



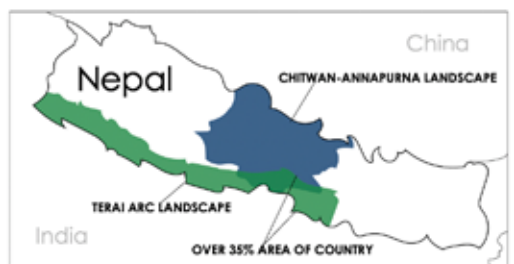
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HARIYO BAN: ENSURING A RESILIENT FUTURE FOR NEPAL'S PEOPLE, WILDLIFE, FORESTS, AND RIVERS

Nepal is home to some of the richest and most diverse plant and animal life on the planet, including endangered wildlife—such as tiger, greater one-horned rhino and gharial in the lowlands of the Terai, and elusive snow leopard and red panda in the mountains. Nepal is also one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, putting its people, wildlife, forests and rivers at risk¹.

USAID's 10-year Hariyo Ban Program aims to increase ecosystem and community resilience in the Chitwan-Annapurna and Terai Arc landscapes. Its name means “green forests are the wealth of Nepal”—and in addition to providing natural resources for local people, forests play a vital role sequestering carbon, regulating water flows, stabilizing steep hillsides and conserving biodiversity. Hariyo Ban works to reduce threats to biodiversity and help people and nature adapt to climate change. Recognizing local communities' important role in stewarding forests, the program supports forest-dependent households to enhance their livelihoods through market-based enterprises, works to improve governance of natural resources, and promotes gender equality and social inclusion (GESI).

Implemented by a consortium of WWF, CARE Nepal, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), and the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), Hariyo Ban partners with local community groups, government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector.



Landscapes where Hariyo Ban works

HARIYO BAN ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS



Tiger numbers increased from 198 to 235 between 2013 and 2018, close to Nepal's internationally declared target for doubling the tiger population



30,270 people living in critical landscapes have experienced improved economic benefits



117 subcommittees were formed in natural resource management groups to deal with gender-based violence issues



One-horned rhinoceros, wild water buffalo, and blackbuck were successfully reestablished in parts of their former ranges



Climate change resilience improved for 288,499 people in Phase I and 120,266 in Phase II



Support was provided for over 150 government policies at different levels



970,524 hectares of critical landscapes are now under improved natural resource management, facilitating corridors for wildlife



559 drinking water and 248 irrigation schemes were supported



14,855 people took part in community learning and action centers, including 14,276 women and adolescent girls



Community relief funds have been established at national, sub-basin, and community levels to address human-wildlife conflict



571 sites have new or improved measures to reduce flooding, riverbank erosion, and landslides



87% of leadership positions in community management groups are filled by a woman or a member of a vulnerable group, up from a baseline of 72%

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-climate-risk-index-2020>



CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY AND PROTECTING WILDLIFE

Hariyo Ban has worked with partners to conserve biodiversity by reducing threats and climate vulnerabilities. A major focus has been on reducing wildlife crimes such as poaching and illegal trade in core areas and along strategic trade routes. Several species have been reintroduced in parts of the Terai Arc. Since local communities are key stewards of biodiversity, Hariyo Ban works with them to strengthen community forest management, improve livelihoods for forest-dependent households, and reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Wildlife numbers on the rise

With greater habitat protection by government and local communities, and support to government agencies to tackle illegal wildlife trade, Nepal's tiger population nearly doubled in just nine years to 235 animals in 2018. Rhino numbers increased from 435 in 2009 to 645 in 2015, and since 2011 there have been seven 365-day periods of zero rhino poaching in Nepal.

Wildlife lab helps combat zoonoses

Hariyo Ban supported the National Trust for Nature Conservation to upgrade Nepal's only molecular diagnostic wildlife laboratory in Chitwan so it can conduct genetic research for endangered species and monitor diseases that threaten wildlife, livestock, and human health. This, along with reducing poaching and wildlife trade, can play an important role in prevention and early diagnosis of possible zoonoses in the future.

Reducing environmental impacts of infrastructure development

Nepal's infrastructure is expanding rapidly but is not always well planned, presenting a growing threat for its people, wildlife, and environment. Hariyo Ban supports environmentally sound infrastructure development by providing training for improved rural road planning, which reduces risks of landslides, erosion, and flooding. It has also helped pilot wildlife guiding fences, canopy bridges, and underpasses on highways; and measures that prevent wildlife from drowning in irrigation canals.





CONSERVING RIVER BASINS AND WATERSHEDS

To conserve watersheds threatened by climate change and inappropriate land-use practices, Hariyo Ban collaborated with upstream and downstream stakeholders on integrated watershed management approaches to promote healthy ecosystems, reliable water supplies, disaster risk management, and climate adaptation. In Phase I, the program supported a climate-smart strategy for the Gandaki river basin that makes up the Chitwan-Annapurna Landscape. In Phase II, the program expanded its work on watershed-scale adaptation and shared its multi-scale institutional results with Government as it developed the National Integrated River Basin Strategy and Action Plan for Nepal, as well as an amendment to the Soil and Watershed Conservation Act.

