

World Bank - Grant Reporting and Monitoring (GRM) Report

Report to Donor

Ref. TFOA6108
Printed On: 02/04/2021

Reporting Period: 07/01/2019 to 06/30/2020
Report Type: Progress Report
Report Status: DRAFT

Assignment: TFOA6108

Bhutan REDD+ Readiness Preparation Support Program AF FCPFR - Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

Task Team Leader: 00000239109 - Andrea Kutter
Approving Manager: 00000175113 - Christophe Crepin

Summary Information	
TF Status	ACTV
Recipient Country	Bhutan
Executed By	Recipient
Managing Unit	9274 - SSAE1
Grant Start Date / End Date	02/09/2018 to 12/31/2021
Original Grant Amount	4,800,000.00
Grant Amount	4,800,000.00
Outstanding Commitments	0.00
Cumulative Disbursements	3,591,288.24 as of 06/30/2020
Disbursed 07/01/2019 to 06/30/2020	1,162,526.39
Donor	TF602001 - MULTIPLE DONORS

This GRM report includes the following sections: Overview, Components, Outcome, Execution, Program(FCPFR), Disbursements.

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OVERVIEW

Overall Assessments

Grant Objectives:

The objective of the AF for Bhutan's REDD+ Readiness is to build national capacity of Bhutan to engage in REDD+ efforts at the national as well as international levels, through strengthened policies, increased knowledge on REDD+, and enhanced data on forests and forest management

Overall progress from 07/01/2019 to 06/30/2020 with regard to Achieving Grant Objectives:

Comment:

During the reporting period, the RGoB made good progress with achieving the objective of the grant. All project components are progressing well. The only concern is the timely disbursement of the remaining resources. COVID-19 has impacted the start of some consultancies and has led to delays with delivering the outputs. The WB task team is monitoring these delays and is in close contact with the client.

Overall progress from 07/01/2019 to 06/30/2020 with regard to Implementation of Grant Financed Activities:

Comment:

During an implementation support mission in August 2020, the task team rated the implementation progress for the grant as satisfactory. The REDD+ Secretariat housed in the Watershed Management Division (WMD) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) and relevant partners in other government entities have good capacity to implement the grant and has made, overall, made good progress with implementing the planned activities. COVID-19 impacts will need to be monitored and assessed closely

Grant follow-up and structure

Description and context of Grant:

The Grant was restructured in May 2020 and the GA was amended. The Grant was restructured as follows:
##Extension of grant closing date from June 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021. The undisbursed amount beyond this date will have to be returned to FCPF. Based on the findings from the implementation support mission (August 5-7, 2020), it is anticipated that by grant closing date all resources will be disbursed for eligible activities and the project objective be achieved. The impacts of COVID-19 have slowed down consultancies that require travel to and within Bhutan. The Task Team is monitoring the delays, assess the potential impact and will suggest options.

Expected follow up (if any): The task team will stay in close contact with WMD to follow up on the implementation of the remaining activities.

Comment on follow up:

During the reporting period, the Task Team had an in-person implementation support mission in October 2019 and a virtual mission in August 2020. The team urged WMD to continue the implementation of the project despite COVID-19, including the outstanding consultancies and procuring the consultancy services. The lack of in-person visits due to COVID-19 makes the follow up challenging, however, the task team is in close contact with WMD on an almost weekly basis.

End Date of Last Site Visit:
August 7, 2020

Restructuring of Grant:
See above.

OUTCOME

Comments on outcome achieved from 07/01/2019 to 06/30/2020

The implementation of the project is progressing well and the last mission assessed implementation progress as "substantial"

Grant Outcome Indicators

No Outcome indicators are defined or used for this grant.

COMPONENTS

There are no outcome indicators defined for this trust fund / grant.

Comment on planned and actual Output

Outputs are produced as per agreed schedule with some delays materializing due to COVID-19.

Comment on component implementation progress

Component 1 - Readiness Organization and Consultation: The institutional arrangement for REDD+ in Bhutan is in place with well-defined roles and responsibilities. The WMD has the overall coordination role and implements components 1 and 2; the Forest Resources Management Division (FRMD) implements technical part of the project (reference level and national forest monitoring system); and National Land Commission (NLC) is responsible for land use planning and zoning. Similarly, Functional Divisions or field offices (DoFPS), the Royal Academy Construction Project, the Royal Education Council, the National Soil Service Center (SPAL), and the Tarayana Foundation are also involved in implementing some of the activities. The Technical Working Group (TWG) provides technical advice and guidance, while the REDD+ Task Force provides the overall direction for the implementation of the project. Technical coordination meetings have been organized on a regular basis, and capacity of field offices of the DoFPS has improved. The field offices are now capable of organizing the workshops for consultation, participation and outreach. Due to COVID-19, consultations and other stakeholder engagements have become a challenge as meetings and travel have been temporarily suspended.

Also, as part of capacity building and awareness raising, several training events have been organized, for example, on soil and watershed management, forest fire, waste management, forest management, and forest law enforcement. Similar training events have been organized for schoolteachers - mainly Environmental Science teachers - and students, covering all the schools from 15 districts (out of total 20 districts). Component 1 is on track to generate the intended outputs and outcomes.

