



Enhancing internal governance within a national federation of community forestry users in Nepal

Producer organisation:

Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal



Internal Governance Case Study 3: Nepal



Himalaya Raj Ghimire

Acknowledgements

This case study on tactics that improve internal governance within forest and farm producer organisations was commissioned using a template prepared by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) for the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), a co-management partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), IIED and AgriCord. The FFF is supported by the governments of Sweden, Finland, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and Ikea.

I would like to express my gratitude to members of the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) for providing me with valuable documents on their internal governance practices. Their willingness to share information has greatly contributed to the development of this case study. I also thank FECOFUN president Mr Thakur Bhandari, general secretary Ms Parbata Gautam, board members and employees of secretaries for participating in the group discussions, providing information and sharing their insights. I would also like to thank the president and employees of FECOFUN's Makawanpur district office, and the three forest user groups and others for providing information about the production of turmeric, handicrafts and furniture during field visits. Their dedication to production, operation and market promotion has provided valuable insights for this case study.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr Stephen Mwangi and the IIED team for providing me with this assignment. Their guidance and support have been instrumental in helping me understand the importance of internal governance within forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs). I am grateful for their expertise in facilitating access to relevant information, which has enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the practices and strategies employed by FFPOs such as FECOFUN. Their commitment to promoting sustainable resource management and community empowerment has been a source of inspiration throughout this process.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by IIED in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IIED.

IIED publications may be shared and republished in accordance with the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Public License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). IIED is happy to discuss any aspect of further usage.

International Institute for Environment and Development
Boroughloch, Newington, Edinburgh EH8 9NJ
www.iied.org
@iied

www.facebook.com/theIIED

Download more publications at [iied.org/publications](https://www.iied.org/publications)

IIED is a charity registered in England, Charity No.800066 and in Scotland, OSCR Reg No.SC039864 and a company limited by guarantee registered in England No.2188452.

Ghimire, HR (2024) Enhancing internal governance within a national federation of community forestry users in Nepal. FECOFUN, Nepal and IIED, Edinburgh. <https://www.iied.org/22351g>

Cover photo: Members of FECOFUN working in a women's woodcarving and handicraft centre © Himalaya Raj Ghimire

Corresponding author: Himalaya Raj Ghimire

Email: himalghimalg75@gmail.com

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
List of boxes, figures and tables	4
Acronyms	4
Summary	5
1 About the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)	6
1.1 FECOFUN's background, vision and mission	7
1.2 Location and membership	8
1.2 Land use and livelihoods	9
1.2.1 Case study: Supporting women entrepreneurs in Bungdal CFUG	10
1.2.3 Case study: Supporting women entrepreneurs in Piple Pokhara CFUG	12
2 Evolution of internal governance structure, systems and practices	14
2.1 Organisational structure	14
2.2 Structural innovations	16
2.3 Organisational systems	16
2.3.1 Policy design and strategic planning	16
2.3.2 Operational systems and human resources	17
2.3.3 Financial accounting and transparency	17
2.3.4 Conflict-resolution processes	17
2.3.5 Gender and youth policies	18
2.4 Organisational practices	18
2.4.1 Diversity and social inclusion	18
2.4.2 Monitoring and evaluating progress	18
2.4.3 Training, advocacy and team building	19
2.4.4 Fostering equity and creativity	20
2.4.5 Communication practices	20
2.4.6 Safeguarding practices	20
3 Tactics that improve FECOFUN's internal governance	21
3.1 Tactics that improve members' trust and sense of belonging	21
3.2 Tactics that have improved external relations with banks, markets and government	21
3.3 Tactics that improve the delivery of FECOFUN's vision and mission	21
4 Future plans to improve FECOFUN's internal governance	22
4.1 Future plans	22
4.2 Prospectus for replication	22
4.2.1 Potential challenges in achieving organisational goals	22
4.2.2 Recommendations to tackle organisational challenges	23
5 Main conclusions	23
5.1 Innovations	23

5.2 Lessons learnt	24
References and bibliography	25

List of boxes, figures and tables

Box 1. Key events and milestones in the evolution of FECOFUN	8
Figure 1. Numbers of federated CFUGs in FECOFUN (1995–2023)	9
Figure 2. FECOFUN's organisational structure.....	15
Figure 3. Employees composition of FECOFUN.....	18
Table 1. Current composition of FECOFUN's central executive committee	14

Acronyms

AGM	Annual general meeting
CFUGs	Community forestry user groups
DFO	District forest office
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FFPO	Forest and farm producer organisation
GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)
NGM	National general assembly meeting
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

Summary

This case study discusses the internal governance practices of the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), a forest and farm producer organisation (FFPO). FECOFUN is dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights of forest users through capacity strengthening, technical support, economic empowerment and policy advocacy for the sustainable management of forest resources.

