

Evidence Based Advocacy for Low-Carbon, Pro-Poor Sustainable “Eco-Village Development” (EVD) in South Asia

Report on Eco-Village Development (EVD) Concept Interaction Meeting



Prepared By:

Center for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRT/N)

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Abbreviation

CDM:	Clean Development Mechanism
CEAPRED:	Center for Environmental and Agriculture Policy Research, Extension and Development
CISU:	Civil Society in Development
COP:	Conference of Parties
CRT/N:	Center for Rural Technology, Nepal
CSR:	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV:	Climate Smart Village
DDC:	District Development Committee
EFLG:	Environment Friendly Local Governance
EVD:	Eco-Village Development
GHGs:	Green House Gases
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
NEFEJ:	Nepal Forum for Environment Journalist
SE4ALL:	Sustainable Energy for All
VDC:	Village Development Committee
WOREC:	Women Rehabilitation Center
WWF:	World Wildlife Federation

Project Description

Evidence Based Advocacy for Low-Carbon, Pro-Poor Sustainable “Eco-Village Development” (EVD) in South Asia is a regional project supported by Civil Society in Development (CISU), Denmark which is being implemented in India, Bangladesh, Srilanka and Nepal. Centre for Rural technology, Nepal (CRT/N) is the implementing organizing in Nepal. The countries in South Asia have been identified as countries with emerging economies and expanding populace where developmental activities are bound to contribute in emission of GHGs into the ambient atmosphere. Furthermore, development in growing economies are bound to be centralized therefore development tends to leave large parts of the rural population in poverty. The poorest groups of society are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In such circumstances, implementation of EVD concept can act as an intervention that can address poverty reduction, reduction in emission of GHGs and sustainable development of rural sector of the country and also produce result where development with poverty reduction and climate mitigation does not need to be in conflict. However, advocacy of the EVD concept is necessary in order to aware concerned stakeholders at local, national, regional and international level who can influence the decision and policy makers at different levels respectively. The experience-based advocacy can become a strong tool for promoting and campaigning for EVD concept to be included into national, regional and international negotiations on climate change/mitigation and poverty alleviation.

The EVD Concept Interaction Meeting

The interaction meeting was organized on May 9, 2016 at Bougainvillea, Kathmandu with participation from various stakeholder organizations, government representatives, representatives from project district and villages, representatives from communities and CRT/N team members. In all, the meeting was attended by 52 participants(Annex B).The main objective of the interaction was to introduce the concept of eco-village development concept as an integrated approach of creating development focused, low-carbon communities of practice in pre-existing villages. The meeting also aimed to seek for coordination with stakeholders to promote and integrate eco-village concept into national policies and program. This report consists of the discussions and main outcomes of the interaction meeting.

Proceedings

In the interaction meeting, various organization who in recent times have been working in the project relevant to eco-village development concept and climate friendly initiatives were invited to share their experience working with the rural communities in order to establish village where the development activities are environment and climate friendly. In the first half of the meeting, the presenter from organizations namely DDC, Kavre, CRT/N, CEAPRED, WOREC-Nepal and Social Multipurpose discussed about the eco-friendly initiative that they have been doing in various rural villages of Nepal. The second half of the meeting was organized in an interactive manner in order to ensure maximum participation from the EVD project village representatives, media and stakeholders from district as well as central level.

The day was structured in five sessions as follows:

- A. The opening session
- B. Presentations on initiatives pertinent with EVD concept
- C. Perception of eco-village inhabitants

- D. Panel discussion
- E. Output from open floor discussion

A. The opening session

The opening session was facilitated by Mr. Subas Lamichhane, CRT/N who currently is working as Field Coordinator for the EVD project. In the meeting venue, a model of eco-village was displayed with the purpose to exhibit the concept of eco-village to the participants of the meeting. As the session began, Mr. Lamichhane briefly explained the knowledge materials that were distributed to the participants of the meeting during the registration process. The knowledge materials included the policy brief that was shared at COP21 regarding rationale to EVD concept as tool for rural development and adaptation and mitigation measure for climate change impacts. The knowledge material also included small booklet highlighting the progress being made in EVD project villages. Followed by the briefing of knowledge material, all the participants were requested to introduce themselves to each other.



