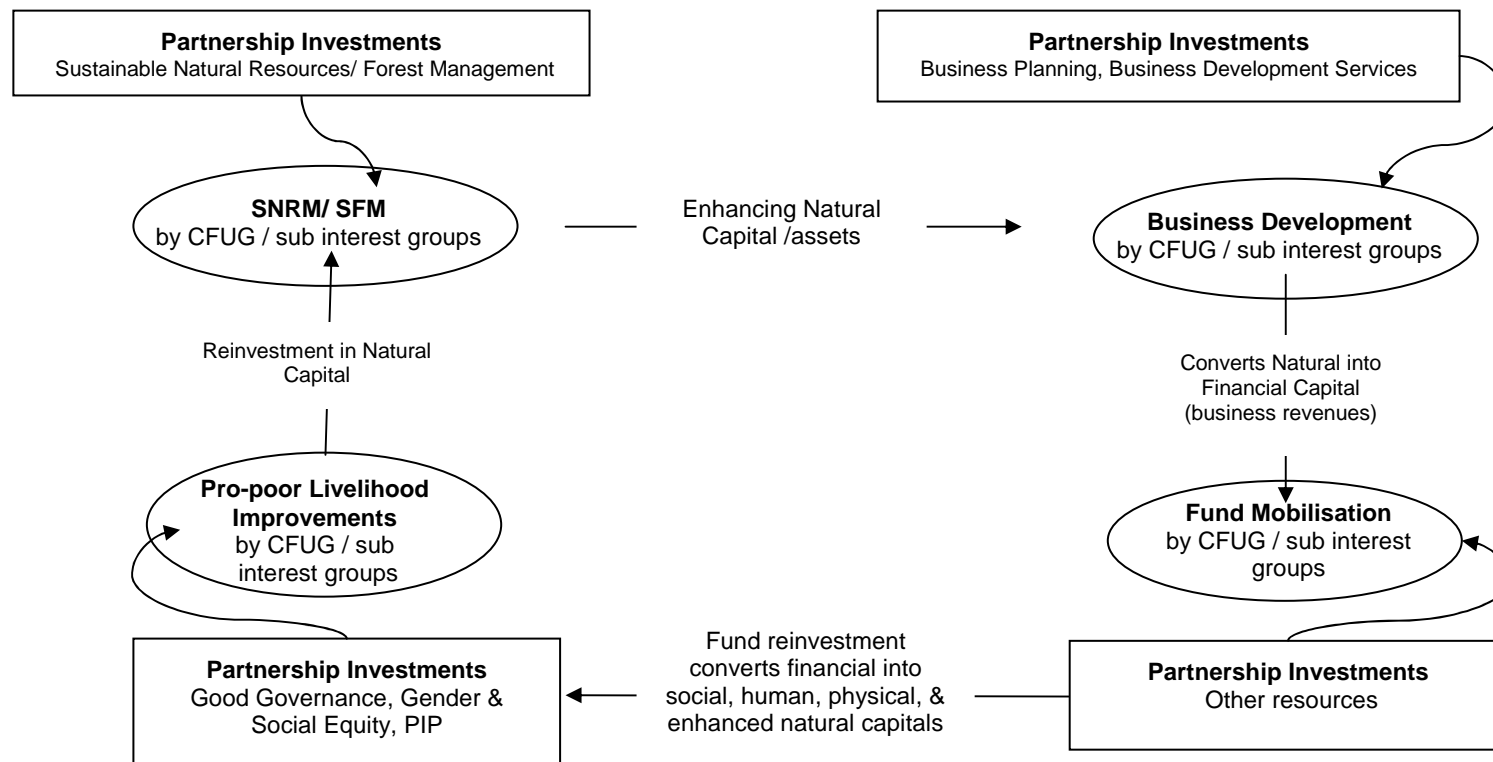


## **Annex 3**

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# **Towards a Self-reliant CFUG**

