

Program Indicator Evaluation Report for DFE's program

“Empowerment of Communities through democratic Natural Resource Management”

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Abbreviations

AFFON	Association of Family Forest Owners of Nepal
Ama	Associacao do meio ambiente (Mozambique)
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CISU	Civilsamfund i Udvikling (Civil Society in Development)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFE	Danish Forestry Extension
DFO	District forest office
fea	Forestry and Environmental Action (BiH)
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FIP	Forest investment Plan Forest Rights Coordination Group
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
HR	Human Resource
IEE	Interactive environmental education
IFFA	International Family Forest Association
LSC	Life School Centre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoFE	Ministry of Forestry and Environment
NCED	National Centre for Education Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPP	Nepal Prakriti Pathshala (NPP), WCN project: Nepal Nature School
NRM	Natural Resource Management
Nrp	Nepalese Rupees (currency)
NVCARD	North Vietnam College of Agriculture and Rural Development
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
VD	Vietnamese dong (currency)
WCN	Wildlife Conservation Nepal

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1. INTRODUCTION

DFE's program "Empowerment of Communities through democratic Natural Resource Management" coordinates the efforts of 5 partners in 4 countries: DFE (Danish Forestry Extension) in Denmark, WCN (Wildlife Conservation Nepal) and AFFON (Association of Forest Owners of Nepal) in Nepal, MORE TREES in Vietnam and fea (Forestry and Environmental Action) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to these 5 partners the partnership has included 3 others, ama (Associacao do meio ambiente) in Mozambique, the Life school Centre (LSC) in Nepal and Mali Folkecenter in Mali. However, ama is no longer a cooperation partner and DFE is presently developing exit strategies for LSC and Mali Folkecenter, as both will be leaving the partnership by the end of this year. These partners have therefore not been included in this evaluation.

The partners have various length of association with DFE and are also in different stages of implementing their activities. The partnership between DFE and WCN goes back more than a decade through the NPP (environmental education and nature school project). Also, DFE has been involved with MORE TREES in Vietnam for nearly a decade. AFFON and fea are relative new partners that have only joined the partnership within the last couple of years. The "age" of the partnerships has been taken into account in this report.

As the program title implies, the partnership focuses on the involvement of communities in natural resource management. In fea, MORE TREES and AFFON, the main focus is on involving local communities in sustainable forest management through development of associations of farmers involved in small scale family or farm forestry, which is also the main competence of DFE in Denmark.

WCN's approach to community empowerment and sustainability goes through education, empowering the next generation to influence their communities and participate in more sustainable natural resource management (NRM). Also, MORE TREES invests in education by developing training courses in farm forestry for agriculture college students. This is another field where DFE has substantial experience.

During the partnership, regular evaluation and monitoring has taken place. However, this monitoring has mainly focused on the fulfilments of the local level outputs and on activity and output indicators of the program. This report is the first that focuses on the indicators for the overall program objective and the 3 immediate objectives: improved natural resources, improved partner capacity and successful association building and education on NRM.

The report is developed by Hanne Hübertz, consultant to DFE in Denmark in cooperation with Amila Brajić, M&E Officer for fea. Monitoring templates were developed together with DFE. Hanne has carried out the field work in Nepal and Vietnam, while Amila has been responsible for BiH. The report is following the DFE Monitoring and Evaluation Manual from February 2015.

2. METHODS

2.1. Purpose of Evaluation

As described in the DFE Monitoring and Evaluation Manual monitoring and evaluation are primary tools for program management. They provide the management group and other stakeholders with relevant information about the program. Monitoring is designed to analyse information and continually adjust the program, to provide evidence for advocacy and to learn what works and what does not (which will provide a basis for future program design). The specific purpose of this evaluation of outcome indicators (impact and contribution to change) has been to develop a picture of the programme achievements so far to be used as a “baseline” and guiding the next program phase. Further, it is expected to contribute to the development of a result monitoring system for the next program phase as recommended by the CISU Review cum Appraisal report from March 2018.

2.2. Approach and methods to evaluation

While indicators on activity and output level generally are specific, tangible and quantifiable, indicators on outcome (impact) level tend to be less specific and more qualitative, and are often measured in the form of self-reviews, interviews and/or surveys.

To cover all indicators for program objective and outcomes and capture an overall picture of the present program achievements, it was decided to apply the same monitoring toolbox with all 4 partners. A format for partner self-review of capacity and synergy was developed (including a grading system for level of achievement from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (exceed expectations), together with formats for assessment of association capacity and focus groups interviews on most significant change and on member satisfaction (formats attached as Annex 2). For monitoring “signs of success” in IEE (Interactive Environment Education) a teacher’s questionnaire has been developed for NPP. The result of the first test of this tool is also included in this monitoring report.

The monitors (Hanne or Amila) facilitated most of the self-reviews and focus group discussions directly, both with partner and with organizations and members in the field. In Nepal and Vietnam, Hanne was supported by partner staff that also acted as interpreters and helped to facilitate focus group discussions. In BiH and Vietnam all local associations/cooperatives supported by the program were visited (1 in BiH, 3 in Vietnam), while in Nepal 3 chapters were chosen as representative of the present 43 AFFON chapters. At each association/chapter interviews were conducted with both staff and board members/chairman. A further 11 AFFON chapters answered the capacity format by mail.

In each target area, several focus group interviews were facilitated with association members, non-members and/or local forestry group members (between 7 and 15 people in each target area, both women and men). In addition, Hanne met with representatives of the provincial Farmer Unions in the Ha Tinh and Hoa Binh Province that are the MORE TREES target areas in Vietnam. Meetings were also held with management and teachers at the North Vietnam College of Agriculture and Rural Development (NVCARD). At NVCARD informal group discussions were facilitated with 9 students using the modules developed by MORE TREES.

During all facilitation, the monitors had a specific focus on collecting concrete examples to illustrate and support the self-reviews and group discussions. The schedule for the monitoring visits is attached as Annex 1).

It should be noted that although self-review provides useful monitoring results and also forces the participants to reflect on their own work and achievement, there is a risk that partners will assess themselves in relation to the level of their own expectations rather than to the program indicator. A partner

with a lot of insight in what more could be done may thus rate themselves too low in relation to program achievements. On the other hand, in the desire to present their activities in better light, they can rate themselves too high in relation to real program achievements. The monitors have endeavoured to keep this in mind when comparing results and grading from the different partners.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1. Program Development Objective

“Local communities, including school children, have an in-depth understanding of natural resources, have equitable access, and have the skills to responsibly collaborate, conserve and manage them, contributing to overall poverty reduction as well as social, economic and ecosystem resilience supported by relevant policy framework/s.”

The program LFA has defined 3 indicators for the development objective, namely:

- *Improved/conserved natural resources in target areas*
- *Communities in program area are practicing responsible (and when needed collaborative) NRM, have fair access to, and earning sustainable incomes from natural resources*
- *Government at local and national level act positively in relation to demands of program partners/rights holders for conservation of natural resources/sustainable use as well as equitable access to natural resources*

Obviously as this is the long-term overall goal the program cannot be expected to have fulfilled the indicators yet, but it is relevant to look for documentation and signs for changes in attitude, management and policy support, both on the national or regional level and in relation to local communities and individual farmers.

3.1.1. Improved Natural Resources in Target Area

According to official reports the forest cover in both Nepal and Vietnam has increased within the last few years and is still increasing. This is partly due to forest regulations and tree-planting campaigns in both countries but is also caused by less available labour force in the rural areas as many people go abroad or into the cities in search for work, thus creating more space (abandoned land) and a need for less labour-intensive crops, e.g. forest. However quality extension service and law and policies regarding small scale forest owners has not automatically followed the forest cover increase and today challenge both authorities and forest owners. So basically, the timing of the program is right and the contents relevant.

In **Nepal**, the report *The State of Nepal's Forests (2016)* from Dept. of Forest Research and Survey under the Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE) documents that the forest area of Nepal has increased from 39,6% to 44,74% (about 6 million ha) from 1999 to 2015, and the area is expected to continue increasing. However, as the official recording on private forestry is very poor, it is impossible to pinpoint the family forest contribution to this increase. In 2017, only 2,902 ha of small-scale private forests were officially registered (Amatya, S. and Lamsal, P. 2017: Private Forest in Nepal, Journal of Forest and Livelihood, Forest Action) against an AFFON estimate of probably close to one million ha family forest. Although AFFON has only existed since 2015, examples in the box below show that on the local level, the program has already contributed to improved natural resources:

Examples of improved NRM on local level in Nepal

When asked about the most significant change in relation to NRM/forestry in their area almost all AFFON district chapter members in the three visited chapters mentioned the increase in forest area/greenery. A change that they

say is due to better management of community forests, a shift towards stall-feeding (as more fodder is available) and to more plantations or natural regeneration on land that is no longer being used for agriculture as many farm labourers have gone abroad for work.

Members of the Kavre District Chapter report that illegal use of wood and other forest products has stopped as most people now produce their own fodder and firewood (or use gas). (Before most people had to steal from the government forest; one female member even told how in the past her father made her and her sisters go to the forest at night to collect firewood). Also, the Kavre chapter members mentioned that the watershed is now better protected by tree planting around the springs and that there are fewer landslides now.

During focus group interviews in Rautahat District it was reported that due to the awareness campaign of AFFON womens' participation in the family forest movement has increased. Among other things this has resulted in a change in the family planting strategy towards more greenery at the homesteads, as women particularly want to increased fodder and firewood opportunities near their homes.

The AFFON chapter board in Gorkha District estimates that all AFFON members in the district have family forest, and that 40-60 % of them are actively improving their forest (applying various techniques of silviculture, pruning and intercropping incl. medicinal plants, mainly learnt from community forestry). All have benefits from their forest (fodder, intercropping, firewood etc.) while only 1-5% have direct income from their forest, as they all face the same problems of not being able to sell their poles/timber due to government restrictions.

As WCN/NPP is working with children the actual effect of their effort on improved natural resources has a long-term perspective. However, more than half the IEE teachers using the monitoring tool "Signs of success" report that parents tell them that they have learned about environmental issues from their children and that this has actually made them make changes to improve the environment (such as e.g. waste management, tree planting, composting or reduced use of plastic).

In **Vietnam**, the *National Forest Development Strategy (2017)* reports that the forest cover has grown from 12,3 mio ha in 2015 to 14,4 mio ha in 2017. Approximately 2/3 of this forest is plantation forest. In Ha Tinh province (one of the target areas for MORE TREES) the forest cover is 52% with the plantation area having grown from approx. 92.700 ha in 2007 to 107,300 ha in 2015. Also, timber production in Ha Tinh has grown by 17% from 2017 to 2018. In Hoa Binh Province, the trend has been towards planting oranges and sugarcane, but especially within the last year the market for these products has proven uncertain, so also here there is a trend towards converting marginal forest and agricultural land into plantations/natural forest regeneration.

Obviously, MORE TREES is a small pawn in this game and MORE TREES' contribution to this positive development cannot be extracted from the overall figures. However, the box below gives some examples of how the MORE TREES initiative has contributed to improved natural resources in the target areas:

Examples of improved NRM on local level in Vietnam

Since year 2000 land for production forest in Ha Tinh Province has been given over to farmers. As a consequence, the concern for environmental issues has risen (such as erosion control, nutrient depletion, protection of water sources). This also means that most people have stopped using fire as a means of clearing ground after the harvest (both after forest and agricultural crops).

One of the people who has stopped burning the ground is Mr Le, a cooperative member from Ha Tinh, who explains that he became aware of the benefits of no burning through MORE TREES training courses and other activities (cleaner air, soil keeps moisture and nutrients better, less soil erosion and less need for weeding). He now chops up the residue after harvesting and leaves it to fertilize and protect the soil.

The Lanh Village forestry group in Cao Son Commune in Hoa Binh mentioned as the most significant change in relation to NRM in their area: "People have higher awareness about the environment", "in the past, nobody grew trees, now nearly everybody grows trees. We all grew maize and sweet potato on our forest land and used a lot of

pesticides, so people got ill. Some people even sprayed in the water and destroyed the water quality. Now less people use pesticides as we realise it is damaging to health and the environment. Instead, people increase the forest cover with acacia, melia and styrax and only grow maize for pig and chicken fodder.” Also, one man explained that after MORE TREES courses, he has planted cinnamon on some of his forest land and no longer burns the ground in fear of damaging the cinnamon trees.

In **BiH** the actual establishment of the first forest owner association may be seen as a sign of improved natural resources as before private forest owners did not have a body/organization that would provide extension service and raise awareness on improved management, use and protection of forest goods. Even the process of the establishment of the association has created local awareness and better contact to local authorities and a realization among the new members that together they are able to conserve and manage their forest and the same time improve their income.

In terms of forest ownership, forest land in BiH is predominantly publicly owned, around 80 percent are public forests, and around 20 percent are privately owned mainly by individuals. FAO’s report on *The Forest Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015)* stated that compared to the relatively intensive management of “state forests”, private forests have been quite neglected by both, forest policy decision makers and private forest owners. As a result, few forest policy instruments exist in BiH to guide owners and decision makers on private forest management. Forests represent one of the major natural resources of the country, since it covers 63 percent of the total land area, which is one of the highest values in Europe.

Compared to official data from back to the 1960s, this means a significant increase of forest area (apx 15%) that happen due to afforestation and natural reforestation mainly on abandoned land. In practice, this means an increase of biomass, but a decline of active forest management and quality production of timber. Consequently, reforested areas have turned into unmanaged forests of pioneer species or shrubs, and former managed coppice forests are no longer looked after. Both developments are not considered to support the development of higher value chains for forest goods and services. Therefore, forests in BiH are under-used in comparison to the annual allowable cut in both private and public forests. Besides, FAO reported that human-induced pressures are the main damaging factors for forests, because of poor management practices, over-exploitation of wood resources, illegal logging, air pollution from various sources as well as over-grazing, over-exploitation of Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFPs), hunting and other.

3.1.2. Practice of responsible NRM and income generation

“Communities in the program area are practicing responsible (and when needed collaborative) NRM, have fair access to, and earning sustainable incomes from natural resources”

In both Nepal and Vietnam, the program effort has let to improved income from sustainable use of natural resources in the target areas. However, as legislation and the “baseline” are different in the two countries the approach to supporting responsible NRM and income generation has also differed. In BiH the program effort is still too new to have had any influence of the practice of responsible NRM although the legal establishment of the first forestry association in Busovača can be seen as an example of improved NRM, since private forest owners did not have a body/organization that would provide extension services and cooperate with local stakeholders such as municipality representatives and the cantonal public forest administration.

3.1.2.1. *Nepal*

In the family forests in Nepal the harvest of twigs and grass for fodder from the forest is considered as important. Timber production faces big obstacles for family forestry to contribute to more sustainable forestry because there are very strict regulations on cutting, marketing and transporting wood in Nepal. The present Nepalese laws and policies on NRM do not take family forestry into account and severely limit the

families' possibilities for harvesting and selling their trees. Thus, although people in the target area may practice responsible NRM they do not yet have fair access to earning an income from sustainable forestry. The main objective of AFFON is to advocate for family forest friendly laws and policies. Local AFFON chapters report that nearly all their members have income "in kind" from fodder and intercropping while only 5-20 % of their members have direct income from selling wood or other products from their forest.