The opening session was led by Mr. Lumin Shrestha, CRT/N who welcomed the participants of the meeting. Mr. Shrestha gave brief introduction about Center for Rural technology, Nepal (CRT/N) and its initiatives including Eco-Village Development project. He then briefed the objectives of the meeting. Mr. Shrestha highlighted about project elements like components of eco-village development, how EVD is addressing climate change and how it has helped in promotion of rural livelihood. He questioned “How to uplift EVD into national level policy?” and discussed to share, exchange knowledge among self for holistic approach for climate solution. Mr. Shrestha also stressed the importance of uplifting

the status of women in village that is to be developed by adopting concept of eco-village. He wished for successful conduction of the workshop.

B. Presentation on initiatives pertinent with EVD concept

Mr. Anjit Gautam, Environment Officer from DDC, Kavre, gave a presentation on Environment Friendly Local Governance (EFLG) frameworks: A path towards eco-village. He gave importance to environment friendly local solutions emphasizing the use of renewable energy and climate resilient agro-practices. The local villages being highly dependent on natural resources, he stressed on conservations issues considering 3 pillars such as nature conservation, waste management and tourism for sustainable development of local livelihood. The current local issues like traditional practice of agriculture, forest fires, overgrazing, unmanaged constructions of roads, problem like landslides, water scarcity, high volume of indoor smoke and others were discussed. He explained

how EVD solutions are helping to combat such problems. He talked about management of roads, better agro practices, and agriculture forest on public land, improved cooking stove and clean energy access for sustainable development of rural sector of Nepal. Mr. Gautam made clear how one individual house can help in abating climate change by adopting one or more EVD solutions which is to be chosen according their need. He stressed that concerned stakeholders, civil societies, local government bodies and beneficiary rural communities should join hand in development environment friendly villages that will help to enhance the livelihood of rural people and in the same time contribute in climate mitigation and adaptation endeavors.



Mr. Niraj Shrestha, Project Officer for Eco-Village Development Project of EVD from CRT/N made a presentation regarding briefing and progress of “Evidence Based Advocacy for Low-Carbon, Pro-Poor Sustainable “Eco-Village Development” (EVD) in South Asia” project. The presentation oriented the participants about the essence of eco-village development concept. The presentation highlighted the necessity of nexus between renewable energy, climate resilient agro-practice and gender mainstreaming to develop ideal eco-village that is capable of addressing climate change issues as well as

contribute in developmental issues of rural sectors so as to enhance the livelihood of rural populace of Nepal. Mr. Shrestha termed those solutions as EVD solutions that are capable to mitigate GHG emissions, or adapt climate change impacts while contributing in rural livelihood. Mr. Shrestha stressed on the challenges and issues that are to be addressed in order to promote EVD. The challenges were mainly focused on lack of information and awareness regarding government programs and policies, subsidy delivery mechanism, women friendly financing schemes and lack of vision to address climate mitigation potential from Nepal. He highlighted ongoing progress; changes brought by implementation of various EVD solutions in the project villages. In order to make rural people aware about the eco-village concept, it is very essential to share knowledge and aware those people about how climate change impacts will affect them and how they can mitigate those impacts. He also stressed that the end user of various EVD solutions are to be capacitated in order to ensure sustainability of EVD solutions. For sustainability as much as possible the EVD solution has to be integrated with their livelihood and bring positive impacts resulting in enhancement of their livelihood. Mr. Shrestha emphasized on way forward regarding replication of Eco-village Development Concept. He stressed that EVD concept can be promoted as tool to achieve ambitious targets set by national plans and programs regarding renewable energy and rural development. He made a point that government of Nepal has already showed an intent to develop eco-village as they have promulgated EFLG framework with indicators to measure if village can be termed as eco-village or not. So in that circumstance if relevant private and government stakeholders, CSOs, community coordinate and bring eco-village development programs in a way

that is able to address indicators of EFLG then such villages would contribute to meet the targets set by national level plans, policies and programs. In the end he pointed that in order to advocate about the EVD concept media will have indomitable role to convince decision makers to include the EVD concept for rural development as well as in climate negotiations.