### Annex 3: Towards a Self-reliant CFUG



**Notes**

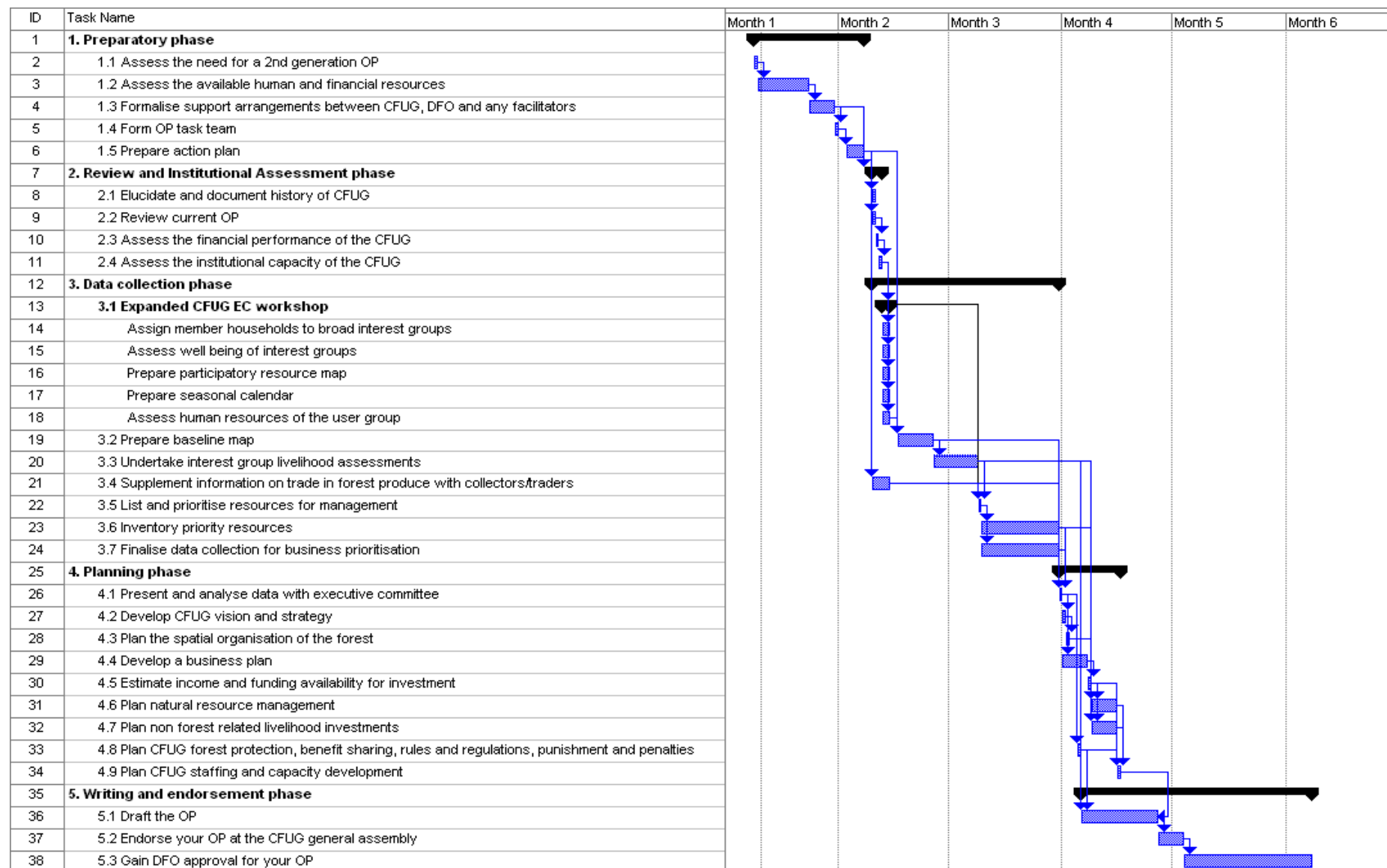
1. Partnerships may involve CFUGs, CFUG product-based networks, FECOFUN, I/ NGOs, DDC/ VDCs, private sector, MFSC, other line agencies, Projects.
2. Sub interest groups include women, poor/ socially excluded groups that are identified during the OP planning process.
3. Broad-based Livelihood Improvement may involve interventions and investments in any area of the sustainable livelihoods framework, including the “5 capitals” & policies, institutions and processes.

## **Annex 4**

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# **Gantt Chart of Major Tasks in Preparing a Second Generation OP**

## Annex 4: Gantt Chart of Major Tasks in Preparing a Second Generation OP



## **Annex 5**

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### **List of Annexes to the Second Generation OP Guidelines**

