

A Concept Note
for the review of the Master Plan for the Forest Sector (1988-2011)
and
the preparation of Nepal's Forest Sector Strategy (2012-2022)

Rationale

The operation of the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) has come to its end in July 2011. Varied degree of achievements, challenges and opportunities have been experienced in the process of the implementation of six primary and six supportive programmes set by the master plan which ran for twenty four years. The overall performance of the plan needs a thorough assessment in order to see whether or not this policy document has achieved its intended social and environmental goals of forest conservation and livelihood improvement of forest dependent people respectively.

After the launch of MPFS in 1988, many issues and perspectives have emerged into the arena of national and international policies such as MDGs, decentralized community based forest management systems, landscape approach to biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, the green economy, promotion of concept of ecosystem services, forest certification and payments for environmental services, REDD+ and local communities and indigenous peoples' rights, market opportunities and private sector services and so on.

Moreover, since the inception of the MPFS in 1988, the political system of the country has changed twice, one in 1990 and the other in 2006. The forestry sector itself is facing a number of unfolding challenges and opportunities, resulting from changes within and outside the sector including institutional restructuring and governance improvement. Furthermore, change in demography, social composition, population pattern due to conflict and migration, infrastructure development, attitudes, aspirations, needs of people have been significantly changed in the last 25 years.

The need and demand of partnerships between the government, communities and private sector are ever increasing. The commitment of the Government to maintain the forest cover area at minimum 40 percent of total land area of the country has enhanced the potential of the sector to contribute to a greater positive impact on environment and people's livelihoods. There is a world-wide trend towards increasing transfer of power and responsibilities to the sub-national and local levels of government.

Very importantly, Nepal is in the process of political and institutional restructuring. Therefore, the process of forest sector strategy development needs go along with the political restructuring as it is mandatory that the new strategy embraces in all way the state's political, institutional and organizational set-up. In this context, MFSC has therefore realized that a thorough revision of forestry sector policies in Nepal has become necessary due to changes in political and social priorities, in the current context of environment and climate, new opportunities and lessons learnt from the past in order to identify the gaps and pave forward the future direction.

How will it be done?

The task is divided into three distinct but interrelated stages

Stage I: Conceptualization and methodology

- Develop a conceptual and methodological framework to review the Master Plan and design a framework to prepare a new forest sector strategy.
- Literature review - Make general assessment of the implementation of the forestry sector and related policy documents including but not limited to key policies, legislations, regulations and guidelines after 1990 notably the Forest Act, 1993, Forest Rules, 1995, relevant operational guidelines, Forestry

Policy 2002, Agricultural Perspective Plan (1995), National Biodiversity Strategy 2002 and Implementation Plan (2006), periodic plans, and other policy and legal amendments and circulars.

- Endorsement of the conceptual framework, methodology and literature review reports.

The key deliverables from stage I are expected to be the conceptual framework and methodology and literature review report

Stage II: Review of the implementation status of the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector - status, achievements, challenges, missed opportunities, and lesson learned

- Carry out the assessment of the achievements, gaps and lesson learned from the implementation of 12 programmes of the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector through the literature review and the collection of the feedback from different stakeholders.
- Consultation meetings, field work, feedback collection and draft review report preparation
- Finalizing review report/dissemination

The key deliverables from stage II would be the master plan implementation review report. It is expected to be not more than a 35 pages analytical report plus annexures

Stage III: Forestry Sector Strategy Development

- Prepare a report on the forest sector strategy through consultation with key stakeholders covering the current status, achievements, challenges, gaps, opportunities and lesson learned, the areas of improvements and future direction of Nepal's forestry sector.
- Carry out stakeholders' consultation for feedback
- Presentation and submission of draft forestry sector strategy for input
- Incorporate inputs and finalization of the strategy

The key deliverables from stage III would be Forestry Sector Strategy for Nepal (30 pages excl. annexures)

For doing above tasks, the consultant(s) will develop a detailed work plan for this assignment based on the TOR provided and the same is to be presented in its inception workshop.