The case study provides an overview of FECOFUN's establishment, vision, mission and goals. It highlights how FECOFUN has grown into a social movement organisation involving millions of people and expanded its network across different provinces and districts in Nepal. FECOFUN was established in 1995 to promote and protect the rights of forest users and has grown into a network of nearly 14 million people from over 22,000 community forestry user groups (CFUGs) and other community-based forest management groups. The federation works at the grassroots level to support sustainable natural resource management, community rights, gender equity, social inclusion and social justice. FECOFUN's establishment can be seen as a formalisation of the culture of community conservation efforts.

The first section explores FECOFUN's products and patterns of land use, focusing on natural resource-based livelihood support programmes facilitated by the organisation. It presents two short case studies on CFUG initiatives for women entrepreneurs including turmeric farming and handicraft and furniture production. These enterprises provide extra benefits to forest user groups.

The second section delves into FECOFUN's organisational structure, systems and practices. It explores the importance that FECOFUN places on diversity, social inclusion and democratic decision-making processes and how FECOFUN ensures accountability to its members and other stakeholders through the use of transparent accounting systems. In addition, FECOFUN has inclusive human resource policies that promote gender equality and social inclusion, as well as effective conflict-resolution mechanisms at various levels within the organisation.

Lastly, the document discusses future plans and recommendations to improve internal governance within FECOFUN. It suggests strategies such as enhancing youth engagement, implementing knowledge-management systems, addressing challenges in human resources management, and improving communication practices.

In conclusion, FECOFUN has demonstrated a commitment to transparency, inclusivity and continuous improvement in its organisational practices. The federation's emphasis on consensus building, financial transparency and addressing challenges reflects its adaptive and forward-thinking approach. By continuing to prioritise transparency and inclusivity while fostering a culture of innovation and learning within its network, FECOFUN aims to further enhance its internal governance for the benefit of its members and stakeholders.

1 About the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)

This case study discusses the internal governance practices of the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), a forest and farm producer organisation (FFPO). FECOFUN was established in 1995 to consolidate the voice, choice and rights of all community forestry user groups (CFUGs) across the nation. FECOFUN is a formal network of CFUGs that works to enhance the rights, collective accountability, self-reliance and sustainable development of communities and to ensure their meaningful participation in the network, including in FECOFUN's collaborative work with the government and other networks and stakeholders involved in community forestry development initiatives. FECOFUN is also a key stakeholder that has contributed to the formulation of various forest and environment-related policies, acts and bylaws in Nepal, including the National Forest Strategy, Forest Policy and Biodiversity Strategy. It is also represented on more than 10 international forums as a major stakeholder advocating for stronger community institutions and better governance of forest resources.

FECOFUN aims to promote sustainable forest management, forest governance and livelihoods through community forest management; and to promote and protect the rights of forest users through capacity strengthening, technical support, economic empowerment and policy advocacy. FECOFUN works to create common platforms for all community forest users and to formalise inclusive, democratic, communal methods and practices on the basis of good governance and to consolidate internal democratic practices. It also aims to mitigate global environmental imbalances and to create awareness of global climate change impacts and of the efficient role that socioeconomically marginalised communities can play in the management of community forests, including implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, protocols and provisions.

Nepal's Constitution 2047 (1990) offers an enabling environment to proliferate civil society organisations such as FECOFUN in Nepal.¹ To this end, in the early 1990s, community forestry user groups (CFUGs) started emerging with the aim of taking ownership of community forests on the basis of Nepal's new Forest Act, which provides for community ownership of community forest land. Nepal's Forest Act of 1992, Forest Regulations of 1995 and Community Forest Development of 1994 provided an appropriate policy environment to institutionalise FECOFUN, by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of communities and their institutions in forest management and utilisation. According to Ojha *et al.* (2007),

In a shift away from the centralised management of forest resources in Nepal, after the advent of multiparty democracy in 1990 the elected parliament provided significant legal autonomy to local forest-dependent communities. This allowed for the expansion of citizens' activity in forestry governance.

As Ojha *et al.* (2007) also say,

With the increase in the number of community forests (now called CFUGs) to a few hundred in the early 1990s, the idea of CFUG networking emerged among CFUG leaders, project employees, and DFOs [initially] in the east of Nepal [...] These preliminary networking experiences were self-initiated in the beginning but later were supported by bilateral forestry projects. The intention of these efforts was to create fora for learning and sharing among CFUGs. The supporting projects responded to such local initiatives positively as networking mechanisms were considered as a potential

¹ The Nepali calendar is approximately 56 years and 8 months ahead of the Gregorian calendar; Nepali year 2047 equates to 1990.

means for providing post-formation services to CFUGs and for effective program planning. Such local-level networking experiences were followed by initiatives in the form of national-level CFUG networking meetings. With support from donor forestry projects, several discussions and gatherings of CFUG representatives were held between 1993 and 1995, including a national workshop of CFUGs in which 40 CFUGs from 28 districts participated. These events provided representatives of CFUGs from around the country with the opportunity to identify ways and means to promote and advocate the community forestry agenda and users' rights over forest management, and to explore the need for a users' national level institution to work proactively to this end. Later, these initiatives were merged and FECOFUN was formed in 1995.