All AFFON district chapter boards and members are able to provide examples of people carrying out improved family forest management and gaining improved income or other benefits such as fodder, intercropping, medicinal plants and leaf-litter for organic compost and fertilizer as well as shade, beauty and a relaxing environment. Obviously, this is not all due to their recent membership of AFFON but illustrate the future scope and possibilities. The story of Rautahat District Chapter member Mr Bionod Kumar Karki illustrates what can be done:

The forest of Mr Bionod Kumar Karki

"I came back from Malaysia in 2011 after having worked there for 5 years. I bought 10 katta (around 0.7 hectares) land in Rautahat and started to plant trees in my farmland in 2013. I planted teak, sal (shorea robusta), eucalyptus and other trees and intercropped with turmeric, ginger, cumin and other species. Now I have 800 trees with intercropping and I am getting more and more income from my crops. Also, people have started to come to my forest to relax and enjoy the shade and beauty. I have also planted bamboo as protection (barrier) against flood and riverbank erosion.

To improve my land, I installed a water pump for irrigation during the dry season. I do pruning and thinning of my trees twice in a year and am using the fodder grown in my forest for goats and other livestock. Presently I am feeding 10 goats from my forest but I now have fodder for another 10. I also use leaf litter as organic compost. Two years ago, I sold 30 Eucalyptus trees from my forest to a middleman and got 120,000 rp, but I now realise that I could have had maybe 70,000rp more if I sold by myself without the middleman. However, with the money from the sale of my trees I started a small shop in the village. This is now another income source for my family and that also helps me pay for my children's education".

However, the below examples illustrate the scope of difficulties faced by individual family forest owners trying to obtain fair access to income generation. The problem is not just that these people fail to get income (and thus an incentive for good forest management) but also that others hear about it and are discouraged to do forestry. As one Ghoraka forest owner put it: "we are growing a fruit we cannot eat".

Legal difficulties faced by individual family forest in Nepal

One AFFON member in Kavre District owns a small sawmill for making local furniture. As he was getting some timber from another farmer to make planks furniture, the police arrested him as well as the timber owner and the man who had transported the timber. They all didn't know about "the process thing". AFFON heard about the case and managed to get them released after one day in prison. After this incident, the sawmill owner realised that he needed "to fight for his rights" and joined AFFON.

Another member from Kavre District needed to replace the stairs in her house 3-4 years ago, as they were broken. As her husband was away working in Saudi Arabia, she asked a neighbour to fell one of her trees and transport it to the sawmill to be made into boards for a new staircase. However, some unknown people (maybe some DFO officials, she does not clearly know) came and unloaded the truck and told her that it was illegal to use the timber. So, this tree is now lying wasted in her yard.

As people in Kavre District have experienced huge difficulties or believe that they will get into trouble if they use their own timber for house construction more and more people buy and use concrete, corrugated iron, bamboo and aluminium frames instead of wood for house construction in spite of having perfectly usable construction timber and poles in their own forest. Metal and concrete can be transported and used without permits while you even need a permit to move old wooden doors and windows if you want to reuse them in reconstructing your house in a new location after the 2015 earthquake.

One farmer in Gorkha District felled and sold his trees without the right permits and was arrested. AFFON managed to collect all relevant papers to prove that these trees were his to sell and get him out of prison after 17 days. Unfortunately, he died immediately after. Another farmer's forest land has been expropriated for a future hydropower plant. He has been compensated for the land but not for the forest. Now he wants to sell the trees as the land will be flooded but has been told this will be illegal as he has no approved forestry plan. The power plant may have a permit, but nobody informed the farmer.

3.1.2.2. Vietnam

Different from Nepal, Vietnamese farm forest are generally well-defined forests or plantations with focus on wood production although there are some activities with intercropping and medicinal plants. The market for forest products in Vietnam is stable although the profit from wood harvesting is considered lower than from e.g. sugarcane and oranges even when taking the labour cost into consideration. Farmers are not restricted in selling their trees, but many still sell their stands to middlemen as short rotation poles of relatively poor quality as the local commune and district extension service only have capacity to focus on laws and regulation issues.

In the two Vietnamese provinces Ha Tinh and Hoa Binh MORE TREES has facilitated the forming and training of 3 local cooperatives (one in Ha Tinh and 2 in Hoa Binh) and a total of 116 farm forestry groups in sustainable forest management. The cooperatives are basically running a small private member-owned business providing extension, ensuring better seedlings (production or facilitation) and offering harvesting and marketing service. The forestry groups mainly function on village/commune level. Having been trained by MORE TREES they manage private or joint forests and often exchange labour and knowledge among each other and sometimes also to non-members. Nearly all groups have funds for loans and for joint group plantings or other events (one group even used their group fund to organise a much-appreciated group holiday to the beach, a sign of surplus and good group spirit). A few groups function as “mini-cooperatives” managing their forest together or earning an income through selling their knowledge and skills to other villagers. Through the MORE TREES province coordinator and field facilitators they are in close contact with the cooperatives although relatively few group members are members of the 3 forestry cooperatives.

In Ha Tinh the cooperative in Ham Son District in Ha Tinh estimates that of the approx. 40.000 farmers in the district approximately half have plantations (mainly acacia monocultures in short rotation (5-8 years). Of these approx. 80% have had income or other benefits from improved NRM (and as some of the benefits are cleaner air (less burning) and cleaner water (less erosion and use of pesticides) in a way everybody is benefitting.) Also, the cooperative estimates that about 1000 households have directly benefitted from training and other support through the forest groups. As an example, the Trung Luu village forestry group reported that in their group people now have 60% of their annual income from plantations, for some group members even up to 70%.

The forest picture in Hoa Binh is more complex as forest plantations have had serious competition from orange orchards as orange production has been encouraged by the Province. Due to extensive plantations of orange trees, the forest cover maybe actually be reduced in some areas of the province. However, in Xuan Phong Commune, where one of the two Hoa Binh Cooperatives are, the forest cover has risen from 200 ha in 2016 to more than 400 in 2018.

Sugarcane, Orange and higher productivity of rice has been the main income sources rather than wood production (The cooperative estimate that in the commune people on average get 10 % of their income from agriculture, 30% from oranges, 40 % from sugarcane, 10 % from husbandry and 10 % from other things including forestry). However, due to over-production, the province has ceased their support to orange production and more people are considering establishing or extending plantations for timber. Approx. 60 % of all farmers in the target area have forest land (all cooperative members have a 1-2 ha

plantation). In 2014 the government (forestry department) allocated 200 mill VD to Xuan Phong commune for looking after protection forest. This year the commune received 400 mill VD. The commune has allocated this money further to communities or individual protection forest owners/guardians. The following box illustrate how the cooperatives, the forest groups and the individual farmers in both Ha Tinh and Hoa Binh practice sustainable NRM and income generation:

Examples of sustainable NRM and income generation in MORE TREES target areas

In the Ham Son Cooperative in Ha Tinh the nursery manager Ms Nu recently sold 36.000 seedlings to Mr Si in Son Kim Community 17 km away. Mr Si bought seedlings on behalf of himself and his neighbours. He himself needed 16.000 to replant 8 ha of a 5-year-old plantation felled after a storm. The remaining 20.000 plants were ordered by his neighbours after he recommended their quality to his neighbours and they share the transport cost. Mr Si is not a cooperative member but has bought seedlings from the cooperative before.

Apart from managing their own forests the Bin Son forestry group in Ha Tinh generates income from selling skilled harvest labour to other farmers not included in the group. They also harvest together (coordinate harvest) and thus can afford to rent a tractor rather than use buffaloes. Also, they are saving money for buying a new chainsaw. Before they did not know how much income they could get from selling their wood. Now they can make better estimates from experience and they also sometimes make sample plots. And since they themselves harvest and transport the wood they are no longer depending on the estimates of middlemen that would previously buy the entire stand “on the roots”. The ham Son coop consider using this group as harvest contractors if they buy stands in the neighbourhood.

The Ham Son coop chairman Mr Tai is one of the bigger land owners in the target area. He has a 30 ha plantation (on average people in the area have 3 ha, coop members have an average of 5 ha). Mr Tai tells: “After the farmers field school and other awareness raising experiences from MORE TREES, I decided to prolong my plantation rotation from 5 to 12 years. I expect that an income will be 3 times as much as if I sold the stand at the age of 5 years for plywood. This way I am also reducing my cost for replanting (only 1 time per 12 years, rather the every 5th year). I have now started thinning my plantation and the income from the trees I take out pays for the thinning and gives a little extra surplus. I generally harvest and replant approx. 3 ha every year and of course I use the cooperative harvesting service.”

According to the members of the Trung Luu forest group in Ha Tinh the village chairman Mr Hung has the best forest. He started applying new techniques straight after MORE TREES farmer field school and now advises others – e.g. on increasing space between seedlings, thus using less seedlings and money and producing bigger trees quicker. He also advises others to use good seedling sources e.g. from the cooperative nursery. His first sustainably managed forest was harvested in 2013. Now he suggests to others to prolong from 5 to 8 years as this may more than double the income and at the same time requires less investment in replanting.

Mr Nam in the Trung Luu forest group in Ha Tinh used to think he had to harvest his 3 ha plantation every 5 years when the middleman came. Like Mr Hung he can now do his own calculations and realises that with prolonged rotation he earns at least the same amount pr. year and will have to spend less money on reestablishment.

The Can no 1 village in Hoa Binh has an active forest group that manages a common plantation on land lent to them by one member, Ms Soi. Apart from the joint forest Ms Soi had 6 ha of acacia that she harvested last year, using half the profit to repair her house. The rest she will invest in more planting. This year she has sugarcane on the harvested land, next year she will replant with acacia trees. She thinks she has approx. 60% of her income from forestry.

Mr Moi in the same village (Can no 1) planted 4,2 ha acacia 3,5 years ago using the new techniques of no burning for ground clearing, using quality seedlings and more spacing. Before the land was used for melia trees, maize and sugarcane. He switched to forest because he found the sugarcane too labour intensive compared to the income – and he chose acacia because he considered it the fastest growing tree. He thinks that he made the right decision, as he did not have to invest nearly as much as in sugarcane or oranges as his neighbours and the acacia price seems stable. Also, he likes acacia around his house as it makes his house cooler and the air fresher.

3.1.2.2. Bosnia and Herzegovina

The municipality of Busovača is located in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, covering an area of 157 km², and having approx 17.910 inhabitants. Busovača has a high forest cover, having 12.061 ha (76,82%) forest and forest land of the total area, within which 2.022 ha (16,76 %) is private owned forest. In the private forests 1,090.80 ha or 53.94% are coppice forests and 871.82 ha (or 43.11%) are high forests. The total number of the cadastral parcels within the municipality is 5.808, meaning that the average size of the parcel is 0,348 ha. This implies that private forest parcels are simply too small for practicing management activities or to gain some income without being associated. As the association is newly formed there are not yet any indicators of improved NRM nor income as a result of the program. However, one member of the association has been practicing responsible forest management activities as illustrate in the box below.

Example of sustainable FM and income generation in Busovača

This area is known for its long tradition of forest management and wood processing (back from the Ottoman period). Currently many small and medium private wood industry companies are located in Busovača such as Tamex, or in the neighbouring municipality Fojnica MS Wood who are constantly looking for timber. This fact was recognized by one member of the newly formed Association of private forest owners of Central Bosnia Canton from the village Vukovci, who is buying forest land at a good price and so far, has approx. 10 ha. For him, forest products (mainly timber) is his main income generation. However, he is not using its forest just for cutting trees, but he is implementing silviculture and protective measures thus managing his forest in a responsible manner. Since he is not a forester by profession, he is using its acquaintances who are local forest engineers and technicians for advice and information.

3.1.3. Government support for NRM

“Government at local and national level act positively in relation to demands of program partners/rights holders for conservation of natural resources/sustainable use as well as equitable access to natural resources.”

In all partner countries the government is aware of the importance of NRM and eco system resilience. However, turning this awareness into a relevant an implementable policy framework and positive action is another matter. **In Nepal** the encourages tree planting and forest protection as well as IEE. However, nearly all emphasis has been on community forestry while family forestry has been overlooked or even frowned upon by the authorities. In Nepal it is very difficult for farmers to be allowed to harvest and transport timber. AFFON has therefore focused on creating awareness of the opportunities and restrictions of small-scale forestry (family forestry) supporting people to seek advice from local forest services. This fact together with the new national constitution (2015) that delegates more power (and budget) to the state and local level and requires revised policies and regulations on all levels clearly indicate that this is the perfect timing for the family forestry movement to gain ground and approach the authorities. AFFON is advocating towards the government to see family forestry as a strong factor in more sustainable forestry rather that a threat to the conservation of the countries natural resources.

In **Vietnam** the general wish for tree planting together with the demand for wood and the gov. policy for cooperatives indicate that also in Vietnam the program timing for seeking government support for forest cooperatives is right. There have been massive tree planting campaigns for decades, but very little extension services for the smallholder farmers. While communities and individual farmers are allowed to sell their trees, there has been very little support and/or encouragement in relation to management and marketing of the planted trees. In the target areas MORE TREES are playing an important role in filling this gap, giving farmers awareness and knowledge on forest management and better marketing.

The table below shows how the partner organisations AFFON, WCN, MORE TREES and FEA rate the behaviour of the government in relation to program aims and interventions from the beginning of the

program and now. The gradings goes from 1 (no knowledge or interest) over knowledge but no action and active support to full government cooperation (5). The 4 boxes below give examples to justify the grading.

