



Monthly Update – March 2010, Issue #13

USAID/Nepal Flood Recovery Program

Build Back Better

UPDATE: PROGRESS IN KOSHI FLOOD RECOVERY

In August 2008, floods caused by a major breach in the eastern embankment of the Koshi River affected more than 250,000 people, displaced 47,000 people and damaged 5,000 hectares of farmland and 17 kilometers of East-West Highway along Sunsari district. Thousands had to live in camps for months and many require a solution for permanent resettlement.

The Koshi flood, as it is commonly known, was one of Nepal's largest humanitarian crises. Although the initial humanitarian response was large and effective, the demands for the recovery stage are greater and will require substantial investment and planning. UNOCHA and UNDP have made strong efforts to facilitate coordination among the relief and recovery community, but many challenges remain that can affect program implementation.

Within this context, USAID-NFRP was authorized a 10-month extension and increased funding to expand operations to Sunsari district in October 2009. The team responded immediately by hiring all new staff, setting up office facilities, and starting field operations within a month. In order to ensure complementarity (and avoid duplication), field staff focused initially on ensuring broad coordination with other programs and identifying gaps within the overall response. Now, as programs that were focused on the early relief stages begin to pull out, coordination is becoming less crucial, and USAID-NFRP has taken a central role in the flood recovery effort for Sunsari district.

Livelihoods and Income Generation: The LIG program was the first USAID-NFRP activity to initiate in Sunsari. The 16-month training program began in November 2009 and will span three crop cycles. A total of 1,067 participants were organized into 192 producer groups and by late January the programs had distributed all seeds, nursery sets and integrated pest management kits. Demonstration plots totaling 270 hectares have been planted for the first crop cycle with a variety of high value crops such as onion, chili, cucumber, squash, pumpkin, okra, long bean and hybrid maize.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.
"Red Zone" of the Koshi flood-affected area – the silt and sand deposited by the flood (seen here) is up to 10 ft. deep



LIG trainees test their program-supported diesel pump and shallow tube well installation – Haripur VDC



Long beans are in the early stages of production on this demonstration plot – Laukhi VDC

USAID-NFRP has received excellent collaboration from the local Groundwater Irrigation Board (GIB), which is implementing the government's ADB-funded plan to increase the irrigation supply for Koshi flood victims. As of March, the GIB has installed 168 irrigation sets – comprised of a shallow tube well and motorized pump – and plans to complete an additional 14 installations for LIG farmers in April. This amounts to a \$110,000 government contribution. USAID-NFRP also installed 10 irrigation sets for producer groups not included in the GIB program, and each group has followed through on its agreement to pay for 25 percent of the installation cost. All 192 producer groups will have irrigation sets by the end of April.

Infrastructure: Following the LIG program's identification and selection of trainee participants, USAID-NFRP designed all infrastructural support around the location and markets of the 192 producer groups and the long-term economic benefits that selected projects can provide. The engineering team completed project designs and cost estimates in January, and construction via subcontracting with local firms began in February. All projects are scheduled for completion by July 2010, before the monsoon rains begin.

Eight of the 11 productive infrastructure projects in Sunsari are for bridge and culvert construction; three will rehabilitate important sections of local roads. These projects will directly benefit an estimated 7,364 households and will improve the quality, accessibility and resilience of over five kilometers of local roads – equating to a complete rehabilitation of 20 percent of all roads affected by the flood (approx. 25 km). USAID-NFRP also plans to build three agricultural collection and marketing centers in Sunsari that will directly facilitate the commercialization efforts of local farmers, and LIG participant in particular.

USAID-NFRP will continue to provide integrated assistance and training to support local recovery efforts in Sunsari through March 2011. By then the program will have generated \$1.1 million in increased incomes and 30,000 days of temporary employment, and will have constructed at least 14 productive infrastructures throughout the affected area.



The high water table at many sites near the Koshi River requires extensive drainage before construction can begin.



Excavator reshapes roadway – Pachim Kusuha VDC



An 8 meter slab culvert nears completion – Haripur VDC



This pipe culvert is not yet complete, but it is already being used – Shripur VDC