Component 2 - REDD+ Strategy Preparation: The RGoB formally launched the National REDD+ Strategy on World Ranger Day (July 31, 2020). Other strategically important REDD+ readiness documents already finalized include the cost benefit analysis, the benefit sharing mechanism and a fund mobilization strategy. The following additional documents are being finalized: a wetland inventory framework, a plantation impact assessment, the forest management code of Bhutan, and a non-wood forest products strategy. DoFPS has also been developing strategies and action plans for the management of community forests, local forest management, sustainable forest management, watershed management, and business plans for forest utilization. Support has been provided to private sector actors on forest resources harvesting, utilization and marketing, developing forest business plans for sustainable forest management and utilization. For the implementation of the REDD+ Strategy, WMD has initiated the preparation of the REDD+ investment and implementation plan, a gender action plan and a capacity development plan.

1. As part of assessing the potential social and environmental impacts of the implementation of the REDD+ Strategy, WMD has finalized the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), and a Safeguard Information System (SIS). These documents will be finalized considering comments and further guidance from the Bank. Similarly, the Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) is about to be finalized.

Component 2 is on track for delivery of all outputs in a timely and high-quality manner.

Component 3 - National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level: The design of the Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL)/Forest Reference Level (FRL) has been finalized. The RGoB submitted its proposed FREL/FRL in January 2020 to the United Nations Framework Convention to Climate Change (UNFCCC) for a technical assessment. Based on the assessment and related guidance, the RGoB revised the FREL/FRL and resubmitted the documents to the UNFCCC on August 5, 2020. It is important to highlight that the FREL/FRL was led and developed by national experts in the DoFPS (FRMD and WMD), due to the fact that the REDD+ Readiness project support has significantly contributed to build national capacity.

To update future FREL/FRL with more precise data and information, DoFPS has been developing biomass and volume equations for several tree species. So far, biomass equations for 31 tree species have been completed. For additional 11 tree species field work has been completed and data analysis is ongoing.

Component 4 - Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Information on Safeguards: FRMD has developed the Forest Information Reporting and Monitoring System (FIRMS), which is an online database repository of all information and data captured by the Department. A geo-portal system is also being developed. FRMD has been developing a spatial decision support system (SDSS) for forest clearance. The SDSS product has been finalized but final delivery and training has been delayed due to COVID-related travel restrictions of international consultants. The Satellite and Land Monitoring System has also been completed and is expected to be launched soon. Satisfactory progress has been made on other activities supported under component 4 such as preparing a forest type map for Bhutan, establishing permanent sample plots, strengthening inventory data collection, integrating the national forest inventory and remote sensing data in the geo-portal for NFMS, and strengthening a smart patrolling and forest fire management system.

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EXECUTION

Bank project related to the grant

Project ID / Name: P150177 - Bhutan REDD Readiness
Project Status: Lending
Global Focal Area: Climate change
Product Line: CN - Carbon Offset

Implementing agency and contact details

Agency: Watershed Management Division/Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Contact: Jigme TENZIN, PhD
Address: Watershed Management Division/REDD+ Secretariat, MoAF
Phone: +975-2-338897/323568 Email: Jigme Tenzin <jtenzin@moaf.gov.bt>
Website: www. http://www.moaf.gov.bt/

PROGRAM

Program Specific Questions

1. Describe progress in how the Grant activities are being coordinated with other REDD+-related initiatives.

The project activities are closely coordinated with other forest-relevant activities in the country financed by the RGoB and Development Partners.

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2. Describe any important changes in the technical design or approach related to the Grant activities.

Apart from the restructuring of the project to extend the GCD, there are no changes to the technical design and approach.

3. Describe progress in addressing key capacity issues (implementation, technical, financial management, procurement) related to this Grant.

There are no technical and implementation-related capacity issues.

The financial management risk is rated as “moderate” and the performance by WMD as “Moderately Satisfactory”.

The management of procurement-related matters is rated “Moderately Satisfactory”.

4. Describe progress in addressing social and environmental issues (including safeguards) related to the Grant. Is the SESA conducted in accordance with the Common Approach?

WMD has finalized preparation of SESA, ESMF, and SIS and has shared them with the Bank for feedback. FGRM has been drafted and WMD has been reviewing it to finalize. All these documents have been prepared through rigorous consultations at national, regional, district and village level to include wide range of stakeholders in the process.

Safeguards performance is rated as “Satisfactory”.

5. Is the ESMF prepared in accordance with the Common Approach?

Yes.

6. Describe progress in stakeholder consultation, participation, disclosure of information, and the FGRM related to this Grant.

The RGOB is developing a Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) for REDD+, as a means to address any feedback and grievances that various stakeholders may have in the course of REDD+ Readiness, and ultimately as a result of REDD+ Strategy implementation. The WMD has hired of consultants to undertake this assignment, however, due to COVID-19, on-the ground consultations are delayed.

DISBURSEMENTS

Disbursements Summary in USD

Date From	Date To	Planned Cumulative	Planned Period	Actual Cumulative	Actual Period
01/01/2018	06/30/2018	0.00	0.00	2,428,761.85	2,428,761.85
07/01/2018	12/31/2018	0.00	0.00	2,428,761.85	0.00
01/01/2019	06/30/2019	0.00	0.00	2,428,761.85	0.00
07/01/2019	12/31/2019	0.00	0.00	3,004,144.44	575,382.59
01/01/2020	06/30/2020	0.00	0.00	3,591,288.24	587,143.80