Partner	Grading 2016	Grading 2018
AFFON	1	National level 2-3, local level 1-2
WCN	2-3	4-5
MORE TREES	3	3
FEA*	local level 2, national level 1	local level 4, National level 1

AFFON examples of government support for NRM

Quote "It is going the right way":

*Due to AFFON advocacy, the Government has put **Family forestry** into the draft forestry policy". This is a new concept: formerly the categories were national forest (cooperative forest, community forest, leasehold forests, religious forest and protected forests) and private forest, where the latter was always regarded as a large-scale private enterprise. Small scale private forestry was forgotten in policies and regulations, and the small-scale forest owners therefore face a lot of difficulties as no policies or regulations have been adjusted to their needs. And no statistics include them for documenting their contribution to production, forest area increase and sustainable NRM.*

Other examples of government support are:

- *Due to AFFON advocacy, the government has included AFFON in various committees and national and local fora, eg. the Forest Rights Coordination Group (member), National Adaption Plan formulation process, Forest and biodiversity (working team member), REDD+ Strategy formulation (team member), Forest enterprise promotion and development (working group) Ministry of forest and soil conservation, Right to Food Network (member).*
- *The Ministry of Forest and Environment invites AFFON to attend various meetings and workshop in connection to decision-making processes.*
- *AFFON has easy access to Hon. Minister and Secretary of Ministry of Forest and Environment and also the Ministry responds positively to AFFON's invitations.*
- *The various departmental heads of the forest and environment ministry (Head of planning division, Head of biodiversity and environment division, Head of Climate change division, Head of forest enterprise division and chief of Department of forest and soil conservation) and AFFON have good communication and cordial relation regarding promotion of family forestry in Nepal.*
- *A number of District chapters have direct contracts with District forest officers and Divisional Soil Conservation Officers for program and monitoring activities.*
- *Some local chapters have already been allocated budgets from local authorities (DFO) for extension activities.*
- *Local authorities cooperate with local AFFON district chapters in free seedling distribution (AFFON does the distribution).*
- *In a few districts (eg. Kailali, Kanchanpur, Rautahat, Bardiya, Banke, Dang Baktapur) AFFON and District forest offices have started working together to register the family private forest at DFO level.*
- *AFFON conducts district and local level interaction programs to promote family forestry in coordination with DFOs (Jhapa, Taplejung, Bhaktapur, Dang, Rautahat, Gorkha, Tanahu)*
- *DFOs have been actively facilitating the research project on the promotion of family forestry in 4 districts (Jhapa, Rautahat, Chitwan and Gorkha) and they have also presented a paper in a seminar organized by AFFON.*
- *In a number of cases, AFFON and DFO jointly resolved issues that arose due to misunderstandings during transportation and felling of family forest tress. (AFFON facilitated factual information to DFOs) (A number of farmer cases in Kavre district, one case in Gorkha District).*

*Note: Since fea has joined the program only in the beginning 2018, grading was done for beginning of 2018 instead of 2016

MORE TREES examples of government support for NRM

Quote: "The fact that the program is implemented through the Farmers Union is in itself a sign of government approval as the FU is very closely connected with the government and party".

Other examples:

- *In November, MORE TREES is planning a workshop on the development of viable cooperatives for approx. 60 participants (ngo members and province and gov. officials). This workshop is developed in cooperation with the Cooperative Alliance, a government institution on the ministerial level. This is a sign of government interest/involvement.*
- *The Cooperative Alliance is promoting cooperatives in all communes of Vietnam and are looking at the MORE TREES cooperatives as models for forestry cooperatives.*
- *To further encourage forestry cooperatives the government is considering/planning to facilitate bank loans (and possibly insurance) to farmers to encourage them to them to extend the rotation period of their acacia stands to let them to grow into timber size rather than being used for poles and pulpwood.*

Fea examples of government support for NRM

Quote: "At the beginning of the project, the local authorities had knowledge related to sustainable forest management, but they did not implement any activities. Currently we use the logo of the municipality and the canton. The Cantonal Ministry and Public Forest Administration provided inputs with concrete comments for the brochure on the forest legislation that is part of the program activities and the brochure states that it is published by FEA in cooperation with the Cantonal ministry. They now see the association as a partner in the activities related to extension services for the private forest owners. However, they did not give any financial support."

"So far fea has not had any cooperation on the federal level (national level), as this was not the focus in the first part of the program, as all our activities had a local character. At the end of November, FEA is planning to organise a ministerial meeting that will include federal level representatives. This planned meeting will be the first step in establishing a contact and cooperation with the federal level, and the goal of the meeting is to bring to light and discuss the current situation related to responsible forest management in private forests."

3.2. Program Immediate Objective 1: Partner Capacity

"Strengthened independent civil society partners with organizational, technical, and advocacy capacity for responsible NRM, creating a vibrant synergy among each other."

Program Objective 1 Indicators:

1. *Self-review of several dimensions related to organizational capacity (administration and HR, financial management, planning and Implementation, staff with relevant technical skills and their services are in demand, Advocacy skills, access to relevant stakeholders etc., qualitative and timely monitoring and alternative funding*
2. *Joint review of several dimensions for synergy (Establishment of complementary partner relations; exchange of experiences, Ideas, and lessons learned; replication due to inspiration and regular communication*

The 4 partner organisations (WCN (NPP); AFFON; MORE TREES (Farmers Unions) and fea are very different organisations.

- WCN is an NGO with a strong base in nature and wildlife protection with one fraction (NPP) focusing on environmental education and natural resource management. The partnership between the NPP fraction of WCN and DFE reaches back more than 10 years. The self-review is therefore focused on NPP capacity, skills and achievements rather than that of the whole WCN.
- AFFON is a relatively new family forest association, aiming at being a nationwide mainly political organization with local chapters in all provinces and districts, advocating for family forestry in Nepal. In this way, they are a program partner that represent civil society and target group in one. The partnership with DFE was started in 2016.

- MORE TREES is a setup within the large Vietnamese CSO Farmers Union to encourage small scale forestry and independent farmer owned farm forestry cooperatives. MORE TREES have a small coordination unit of 3 Vietnamese staff, that are directly hired by DFE, that coordinate activities through the Farmers Unions in Ha Tinh and Hoa Binh Provinces. The below assessment has been focused on the coordination unit but with reference to the Farmers Unions when relevant.
- fea is a regional non-governmental network established in 2007 aiming at advancing the state of environment and forests in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region. Fea is involved in a number of national and regional environmental projects. Within the program fea’s goal is to facilitate the formation of a private forestry association in Bosnia and Herzegovina and advocate for smallholder forest owners on the national level. The partnership with DFE only started in 2017 as a small pilot project and fea has been a program partner only in 2018.

It is important to keep these differences in mind when looking at the below results of the partner capacity self-review and capacity grading. While all partners report an increase in capacity since the start of the partnership, they did not have the same “starting point” in e.g. administration capacity and management skills or the same needs and challenges regarding advocacy and access to relevant stakeholders and policy makers.

3.2.1. Organizational Capacity and Synergy

Chapter 3.2.1.1- 3.2.1.6 gives a summary of the self-review of the capacity of the 4 organisations (more detailed info can be found in the annexes). The table below show the result of the self-review grading of capacity for the 4 partners on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being unsatisfactory and 5 being above expectations. (see grading explanation in Annex 2).

Categories	AFFON	NPP (WCN)	MORE TREES/FU	FEA
1. Admin and HR	2	3-4	4	4
2. Financial management	3	3-4	4	4
3. Planning and implementation	2	4	3	5
4. Staff with relevant technical skills – and in demand	2	3-5	3	4
5. Advocacy Skills	4	5	3	3
6. Access to relevant stakeholders	4	4-5	3	3-4
7. Qualitative and timely monitoring	2	4	3-4	3
8. Alternative funding	2	2	1-2	3
9. Dimensions for synergy between program partners: regular communication, establishment of complimentary partner relations, exchange of ideas and lessons learnt and possible replication of models	2	2-3	3	3-4

3.2.1.1. *Organisational capacity (administration, HR, finance, planning and implementation)*

Generally, all partners rate their capacity on administration, HR, finance and planning and implementation at 3-4. Only AFFON grade themselves lower feeling that they are still a new organisation with new staff members not yet “knowing the ropes”. They have established 43 local district chapters within a very short time. This is in itself an achievement, but obviously this means that many staff and board members are new to admin, finance and planning procedures as well HR management.

Both AFFON, WCN, fea and the coordination unit of MORE TREES finds that their organisational capacity has increased during the time of the partnership. However, there are still things that can be improved, e.g. reporting could be more reflective and monitoring more consistent.

On HR, WCN pointed out that they would like to have a better strategy for maintaining the present experienced staff as the continued success and spreading of the NPP interventions is very dependent on the joint experience and cooperation of the staff group. WCN's well established policies on volunteers and child protection has proven effective over the years. Also, both NPP and AFFON have a gender policy, something that DFE, fea and MORE TREES are missing.

Both AFFON and NPP would like to brush up their finance management.

The MORE TREES coordination unit in Hanoi consists of only 3 people. Nearly all management planning and finance reporting including contact and support to the 2 coordinators, the 12 farmer field facilitators and the Director and assistant of the 3 cooperatives has to go through the Provincial Farmer Unions. That this set up is working well is a testimony to the finance, admin, planning and coordination skills of both the Farmers Union and the Coordination Unit.

3.2.1.2. Technical capacity (Staff with relevant skills and their services in demand)

On technical skills again **AFFON** rate themselves lower than the other partners. AFFON staff and board members feel that they lack experience in dealing with farmers groups, district chapters and authorities. This is actually more a matter of experience than skills. AFFON staff members and board are not looking for specific forestry skills as they will coordinate with government foresters on different levels when necessary. AFFON still has low capacity to do central and state level advocacy and provide services and information to the 43 local chapters. However, it is clear from field interviews with local family forest owners that the services that AFFON aims to provide (central and local policy change, recognition of family forestry as an important forestry factor, easier access market for products from family forestry, etc.) is in very high demand.

The services of **WCN** are in VERY high demand, thus grade 5. Many more schools would like to join NPP, but the scope is restrained by NPPs wish to focus on integrating the ideas of hands on interactive environmental education into the official government curricula and to prioritise quality over quantity (there is a limit to the number of new volunteers you can train properly at a certain time). NPP finds that as a team they do possess the relevant technical skills - and are very good at sharing and learning from experience and from each other internally. However, there is a general feeling within the staff group that there is little opportunity to share with and learn from outsiders and upgrade own experiences - Exposure visit and specific trainings are in high demand especially for the field staff who feel the development from being volunteers or NGO staff to being "the National experts in IEE" has been a fast and big step. They therefore feel the need of consolidating their practical knowledge with a stronger theoretical background (thus grade 3).

The **MORE TREES** coordination unit finds that they have the necessary skills in forestry extension. However, for advising the cooperatives, they lack skills in marketing and planning (both business plans and forest management planning). Also, the program would benefit from the unit having improved skills in advocacy – to create more interest for the cooperatives and for small-scale forestry extension on all levels (from farmers to local (commune, district and province) and national authorities).

The Farmer Unions recognise that they have had a significant capacity boost especially through MORE TREES facilitators and coordinators that are closely connected to the Farmers Union and have had quite a number of different trainings within the program. Hoa Binh Farmers Union mentioned that they have already employed a number of former MORE TREES field facilitators in the Farmer Union on the commune and district level, thus ensuring that the knowledge and experience stays within the Farmer Union, and both provinces would like to keep the coordinators after the program support ends.

Fea finds that they have definitely improved their skills through the program, especially regarding association building and now meet what is required. However, they feel that communication skills are a field that needs additional improvement.

3.2.1.3. Relevant Advocacy capacity

Advocacy is the main task of **AFFON**. A number of positive results have been reached in a very short time due to **AFFON** advocacy capacity, mainly due to successful campaigns and massive use of social media and newspapers, television and radio, successful networking and friends (association of community radio broadcasters and 397 local radio stations) and also through lucky timing and effective lobbying (and presenting their case as a new fresh concept):

Some results of AFFON advocacy

- *The Draft federal level Forest policy 2018 includes **family forest issues** as a component of forest management, thus officially recognising the family forestry concept.*
- *The Government has realized the importance of family forest and has included **AFFON** in the national level policy formulation group.*
- *Some local governments, for example Tulsipur sub metropolitan in Dang District, have included family forestry in the Forest bill and have also allocated a budget through policy and program.*
- *Some local governments including Dipayal municipality in Doti, Bhajani municipality in Kailali District, Dhulikhel and Nomobuddha Municipality in Kavre District has allocated budgets to promote family forestry. (For training and meetings).*
- ***AFFON** districts chapters including Rautahat, Taplejung, Bhaktapur, Gorkha have organized issue-based discussions with relevant stakeholders and have received a number of free seedlings for Family forest plantings.*
- *The State level forest policy formulation has started and is including the concept of Family forestry due to the advocacy of Central **AFFON**.*
- *In coordination with the Ministry of Forest and Environment, **AFFON** is jointly designing a project called Forest and Farm Facility (FFF).*
- ***AFFON** is involved in a Working group to design projects on FF under the Forest Investment Plan (FIP) and the Dedicated Grant mechanism (DGM) under the REDD Implementation Center, MoFE.*
- ***AFFON** is a board member of IFFA (International Family Forestry Association) and member of the Mountain Partnership.*
- *Due to **AFFON**'s strong advocacy and pressure on the Government of Nepal to ensure rights of famers to utilize their own trees, the MoFE made a special decision to relax 23 previously banned species of trees. The decision still needs to be put in action, but should simplify the process of getting permission cut, harvest, and transport trees such as mango, guava, neem, poplar, teak, eucalyptus, cassia siamea, litchi, Kapok (ceiba), Melia, Dalbergia etc.*
- ***AFFON** has developed a “position paper” with their most important “demands”. This paper was distributed to all local district chapters. Each chapter then added their name to the paper and forwarded it to their local authorities many of whom then sent the demands on to the national authorities. Thus, the national department or minister received not one but over 40 letters with similar demands – it is less easy to disregard or forget 43 than one letter.*
- ***AFFON** is expecting that the results of the research carried out under the present program will be of use for **AFFON** advocacy efforts. Also, **AFFON** is planning to commission the writing of a handbook (or a series of manuals on Family Forestry (species choice etc.)) to help farmers and also raise awareness of family forests.*

Also, for **WCN** advocacy is a priority. **WCN/NPP** Quote: “We never expected we would be the torch leader in *IEE!*“, “we are good at collaborating with other NGOs at advocacy issues” – but also: “in *NRM* we have too little time and too many themes to choose from”, “there is still so much to learn” “we are

sometimes missing the link between IEE and NRM - we need to focus on the impacts of the EE in the children's home area". The box below shows some results of WCN/NPP advocacy capacity:

This year WCN has been running school campaigns on "importance of Environmental Education in Education system of Nepal", "no plastic", "school gardens and education", "fight air pollution" and "children as ambassadors for the frogs of Nepal", in addition to the eco-school programme and the IEE activities on local curricula and teachers training with the government.

As a result of WCN advocacy, IEE has been integrated in the official curriculum on Environment Science for Grade 9 and 10 for the whole of Nepal. This was completed in 2018 and is now in use nationwide. 49 schools in Rasuwa and Chitwan districts have adopted local curricula on environment developed with the support of WCN. The schools are now using the curriculum for Grade 1 to 5 and textbooks for Grade 4-5 that are also developed by WCN. WCN is in the process for developing the textbooks for Grade 1-3 and updating the textbooks for Grade 4 and 5 in 2018. Also, WCN assisted in developing a National Framework for Local Curriculum (with examples on EE based Local Curriculum from Rasuwa and Chitwan in the Annex) that is now a guideline for all schools and Municipalities wishing to develop a local curriculum.

Recently, Budhanilkantha Municipality of KTM valley has signed a MOU with NPP to develop a local curriculum on natural resource management and cultural heritage. They have also allocated funds to implement LC. A survey conducted by WCN during National Teachers Training estimated that only 5 % of schools in Nepal have developed a local curriculum. In the next three years NPP will focus on encouraging more municipalities to follow the trend of Budhanilkantha Municipality and allocate funds for local curriculum.