1.1 FECOFUN's background, vision and mission

FECOFUN emerged from the idea that forest users from all parts of the country should come together to strengthen the role of CFUGs in policy-making processes. Since its inception, FECOFUN has emerged as a social movement organisation involving nearly 14 million people. FECOFUN works at the grassroots community level with a focus on sustainable natural resource management, community rights, gender equity, social inclusion, justice and prosperity.

FECOFUN's establishment formalises a culture of community action to conserve forests and other natural resources. As an umbrella organisation, FECOFUN's main focus is on natural resource-based livelihood support programmes and capacity development for CFUGs, as well as on policy advocacy and the equitable distribution of natural resources. It also supports its members in networking, institutional development, internal policy formulation, awareness raising and governance promotion.

- **Vision:** Self-reliance and empowerment of community forest users, through the application of social and economic justice in the equitable use and sustainable management of community forests.
- **Mission:** To promote and protect the rights of community forest users through capacity strengthening, economic empowerment, sustainable resource management, technical support, advocacy, policy development, and national and international networking, and to uphold the values of inclusive democracy, gender balance and social justice.
- **Goal:** To develop the means of livelihoods and to generate opportunities to reduce poverty through the sustainable management of forests and utilisation of resources, abiding by the approach of consensus in decision-making; and to emphasise the participation of all sections of the community and ethnic groups in policy decisions and to implement this through CFUGs to uphold the values of good governance, empowerment, self-respect, self-reliance and approaches that build on consensus decision-making.

Box 1. Key events and milestones in the evolution of FECOFUN

- **First demand by a CFUG for networking:** On 2 July 1992, representatives of Sildhunga, Patle Pangsing, Pancha Kanya, and Sansari–Suke Pokhari CFUGs in Dhankuta Municipality, eastern hills of Nepal, asked the employees of the DFO [district forest office] and Koshi Hill Community Forestry Project (a bilateral undertaking of the Nepalese and British governments) about the number of community forestry groups and their working approach and how they could best share experiences between CFUGs. In response, the project employees, DFO employees, and users themselves decided to hold a workshop and formed a nine-member group.
- **First inter-CFUG sharing workshop:** From 24 to 26 July 1992, the committee organized a workshop for CFUGs with two representatives from each of the CFUGs within Dhankuta District.
- **Convening CFUG networking workshops:** Learning from the first networking workshop, several other networking meetings were organized in the district and later the DFO also included networking as one of the activities of its annual program. Similar networking workshops were organized in Bhojpur and other districts in the Koshi Hills. The networking process rapidly spread from the Koshi Hills to other areas of the country.
- **The first national CFUG networking workshop:** In February 1993 the first national workshop for CFUGs was organized in Dhankuta District; 41 representatives from 40 CFUGs of 28 districts participated. Networking was perceived to be a means to solve problems and to fulfill the needs of users.
- **The second national CFUG networking workshop:** The second national CFUG workshop was organized from 23 to 26 February 2003; the conclusions and lessons learned from the Dhankuta 1993 meeting were presented. This workshop was a milestone in the movement for CFUG networking throughout the country.
- **Formation of the FECOFUN ad hoc committee:** In May 1995, an NGO called WATCH organized a workshop for community forestry and private forestry plantation user groups at Budol, in Kavre District (near Kathmandu). This workshop elected a 13-member ad hoc committee for FECOFUN, Nepal. In June 1995, an ad hoc FECOFUN committee was formed at a gathering of CFUG representatives from 35 districts and NGOs. This workshop decided to establish a contact office in Kathmandu and formed a committee to prepare a draft constitution for FECOFUN.
- **Formal registration of FECOFUN:** In September 1995, the Federation was registered in Kathmandu District Administration Office and became a legally recognized entity.
- **Holding of the first General Assembly:** The first General Assembly was held in March 1996 with representatives from 38 districts. The General Assembly elected a 27-member national executive committee.

