



Monthly Update – December 2009

USAID/Nepal Flood Recovery Program

Build Back Better

USAID-NFRP works with flood-affected communities of the Terai to increase farmer productivity and income, develop rural infrastructure, improve awareness of sanitation, nutrition, gender and protection issues, and strengthen local capacities through enhanced participation of youth and vulnerable populations. This 34-month activity started in May 2008 and is implemented by Fintrac Inc., a US agribusiness firm in partnership with METCON Consultants and a vast group of local NGOs and subcontractors.

UPDATE ON PROGRAM EXPANSION

On October 21, 2009, USAID/Nepal authorized a 10 month extension and increased funding for USAID-NFRP in order to expand operations in the Terai regions that were most-affected by 2008 floods, including Sunsari, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. Fintrac responded immediately, hiring 10 new technical support staff and 32 field technicians within the first two weeks. Offices in Inaruwa and Dhangadhi municipalities were operational in November; supporting field teams as they completed preliminary assessments to determine target worksites.

Four VDCs in Sunsari and 12 in Kailali/Kanchanpur were selected for support. Because the devastation caused by the Koshi flood (Aug 2008) is unprecedented in Nepal, two-thirds of the extension funding will be allocated for Sunsari alone. Both regions, however, will receive greater concentrations of integrated technical and financial assistance than previously achievable by USAID-NFRP. The LIG team has led the way to date, completing the selection of 2,250 participant farmers by the end of November. Field trainings were underway in December and inputs such as seeds and nursery supplies have already been distributed for more than 120 hectares of demonstration plots. USAID-NFRP will have the full 490 hectares of targeted productive land growing high value crops by mid-February.

LIG participants are now grouped into 348 irrigation clusters, and the program will provide each with a shallow-tube well and motorized pump to ensure year-round irrigation. The team in Sunsari has also been successful in collaborating with the government's Ground Water Irrigation Board, who pledged to pay for 192 of our farmers' irrigation sets in Sunsari (approx. \$110,000 in cost-sharing). Unexpected savings such as this are reprogrammed into new activities that will deepen USAID-NFRP's overall impact.



An example of the damage to housing and farmland caused by the Koshi flood in August 2008, displacing 7,500 families for nearly 12 months (Sunsari district).



Photos by Fintrac Inc.
Before and after of school in Hariharpur VDC (Parsa).

INFRASTRUCTURE

All but one of the 86 infrastructure projects in the original six program districts is now complete. The remaining project, a small bridge in Kailali district, will be finished in mid January. The engineering team has also determined that four flood control projects damaged by flash floods in October are in need of minor repairs. USAID-NFRP authorized an additional \$4,000 to restore these projects to their original conditions and make technical enhancements that will prevent future damage.

While activities wind down in the original worksites, the Infrastructure program is rapidly scaling up in Sunsari, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. After the LIG team completed the selection of beneficiary farmers and worksites in November, engineering staff immediately began to assess the situation to determine which productive infrastructure projects could have the greatest impacts on local economic development. Our initial findings indicate that small-to-medium sized bridges and culverts are in highest demand, and their rapid construction would have complimentary effects on government-planned road reconstruction projects. All prioritized projects are now in the design stage; USAID-NFRP is set to begin construction in the new program areas by February 1, 2010.

LIVELIHOODS & INCOME GENERATION

Livelihoods and Income Generation partners FORWARD and MADE concluded the training program for the second crop cycle in December and farmers have now finalized all harvests and sales for the season. Training and technical assistance activities for the third crop cycle will begin in January.

Contingencies: Heavy rains on October 6-8 caused serious floods in the western districts of Banke, Bardiya and Kailali damaging 37 hectares of program-supported demonstration plots. In early December, USAID-NFRP met with its partner FORWARD to develop an appropriate contingency plan for the flood affected farmers. Both parties agreed to provide a minor increase in funding and compensate farmers by distributing seeds of commercial crops tolerant of sandy flood-affected soils, such as watermelon, bottlegourd, bittergourd, cucumber and onion.

Seed/Nursery Management: USAID-NFRP has distributed 44 kg of seeds and 41 nursery sets to support 12 of the 37 hectares damaged by the October floods. The remaining 25 hectares will be supported with seeds and nursery supplies by early January.

Soil Testing: All 290 targeted soil samples were completed by December, covering all demonstration plots in the Central region and 85% in the West. Considerable deficiencies in soil quality were identified in some areas and recommendations for treatments to improve fertility were made to each farmer. Additional



USAID technical staff inspect the large vented culvert constructed by USAID-NFRP in Jaymanglapur VDC (Parsa) during a field monitoring visit.



Raised bottlegourd stands in Rautahat district. Farmers utilize improved land management techniques such as this to dramatically increase their fields' productivity.

training in soil conservation, fertilizer application, composting and incorporating organic materials was also provided.

Integrated Pest Management: Field staff continued training on the identification, treatment and prevention of pests for 178 farmers and distributed 276 IPM kits this month. Such support reduces the dependence on chemical pesticides, lowers production costs and reduces exposure to hazardous materials.

Marketing: This month 1,585 farmers were trained in the second cycle of marketing management. USAID-NFRP has also developed of a comprehensive system for market surveillance, data collection and information dissemination for farmers. This system will improve access for farmers and communities to timely information on the prices, trends and potential risks of local and regional market centers.

Incomes: December saw 192 hectares of program supported demonstration plots produce 1,060 tons of high value crops for a net sales value Rs. 15,326,465 (\$207,114), resulting in approx. \$275 per household of increased incomes during the second crop cycle.



Bottlegourd in early stages of production (Banke).

SANITATION & NUTRITION / LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS / WOMEN & CHILDREN

During the reporting period, six three-day district-level workshops were conducted for selected youth club and CBO members in each of the program districts. The purpose of the workshops was to allow lead members of each organization to meet with their peers from similar organizations in other program-supported VDCs of their district. Participants had the opportunity to share their experiences and discuss issues of common interest, such as community leadership, coordination with local governments, constraints to economic and social development, internal community cooperation, the peace process, and conflict resolution.

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