In 2016 NCED (National Centre for Education Development) agreed to let WCN conduct national teachers training on IEE to more than 300 government teachers from all districts in Nepal. This experience has led to the development of a government approved 15 days training package to be used by government master trainers from 2018 as one of the six compulsory topics for upgrading in the annual NCED training program for teachers (TPD, Teachers professional Development).

The main objective of the WCN Eco Smart Schools is about living environmentally friendly lifestyles at homes and at schools. The Eco smart school program is a "home grown innovative idea" developed by NPP as a 5 year 5 star certification program. It has grown from 5 schools in 2015 to 9 schools in 2018 with many other schools interested to join.

After the writing of this report a major development happened in that the government passed a Green School Directive, which mandates that all the schools of Nepal become eco-friendly, eco-smart and that they establish schools gardens, eco-clubs and systems so that students can learn and practice life skills important for sustainable livelihoods. It's slogan "one school, one garden" and it's adaptation of the eco smart school concept is a significant acknowledgment to WCN, who through its hard work could feed into the directive, as they had worked on developing green school concepts for several years. Now, WCN, as the only NGO, has been invited to give input to the Resource Handbook on Green Schools of Nepal. Another major milestone that shows how continuous hard work, commitment to cooperation can bring big advocacy results.

In Vietnam **MORE TREES**, generally the state policy for private plantation establishment and harvesting is OK, so the Coordination Unit does not feel the need for advocacy here, but would focus their effort on advocating for support for forestry cooperatives and for loans to allow for prolongation of plantation rotating periods). However, they feel that advocacy on the national level would fail unless they can present a successful model for cooperatives that they may also use for advocating for group FSC certification. Thus, their advocacy work is only really catching up now with the cooperatives now "up and running".

In Ha Tinh the Farmer Union sees the Son Ham Cooperative as "their child" and want to expand to other cooperatives in the province. Also, they help the cooperative by advocating for loans and support. In Hoa Binh there are also very close Farmer Union links to the groups and the cooperatives and Farmer Union use MORE TREES cooperatives as examples in dealing with the Cooperative Alliance and other gov. bodies.

Fea in BiH finds that their advocacy skills are satisfactory with room for improvement. Their reflections are: “*We are still learning about advocacy, since we do not have much experience in it*”. However, they published an Advocacy action plan, which contains advocacy principles that are in line with DFE, goals and objectives AAP, target groups, advocacy action plan, budget, and monitoring and evaluation methods including indicators of process and impacts. They are successfully supporting awareness raising activities related to importance of private forests through their advocacy plan. Thanks to this effort, fea has built good relationships with the local authorities enabling positive environment for forming a successful association. During the past period fea’s actions were directed toward raising awareness among the general public and decision makers on federal and cantonal level related to recognition of the association and smallholder forest owners and their legal rights trough promotional campaign, meetings, and various thematic brochures. All this had positive outcome of enabling experimental status of the pilot area for conducting forest management activities with PFOs through the association and gaining support from local authorities. Within advocacy, there was a particularly interesting campaign that includes wooden benches for urban installation in Sarajevo, Travnik and Busovača (“sit on a ton of CO2”). Wood used for benches were from private forests. The campaign had positive effects, and it has been recognized and supported by the public, local authorities - municipalities and cantonal public administration for forestry in the Central Bosnia Canton.

3.2.1.4. Access to relevant stakeholders

The National **AFFON** chairman is very well connected and AFFON is skilled at using social media and newspapers. AFFON now has access all the way from local level to department, ministries, government members and parliament speakers. It conducts regular networking and meetings with more than 300 stakeholders on all levels. The Role of AFFON in NRM networks has increased and been accepted by all stakeholders. AFFON finds that they have done well in the time they have existed but can also see many more opportunities that they have not yet followed up on.

Due to AFFON advocacy, the government has included AFFON in various committees and national and local fora, eg. FRCG (Forest Rights Coordination Group) (member), National Adaption Plan formulation process, Forest and biodiversity (working team member), REDD+ Strategy formulation (team member), Forest enterprise Promotion and development (working group) Ministry of forest and soil conservation, Right to Food Network (member).

Also, local level access to State and district stakeholders (local municipalities, DFO etc.) is gradually improving. AFFON has a small sub-project on disadvantaged groups and District level alliance and joint meetings among Dalits, Women and AFFON has been conducted.

WCN has very good access with district authorities and school management in focus areas (Rasuwa and Chitwan Municipalities, Eco Smart Schools in Kathmandu, National parks (through other WCN activities). Also, they have very good access to Department of Education and NCED and other national government authorities. Access with government authorities has improved over the years. It is important to note that the long-time frame, the continued donor support of NPP, the persistent and dedicated staff and the long cooperation with DFE and CISU has allowed WCN to develop easy access to stakeholders, as it has not always come easy. Quote: “At the beginning access was dependent on personal contact in the department, now even with changing government staff we still have access!” However, WCN finds that they still need more access at Ministry Level as polices are usually formed at that level and sometimes even surpasses the departments.

From being a solely NGO activity WCN’s project NPP is now guided by a steering committee with representatives from the department of Education. This steering committee has brought WCN and the department closer together and the regular meetings of the steering committee also gives WCN easy access to the department.

In **MORE TREES** both the Coordination Unit and the Cooperatives have good access to Farmer Union and to authorities on district and municipal level (especially when it comes to meetings, less so when it comes to making them actually participate or contribute to activities). The Coordination unit also feels that they have a good contact to national stakeholders (e.g. the Department of Forestry) but feel that they should not be approached until they can be presented with a successful cooperative model that has proven to work.

Fea recognized that access to stakeholders is one of their weaknesses and requires certain acquaintances and subtle approaches. Because of that, they have recently engaged an expert to “bridge” between fea and relevant stakeholders. This turned out to be a good decision, since the expert enabled them access to decision makers on local and federal levels, and to other interest groups during the implementation of planned activities related to advocacy and association building.

3.2.1.5. Qualitative and timely monitoring

AFFON has a digitalized database of members, but it still is only at the start. **AFFON** is not clear on number of members (there are 1000 in registered in the database but they have issued membership cards to approx. 5000 members). This database should be a priority for **AFFON** as it is a great tool to use for advocacy due to the lack of any information on family forestry. If they can present a picture of family forestry based on **AFFON** membership this will be a first step in gaining more information on the topic.

There is a need to develop a format for monitoring activities and for signs of success. **AFFON** has just been contacted by Social Welfare Council and will be monitored by them soon.

District data collection, reporting and monitoring is only just initiated. **AFFON** is interested in developing a participatory monitoring system to be used by district chapters. A system for local documentation, for example collecting cases pending, terminated, and resolved that could be kept in a record book would be a good idea and collecting this information and using for advocacy is also a good idea.

WCN monitoring happens at different levels: internal monitoring (reports, pictures, financial reporting to **WCN** and to **DFE/CISU**), monthly board meetings, external monitoring from Social Welfare Council (annual monitoring which includes reports), from local authorities. **NPP** finds that their monitoring has definitely improved over time but has most focus on activity and output level. **WCN** has recently developed a tool called “signs of success” to monitor the impact of teachers **EE** training. The first results of this effort are presently being analysed and the tool adjusted for overall use.

In **MORE TREES** monitoring so far has mainly covered activities and are based on feedback from **FU** and **NVCARD** (quarterly reports). So far there is no formal participatory monitoring among cooperative members or students/teachers.

FEA monitoring is based on delivering quarterly reports based on the program format and includes a part time **M&E** Officer that collects this information through close contact with the program staff and association management and members. The **M&E** officer, who has a research background, is expected to be the program’s coordinating **M&E** officer in the next phase.

3.2.1.6. Alternative funding

AFFON would like to be able to raise more alternative funding. However, at present the fundraising happens on an ad hoc basis, with no focused fundraising strategy. Membership fees are collected from members. **AFFON** has also managed to attract local funding from **WWF**, local government and others for specific events. Further, the government forest service supported the national general assembly and is supporting some forestry activities on the district level.

The Eco Smart Schools program of **WCN** (5 year 5 star certification program) generates income that can pay for volunteers for 3 months. **WCN** has also been working on seeking alternate funds to run the

organization's other thematic programs and supplement the NPP program. WCN has been successful in getting funds from the Nordic Climate Facility in cooperation with DFE for a project on Empowering women through forest conservation (2017-2019), from the Nagao Natural Environment Foundation for Pika Species Research (2018), from The Patsy Wood Fund for developing EE tool kit boxes for schools (2014 -2015) and supporting disaster relief after the earthquake (rebuilding community and cultural centers, empowering students on disaster risk management (2015)) and SOS Malta for exposure visit to Parishar Asha, Mumbai, on methodologies to Interactive teaching (2015).

In spite of these achievements, WCN recognises that fundraising is one of their weaker points. However, a more focused fundraising effort will require more manpower (allocation of responsibilities or employment of fundraising officer?) to consolidate all the results achieved and diversify its donors.

The coordination Unit at **MORE TREES** does not have the time or capacity to look for alternative funding. However, they are aware that there is a need for the cooperatives to be more self-sufficient (more members/more fees, businesses) or attract the support of other organisations or government institutions

Fea is currently working on fundraising activities. They completed some courses, and obtained professional literature on this subject, and thereby they gained some basic knowledge in fundraising. Also, they nominated a responsible person for fundraising, and created fundraising webinars. They stated: *“This is the first time for us to do such a thing, because we did not have any project that requested fundraising activities. We developed Strategy for fundraising and we are going in the direction of its implementation”*.

3.2.2. Synergy

(Title includes: Complimentary partner relations, Experience exchange and lessons learned between partners, Replication of models and Regular communication with DFE)

While the partnership between DFE and some of the partners is well established, the joint partnership only started in 2016 and the synergy between the partners has only recently picked up force as they start getting to know each other and appreciate the opportunities for sharing experience and joint activities. All mention that joint Facebook pages and shared reports play a role but most important progress has been seen through the joint planning meeting in BiH and through the “Sit on a ton of CO2 campaign” carried out in all 4 countries including Denmark. A number of actual meetings have been planned (advocacy meeting between fea and AFFON in Nepal in October and planning meeting in Copenhagen in December this year).

3.3. Program Immediate Objective 2: Association Building

“Target groups organized in forest and natural resource user associations that have the skills to provide extension services for responsible NRM, income generation, and that advocate towards duty bearers on the local and national level for equitable access to natural resources.”

Program Objective 2 Indicators:

1. *Review of several dimensions of capacity: Organizational strength, extension service, advocacy and policy influence and financial sustainability*
2. *Usefulness of services (technical and advocacy) provided/performed by the organizations*
 - *Target groups have increased capacity to manage natural resources in a responsible way.*
 - *Target groups are engaging in new income generating activities.*
 - *Target groups are practicing the NRM skills they gained from program*

In all three countries the partners are involved in organising target groups in forest and natural resource user associations. However, as background and problems are different, the approach to developing associations also differs. In Nepal, the main limitation for developing family forestry is legal and political – thus AFFON is working on developing a strong national advocacy organisation with local chapters to

ensure high political pressure. Within a very short time AFFON has started 43 local chapters and expects to be able to cover all states and districts soon. The many chapters are giving AFFON a strong advocacy base, but it also means that central AFFON can only give each chapter very limited support.

In Vietnam, the need for knowledge and quality improvement in the farm forestry sector is the biggest challenge and MORE TREES is therefore supporting farm forestry groups and developing local forestry cooperatives to provide extension and ensure quality seedlings and sustainable management and fair harvest and sale of forest products. The strategy of MORE TREES is to start with only 3 cooperatives and make sure these 3 works well before promoting a replication of the model.

In BiH private forest owners have been largely neglected by the authorities both in terms of policy and legal support and extension. The focus of fea is therefore to encourage private forest owners to unite in associations that do advocacy for better conditions for private forest owners as well as provide or ensure provision of better extension. The first association formed this autumn in Central Bosnia.

3.3.1. Association Capacity: Organisational strength, extension service, advocacy and policy influence and financial sustainability

The below reflections are based on facilitated self-reviews of 7 local association in the three countries. As their age, organisational structure, priority activities and financial sustainability are so different each country has been analysed independently.

3.3.1.1. *Nepal*

The monitoring of local association capacity in Nepal is based on facilitated self-reviews of the boards and steering committees of 3 district chapters (Rautahat, Gorkha and Kavre) with another 11 district chapters filling in the self-review format by mail. Looking through the answers it seems as though the 3 district chapters visited are representative and the answers here are consistent with the comments and gradings from other district chapters. The table below shows the average rating of the 14 chapters in relation to organisation, extension, advocacy and finance on a scale from 1-5 where 1 is unsatisfactory and 5 is above expectations:

Capacity area	Grading	Comments
Organisational strength	2-4	Rautahat and Gorkha downgraded themselves from the original grading 3 to 2.
Extension service	2	only Kavre rates themselves at 3 and only Humla 1
Advocacy and policy influence	2-3	Most districts 3, only Dailekh, Gorkha and Kavre 2
Financial stability	1	All chapters rate themselves at financial stability 1 as they are struggling to secure support from local authorities or other sources. A few chapters have received support for specific events or activities but generally they are managing on volunteer basis.

When looking at the low ranking from all chapters it should be taken into account that most chapters have only existed for 1-2 years and are still in the learning phase. So, the ranking is describing where the chapters feel they are in the process of becoming fully fledged chapters, rather than representing unsatisfactory performance as such. Actually it must be taken as a sign of good timing and farmers high motivation for joining that all chapters are still existing and active in spite of very limited support from AFFON's central level, large distances and very scattered members, limited or no office facilities and a number of "beginners faults" (such as being cheated by elected chairman and having to restructure the chapter (Rautahat), promising too much in the beginning (Gorkha), or not being able to explain AFFON policy clearly in the field (Gorkha, Kavre)).

In all district chapters, contact has been established to local municipalities and DFOs and some level of lobbying for policy changes is ongoing. In some districts the chapter has managed to get support or promises for policy change and been invited to participate in various fora involved in the development of policy revision, but so far, no concrete results have been seen as to changes in forest policies/regulations on local level. Most district chapters also have concrete examples on acting as a bridge between authorities and family forest owners. However, this is mainly individual cases or one-time events. Apart from member recruitment direct services to forest owners seem to be given less priority than advocacy.

In all 11 districts by far the most important reason for family forest owners to join AFFON is given as “policy issues and hope for improved market access for wood-based products”. “Skills improvement” comes second and only as no. 3 comes “expectations for support to planting or other management issues”. Thus, the chapter’s focus on advocacy is fully justified.

The below boxes with AFFON chapter reflections illustrate the achievements and difficulties facing the newly established chapters:

Examples of AFFON local Chapter Organisational strength

The Gorkha District Chapter started 2,5 years ago and now has an established office, active board with 20 members (both men and women) that have monthly activity planning meetings. They have more than 300 members registered in a hand-written registry. The chapter is still considering official district registration as the district wants them to register while AFFON argues that the registration should be on the national level only (this may make work in districts difficult, as some districts want them to register before working).