Mr. Roshan Subedi, CEAPRED, presented an overview of “Climate Smart Village (CSV)” for rural development. He made a point regarding Nepal’s economy whose main stay is agro-sector needs to be developed in a climate friendly manner if village is to be called eco-village. To back his remark he presented some climate friendly agro-based initiatives that have been successfully implemented in various VDCs of Kavre district. In order to develop CSV or eco-village there needs to be behavioral change among the rural dwellers. He discussed various behavior which rural dweller need to be acquainted with. Such behaviors includes practices which he termed as *water smart (reuse of water and integration of micro-irrigation system)*, *soil nutrient smart (organic fertilizer and pesticides)*, *crop smart (off-season cultivation, crop switching and crop rotation)*, *ICT smart (use of mobile service to get agro-based information regarding weather, price, market, etc)*, *energy smart (use of plastic tunnels and renewable water lifting technologies)*, *gender smart (building capacity of women)* and *future smart (crop and livestock insurance)*. He shared the success story of using organic manure, pesticides (Jholmal) for cereal crop as well as for vegetables. He asserted that agriculture being livelihood of major chunk of Nepalese population, the village that will be developed through eco-village concept needs to prioritize those EVD solutions that can be integrated with agro-practices so as to uplift the rural livelihood.



Ms. Lalita Thapa, WOREC Nepal, made presentation about role of women in sustainable eco-village. She talked about promoting food security and sustainable livelihood through women empowerment. She pointed that in order to develop eco-village there needs to be commitment from community, active groups or networks of local people, involvement of local government, and economic empowerment of women. She focused on new role of women in eco-village and advocated women to be made change agent in order to establish eco-village. She perceives migration of male population as

rationale to advocate for eco-village development concept. Since most of the villages are occupied with overwhelming population of women, she stressed that in village that is being developed through eco-village concept the EVD solutions must address the needs of women member of the society. The EVD solution selection process must include women members as they are the one who are directly linked with livelihood of the family and health status of the family. She stressed that women needs to be made aware about various EVD solution so that they can figure out why installing certain EVD solutions will address their development issues which are mainly related with enhancing income of their family, improving sanitation status of the family and ensuring food

security for their family. Finally she asserted that until and unless women member feel empowered in a village by contributing in the income of the family and have decision making authority while being able to live in the village with dignity no matter how good the EVD solutions are installed in the village, the village cannot be termed as eco-village.

Mr. Bishnu Prasad Paudel, Multipurpose from Meghauli, Chitwan sketched his presentation on theme of sustainable eco-Village modality to promote eco-tourism. He discussed how various EVD solutions can be integrated in village level livelihood practices in order to develop community that is able to attract both national and international tourists in the village. Mr. Paudel reflects on his experience working in eco-tourism sector by giving examples of implementation of EVD solutions that has been able to attract tourist. He believes that eco-village not only improves livelihood of villagers but such villages can promote eco-tourism along with education for self dependency of villages. He suggests that eco-village should promote indigenous practices and knowledge of local people as these have been tried and tested since the time of their ancestors. For sustainability of eco-village local knowledge and opinions should be evaluated and incorporated. The EVD solutions like cookstoves should be designed in such a way that it does not disrupt the cultural values attached with cooking practices. He explained eco-villages should help to promote local culture and customs, make optimum use of resources available in surrounding environment and encourage resident of such village to become entrepreneurs. He discussed about rationale of eco-village development and identified challenges to promote eco-village which were lack of skills to adopt EVD solutions, lack of supportive policies to promote eco-village, lack of knowledge to manage solid non-biodegradable wastes and political instability.



C. Perception of eco-village inhabitants

This session was facilitated by Mr. Subash Lamichane, CRT/N and the inhabitants from the EVD project village pointed out their achievements, challenges and issues faced while being part of Eco-Village Development project.