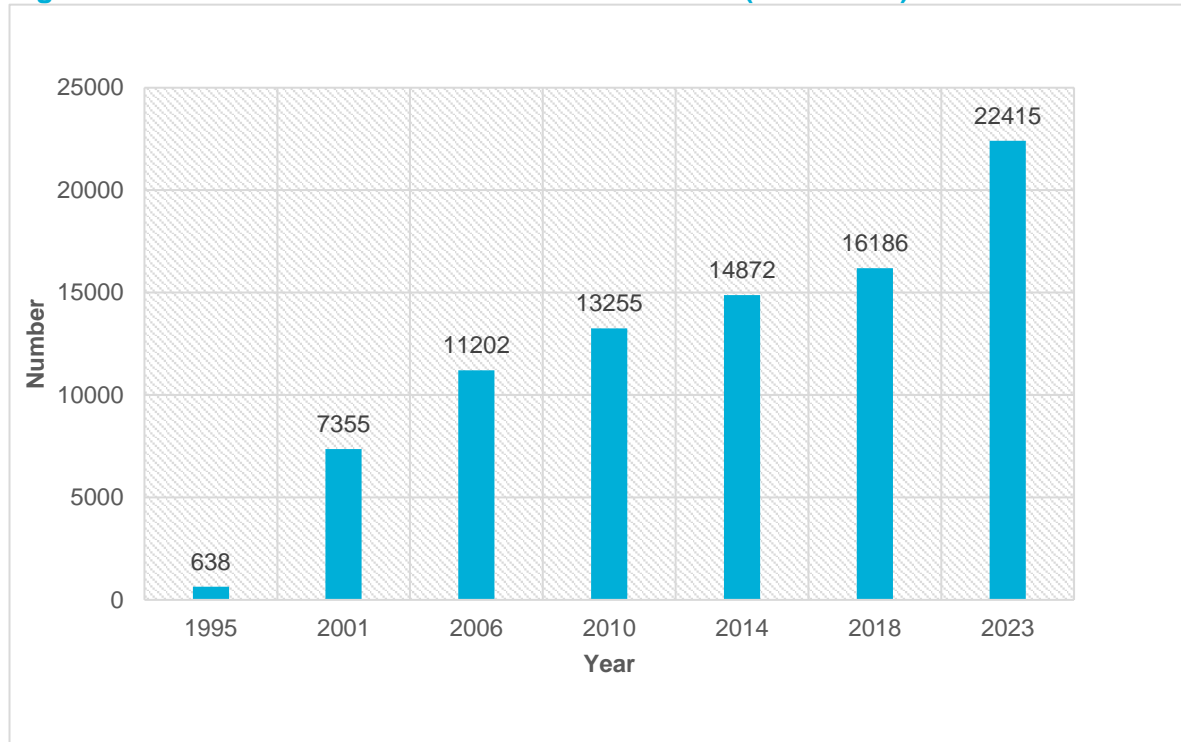
Source: extracted from Ojha *et al.* (2007): 3–4.

1.2 Location and membership

FECOFUN's main office is located in Changunarayan Municipality-2, Bhaktapur, Nepal. FECOFUN also has various regional and district offices as per the federal restructuring of the Nepalese government and works at federal, provisional, district, local and community levels. FECOFUN organises about 14 million people from 22,415 CFUGs, with 2.9 million households now federated into FECOFUN and protecting more than 2.3 million hectares of forests. In addition to CFUGs, other community-based forest management groups (such as leasehold forestry groups, religious forestry groups, buffer zone and traditional forest management groups) in Nepal are also affiliated with FECOFUN.

Responding to the federal restructure of the country, FECOFUN has extended its network throughout Nepal's seven provinces to include 77 districts and 555 local levels with around 15,000 members elected across FECOFUN chapters through an inclusive democratic process. FECOFUN's members include Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, and the ultra-poor. FECOFUN also ensures that 50% of its leadership is women, including in the most senior positions. Figure 1 charts the growth of FECOFUN as a federation.

Figure 1. Numbers of federated CFUGs in FECOFUN (1995–2023)



1.2 Land use and livelihoods

In Nepal, 2.3 million hectares of forest area are managed by CFUGs, which are independent local institutions. While the land tenure of community forests is under national government authority, forests have been entrusted to CFUGs for development, conservation and utilisation that are in the interest of the community.

FECOFUN supports its members in developing livelihoods and enterprises (which is illustrated by the two case studies in the following sections). FECOFUN's CFUG members produce various forest-based products including timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs). There is a symbiotic relationship between the forest user groups and their community forests: CFUGs rely on their forests for firewood and fodder, as well as wood for making daily household tools such as ploughs and value-added products for sale such as handicrafts and furniture. Sub-groups of CFUG members also engage in other types of group enterprises that add value to their forest resources, such as producing herbal products, spices, natural essential oils, natural resins, Nepali paper (*lokta*), fibre-based products such as hemp or nettle cloth, and bamboo handicrafts such as mats, baskets and ropes. In addition, members operate tourism businesses (such as homestays) in their community forest areas. This has provided extra income for CFUGs as well as a marketing platform for their fibre-based handicrafts and other nature-based products. Meanwhile, the conservation of watersheds and water catchment areas has been of great value.