The chapter feels they lack overall strategy and an action plan, better logistics (and finance), office equipment (PC) and staff to supplement the volunteer effort. Also, they have no clear reporting/record keeping of requests made and activities carried out.

The Kavre District Chapter started about 2 years ago. It has an active board with 15 members (all male). They had an initial team-building workshop with Central AFFON and now they hold 3 meetings a year where they plan activities. They have a hand-written registry of their 68 present members, a bank account and a steering committee of 7 people. However, they are very weak on recording and documentation of actions and achievements (eg. cases where they have assisted people in issues related to forestry and timber sale) and they lack overall strategy and action planning.

The Rautahat District chapter has held a general assembly and selected a board with a chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer and “advisor” (very experienced farmer). The board includes several women including the vice-chair and treasurer. It holds regular meetings and has an overall plan and finance management in place. But so far, no participatory monitoring, no financial sustainability and only 55 members, as they have not really started campaigning for membership.

Examples of AFFON local Chapter Extension service

The 20 board members of the Gorkha District chapter have divided the district, so each member has his/her “own” area (basically their home area) where they are responsible for raising awareness and forming local committees. Also, people come to their office and ask to become members. They feel that they need more knowledge themselves to be able to improve their information in the villages. At the moment they just say that if you become a member we will “fight for you” if you face problems felling and selling your trees. They realised they promised far too much in the beginning, saying that members would get support for everything related to selling their trees: the paperwork, the felling, the transport, even good prices etc. They now struggle to tell people that they will not be able to live up to that promise.

They have been actively involved in one actual case in 2 years helping a farmer imprisoned for selling “illegal timber” documenting that he had the right to sell his trees. One female farmer said she had taken her case to AFFON (the other villagers prevented her from selling her trees), but “nothing happened”. The chapter keeps no record of such incidents. The board members feel they need the change in policy before they can help people with more specific advice on market access etc. however, some felling permits were given after the earthquake to use trees to build new houses.

The board members of the Kavre District Chapter have been active in member recruitment, in spreading information and managing two planting events. However, they are themselves not that knowledgeable on the legal hurdles that people face. They have assisted in 3 cases where farmers “clashed” with authorities (acted as bridge between family forest owners and authorities). The board is considering gathering people together to form a kind of cooperative for joint sale of timber etc. However, so far, no actual action has been taken.

Also, the Chapter has been assisting two members that were managing forest on “no man’s land” (and paying land tax on this land) to have their claim to the trees recognised by the DFO, so that they were able to sell these trees (alder and pine), one of them making more than 1 mill Nrp. Following this the DFO agreed to follow local forest sector office recommendations on such matters (“no man’s land” being common in the area) rather than everybody having to go to the District forest office for permits.

The Rautahat district chapter has provided much needed information about the family forest concept to members. Also, in a number of cases the chapter has acted as a “Bridge between members and district” encouraging people to go to the DFO nursery to register their forest as a first step towards getting DFO support. The chapter has acted as coordinator between DFO and 3 villages for free seedlings for family forest plantation. In a few cases the chapter has supported farmers in transporting seedlings from the nursery to the field.

However, the chapter realises that this is only a beginning, and that there is much more to do, especially in bridging the gap between farmers and local authorities, informing farmers about family forestry and helping members to make the right species choice and ease the marked access.

Examples of AFFON local Chapter Advocacy and policy influence

The Gorkha district chapter has been active sending the position paper and “demands” to district authorities incl. DFO and the District Coordination Committee. So far, the district has answered very positively and requested more information on what needs to be changed in the local forest policy. However, so far, no concrete results. The Board has selected advisors with experience from FECOFUN and thus has good access to authorities but this may also cause confusion among authorities and villagers on FECOFUN (community forest) and AFFON (family forest), especially as board members often travel with FECOFUN vehicles. The DFO has allocated a budget for forest fire control (10.000Nrp) to allow some AFFON members to join DFO fire protection training.

In Kavre, the district chapter chairman and secretary have established good relations with the DFO and other authorities. The chapter is being invited to discussions on changes in policies etc. but so far little actual change in rules or behaviour towards family forestry has been seen. Two stakeholder meetings (orientation and follow up 6 month later) with local authorities (DFO, Livestock office and others) are already planned and budgeted for with support from a local Municipality (Namobuddha Municipality).

The district chapter in Rautahat has been very active in advocating for the family forest concept on the local level. The Local government authorities have promised to include the word/concept “Family forest” in future policies and guidelines, but the result has not been shown yet. However, the Local authorities now invite the chapter to participate whenever they discuss new drafts. Also, the chapter is advocating for family forestry in various public fora such as The Churia Development Committee, The District Level Conservation Program, The Human Right Alliance, The FECOFUN District Coordination Committee and various local municipality meetings.

Examples of AFFON local Chapter Financial sustainability

The Gorkha District Chapter is relying on membership fees, own private funds and on other organisations giving them lifts when going to the villages. One rural municipality (Sahid Lakhan) supported a stakeholder information meeting. Also, the chapter has support through a Central AFFON research fund (part of the program).

The Kavre district chapter has received small amounts from local chapter of Lions Club and a few other private donors for planting activities. Also, they have had rural municipality support for a stakeholder meeting.

The Rautahat district chapter has so far had difficulties identifying and tapping local funds. They have received some funds from central level AFFON, but these are earmarked for specific issues. Membership fee is 500 Nrp for 4 years.

3.3.1.2. Vietnam

The self-review of the 3 Cooperatives in Vietnam (Ham Son Cooperative in Ha Tinh Province and Xuan Phong and Cao Son cooperatives in Hoa Binh Province) show that all 3 see themselves as moving forward on organisational strength, extension and financial stability but lagging somewhat behind on advocacy and policy influence. They have all struggled to find the right organisational structure and there has been confusion as to the division of roles between the board and management (e.g. between board chairman and cooperative director). Since the last management training by DFE in 2017, all cooperatives seem to be making progress in this field.

On extension, all three cooperatives try to ensure better quality seedlings (Ham Son having its own nursery and the two others facilitating delivery of quality seedlings). Also, all 3 cooperatives are involved in buying and selling timber, mainly buying stands “on the roots” that they then harvest and sell in direct competition with other middlemen (wood merchants). There is very little cooperation between the government extension staff on district and commune level as the cooperatives see the government staff only “concerned with rules and regulations”.

Generally, the cooperatives have not yet been involved in many advocacy activities. However, both provincial Farmer Unions have used the MORE TREES forestry groups and cooperatives as models and examples in their effort to advocate for more support to agroforestry and to both agroforestry and forestry cooperatives.

All 3 cooperatives have problems with ensuring financial sustainability and attracting more members in spite of good contact with the forestry groups that are also supported by MORE TREES. Also, all 3 cooperatives have merged into other services to have more income. The two cooperatives in Hoa Binh sell fertilizer, Xuan Phong is also in charge of irrigation schemes while Ham Son has invested in a truck and a shop selling fruit trees and ornamental trees. While none have reached total financial stability so far, they estimate that they now are between 60 - 75 % self-financing and have been able to pay a bonus to their members.

All 3 cooperatives expect that they will be able to manage without support from MORE TREES within the next 3 years as they will have more members and more business (in harvesting, nursery and fruit tree shop in Ha Tinh, in harvesting, medicinal plants and irrigation in Xuan Phong, and in harvesting and bamboo production in Cao Son). Especially in Xuan Phong only approx. 40% of the activities will be forestry related.

Both Ham Son and Xuan Phong coop expect to get loans from Farmer Union and/or the Cooperative Alliance to expand in harvesting activities (mainly to buy more stands “on the roots”). Cao Son had a “lessons learnt” from involving in its own nursery that failed due to insufficient planning, knowledge and “market analysis”. Thus, they are being more careful and would like to have “done their homework better before applying for loans”.

The table below show how the 3 coops rate themselves on a scale from 1-5 where 1 is unsatisfactory and 5 is excellent:

Coop	<i>Organizational strength</i>	<i>extension service</i>	<i>advocacy and policy influence</i>	<i>financial sustainability</i>
Ham Son	3	3	2	3
Xuan Phong	3	3	2	3
Cao Son	3	3	2	3

The boxes below give examples of the coop’s reflections on their present organisational capacity

Examples of Organizational strength in MORE TREES Cooperatives

Ham Son: After having had an unclear structure and division of responsibilities in the beginning, the cooperative now has a management board with a chairman and 2 members and a staff consisting of a director and an assistant. A “volunteer supervisor/monitor” appointed by the General assembly reports back to the members on cooperative finance and progress every 3 months. 5 cooperative members work in the nursery and 10 members in the harvesting team. The assistant also manages the newly opened cooperative plant shop (selling mainly fruit tree seedlings and ornamental trees) in the nearby town (Pho Chau in Huong Son District). The cooperative is legally registered as a cooperative and have statute and bylaws approved by members and the authorities. A General assembly is held every 2 years with approx. 50 participants. However, the cooperative still feels that they do not operate smoothly and have not yet completely divided responsibility and function between management board and director (e.g. the chairman is in charge of harvesting). Also, they feel they need to improve their skills in management, marketing and forestry skills (technique and economy).

The Ham Son cooperative works in very close cooperation with the province MORE TREES coordinator mr Que. All in all, the coop has only 21 members (“shareholders”) who has each contributed between 400.000 and 2mill VD to the Cooperative as “capital”) plus a higher number of “unofficial members” (frequent buyers of nursery products) that are not “shareholders” but buy seedlings at full price but get the discount as an investment in the cooperative.

The Xuan Phong Cooperative has developed a finance and activity plan approved by the management board. According to this plan, 60% of the cooperatives’ income will be from agriculture (fertiliser 30%, Irrigation 25%, medicinal plants 5%) and 40% forestry (harvesting 20% and reselling seedlings 20%). Income has increased since the start in 2015 and members have increased from 7 to 32 (with 12 more on their way). The membership fee is min 300.000 VD. The cooperative has an office in the Xuan Phong commune compound supported by the commune.

The Cao Son Coop has a management board with chairman and 2 members and a staff consisting of director and assistant. They have also organised a harvest group of members. Presently there are a total of 59 members (member fee is a minimum of 300.000VD). Cao Son commune has provided an office for the Cooperative. The last General assembly was in Nov 2017 and the next will be held in Dec 2018.

Examples of extension service in MORE TREES Cooperatives

Ham Son cooperative has established a nursery and is selling seedlings to both members and non-members and to forestry groups. Members get a 10% discount. Also, the cooperative buys seedlings from other nurseries to sell to local farmers. The cooperative offers a harvesting service where they buy standing trees from farmers and harvest and sell them. In this business, they struggle to compete with middlemen who have more money to pay up front, know the market better and in some cases have also paid for roads to the plantations, so the cooperative or forest owner have to pay a high fee to the middleman to use the road.

On planting and forest management the extension service of the cooperative is mainly “on the spot advice and instructions” eg. when people come to buy seedlings or during harvesting operations.

Most technical advisory service and training is carried out by the province coordinator together with the 6 field facilitators. The cooperative and the coordinator are in frequent contact (1-2 times pr week by mail or phone and they hold regular quarterly meetings. The cooperative is also in frequent contact with the field facilitators as they call about buying seedlings or ask about harvest, farmers selling trees or other issues, on average once a week, but mostly their contact is with the field coordinator mr Que.

The Xuan Phong cooperative is in frequent contact with the field facilitators as they call about buying seedlings or ask about fertilizer. Also, they have close contact with Farmer Union through the field coordinator and with commune staff as their office is in the same compound. The director is in Facebook contact with the field coordinator mr Hung almost daily. Four cooperative members are also Forestry group leaders (in this district 21 active groups and 2 field facilitators).

The Farmer Union facilitated the contact to the fertilizer company and the commune to the irrigation control work. This year the cooperative has carried out harvesting for 2 members (3,7 and 1,8 ha) and for one non-member (4,5 ha). Mr Dem (non-member) got a 4% higher price than offered by middlemen (1 mill dong more pr ha), the two other members got 5% better.

In harvesting, the Xuan Phong Cooperative acts as a middleman buying standing timber, then harvesting and selling to a factory. Half of the harvest is for members, half for non-members. The Cooperative thinks that they are fairer than the middlemen at assessing volume, thus offers better price, but anyway finds it difficult to compete. 7 members are involved in the harvesting team, 3 board members are in charge of fertilizer sale.

In Cao Son the cooperative board includes an employee at the commune extension service as well as 2 MORE TREES field facilitators. The cooperative has a harvesting group that buys standing timber from members and employs the timber owner's family members to participate in the harvesting. Also, the coop has a service for providing seedlings – buying high quality seedlings and reselling to farmers

The cooperative also supplies fertilizer as this is connected with tree planting, but according to the cooperative director the profit is not very high compared to the amount of work involved.

And finally, the cooperative offers free consultancy service on bamboo plantation (new species) in the hope of a new business of harvesting and selling bamboo poles and shoots (the cooperative is hoping to get members to plant 100 ha bamboo) and also promote medicinal plants.

Examples of advocacy and policy influence in MORE TRESS cooperatives

Ham Son The advocacy capacity of the Cooperative Ham Son board and director is still weak, however they have established good relations with the local authorities who have given the coop the office house and are renting them land for the nursery. Through the Farmer Union the cooperative has also advocated for a loan. Some farmer groups are asking about support to utilise natural forest as for some of them this is half of their allocated forest area. In Ha Tinh province there is a very strict policy of not allowing any use of native forest, but the cooperative could look into the possibilities of clarifying the regulations to the farmers and advocating for farmers to receive a fee for protecting natural forest as is the case in Hoa Binh.

The Hoa Binh Farmer Union and the district Peoples Committee is using the Xuan Phong cooperative as a practical example of a forest cooperative in their dealings with the Cooperative Alliance and other relevant stakeholders (the official government policy is at least one coop pr. commune). The cooperative is mainly advocating for more members through meetings, workshops etc. (Member benefits are discount, better quality and forestry technique training).

The advocacy capacity of the cooperative board and director is still weak; however, they have established good relations with the local authorities, who have given the cooperative an office in their compound. Also, the Xuan Phong Commune Peoples Committee frequently introduces the cooperative service at commune/village meetings. The cooperative has also advocated for two loans (from Farmer Union and from the Cooperative Alliance) for new harvesting equipment and for buying more standing timber.

The Cooperative in Cao Son is promoting bamboo cultivation. Also, the coop is used as example in province advocacy for coop establishment. The cooperative is mainly doing harvesting for members but eventually they expect to spread their service to others and hopefully also gain more members.

There is close cooperation with district extension service as one board member works there and with Farmer Union as both "the monitor" (finance controller) and board chairman are MORE TREES field facilitators.