Ms. Makhmali Singtan, resident of Chamrangbeshi V.D.C. is happy that she is able to use biogas as well as portable improved cookstoves at home and does not have to go hill slopes to search firewood. She exclaims with delight "It is saving lots of time and I am focusing on agriculture on spare time". She said "I am practicing agriculture on plastic tunnel and now I feel that I will be able to significantly contribute in improving family income". Additionally, she says the organic manure preparation has helped in better production from her farmland. Further she adds "The electricity supply from national grid is very erratic, so I convinced my family members to get solar home system to power her home. She feels that with



assurance of light in her home at night she is enjoying flexibility in managing time for kitchen work. She said "I am thankful to CRT/N and concerned organizations for encouraging women to decide in selection of EVD solutions. Now that I have various EVD solutions, I will actively work and bring more good result".



Ms. Yam Maya Shrestha, is resident of Dhungharkha V.D.C. She looks after Hydraulic Ram pump installed nearby her house. She even makes minor repairs of hydraulic ram pump. She said "I am very delighted to look and supervise ram pump for my village. It not only provides water for locality but has given me confidence to do works other than household chores. Being women it is challenging to do mechanical work but still I am capable to perform which delights me. This would not have been possible if the project had not requested my community to send female representative in hydraulic ram pump repair and

maintenance training. According to her there were lots of traditional practices, especially cooking in confined space which has now changed. There are various eco-friendly activities going on in my village like developing nursery system, plastic tunnel for off season growth of vegetables, waste water management, livestock waste management for manure preparation which are helping villagers to move forward and establish themselves as change agent to develop first eco-village in their VDC".

Ms. Rupa Lama is resident of Chahal Ganesthan V.D.C. She comes from very backward village. She recalls "I was so hesitant to speak earlier. Now you can see changes on me. I am standing in front and speaking my mind." She added, "Earlier tunnel practice was limited to certain privileged ones, it is now diversified. Rain water collection system with sprinkler is now integrated with our temporary shelter which gives us great opportunity to use water in our kitchen garden and produce food at least for self consumption. The villagers have dug pits to collect water that has been used to wash face and utensils. We have been encouraged to use this water for irrigation. The training has made me more curious to know things. I learned about these solutions during EVD project knowledge sharing sessions held in our village. I am expecting to learn more about EVD in coming days. I am so thankful to CRT/N and concerned organizations for selecting our village which prior to earthquake was discarded by most of other development organizations."



D. Panel Discussion

The Panel discussion was organized with the objectives of linking the output and outcomes of initiatives such as the Environment Friendly Villages to the national Sustainable Development and other climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Dr. Indira Shakya (Senior Gender Expert) moderated the session with the following panelists:

1. Mr. Suman Basnet (Independent Energy Expert)
2. Mr. Ugan Manandhar (Deputy Director, WWF Nepal)
3. Mr. Sahaj Man Shrestha (President, NEFEJ)



Mr. Suman Basnet (Independent Energy Expert) is currently involved in developing SE4ALL country action agenda for Nepal. According to Mr. Basnet, while doing development activities, resources should be used wisely to make it available for future generation. Wherever, we need comfort either in village or urban areas, there is always requirement of technology (sources), productive work and money for that purpose. The technology used should be renewable and one should make sustainable use of resources: both human and financial but having long

lasting impact without compromising with environmental balance. Result of resource used should be clean- effect should be sustainable. EVD is such concept which touches social, economic, and environmental aspects of society with focus on climate protection. In most of the development initiatives, environment was not given importance but now we should place it on the top of our development priority. Development initiatives should progress from the grass root level by addressing the values of local people. EVD concept translates a development process where the values of the people are shared and addressed.

In response to the question regarding EVD concept's ability to contribute to SE4ALL's two major objectives: doubling share of renewable energy and improving access to modern energy technologies, Mr. Basnet mentioned that SE4ALL deals with target which is just a number. The number is decided internationally but action like EVD at local level gives result. Eco-village is filling the missing gap giving sustainability in development endeavors. The EVD project has raised local level empowerment, their stakes in national level, has helped in knowledge and skills dissemination; such independent acts help in collective solutions. EVD is contributing a lot on ground level for SE4ALL. Objective of Eco-village does complement the objectives of SE4ALL.