By strengthening the interrelationship between communities and their forests, FECOFUN plays a pivotal role in harnessing these opportunities to tap into higher benefits for communities and motivating them to manage their forests more sustainably. Moreover, FECOFUN has also mapped the wellbeing of these communities for equitably sharing benefits. It allocates lands to ultra-poor communities to provide them with income-generating activities and 35% of the annual income of CFUGs is allocated to ultra-poor and marginalised communities.

As the following two case studies demonstrate, FECOFUN's support for its member CFUGs has significantly contributed to helping them generate incomes, for example by producing turmeric, sculpted wooden products and furniture. Undoubtedly, CFUG groups have also played a catalytic role in forest conservation, establishing a win-win situation for forests and people. However, for these enterprises to be sustainable, CFUGs also need greater support in terms of enterprise management and enterprise development planning. It has been observed that the CFUGs and their sub-groups face a number of challenges, including the:

- Lack of good financial management capacities and financial resources that would enable CFUGs to make optimum use of their available natural resources
- Lack of advanced technology to enhance production quality and quantity, and
- Lack of product quality-testing facilities, due to limited access to laboratories or service providers to ensure that their products are of sufficient quality for markets.

As such, FECOFUN can play an incredibly significant role in enhancing the capacity of CFUGs and their sub-groups by increasing the number of focused capacity-development and skills-related training it provides, as well as providing more financial and other support to ensure the sustainability of these grassroots enterprises.

1.2.1 Case study: Supporting women entrepreneurs in Bungdal CFUG

Registered in 1995, Bungdal CFUG is one of the earliest forest user groups in Nepal. Bungdal CFUG has been managing 78 hectares of forest land in Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City, Chaughada. Beyond its core functions of forest resource conservation, this CFUG also contributes to community development, including rural electrification, drinking water management, better education in community schools, road maintenance and the promotion of religious and spiritual places. Over the last two years, the group has also begun producing organic turmeric powder and promoting women's entrepreneurship as part of FECOFUN's One Forest One Enterprise campaign that aims to promote green enterprises at the local level and to generate green employment.

Turmeric farming and production were chosen with the objective of attracting women to farming on underutilised land. The initiative has received significant financial and infrastructural support from various stakeholders: FECOFUN has contributed 600,000 Nepalese rupees while the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) project has contributed 1,800,000 Nepalese rupees. The Agriculture Knowledge Centre, an initiative of Nepal's Directorate of Agriculture, has provided the machinery for processing raw turmeric to initiate and operate the turmeric production plant. According to Ms Janaki Ghimire, coordinator of the turmeric production subcommittee,

This year we were able to produce and sell 60 quintals of turmeric powder that makes an income of around 1,800,000 Nepalese rupees in Hetauda Bazar from a plot of land that covers 1 hectare of land in the river corridor. We are receiving positive feedback from the buyers [...] We received market assessment training, where we learnt about approaching and assessing the market, and developing a business plan.



Bungdal CFUG sub-committee coordinator monitoring a turmeric farm operated by the group
© Himalaya Raj Ghimire

In addition, according to the president of FECOFUN's Makawanpur chapter Mr Sadhuram Chaunlagain, "Being in the middle of the forest and river corridor, we have been claiming [the turmeric] to be organic and are facilitating for its certification." Mr Chaunlagain himself contributed around 50,000 Nepalese rupees towards the operation of the turmeric processing plant.



Members of Bungdal CFUG at the turmeric processing plant © Himalaya Raj Ghimire

According to Mr Badri Prashad Adhikari, the former president of Bungdal CFUG, turmeric farming is appropriate for avoiding community-wildlife conflicts and is geographically and ecologically viable and appropriate. “Production has been started with the contribution of 200,000 Nepalese rupees from the group,” he says. The group was attracted to growing turmeric as the farming could be done with a low investment and on underutilised community land. Turmeric is also less susceptible to harm caused by wildlife and disease and was identified as the most scalable product by the group. Access to local markets has also been beneficial to the sub-group. “This cluster is situated at the entrance of Hetauda Bazar and has found a very significant market for its product, not only in Hetauda Bazar but also in rural parts and at the local level,” says Mr Bhim Bahadur Adhikary, president of Bungdal CFUG.



FECOFUN members displaying their turmeric final product © Himalaya Raj Ghimire

The turmeric sub-group includes a steering subcommittee with seven members who are also engaged in turmeric production. Comparatively, the group seems to have better-quality production than similar products on the market. According to Shanti Ghalan, one of the members of the subcommittee, “We are very cautious about the quality. There had been a dominance of turmeric from eastern Nepal but now our product has been well accepted and is being consumed in local markets.”