Examples of financial sustainability in MORE TRESS cooperatives

Ham Son: Since the establishment 3 years ago, the financial stability of the cooperative is increasing but is still not covering all costs without input from MORE TREES. Today approx. 75% of the operational costs are covered, including wages. The cooperative has invested in a small truck and offer transportation of both seedlings, wood and agricultural products for a fee. The truck is driven by a member who gets income depending on income from offering the truck services. About two month ago, the coop also opened a shop in town selling fruit trees and ornamental trees. Before the shop the coop sold fruit trees from the field office. The coop sells up to 80 km away (fruit trees). The cooperative has paid a membership bonus each year as there has been a surplus due to the programme support to wages. Bonus depend on capital and use of services – and there is an extra bonus for the board. The main strategy for future income is to gain more members.

Xuan Phong: Since the establishment 3 years ago, the financial stability of the of the cooperative has increased, but the income is still not able to cover all costs without input from MORE TREES. Today approx. 70% of the operational cost is covered, including wages. The coop expects to be self-sufficient in 2 years by scaling up harvesting, seedling reselling and irrigation.

The coop has paid a bonus in the last 2 years. In 2015 the revenue was 100 mill VD with no profit. In 2017, the revenue was 1,3 billion VD with 100 mill in profit.

Cao Son: Currently the income of the cooperative covers approx. 60 % of the total costs. Income has increased since the start in 2015 and the cooperative expects to be self-sufficient in 2 years, hopefully partly due to a successful increase in bamboo business and harvesting and possibly also production and sale of medicinal plants.

3.3.1.3 Bosnia and Herzegovina

In BiH, the first association was established only 2 months ago, therefore this assessment cannot provide much information. Their self-review reflection on capacity strength is: *“We are legally registered, we have statute, we have formed the board and supervisory board, we have president and organizational structure, and having in mind that association exist only one month, we would grade it with 5”*. Besides, they found an office space, they established good relations with the local forest administration and created all basic legal documents.

3.3.2. Usefulness of Services (technical and advocacy)

“Target groups organized in forest and natural resource user associations that have the skills to provide extension services for responsible NRM, income generation, and that advocate towards duty bearers on the local and national level for equitable access to natural resources”

Indicators:

- *Target groups have increased capacity to manage natural resources in a responsible way, are engaging in new income generating activities and are practicing the NRM skills they gained from program.*
- *Associations have members that are well-versed in relevant laws and policies and have built up positive relationships to duty bearers and have engaged in advocacy activities that have resulted better implementation of the relevant laws.*

3.3.2.1. Target groups have increased capacity

According to focus group discussions among target groups in Nepal (AFFON chapter members in 3 selected chapters), Vietnam (members of 6 different MORE TREES forest group in Ha Tinh and Hoa Binh Province including members of the 3 cooperatives) and BiH (members of the newly formed association) the target groups generally find that the chapters/coops/forest groups and association live up to their expectations and provide them with significant benefits either in the form of new techniques and information or as advocacy help to make laws and policies more farm/family forest friendly.

However, many members -maybe unrealistically- expected more results sooner. Despite this very few people have left the chapters or groups and all established chapters in Nepal and more than 100 out of 116 groups in Vietnam are still functioning (some better than others). The association in BiH as well as many of the AFFON chapters are quite newly established and obviously have had limited impact so far, but member trust and expectancy is generally high.

In all visited AFFON chapters in Nepal, the board members graded “Target Group Capacity” to have developed from 1 (*Most people in target groups have generally little or no awareness*) to 2 (*Most people have good awareness but have not yet transformed this into action*) within the last 2 years. Or as one group member put it: *“we have moved from having problems marketing our wood products and not knowing why we are still having problems, but we now we know why”*). Only Rautahat District chapter found that their

target group had reached level 3 (*Most members have “Hands on” knowledge and have undertaken management changes*).

There are 55 members in the Rautahat Chapter and they estimate that 90 % of them are active in forest management and that 10-25 % of them have income from the forest (wood, fodder, or intercropping). Despite the low ranking, the Gorkha District Chapter board reports that 40-60 % of all AFFON members in the district are actively improving their forest (applying various techniques of silviculture, pruning and intercropping including medicinal plants, mainly learnt from community forestry). All have benefits from their forest (fodder, intercropping, firewood etc) while only 1-5% have direct income from their forest, as they all face the same problems of not being able to sell their poles/timber due to government restrictions.

The cooperatives in Vietnam rank target group capacity as going from 1-2 to 3-4 from 2016 to 2018 which is also reflected in improved NRM and a reasonably high knowledge of laws and policies concerning forestry. Out of 58 original forestry groups in each of the two target provinces about 50 in each province are still functioning. In Hoa Binh, 30 of the groups work well, 15 medium and 5 less good according to the field coordinator Mr Hung. A few groups have taken in more members, but no new groups have been initiated by other forest owners although they see the benefits in joint forest management, experience and labour exchange between members and the benefits of a loan fund. The interview groups explained that they did not think groups would ever be started without some initial outside “push”.

The Ham Son cooperative in Ha Tinh estimate that approx. 2/3 of the farmers that have been trained now use the improved techniques and most of them also train others to use the techniques (of e.g. soil preparation without burning, planting, thinning and pruning techniques etc.). They estimate that approx. 80% of the trained farmers have trained others. The cooperative has the following score for awareness of the community from project start until now: 2010: 1,5 2016: 3 2018: 3,5

The Cao son cooperative in Hoa Binh estimate that nearly 60% of all farmers in the commune apply better forestry techniques (planting, spacing, less burning). They rank the capacity of their member from project start till now as 2010: 2 2015: 3 2018: 4.

And the score for all farmers in commune as 2010:1 2015: 2 2018: 3

Since the association in BiH is newly formed they could not estimate target group capacity. Beside this, through the main forester their paradigm and project goals are broadcasted among private forest owners, and basis for successful communication is established including raising awareness when it comes to the management and use of forest goods, not just timber. What is most important is that they gained the trust of a critical mass those who will lead and maintain activities in the association. More than 100 private forest owners have been motivated to join the association.

All local boards and members of district chapters in Nepal and cooperatives and forestry groups in Vietnam are able to provide examples of people carrying out improved farm/family forest management and gaining improved income from their forests. Apart from the income the family forest owners in Nepal list a number of other, equally important benefits such as grass and leaf-fodder, intercropping, medicinal plants and leaf-litter for organic compost and fertilizer as well as shade, beauty and relaxing environment, while better management and improved income and stable market opportunities ranks high in Vietnam.

In the first box below are examples of the focus groups’ view on most important achievements of the chapters in Nepal and of forestry group and cooperative members in Vietnam. Examples of members managing natural resources in a more responsible way, engaged in new income generation activities and/or practicing new skills gained from the program is given in the second box. The association in BiH is still too new to provide such examples.

**Most important achievement of local associations
(chapters in Nepal and cooperatives and forestry groups in Vietnam)**

Nepal – most important achievement of AFFON chapters:

- *As the most important achievement the members of Rautahat District chapter said: : “Before we did not know about family forestry – trying to get support or sell products was difficult but we did not know why. Now we know and can join forces to get family forestry recognised”.*
- *The Kavre District Chapter members listed the most important achievements as:*
 - *Getting knowledge about AFFON and family forestry*
 - *Our chairman has access to the authorities*
 - *We now have more ideas and knowledge about legal hurdles and what to do (awareness level raised)*
 - *More people are interested and want to make family forestry a long-time investment*
 - *There is more experience exchange between farmers*
 - *We now have networks in the District (between farmers and with the authorities)*
 - *We are getting environmental benefits from our trees (shade, clean air, etc). One farmer quote: “I like to go and stand in my forest every morning and evening – just to be there”*
- *In Gorkha the District chapter members found that the most significant benefit was that they were now informed about what the legal limitations are. However, there was some confusion as to whether the relations with DFO had actually been improved or whether changes in forest laws were on their way.*

Vietnam – most important achievement of forestry groups and cooperatives:

- *Binh Son Forest Group (Ha Tinh):*
 - *“The most significant benefit is the income from providing forestry services to non-members. Each member family has at least 10 days paid work pr year”.*
 - *“In the future we will also have more income from improved plantations (managed with better technique incl. less seedlings). Our forest group also provide social benefits as we help each other (labour exchange within groups) and have two small funds for loans (one because every member pays 100.000 each month and one where they pay a little to the fund each time they get work for non-members. Loans rotate, are mainly used for buying chicken or husbandry (buffalo))”*
 - *“Before we did not know how much benefit we could get from our forest eg pr. ha. Now we know from experience and also sometimes count trees and make sample plots. And since we ourselves harvest and load the wood we are no longer depending on the estimates of a middleman that would previously buy the entire stand “on the roots”.*
- *Trung Luu forestry group (Ha Tinh):*
 - *Increase in income (people now have 60% of their annual income from plantations, for some group members up to 70%)*
 - *Environmental awareness and improvement: fire prevention, no or more sustainable use of pesticides (incl not throwing pesticide can in the fields,) Before all used fire to burn wood residue and even straw, including all group members – most stopped in 2005-09.*
 - *More cooperation in the group – and also closer to other stakeholders eg local authorities, peoples committee.*
- *Can no 1 Village foret group (Hoa Binh):*
 - *“That we now know more and get better quality”*
 - *“The group helps each other and is a happy team” – they even organised a vacation for the group with families to the beach for the group fund (we only had to pay food) One member quote: “without I would never have had a vacation”.*
 - *“We exchange labour and put money in the group fund. It would be much more expensive if we had to hire labour”.*
 - *“We can also borrow from the group fund for eg. chicken, pigs or family issues such as hospital expenses”.*
 - *Improved environment with less erosion.*
- *Lanh village Forest group (Hoa Binh):*
 - *The households have learned the new techniques and we can ask group members if we have forgotten the techniques.*
- *The cooperatives:*
 - *Farmer Union is a large, strong and well-connected organisation. Placing the cooperative in connection with the Farmer Union is therefore a win-win situation. Farmers have used the*

cooperatives as a concrete example in their effort to advocate for loans and support from the “Cooperative Alliance” to new cooperatives. This means that the cooperatives have gained from the advocacy effort of the bigger organisation at the same time the bigger organisation has had concrete examples for their advocacy effort.

Examples of members managing natural resources in a more responsible way, engaged in new income generation activities and/or practicing new skills gained from the program

Nepal:

- *The Kavre District chapter secretary used to have people to manage his farmland (1,5 ha). Now these people have gone and following AFFON advice he has converted the whole area to forest, and his neighbours are replicating his planting practice. He did not have any particular knowledge of forestry but looked around and saw what was growing well in the neighbourhood, then bought those species and planted. Another young board member, Subash Dhakl, has recently taken over his farm. His father and grandfather used to leave naturally regenerated trees in field corners, near roads etc., but inspired by AFFON discussions he has started actively planting multipurpose trees rather than relying on natural regeneration.*
- *AFFON member Indra Upreti from Chandrapur in Rautahat has planted bamboo on his barren land and now has a steady income of 10-12.000Nrp pr year. He is continuing planting and is now also selling shoots for food. Another member (Krishna Karrel Fatuwa Bijaypur) is doing intercropping and also selling wood, earning approx.100.000 pr year. Both examples are people who planted their forest before the AFFON Chapter was formed, but they are now examples for others to follow.*
- *A group of people incl. the local AFFON Chapter secretary in Rautahat have started planting a model forest. There is no timber harvest yet, but earnings in the form of easily accessible grass and other fodder.*

Vietnam

- *The chairman of the Xuan Phong Cooperative Board used to work for the Farmers Union but has now retired. He joined the cooperative as he sees it as his duty to promote NRM. He has 2 ha protected forest where he has planted medicinal plants (a climber). He sees this as better than timber (although more labour intensive) and also better for the soil as he can harvest after only 4 months and again every year for 20 years. (hope that over the next 20 years he will earn 4-5 times as much as from timber).*
- *The Trung Luu forestry group in Ha Tinh was started after the Farmer field school approx. 4 years ago. In the beginning they had 18 members but later they have included more members and now there are 35 members. Together the group owns approx. 200 ha forest of which approx. half is plantation and half protection forest. The group helps each other and share experiences, but buy and sell individually. Some people have bought seedlings from the cooperative. They sometimes exchange labour for harvesting or planting, but do not harvest together as they can only harvest little at the time due to transportation problems, as the road to most of the forest is only accessible by buffaloes.*
- *Last year a storm felled the forest of mr Anh in Ha Tinh (1ha). As he and his wife are elderly, they could not cut and transport the felled trees and clear and replant the area. The forestry group members did it as “exchange labour” that mr Anh will replace when he can. The group often arrange exchange labour among themselves when it is only few days.*
- *The Can no 1. Village forestry group in Hoa Binh consist of 11 families. They have a common acacia forest (3 ha). The group helps each other and share experiences but buy and sell individually. They sometimes exchange labour for harvesting or planting, and then pay to a group fund that they use as credit or for joint activities (meeting expenses, group tour to the beach). They advise neighbours on new techniques for free but do not want new members. They think people will start asking more now, as people feel the market for sugarcane is too unpredictable while “acacia you can be sure to sell”.*
- *Mr Thuan, one of the field facilitators in Ha Tinh used to sell his timber through the local middleman. This time he instead made his own “market analysis.” With his mobile phone he called round to other farmers that he knew asking them who they had sold their trees to, and at what price. He then invited a couple of these middlemen to give a price for his acacia stand and finally sold to one of them getting a 5% higher price than the first middleman offered.*

More examples from both Nepal and Vietnam are given in chapter 3-1-2 Practice of responsible NRM and income generation

3.3.2.2. Legal knowledge/awareness of the target group

“Associations have members that are well-versed in relevant laws and policies and have built up positive relationships to duty bearers and have engaged in advocacy activities that have resulted better implementation of the relevant laws.”

On legal knowledge and engagement in advocacy activities all visited AFFON chapters in Nepal graded “Target Group Capacity” to have developed from 1 (*Most people in target groups have generally little or no awareness*) to 2 (*Most people have good awareness but have not yet transformed this into action*) within the last 2 years. However, the board members also graded themselves at 2 in legal issues, demonstrating a huge need for more information to be able to do more efficient lobbying and better information to members and other farmers. All focus groups rank “raised awareness” as the most significant benefit, and more information to members rate high as recommendations for improvement. See examples of AFFON chapter and MORE TREES cooperatives relationships with duty bearers and advocacy activities in the chapter on Association Capacity.

3.4. Immediate Objective 3: Education on NRM

“Education focusing on proper management of natural resources in formal education system is implemented/introduced, promoted and strengthened on the local and national level.”

This objective refers to the effort of NPP and More trees to strengthen the teaching of IEE and NRM/forestry in national schools (Nepal) and colleges (Vietnam). The indicators for this objective are:

- *Number of teachers educated and practicing the new methods of teaching NRM and IEE. For Vietnam also:
 - *Number of colleges implementing the new curricula focused on NRM*
 - *Number of university/college students applying for the course on NRM**
- *Government at local and national level act positively in relation to demands of program partners for changes in quality education on NRM - supported through curriculum adaptation and scaling up, including investment in books and curricula publication.*

Although both interventions ultimately aim at improved NRM in their countries the approach and immediate target group is very different in Nepal and Vietnam. Nepal focuses on creating higher environmental awareness in all school children in Nepal hoping and expecting that this will eventually lead to more sustainable NRM. MORE TREES, on the other hand, targets future farm foresters and extension staff directly by strengthening the education of farm forestry in agricultural colleges.