BUILDING RESILIENCE AND SUPPORTING ADAPTATION TO A CHANGING CLIMATE

More erratic weather patterns in Nepal increase the risk of landslides, soil erosion, flooding, drought and forest fire, affecting water supplies, agriculture, infrastructure, forests, and wildlife. Hariyo Ban's climate-adaptation work uses nature-based solutions to support poor, vulnerable, and socially excluded communities adapt. Since many natural ecosystems and the services they provide are themselves vulnerable, the program works to build their resilience.

Leveraging climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction in local government

In Phase I, Hariyo Ban worked with communities and local authorities to produce local climate-adaptation action plans. Nepal adopted a new national constitution, held national elections and restructured the government, creating many new local municipalities. In Phase II the program was then able to support municipalities to incorporate adaptation activities into their planning, thus mainstreaming adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Financial support for adaptation and disaster risk reduction has now become more sustainable and will continue beyond the life of the program.

Rising to resilience

In Phase II, Hariyo Ban helped 120,266 people improve their resilience to climate change. Adaptation measures included improved water security through watershed management, water source protection, and water efficiency; improved food security and nutrition through climate-adapted agriculture; increased income through alternative climate-adapted livelihoods; and disaster-risk reduction through measures like flood management, landslide prevention, and forest restoration.

Supporting the most vulnerable

The people most vulnerable to climate hazards often include marginalized groups such as poor forest-dependent people, Dalits, Janajatis (Indigenous people), women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Hariyo Ban has focused on building their capacity to participate actively in community processes to identify their climate vulnerabilities, plan adaptation responses, and benefit from support. During this process, they learn about their rights and are empowered to secure them through action.



IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS AND EMPOWERING PEOPLE

Reducing poverty through market-based enterprises

To reduce biodiversity threats and climate vulnerabilities in Nepal, Hariyo Ban supports alternative livelihood opportunities for people in forest-dependent marginalized communities. Through development of market-based enterprises and provision of skills training to increase employment potential, many people were able to increase their incomes and reduce their dependency on forests.

Promoting rights and representation for women and marginalized groups

Hariyo Ban's focus on gender and social inclusion—building capacity in marginalized people to understand their rights and have the self-confidence to stand up and claim them—includes establishing groups where people come together to discuss challenges and learn ways to overcome them. The issues are wide-ranging, from gender-based violence to exclusion from sharing in forest benefits. Group members are empowered to take action and improve their circumstances. Some have gone on to take leadership roles in community forest user groups, advocate for better access to health services, tackle key social issues, and be elected as local government representatives.

Strengthening capacity of local communities to manage natural resources

One of Nepal's remarkable strengths is the grassroots engagement of local groups, including those managing natural resources. However, weak institutional capacity often limits groups' effectiveness. Hariyo Ban used an institutional capacity-building approach to improve governance, natural resource management and internal organization, promoting better accountability, equitable benefit-sharing and representation of the poorest and most marginalized people in leadership. The program also helped establish sub-watershed coordination committees, applying the same best practices in capacity building and governance as they addressed local watershed management issues.

FROM FIREWOOD TO JEWELRY

In the Tanahun District, Parvati Sunar and other women from 26 poor Dalit families in Bhanu Municipality-3 used to collect firewood from a nearby community forest. The forest is in an important north-south biodiversity corridor, and firewood collection was a key threat. Through a revolving fund established by Hariyo Ban this group of women obtained a loan to make traditional clay jewelry which they are now selling to buyers from Kathmandu and Pokhara. With the increased income the women are able to send their children to school, and their standing in the community has grown dramatically. They no longer collect firewood and are protecting their forest.





POST-EARTHQUAKE GREEN RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION

Responding to the major disaster of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Hariyo Ban provided emergency relief supplies to partner communities, followed by recovery and reconstruction support in four of the worst affected districts, including in some very remote areas. The program had a major focus on increasing resilience to future hazards through building back better and greener, helping promote sound environmental practices both at community level and in government ministries such as those responsible for housing, water and education.

BUILDING ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR A THRIVING FUTURE

In addition to its work in the field, the program helped strengthen the policy environment by supporting government at all levels in the new federal structure to formulate, review and update policies. The program also produced many outreach materials for local audiences and several peer-reviewed papers.

Over its lifetime Hariyo Ban introduced cutting-edge approaches and adapted as it learned about what was working and was not working—maintaining flexibility, responding to new opportunities, and embracing complexity while keeping the end goal in sight. Looking forward, the future of Hariyo Ban's legacy lies in ownership and active engagement by local governments, communities and civil society to maintain landscape resilience and ensure a sound future for Nepal's people, wildlife, forests and rivers.

Hariyo Ban Program



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