The subcommittee and Bungdal CFUG have been working extensively to expand markets for their products and plan to expand production by encouraging all 40 members to produce turmeric at the household level. “Motivated [by our success], we are planning for production and market expansion. We have been coordinating with various stakeholders and authorities,” says Ms Janaki Ghimire.

1.2.3 Case study: Supporting women entrepreneurs in Piple Pokhara CFUG

Piple Pokhara CFUG has around 1,700 households as members, managing a community forest that covers 2.3 hectares of land. Piple Pokhara CFUG promotes and supports a sub-group of women entrepreneurs to produce carved wooden handicrafts. This exemplary group enterprise contributes towards efforts to build women’s ownership and has been a great platform for women from marginalised groups to generate an extra income using forest-based products.

Bishnu Kumari Rai is the coordinator of this sub-group enterprise: “We first received six months’ basic and advanced-level wood-carving training from Ashmita Nepal [a social organisation that supports socially marginalised women and children] facilitated by FECOFUN Makawanpur in 2072. [This] was a triggering factor for the establishment of our group enterprise.”

Since its initiation, Piple Pokhara CFUG has supported this group enterprise by providing them with resources such as timber, electricity, space for production and machinery. Now the group is at the stage of expansion and has been coordinating with Piple Pokhara CFUG for more space to store their furniture products. “We now produce 200 pieces of handicraft monthly. It has been a great income for the engaged women. We on a monthly basis distribute 10,000–15,000 Nepalese rupees per month per individual,” says Ms Prasansha Rai, a member of the sub-group.

The sub-group has also been producing carved wooden frames for windows, mirrors and photos, as well as items such as keyrings. The group also plans to modify its products by analysing market responses and demand. “Till now, we are limited to the local market but soon we will be expanding to external markets,” says Ms Bishnu. “But still, we are planning to enhance our skill,” she adds, in reference to the sub-groups experience of having to turn down orders because the designs were too complicated for them to produce.

Nevertheless, the outcome has been overwhelmingly positive for the sub-group. According to Chandana Koirala, a member of the sub-group steering committee,

It has been a great opportunity for us as we have been using the wood provided the CFUG at a very nominal rate. FECOFUN, IUCN [International Union for Conservation of Nature] and Ashmita Nepal have been very significantly motivating us by not only promoting our products but also consuming our products. Even during the COVID period when all the market was shattered, we had been receiving demands from them.



A member displays a sample product from the handicraft enterprise © Himalaya Raj Ghimire

2 Evolution of internal governance structure, systems and practices

2.1 Organisational structure

FECOFUN is a registered self-governing membership-based organisation that provides membership to forest user groups only. Its executive committee is elected unanimously by representatives from its forest user-group members. FECOFUN is committed to complying with all legal and social practices in the planning and implementation of its activities and to equitable benefit sharing. Its organisational structure is shown in Figure 2.

FECOFUN is renowned as an institution that initiated mainstreaming gender and social inclusion and provisioning for the equal participation of men and women in its structure. At FECOFUN's seventh national general meeting (NGM) in May 2023, the federation made a fifth amendment to its statute to expand the total number of members on its executive committee to 85, with a tenure of four years (see Table 1).²

FECOFUN's statute states that at least two women hold two of four senior positions on the executive committee: chair, vice chair, treasurer and general secretary. At present, youth representation is not provisioned in policy documents. As well as ensuring the meaningful inclusion of women, FECOFUN's statute also ensures that its executive committee is more inclusive and selects representatives from ethnic minority communities, including Dalit, Tharu, Madheshi, Muslim and Indigenous Peoples, as well as people with disabilities and people from the poorest communities.

Table 1. Current composition of FECOFUN's central executive committee

Representation	Composition		Men	Women	Total
Elected members	8 members (4 women and 4 men) elected from each of the 7 provinces	28	28		56
Social inclusion members	Indigenous Peoples: 8 members (4 men and 4 women) Madheshi: 4 members (2 men and 2 women) Dalit: 4 members (2 men and 2 women) Tharu: 2 members (1 man and 1 woman) Ethnic minorities: 2 members (1 man and 1 woman) Muslim: 2 members (1 man and 1 woman) People with disabilities: 2 members (1 man and 1 woman) Poor: 2 members (1 man and 1 woman)	13	13		26
Nominated independent election committee members	Currently 3 members (the statute stipulates that the election committee must be between 3 to 5 members, at least two of whom must be women)	1	2		3
Total		42	43		85