All these 3 steps are very clearly interlinked however, it is important to establish a clear cut-off points between these steps so that learning and recommendations from one stage are ready to use for the next stage work.

In summary, the process involves the following activities:

- Formation of the Advisory Committee and the Task Force under the leadership of the Secretary and the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation with clear Terms of References (TORs).
- Review of the implementation status of the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector and other relevant international, national and local level policies, plans, legislations, rules, guidelines, and the preparation of the Forest Sector Strategy by a team of independent consultants
- Consultation meetings and workshops with relevant multiple stakeholders and interest groups from government, non-government, private sector and community based organisations, experts and personalities
- Write up series of review and learning reports on the review of the Master Plan and at the same time prepare a draft of the new forest sector strategy
- Incorporation of feedbacks received from a wide range of actors on review papers
- Presentation of the review papers by the consultants through Task Force
- Presentation of draft strategy paper by the Secretary for the approval by the Minister
- Integration of feedbacks received from a wide range of actors on the draft strategy paper
- Approval by the cabinet and the announcement of the Nepal's forest sector strategy paper

Institutional arrangement and human resources

Under the overall guidance of the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, an Advisory Committee will provide strategic direction to the Task Force, which will facilitate the process of both (i) the review of the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector and (ii) preparation of the new Forestry Sector Strategy. The Task Force seeks services from consultants and experts from various backgrounds and mobilizes various organizational and personal expertise from international, national and local levels (Table below).

Human resources	Expected number of days	Remarks
National Coordinator		Secretary/or his representative
Team Leader and National Experts	Up to 200 person days	Consultant/Contract
Research assistants and volunteers	Up to 1000 person days	Upon demand, to be made available by development partners and various organizations

In addition to the Advisory Committee, the Task Force and Consultancy services it is envisioned that the necessary additional inputs, if required, will be sought from like-minded development partners. Support will also be sought from a pool of human resources from the on-going projects and programmes, university students, researchers, field assistants and volunteers which are willing to contribute in the process of the review and the preparation of the strategy. Preferably young and enthusiastic professionals will be mobilised to gather documents, collate information, assist senior consultants in organizing consultation meetings, writing minutes, keep records, for indexing files, taking the inventory of knowledge - reading materials, interviews and to establish a resource folder to make the reading materials available electronically and in hard copies for reference.

In addition, upon the request of the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation as National Coordinator, a group of national and international experts as peer reviewer will be assisting the Task Force. These human resources are expected to be made available by the development partners as a part of Technical Assistance to ensure that the strategic provisions are well informed to the local, national and global agenda. These experts are expected to be the pool of resources made available upon demands as helping hands of the Team Leader and the national experts to offer missing information, comments, technical and methodological inputs to the framework of the document and the draft reports. These experts should have extensive knowledge and experience of national and international context of forest policy and policy making processes and practice on ground.

The active involvement of civil society in this process is vital. Therefore, it is expected that the civil society organizations will contribute by organizing consultations at local levels and providing feedback to the whole process.

Financial resources

Basket fund will be created at the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation through direct funding arrangement. Relevant development partners and donor funded projects are expected to contribute both intellectually and financially.

Time frame

The whole process of the review of the Master Plan and the preparation of the strategy paper is expected to be completed in 8-12 month time period. See Table below, the details of the work plan.

Month/Activity	Month1	Month2	Month3	Month4	Month5	Month6	Month 7-8
Preliminary Desk Review and the elaboration of the TOR	*						
Preparation and the presentation of the detailed work plan, conceptual and methodological framework	*						
Desk review of the documents		*	*	*			
Consultation with the key stakeholders		*	*	*			
Preparation of the draft report on the review of the Master Plan				*			
Sharing of findings and revision of the draft report on the review of the Master Plan				*			
Literature review for the preparation of the strategy paper		*	*	*			
Consultation with key stakeholders		*	*	*			
Preparation of the draft forest sector strategy report					*	*	
Distribute the draft review report and the strategy paper for peer reviewing/ wider consultation – regional meetings					*	*	
National level interaction programs for final feedback collection						*	
Submission of the draft reports						*	
Peer reviewing						*	
Submission of the final reports							*

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