In response to sustainability issues and ability of EVD concept to achieve sustainable development Mr. Basnet, stated that the EVD initiative should be inner driven; while involving people one needs to consider this fact. Any clean and renewable energy project should be given top priority as is being done in EVD. Information dissemination should be priority as the beneficiary population

must be provided with information regarding how to share information on ongoing plans, policies and program etc., skills required and capacity building initiatives, policy issues etc. It seems that there are enough technical skills being promoted in EVD solution but the missing link is managerial skills, and how to make cash flow transparent and how to effectively utilize cash. These managerial skills are also very essential for sustainability of the concept.

Mr. Ugan Manandhar, Deputy Director for WWF, Nepal is also a member of climate negotiation team for Nepal. Mr. Manandhar exclaimed that eco-village is a very good concept. Everyone should be encouraged for “Let’s build our village ourselves” kind of attitude. EVD concept touches all developmental aspects which includes social, environment and economic aspects. It motivates people to develop their village by themselves making it environmentally sustainable. The low carbon based development approach should be developed and promoted from village level to town. He expressed that when WWF worked for forest conservation in earlier days community element was lacking. But recently WWF initiated sustainable community program that have evolved integrating, education, skill building and management along with the main theme of conservation. In order for EVD concept to address sustainability issue, villages need these entire programs along with eco-village approach for the sustainable development. Regarding potentials of EVD concept in mitigating climate change Mr. Manandhar elucidated that the EVD concept can be a good example to showcase at international level how small action at local level is helping to abate climate change at national and global level. People at grass root are contributing for climate mitigation though their contribution on carbon emission is very negligible. This can draw the attention at international level for broader discussions.



Mr. Sahaj Man Shrestha, President for NEFEJ believes the concept of eco-village or climate smart village is really good and such concepts need to be switched onto for making smart city as well. The concept of smart city is also being brought forward by government. So in that context, eco-village development concept where local people are involved for development of their community to improve their livelihood can exemplify itself to promote smart city in future. For this media has a key role to play in advocating what has been done on the ground. The mainstream news should share information that describes “What is Eco-village?”,

“What are needs of eco village and what has been done there?” The broader section of society has to know of the efforts, toil and sweat shed by people at grass root for development of eco-village.

When asked about how media can take such news to stakeholders. Mr. Shrestha explained that Nepalese mainstream media is prioritizing news based on politics, abuses, harassment, corruption; social norms breaking are selling on main streaming media. But this trend is slowly changing;

projects like EVD are also gaining attention. With the presence of community FM, Television channel and other campaign the media scenario has been changing. There are about 27-28 local level TV stations and more than 500 community level radio stations. Many people are also drawn to news from grass root for attention at national level. There are lots of media house who are sharing news and information. ICT can help in empowering people with world knowledge and right dialogue at local level. On topic related to bridging gap on supplying information from low (village) level to high (city) level, he explained the presence of various hurdles in information sharing and specifically stressing on lack of audience. Sensitization and sustainable development awareness depend on people's choice. He also explained that the general public should also encourage and demand for developmental, environmental and social news. There should be less editorial restrictions for such cases. Creative approach should be followed for engaging audiences. The concepts of lots of ground works like home stay, EVD solutions and other empowering activities for men and women should be promoted.

E. Output from open floor discussion

Mr. Madhu Sudan Guragain, Nagarik Daily explained that there are no markets to share farmers talk, no encouragement of such by readers. But slowly there is rise in news from grass root level. He suggested still we are following traditional practices of agriculture which should be discouraged; more use of technologies and ICT should be incorporated. Local solution has to be encouraged. EVD provides logical addressing of this problem. There must be balance share of information among involved institutions. According to Mr. Guragain there is immense need of discussions with editors to promote such creative approach of EVD. He also suggested that the editors of most of the newspaper and magazines needs to be sensitized in order to highlight news related with environment and climate change in the front page of the paper. Only then the reporter will be encouraged to develop or cover such news.



Mr. Srijan Adhikari, ACORAB shared opinion as solution should be field based. The concepts like EVD solutions should be encouraged. There must be combine actions for all. As remark of Mr. Niraj Shrestha for need of community information desk, Mr. Srijan suggested to use community radio as information desk for local community to get up to date on upcoming news, events and even government level plans, policies and programs. For this the audio based media segment has to be sensitized regarding importance of disseminating news that are of relevance to farmer communities. There must be increment in people's role on local development along with government support.