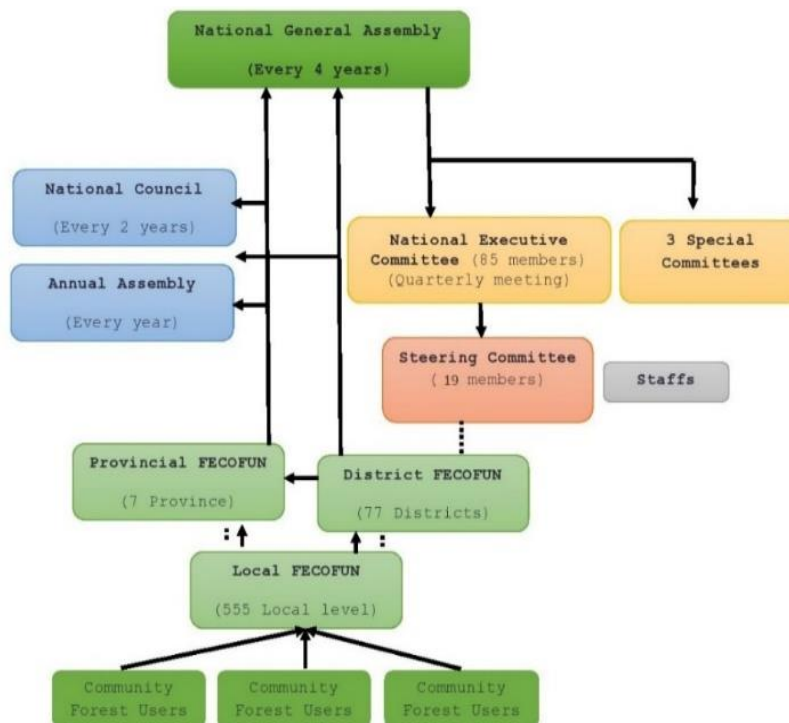
² For more information, see: <https://fecofun.org.np/executive-committee>

FECOFUN organises a national general assembly every four years. To maintain accountability to its members at grassroots level, representatives of forest user groups participate in NGMs and in selecting/electing committee members and decision-making. This inclusive system ensures that there are effective decision-making processes within the federation. An independent election committee of between three and five members is formed to facilitate the leadership selection process. FECOFUN's statute clearly states that at least two women must be nominated to this committee. The election committee members are nominated by the founding executive committee, members of forest user groups, past executive committee members and experienced individuals, as recommended by the standing executive committee.

Guided by the philosophy of FECOFUN, the independent election committee tries to establish consensus for the leadership selection process. However, due to chapter and sector expansion, securing consensus on who should be selected is often not possible. In such situations, the election committee organises an election to form the executive committee. To stand for election, aspiring candidates must register their candidacy and, to maintain accountability, must also receive a recommendation from his/her user group at local, district and provincial levels of FECEOFUN.

FECOFUN prioritises consensus-based decision-making in the belief that it justly promotes contributions from all its members. While the executive committee is responsible for making major decisions, these are usually ratified at the NGMs. The executive committee is guided by standing committees which are formed at local, district, provincial, federal levels and the NGM. Plans of action are developed by FECOFUN and approved at the NGMs. However, in the event that major decisions must be addressed before the next NGM, a special assembly is called immediately. While decisions are usually made by consensus, a democratic process is followed if consensus cannot be established.

Figure 2. FECOFUN's organisational structure



2.2 Structural innovations

FECOFUN makes amendments to its strategies according to changing contexts and situations. The statute guides its plan of action and strategies (FECOFUN 1996). Many amendments have been made to its statute according to context and the national political structure:

- Third national general assembly meeting 2063 (2007): FECOFUN amended its constitution and increased the number of representatives on its national executive committee to ensure the inclusive representative of targeted communities. It also formed a judicial committee.
- Special general assembly meeting 2066: FECOFUN organised a special meeting to change its organisational structure as per the new federal structure of the nation after the new Constitution of 2066. FECOFUN made a provision that women should hold 50% of seats in key posts at all levels of its organisational structure. It also increased the number of representatives on its the national executive committee to 77.
- Fifth national general assembly meeting 2071: FECOFUN approved its new five-year strategic plan and conducted a campaign to promote good governance.
- Sixth national general assembly meeting 2075: FECOFUN adopted new provincial structures and improvements in Nepal's seven provinces. It also increased participation in the new policy drafting stage and advocated for community rights.
- Seventh national general assembly meeting 2075: At FECOFUN's seventh NGM in May 2023, the federation expanded its executive committee to 85 members.

2.3 Organisational systems

2.3.1 Policy design and strategic planning

FECOFUN's statute was ratified and endorsed at its first NGM in 2052 (1996). Based on the statute, FECOFUN has developed its major internal policies and operational guidelines, such as its internal finance, operational and human resources policies. These policies guide its day-to-day operations. It has also developed policies on cross-cutting issues.