3.4.1. Teachers educated and practicing new teaching methods

3.4.1.1. Nepal

In Nepal more than 2000 teachers have been trained in various aspects of IEE during the program through three main teacher training activities in cooperation with the Dept of Education: Pilot Local curriculum development in Chitwan and Rasuwa, the National Teachers training on IEE and Local Curriculum on Environment in 2016-2018 and the NPP Ecosmart school program.

A total of 56 teachers were trained under the pilot local curriculum development. They were involved in implementing the local curriculum in 56 schools in Chitwan and Rasuwa prior to the present program, but are still continuing it.

328 teachers took part in the National Teachers training on Interactive Environment Education and Local Curriculum on Environment in 2016-2018. Each teacher was responsible for transferring their knowledge

gained from the training to 5 other teachers. Thus, a total of 1640 other teachers were educated on IEE by the trained teachers.

Of the 328 first teachers trained more than 1/3 have reported that they have been actively practicing the methods in their schools (the number may be higher as not all have access to internet). Out of the 328 plus 1640 teachers more than half have become members of the National Eco-teacher Network (online portal www.facebook.com/ecoteachernepal) (at present 1300 members). This is a platform where WCN shares information about competitions, grants and relevant environment issues and news and IEE activities for teachers as inspiration (weekly update). Right now, WCN has announced an ECO Smart School project grant for teachers. Through WCN, the member teachers are posting their activities related to environmental education in the network. This is a very good way of having continued contact to the trained teachers even long after the teachers have taken the official training. Having a system where teachers report on the activities they have executed and using the network as a hub for exchange, inspiration, and encouraging participation is a low-cost way to keep track of the training success and continuing to support the teachers and motivating them to continue with IEE in their schools.

In addition, 110 teachers from Eco smart schools in Kathmandu and from Rasuwa and Chitwan were trained on assessment and evaluation of interactive environment education based on the local curriculum developed by NPP. These 110 teachers tested the draft monitoring tool “signs of success” developed in 2017 to assess the impact of the IEE teachings.

In July 2018, the draft was distributed to 40 teachers in Chitwan and 16 Rasuwa and to 54 teachers in the 9 eco-smart schools (in Kathmandu valley) and by Sept. 2018, a total of 78 teachers had returned the paper. It should be noted that not all teachers have been able to return the paper due to remoteness and lack of internet access. Rasuwa especially was near the epicentre of the 2015 earthquake and it is testament to the dedication of the teachers that the program is still running successfully here despite many school buildings and homes being destroyed. Among other thing the results of this trial show that:

- More than half of teachers report that parents are reporting back that the children’s IEE education has led to changes in household behaviour (eg using less plastic, using different light bulbs, taking bags to supermarket, reduced use of pesticides).
- 10-20 % of the teachers find that their pupils come up with “age relevant solutions” to environmental problems.
- Also 10-20% of the teacher report that more than half or almost all pupils take part in environmental day or other environmental events.
- Almost all teachers report that the students are interested in doing after school trips to green areas or other environmental/cultural activities.

Longer lasting impact will have to be seen. While the “signs of success” needs to be further developed /adjusted it is a useful tool for monitoring the immediate impact of EE. The entire “signs of success” analysis is attached as annex 5.

3.4.1.2. Number of teachers trained and practicing in Vietnam (incl. number of colleges and students involved)

In Cooperation with NVCARD MORE TREES in Vietnam has developed a curricula for 6 modules (with textbooks) for teaching farm forestry at agricultural colleges: seedling production. Plantations, Harvesting and marketing, Developing business plans and NTFP. These modules have been approved by the Ministry of Agriculture (MARD). Also MORE TREES has invested in training teachers to teach this curriculum. A total of 25 lecturers at 5 colleges took part in the training course of teaching the Farm Forestry Curriculum. Also the MORE TREES’s 37 field facilitators were trained using the 6 modules.

Today the curriculum is being applied at 5 colleges as an integrated part of the courses at college level in Agroforestry Sylviculture, Forestry Extension, Forest Management, Natural Resource and Environment Management:

- The North Vietnam College of Agriculture and Rural Development (NVCARD)
- The Phu Tho College of Technology, Agriculture and Forestry
- The Quang Ninh North-East College of Agriculture and Forestry
- The Lang Son Vocational College of Agriculture and Forestry
- The Hoa Binh College of Economy and Technology
-

All in all, 837 students of the 5 colleges have been through the curriculum – in addition, the field facilitators have trained 3,800 households in Hoa Binh and Ha Tinh.

During a meeting with the teachers at NVCARD, the teachers grade their capacity going from 3 to 4 mainly as a result of better capacity to combine theory and practice. At present 5 of the 6 modules are in use, but when a new course on forestry starts in 2019, all 6 modules will be used. The teachers find that some modules could do with an upgrade, and a new module on certification would be appreciated. However, the present agroforestry course is only running with half capacity (only 20 students rather than 40) despite most of the students being supported by the government. The teachers expect that the new forestry course will attract even fewer students than agroforestry.

During informal group discussions with a small number of agroforestry students the students said that they felt that they learned a lot from the modules, mainly due to the integration of theory and practice. When asked why they thought only few students chose agroforestry they answered that animal husbandry is the “fashion” at the time – but also that they had to choose subjects before coming and as nearly all students are from farming backgrounds agriculture seemed the “safe choice”. Generally, the students were aiming to work on their family farm or getting a job in commune extension service. Only two students had considered the private sector (e.g. working in nurseries or in wood processing, marketing or “landscaping”). Neither teachers nor students knew which jobs the previous students hold today.

3.4.2. Government support

“Government at local and national level act positively in relation to demands of program partners for changes in quality education on NRM”

3.4.2.1. *Nepal*

On rating government support to IEE in Nepal the NPP staff says: “Grade 5 is at the doorstep but has not quite taken root yet!” (*Grade 5: The involved government institutions at national and/or local level have a clear knowledge (awareness) of interactive education on NRM, are acknowledging, endorsing and directly contributing to interventions by program partners and are also - in close cooperation with partners or on their own accord - implementing policies or practices focused interactive education on NRM*).

Examples where the Government has shown, on its own accord, willingness to invite WCN to do government work or adopted WCN work in its system are shown in the box below:

1. *Thirty-eight schools in Chitwan district and 11 schools in Rasuwa districts have adopted local curricula on environment developed with the support of WCN for Grade 1-5. The schools are now using the textbooks from grade 4 to 5 that are also developed by WCN and are now awaiting the textbooks for Grade 1-3. Without continuous support / intervention from WCN, the local curricula may not sustain on their own. However, with the newly elected local governments, there is a good chance that they will incorporate the*

local curricula in their annual budgets. WCN will therefore use the next three years to lobby for and support municipalities/local governments to adopt and spread local curricula on their own with allocations of local budgets.

- 2. Based on the successful implementation of the Local Curriculum in Chitwan and Rasuwa, WCN was invited to share its experience and help in developing and publishing the National Framework for Local Curriculum that is now a guideline for all schools and Municipalities wishing to develop a local curriculum.*
- 3. NCED (National Centre for Education Development) and WCN agreed on conducting national teachers training on EE to government teachers from all the districts in Nepal. By the end of the 5th training the Government authorities asked WCN to make a Teachers Professional Development Package that would be incorporated in the regular government owned teacher trainings. This is a 15 Day training program. The training package is developed and approved, and WCN is planning to introduce the package by conducting Master Trainers Training in 2019. However, to make the trainings popular among the government teachers, WCN may have to invest in training a specific number of teachers as pilots.*
- 4. Based on the successful implementation of local curricula in two districts (Rasuwa and Chitwan) and the development of the national framework for local curricula, WCN has been invited to develop the government's official training package on local curriculum for teachers, called "the customized local curriculum training" which has been approved by the Government. By December 2018 this package will be ready. This training package will contain pedagogical techniques and approaches for teaching.*
- 5. WCN has also been requested to support the government to develop two videos on Floods and Environment as training materials for the age group of 12-16. By December 2018, the videos will be developed.*
- 6. WCN was invited to co-write the government curriculum on Environment Science for Grade 9 and 10 for the whole of Nepal. This was completed in 2018 and is now in use. WCN was also involved in developing the teaching material and evaluation questions for Grade 9 and 10 and is in the process of publication to be used for the next school year starting from April 2019.*
- 7. From being a solely NGO activity all the activities in NPP are now (since 2014) guided by a steering committee formed at the highest level of bureaucracy at department level. The Steering Committee comprises of the six following members:
 - i. Department of Education- Chair (1)*
 - ii. Department of Education- Secretary (1)*
 - iii. Curriculum Development Center – Member (1)*
 - iv. National Center for Educational Development-Member (1)*
 - v. WCN- Member (2)**

This steering committee has brought WCN and the department closer together. Also, it has given the Department a greater sense of cooperation and ownership and WCN an additional incentive for delivering their best for their materials and ideas to be approved.

3.4.2.2. Vietnam

The MORE TREES grade government support to MRN education at 3 (The involved Government institutions at national and/or local level have a clear knowledge (awareness) of interactive education on NRM and are acknowledging or endorsing interventions by program partners eg. by allowing the use of printing logo, using gov. channels to send info out, etc.)

The government dictates approx. 70% of the curriculum for the students, while the colleges can decide on the last approx. 30%. Farm forestry comes under the last 30%. It is a big step forwards that the farm forestry modules have been approved by MARD. However, at present there is no complete training course

on farm or family forestry but the 5 colleges in North Vietnam including NVCARD are integrating 5 of the modules in their other courses without support or incentives from the program. However, it is felt that to reach grade 4 at least one of the colleges should carry out the complete farm forestry curriculum and/or more colleges should take up the modules.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Generally, the monitoring methods and formats worked well. However, to save time and labour it is recommended to revise the formats so the questions correspond even closer to the indicators/monitoring report headlines so that field notes can be directly transferred to the monitoring report.

Program Development Objective

On monitoring program development objective it is recommended to include a specific indicator on **gender issues**. Fair access also means equal access for men and women. The program has no general strategy on gender issues and while both WCN and AFFON has included it in their approach (e.g. having recommendation for women representation on chapter boards and steering committees) it has been largely neglected in Vietnam and to some extent in BiH. In the cooperatives, men are paid a higher salary than women when hired to help harvesting. When questioned the answer is “men are stronger”, but it was quite clearly not an issue that had been considered before. For a long time, in BiH traditionally men were the only holders of land ownership. Recently women were given the right to property, which is why this is important issue to be included.

Program Immediate Objective 1: Partner Capacity

Self-review works well as a monitoring tool and also encourages the partners to consider and discuss capacity issues. It is recommended to repeat the partner capacity review each year, preferably with program appointed facilitator. The “plan for improvement of grades” developed by the partners could be used as a “checklist”.

AFFON Plan for Improvement of Grades

	Action	Due Date by	Person Responsible
1. Administration and HR	Capacity building to staff Exposure visits within the organization	2 years	Chairperson, AFFON
2. Financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and account and record keeping training • Sharing with other institutions • Financial policy revision Suggestion: Program accountant training/workshop with Balram and Flemming in Nepal	1 yr	Treasurer, AFFON
3. Planning and implementation	Already have Monthly, Trimester, half yearly and yearly planning, but need to make proper implementation plan. Implementation plans should be fixed point in monthly board meetings specifying targets and persons responsible	1yr	General Secretary, AFFON
4. Staff that has the relevant technical skills and their services are in demand.	Training- Advocacy, Governance, Team building Policy analysis Exposure visit, both central and district level board members need to be exposed to how it works on state/district level	3 yr	National Program Coordinator (NPC)
5. Advocacy skills	Manual (action plan) needed on both central and district level – need to develop common understanding Develop Policy brief to be distributed Translating relevant papers into local languages <u>Conducting a Women and GESI National Workshop</u> Advocate for Family Forest statistics to be included in national reports	1yr This year, November?	Chairperson, AFFON Vice-chair (Indira)

6. Access to relevant stakeholders etc.	Forest Rights dialogue Revise Position Paper and develop state level position paper and other tire of the government	2yr	General Secretary, AFFON
7. Qualitative and timely monitoring	Update database Explore good practice and develop monitoring tools such as format for participatory monitoring or “signs of success” for district chapters Expert consultation on database management, monitoring format, guidelines,	3 yr	Chairperson, AFFON
8. Alternative funding	Concept paper development, focus on networking	1yr	NPC
9. Dimensions for synergy: Regular communication, sharing of ideas and lessons learnt, establishment of complementary partner relations and possible replication of models	More frequent meetings (live or via internet to also establish personal relations (get to know each other) More dialogue Possible joint partner workshop Update Websites, Use email, twitter	3yr	Chairperson, AFFON Pitambar/BJ

WCN Plan for Improvement of Grades

	Action	Due Date	Person Responsible
1. Administration and HR	Continue follow procedures and at the same time allow for flexibility. Look for possible staff incentives and suggest to program management	Continuous	Sanjee/Ritu
2. Financial management (partners are practicing accounting to the agreed model)	Look actively for suitable tools (trainings, workshop) to upgrade accountant’s skills and confidence. Suggestion: All partner accountants’ workshop with Flemming and Balram in Nepal	1 year Continuous	Budha /Ritu /
3. Planning and implementation	Continue to follow procedures and at the same time allow for flexibility. Continue delegating responsibility and set realistic planning goals	Continuous	All, Sanjee/Ritu
4. Staff that has the relevant technical skills and their services are in demand.	Look for specific trainings/exposure (skill improvement activity) that complement/are needed for specific programme activities. Goal: Skills upgrading activity at least once in two years for all staff (outdoor pedagogic, interactive skills, assessment/evaluation, facilitation skills, etc.) WCN actively looks for alternative funding for such skill improvement activities.	Continuous	All Sanjee/Ritu
5. Advocacy skills	continue searching for partners for advocacy issues Maintaining good relations with Dept of Education, NCTD and other stakeholders More focused approach to campaigns	Continuous	All
6. Access to relevant stakeholders etc.	continue the good practices and explore new relations within the Ministry	Continuous	All
7. Qualitative and timely monitoring	further develop “signs of success” into a tool to be used measuring EE impact	1 year	All Sanjee/Ritu
8. Alternative funding	Move from “ad hoc fund raising” towards a more strategic approach. Develop “fund raising paper” listing results and impact and initiatives in need of support. Allocate fund raising responsibility and upgrade fund raising skills/practice	3 years	Sanjee/Ritu/Nabin
9. Dimensions for synergy: regular communication,	Improve communication through online meetings Biennial joint meeting Suggest that joint activities such as “sit on a ton of	Mid December 2018/	Sanjeevani

establishment of complimentary partner relations, exchange of ideas and lessons learnt and possible model replication	carbon”, or a NRM photography competition is carried out for all partners on a yearly “nature/forest day” Suggests that all partners come up with ideas for more joint events and suggestion on Dec. meeting)	continuous	
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More Trees, Plan for Improvement of Grades