Ms. Prem Kumari Ghale, BSP Nepal shared her views and said EVD is providing clean energy access to people which delighted her. The use of Bio-gas as alternative energy solution provides multiple advantages like for power for cooking and organic manure. Ms. Ghale on the remark presented by Ms. Lalita Thapa regarding unsuitability of biogas in cold region, mentioned that biogas can be used in colder region as there are various techniques to ensure production of gas in colder region. Further she added that BSP Nepal is carrying out test to produce biogas or increase the efficiency of biogas system in cold climate regions as well.



Mr. Niraj Shrestha directed his question to Mr. Ugan Manandhar about possibility of advocating EVD concept in climate negotiation as climate mitigating solution with potential of the concept to contribute in CDM. Mr. Manandhar responded that until and unless the scalability of development of eco-village is high, starting the procedure of CDM is difficult, time and cost consuming as well. So until the scalability is high, the concept can be advocated and promoted in different climate and environment forums as low carbon based development concept contributing in uplifting livelihood of rural people. Through this development concept, country like Nepal that contributes least in

global emission of GHGs can exemplify itself in international climate platforms about contributing in climate mitigation although having no legal obligation to do so.

Concluding Remarks

Concluding remarks was given by Mr. Ganesh Ram Shrestha, Executive Director, CRT/N which highlighted the major discussion of the workshop. There are lots of organizations involved in similar approach to EVD but there is huge gap and diversity in their involvement. There is need for better co-operation among stakeholders involved in similar initiatives. There should be environment to share information, experience, skills and facilities. We should be focusing on replicating such initiative so it comes in radar of government. Simply policy should not be barrier as we have seen such greater value generation and good result early in project implementation phase. The true result is change in rural livelihood along with best practice which we could hear from people who shared their words with us. EVD concept is not only advocating about building capacity of people and introducing various EVD solutions but it is also helping to narrow gender inequality situations in rural sectors. Mr. Shrestha encouraged promoting eco-products, and their markets. There are challenges to marketing of eco-village and mainstreaming it into national level policy making and implementation. We should try to promote use of Social



Corporate Responsibility (CSR) for financing eco-solutions. Planning process based on EVD concept should also be integrated in mainstream planning process in order to address major national issues like improving access to modern energy, rural development and contributing in climate adaptation as well as in mitigation. Resource mobilization and managerial intervention are necessary for taking EVD to national campaign. Mr. Shrestha appreciated working, proceeding of Eco Village Development Concept Interaction Meeting; gave note of thanks for organizer, presenter and participants of the meeting.

ANNEX A: Program Schedule

Date: May 9, 2016

Venue: Bougainvilla, Tripureshowr

Time	Session	Resource Person	Remarks
09:00 – 09:30	Breakfast and registration		
09:30 – 09:40	Welcome and Objective of the Meeting	Mr. Lumin Kumar Shrestha Senior Director, CRT/N	
09:40 – 09:50	EFLG framework: A path towards eco-village	MOFALD	
09:50 – 10:20	EVD project briefing and progress	Mr. Niraj Shrestha/ Mr. Subas Lamichhane, CRT/N	
10:20 – 10:40	Climate smart village for rural development	CEAPRED	
10:40 – 11:00	Gender mainstreaming in eco-village	WOREC, Nepal	
11:00 – 11:10	TEA BREAK		
11:10 – 11:30	Sustainable eco-village modality	Mr. Bishnu Prasad Paudel Social Multi-purpose, Meghauli (Chitwan)	
11:30 – 11:50	Perception of inhabitants of eco-village	Eco-village inhabitants	
11:50 – 12:30	Remarks on eco-village concept in rural development	Mr. Suman Basnet, Independent Energy Expert Mr. Ugan Manandhar, Deputy Director, WWF, Nepal Mr. Sahaj Man Shrestha, President, NEFEJ	Facilitator: Dr. Indira Shakya, Senior Gender Expert
12:30 – 12:40	Closing Remarks	Mr. Ganesh Ram Shrestha Executive Director, CRT/N	
12:45 – 01:45	LUNCH BREAK		

ANNEX B: List of Participants

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