## **Annex 5: List of Annexes to the Second Generation OP Guidelines**

1. Some important legal provisions relating to community forestry
2. Gender, poverty and social equity (GPSE) indicators
3. Sample tri-partite agreement between CFUG, facilitators and DFO
4. Template for income and expenditure statement
5. Criteria for institutional assessment of community forest user groups
6. Sample of a CFUG institutional assessment output
7. Example of a CFUG interest group's livelihood indicators output
8. Example of a CFUG participatory resource map
9. Example of a CFUG seasonal calendar
10. Example of an assessment status of human resources and their availability of a CFUG
11. Example of a CFUG baseline map
12. Example of a CFUG assessment of consumption and supply of forest products according to interest group
13. Example of an assessment of the livelihood situation and issues of different interest groups of a CFUG
14. Example of a CFUG business prioritisation matrix
15. Example of a table depicting the status of different maturity classes of trees according to Sub-Blocks
16. Example of a CFUG ethnic group /Caste Composition
17. Example of Pine plantation management prescriptions according to thinning regime
18. Example of prescriptions for forest management according to annual allowable cut
19. Example of a forest area description
20. Example of a CFUG working circles description
21. Example map of a CFUG's working circles
22. Example of a CFUG description, schedule and budget for program activities
23. Example of a CFUG's plan for forest product distribution and sale
24. Example of a CFUG's plan for imposing fines and penalties
25. Example of a CFUG income and expenditure statement
26. Template for CFUG Market Analysis matrix
27. Template for a CFUG business prioritisation matrix
28. Template for estimating CFUG income
29. Example of a CFUG Business Plan
30. Example of a Table of contents for a second generation CFUG operational plan

## **Annex 6**

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# **Estimated Costs and Time to Produce a Second Generation OP**

## Annex 6: Estimated Costs & Time to Produce a Second Generation OP

### Second generation OP production costs

All costs NRs

S.N.	Description of cost	Hile "Ka" pilot CFUG	Other NACRMLP pilot CFUGs	Estimated cost for other CFUGs to replicate elsewhere
1	Facilitators payment— (project)	14,400	6,600	0
2	Facilitators payment— CFUG	20,000	5,000	10,000 – 18,000
3	Allowances to CFUG representatives	5,000	1,000	2,000 – 3,000
4	Cluster team/outside support staff <sup>13</sup>	1,80,000	1,20,000	40,000
5	DFO staff support— TA/DA	6,000	6,000	2,000
6	Task team meetings	2,000	1,000	1,000
7	Facilitator training— 3 facilitators	15,000	15,000	15,000
8	IOP writing workshop for CFUG <sup>14</sup>	20,000	20,000	15,000
9	Typing/ binding	12,000	5,000	4,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,74,400</b>	<b>1,79,600</b>	<b>89,000– 98,000</b>

<sup>13</sup> Daily allowances/ wages. Assumes 3 months 3 full time field staff for the pilot Hile Jaljale Ka CFUG, 2 field staff for 3 months full time for other NACRMLP pilot CFUGs, and 1 field staff for 2 months when replicated by other CFUGs

<sup>14</sup> Assumes 15-20 people (facilitators, CFUG & interest group representatives, ranger/ support staff) for 7-10 days in a community-based location

Approximate level of effort and time to produce one CFUG second generation OP

(Person days/CFUG)

Facilitator, CFUG leadership, and support staff person days for IOP preparation including training cycle, field work, and write-up—based on actual NACRMLP pilot second generation OP process at Hile Jaljale Ka CFUG<sup>15</sup>, Janagal cluster, KP district.

	<b>Tasks/activities</b>	<b>Person days</b>
<b>Activity 1</b>	<b>Module I facilitator training:</b> Covering overall process/ schedule and major tasks of phases I-III of IOP preparation—preparatory, review & institutional assessment, and data collection phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 trainee facilitators/ CFUG executive committee members.</li> <li>• @ 5 days = 15 person days</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 2</b>	<b>Field Assignment I:</b> Field work for phases I-III of IOP preparation process	
Sub activity 2.1	Phases I-II plus III—social data for livelihood improvement and business planning/ enterprise development data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 trained facilitators can cover 10-15 households per day</li> <li>• (200 households/15) x2 = 27 p/days</li> </ul>
Sub activity 2.2	Phase III: Data on sustainable forest management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 trained facilitator can map/ survey c. 5 ha/day</li> <li>• 200 ha/5 = 40 person days</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 3</b>	Monitoring and ‘coaching’ field staff/ specialist support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• c. 12 person days support</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 4</b>	<b>Module II facilitator training:</b> Covering phases IV-V of IOP preparation. (Data analysis, synthesis, planning, and write-up/ endorsement of IOP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 trainee facilitators/ CFUG executive committee members.</li> <li>• @ 5 days = 15 person days</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 5</b>	<b>Field Assignment II:</b> Phases IV-V of IOP preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 days of analysis and planning work involving 3 facilitators/ CFUG members</li> <li>• = 21days</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 6</b>	Monitoring and ‘coaching’ field staff/ specialist support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• c. 9 person days support</li> </ul>
		<b>Total person days: 139</b>

<sup>15</sup> Hile Jaljale Ka CFUG has a membership of c. 200 households, and a CF of c. 200 hectares

## **Limitations**

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