	Action	Due Date	Person Responsible
1. Administration and HR	Continue the already well-established practices		Admin staff, (Loan)
2. Financial management	Continue the already well-established practices		Admin staff, (Loan)
3. Planning and implementation	Establish closer relations with FA and NVCard Prepare more detailed joint plans	Next phase	Mr. M
4. Staff that has the relevant technical skills and their services are in demand.	Learning by doing Learn from other NGOs in Vietnam Learn from Programme partners It is realised that there is a need for Cooperative capacity building on planning and marketing –this should be a focus point in the next phase – at present it is not clear what approach would be best	Next phase	Mr. M
5. Advocacy skills	See 4 (skills) and 6 Access	?	
6. Access to relevant stakeholders etc.	Will focus on documenting a successful cooperation model - then approach national stakeholders and advocate for more cooperatives		Coordination Unit
7. Qualitative and timely monitoring	Introduce participatory monitoring to cooperatives	Next phase	Coordination Unit
8. Alternative funding	Continue supporting the cooperatives in their efforts to become more sustainable	Next phase	Coordination Unit
9. Dimensions for synergy: Regular communication, sharing of ideas and lessons learnt, establishment of complementary partner relations and possible replication of models	Joint project, experience sharing	Next phase	Coordination Unit

fea Plan for Improvement of Grades

	Action	Due Date	Person Responsible
1. Administration and HR	Engagement of external associates Continue the established practices	Continuous Next phase	fea - Ajla
2. Financial management	Sharing knowledge with other program partners Continue the established practices	Continuous Next phase	fea - Ajla
3. Planning and implementation	Better capacity planning More accurately determine budget lines	Beginning of the next phase	fea - Ajla
4. Staff with the relevant technical skills and their services are in demand.	Training - communication skills Sharing knowledge with other program partners	Continuous Next phase	fea - Ajla
5. Advocacy skills	Training - advocacy skills	Continuous	fea –

	Revise/improve advocacy plan Sharing knowledge with other program partners	Next phase	Ajla/NN
6. Access to relevant stakeholders etc.	Engagement of external expert Build relations with stakeholders through project related gatherings, meetings, joint campaigns	Continuous Next phase	fea – Ajla external expert
7. Qualitative and timely monitoring	Engagement of M&E Officer. Introduce participatory monitoring	1 yr	fea – Ajla external expert
8. Alternative funding	Training – fundraisings Networking with potential financiers	2 yr	fea – Ajla/NN
9. Dimensions for synergy: Regular communication, sharing of ideas and lessons learnt, establishment of complementary partner relations and possible replication of models	More frequent meetings, personal or via internet Developing common activities and joint projects Improve social networking by posting more experiences, ideas etc. Sharing stories and knowledge on social networks Conducting an external audit among program partners	Continuous Next phase	Fea – Ajla/NN

Program Immediate Objective 2: Association Building

When asked about **Participatory monitoring** many AFFON members were familiar with the concept from community forestry, but no district chapter have initiated monitoring (many still struggle to even keep track of their members). However, monitoring should be introduced as soon as possible and participatory monitoring can be quick and cheap and efficient. As the focus of AFFON is not on forest area or number of trees planted, but on policy changes, awareness raising and skills improvement, this should be reflected in the monitoring. Below is a draft idea for a participatory monitoring model on district chapter level based on regular reporting and discussion on general assembly. With minor adjustment the model should be able to fit the MORE TREES cooperatives too.

Draft idea for Participatory system based on General Assembly (GA):

- Recording before (GA):
 - List all family forest owners
 - List family forest owners who has faced actual trouble trying to sell their trees
 - List family forest owners who would like to sell trees but has not even tried as they though it was impossible
 - Make record of people who has been assisted by AFFON
 - Prepare policy advocacy update
- Do at GA:
 - Present no. of members, no. of people trying to sell trees and no. of people wanting to sell trees
 - Ask GA participants to grade target group’s skills on most needed issues (eg. policy knowledge, species choice etc)
 - Present policy update
 - Ask GA participants to set realistic goals on marked access, on number of assist cases, on skills and on policy advocacy to be reached before next general assembly (eg number of people managing to sell their trees, expected number of assist cases, improvement of grading in policy knowledge from x to xx, advocacy results to be expected)
 - Ask GA to list activities (and responsible persons/institutions) needed to reach these goals (such as stakeholder meeting with DFO (using the lists of people applying for felling permits as levers for change in policy or less bureaucratic approach eg referring to local sector office)), local manual or training course for multipurpose trees suitable for the area etc.)

- At next GA: Evaluate results and repeat goal setting and activity listing to be reached before next GA, thus keeping track of and holding the board responsible for activities carried out and results achieved or failed

AFFON issue to be considered:

- In all visited chapters the board members graded “Target Group Capacity” to have developed from having problems marketing their wood products and not knowing why to still having problems, but now knowing why. However, the board members graded their own development at the same level, demonstrating a huge need for more information to be able to do more efficient lobbying and better information to members and other farmers. At present this may be a bigger challenge than the low financial stability.
- In all 11 districts by far the most important reason for family forest owners to join AFFON is given as “policy issues and hope for improved market access for wood-based products”. “Skills improvement” comes second and only as no. 3 comes “expectations for support to planting or other management issues”. Thus, the chapter’s focus on advocacy is fully justified. Also, although many members find that the process in the district is too slow, they are generally satisfied with AFFON and have not considered leaving. Raised awareness is mentioned as the most significant benefit, and more information to members rates high as recommendations for improvement.

MORE TREES issues to be considered:

- The MORE TREES has many “semi-independent components” (the forestry groups, the cooperatives, the education component as well as various networking attempts). It is recommended that the Coordination unit keep its main focus on supporting the still “shaky” cooperatives to become financially sustainable. It should be considered whether the existing forestry groups could be “handed over” to the Farmers Union and the training modules to NVCARD, thus gradually phasing these two elements out during the next program phase and allowing the coordination unit to focus on forestry cooperatives. Both by helping the existing 3 to gain more members and become fully independent and financially sustainable. And by advocating for the Cooperative Alliance to support more forestry cooperatives following the MORE TREES model.
- Operating through Farmer Union has to some extent been viewed as “midwife” strategy. However, after 8 years the Farmer Union is still a main player. There may also be important experience exchange to gain from the Farmer Unions as they have managed to turn production groups in agroforestry into small part-time cooperatives (178 cooperatives in Hoa Binh alone). It is recommended to continue working closely with FU and to use FU actively – take them on board, organise experience exchange and nurture them to take over responsibility for the forestry groups. Farmer Unions are going to be here after MORE TREES has gone. Lessons learnt:
From working with the Son Ham cooperative Ha Tinh Farmer Union has the following lessons learnt:
 - As all land has been allocated to farmers the local authorities have little land to allocate for cooperatives
 - A cooperative need a “seed fund” for the setting up period
 - A cooperative depends strongly on the management skills of the staff
 - To be successful, a cooperative needs to be skilled in marketing and service provision to be able to compete with private businesses in the same field (eg. middlemen/wood buyers)
- Is the Cooperation Extension service/relations with the forestry groups strong enough if /when field facilitators phase out?
- The Cooperatives’ strategy for business development has been to diversify income sources including non-forestry activities such as irrigation and fertilizer sale. Is there a risk of losing forest focus? Does it matter if a cooperative has only 40% income from forest activities if the business is viable?
- Could a better Member recruitment strategy be developed for the cooperatives (eg using Ham Sons idea of “secondary members” who gradually build up their share)?

- The cooperatives mainly offer the same services as the middlemen. Would it not be possible for the coops to offer a regular harvesting and transport service rather than buying the stands “on the roots”?
- The Cao Son cooperative wants to expand in bamboo growing and offers bamboo growing training for free to introduce bamboo growing. Could the Cao Son Coop deliver other short local forestry courses for a fee (eg. on species with natural regeneration?) They could be offered for a small fee as a start and full cost later? The coop has field facilitators in place in the coop to conduct the training. A survey of farmer demand and willingness to pay?
- While most of the forestry groups work well some (eg the Lanh Village forestry group in Hoa Binh) are in need of serious advice/restructuring. This group consist of the original 10 Farmer field school members’ families, and one new family. Of the 10 household members we met only half knew that there had been a meeting in May this year. The other said no meeting since 2016. Not all knew about the group fund that their family member had contributed to, and we found only one person having had a loan from the fund. No common plantation or other shared activity, they only consult each other when in doubt of the right technique. The MORE TRESS should make a strategic decision on whether or not to invest in such groups.

Fea issues to be considered:

- This report should be baseline for future progress tracking. Since the association has not yet properly lived this is a good chance to collect experience from the other partners in order to facilitate operations.
- Municipality Busovača is relatively small, and locals are very close, thus participatory monitoring in the form of informal small talk is very popular among them. However, having in mind that the association will be expanding to other municipalities across the district, participatory monitoring should be shaped and scheduled in order to be functional.
- In order to be important stakeholder association, it needs to attract more private forest owners to become members. One way for it is to have practical example of benefit from the associating. Therefore, they could do pilot project of providing extension service on one parcel. Moreover, they could use good relations built with forest local forest administration in order to apply for subsidies.
- Considering that association members will have study travel in Croatia and Slovenia, they will see a nice example of formed associations and benefits gained from being organized. One of it is machinery rings that can be very applicable in BiH.
- In the next phase they need to think how to achieve financial sustainability. To begin, they can employ a young person to apply for project proposals and use different funds that are available for the NGOs. However, this is tricky, since subsidies should be just their short-term push to become sustainable, and not the mode of work.
- Bearing in mind that the forest sector is at a crossroads when it comes to regulations and consequently its re-organisation (new law on forest needs to be adopted that will bring about significant changes), the association should take advantage of this situation and appear in the forest policy agenda as an indispensable stakeholder. This way, they will make space to fight for its members rights and interests.

Program Immediate Objective 3: Education on NRM:

IEE in Nepal:

- While the “signs of success” for IEE teachers needs to be further developed/adjusted it is a useful tool for monitoring the immediate impact of EE.
- The success of WCN is largely due to the joint experience and the cooperate spirit of the present very hard-working team. While obviously in time there will be some staff changes, it is important for the program success that the program makes an effort to keep the experienced staff (senior staff promotion, bonus increase for long employment).
- Without continuous support/intervention from WCN, the local curricula developed by WCN and implemented in Chitwan and Rasuwa may not sustain on their own. However, with the newly elected local governments, there is a good chance that they will incorporate the local curricula in their annual budgets. WCN should therefore set time aside during the next phase to lobby for and

support municipalities/local governments to adopt and spread local curricula on their own with allocations of local budgets.

Forestry Training modules at Colleges in Vietnam

- Running courses at half capacity is expensive, inefficient and time-consuming. Any possibility to use forestry groups to encourage/support youngsters to apply for forestry course? And or arrange internships in forest organisations and extension service? Could the cooperatives or the field facilitators offer internships?
- The NVCARD teachers suggested upgrading of the modules and the development of a new module on forest certification. It is suggested that the templates for the modules be made available to the teachers for making smaller adjustments that they find are needed, but as long as the demand for the courses is limited a major module revision seems a bit of an “overkill”. DFE and the coordination unit are at present looking into the options for group certification on cooperation level. A pilot project here seems a more appropriate entry into the complex world of certification.
- The students tend to photocopy the modules again and again – instead they should be made aware that they can download the modules for free. It should be printed in revised modules that they can be found for free on the web, and a label with the web address should be glued inside the cover of existing NVCARD library modules.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Differences between countries and geography, policy, forest history etc make it difficult to generalise, but all partners have moved forwards and generally fulfil the relevant indicators.

Looking at the 5 key words for M&E: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability, the program has made very good progress. In all countries the relevance is in top with all partners addressing important and pressing challenges within the forestry/NRM sector in their country at a time where it is both technically and politically relevant and in a way that may be said to both effective and efficient.

In both Nepal WCN and AFFON in Nepal score high on advocacy and have managed to leave their marks on national forest policies and nationwide environmental education curricula.

By initiating so many chapters in a very short time, AFFON is facing some serious challenges of getting all chapters to function and their boards to be knowledgeable enough. However, in the present political landscape where laws and policies are now being revised on national, state and district level it must be considered the right strategy to try to have representation and involve in the process on all levels. This fact, together with the new national constitution (2015), that delegates more power (and budget) to state and local level and requires revised policies and regulations on all levels clearly indicate that this is the perfect timing for the family forestry movement to gain ground and get involved across the whole of Nepal rather than making pilots with more central support. In a surprisingly short time, and in spite of “beginners difficulties”, AFFON has become an important player in the farm forestry sector, mainly due to very effective advocacy, including widespread use of mass media and political lobbying. This work is likely to continue and be further strengthened in next program phase with rising local chapter capacity and experience.

The impact of WCN’s work in the schools and within the Department of Education is substantial and has been achieved through a long continued and focused effort combined with quality ground work in the schools and with a high level of stakeholder (especially teachers) involvement.

The fact that IEE curricula and materials developed by WCN are now part of the national education plan for all government schools and teacher training programs is a significant success. It could be said that too

much of the material (curricula, books, videos and teacher training materials) is still made by WCN as a “free” service to the department, but this has probably been a necessity to gain the departments trust and cooperation.

The next program phase should consolidate WCNs success within national and local curricula, teachers training and eco-schools encouraging aiming department of Education as well as local governments and individual schools to allocate adequate budgets for both national and local IEE curriculum development and implementation and eco-school activities.

The government institution “The Cooperative Alliance” in Vietnam has shown an interest in the MORE TREES cooperatives as models for farm forest cooperatives, but so far no replication has been made – and the cooperatives’ expectation of financial sustainability within the next 2 years may be too optimistic, as they still struggle with realistic business plans, member recruitment and extension service development. With a focused effort it should be possible to consolidate the MORE TREES cooperatives within the next program period and at the same time ensure the continuation of most of the 116 forestry groups in a way where they can still draw on both Farmer Union and the services of the cooperatives when needed.

And finally, with the forming of the first private forestry association, fea has made a promising start towards a private forest owner “movement” in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the next program phase the lessons learnt from this first success should be used both in increased advocacy and extension and in practical association development, expansion, and replication.

Annexes (Available upon request):

Annex 1: Hannes itinerary for Nepal and Vietnam and Amilas itinerary for Bosnia

Annex 2: The monitoring formats incl. instructions for grading

Annex 3: Debriefing note AFFON

Annex 4: Results of NPP: “Signs of Success”

Annex 5 Draft data from interview and self-review of 1) AFFON, 2) WCN, 3) MORE TREES, 4) FEA

Annex 6: Draft data from field interviews and assessment: Nepal: 1) Rautahat, 2) Gorkha, 3) Kavre and Vietnam: 4) Ha Tinh and 5) Hoa Binh and BiH: 6) Busovača