FECOFUN also develops successive five-year strategic plans, in which it updates its goals and targets in response to changing socioeconomic and resource-management contexts. The strategic plan is FECOFUN's main guiding plan of action that determines its five-year goals. The current strategic plan (Khanal 2020), 25-year roadmap (FECOFUN 2023), and GESI strategy (FECOFUN 2021) are the outcomes of reflection during planning sessions.

FECOFUN's sustainable forest and land-use plans are guided by its community forest development guidelines of 2015 and by the Forest Act and regulations of the Nepal government. The federation's forest operational plans are usually developed by CFUGs in line with government policies, act and guidelines and authorised by the district forest office. Plans are guided by FECOFUN's main philosophy for the protection, promotion and utilisation of community forests by user groups for communal benefits.

FECOFUN undergoes a systematic process for developing and revising its policies. A policy drafting team drafts the required policies and revises them in consultation with its members at the various levels of the network, accommodating their feedback, suggestions and aspirations. The executive committee then presents the draft to the NGM for ratification by members. Internal policies such as financial, operational, and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategies are formulated and executed by the executive committee, according to FECOFUN's five-year strategic plan and vision.

2.3.2 Operational systems and human resources

In terms of the day-to-day running of the federation, FECOFUN also has a central-level secretariat responsible for its operational activities. The secretariat holds regular monthly meeting which includes participation of both the executive committee members and the secretariat employees. The executive committee members, as per the federation's guiding principles, work on a voluntary basis to achieve the federation's objectives.

As Nepal's largest civil society and non-governmental organisation (NGO), FECOFUN has two different categories of employee members: project employees and non-project core employees, managed by a secretariat. The HR policy states that 50% of candidates and employees must be women and also promotes diversity and social inclusion. Management of human resources is the sole responsibility of the secretariat, guided by FECOFUN's administrative and financial policies of 2009 that includes human resource policies and procedures (such as recruitment and dismissals, annual leave, salaries and other benefits). FECOFUN also provides flexibility for its committee members and employees in terms of dress code and working hours. FECOFUN also provides maternity and paternity leave as per government rules.

2.3.3 Financial accounting and transparency

FECOFUN is well-developed organisation and has been using an accrual system using double-entry bookkeeping and software for its financial transactions.³ The system is guided by the Association of Chartered Accountants of Nepal and is regarded as Nepal's standard system for maintaining financial records.

Financial transactions and procurement-related activities are guided by the federation's financial and procurement policies. FECOFUN maintains financial transparency and accountability following national policies and guidelines to ensure good governance. It strictly complies with both national and internal requirements in relation to taxation, periodic financial audits and social audits, among others. FECOFUN also organises half-yearly review and reflection meetings to identify any challenges and issues faced and to discuss ways forward. Findings and recommendations are then discussed at committee meetings. In addition, various internal and external monitoring and evaluation-related visits are also done to ensure that field-based financial activities are transparent and ethical.

2.3.4 Conflict-resolution processes

As a nationwide network spanning community user groups to its federal-level executive committee across seven provinces, FECOFUN has efficient processes for handling disputes. To manage the risks associated with conflict and the repercussions, FECOFUN has judicial subcommittees at central, provincial and district levels, responsible for handling and facilitating dispute resolution within the organisation. The committees consist of five members, and, as guided by its statute, must include at least two women. District-level FECOFUN offices handle district-level disputes, but if these disputes are unresolved, they are referred to the judicial committees at provincial or central levels. Legal action is only taken in the event that a dispute is beyond the jurisdiction of the central-level judicial committee.

Most disputes are related to breaching FECOFUN's constitution, organisational code of ethics or policies, or to the demarcation of CFUGs, encroachments, revenue sharing or community-wildlife conflicts. Judicial committees have the authority to monitor and observe compliance at all levels of the federation. They receive complaints and listen to the member's voices in different forums. Committees can request support from thematic experts where necessary. Judicial committees report to the executive committee on an annual basis. FECOFUN is also planning to improve the efficiency of its complaint response mechanism.

³ Accrual accounting is a method whereby payments and expenses are credited and debited when earned or incurred.

2.3.5 Gender and youth policies

FECOFUN is regarded as an initiator and good practitioner of gender equality and social inclusion within its internal mechanisms and network. As a federation of groups, FECOFUN also actively engages with youth throughout its network. However, at present it has no specific guidelines for youth engagement strategies, although strategies are being discussed and developed.

2.4 Organisational practices

2.4.1 Diversity and social inclusion

FECOFUN promotes diversity and social inclusion and has been a role model for inclusive practices from central to grassroots levels, which is reflected in its organisational structure, statute and decision-making processes. However, ensuring diversity and social inclusion in employee recruitment and human resources is challenging in terms of practicality. This is due to the lack of applicants from targeted communities, the number of vacant positions available and the lack of financial resources. It has been a major challenge for FECOFUN to comply with its own inclusive human resource policies.

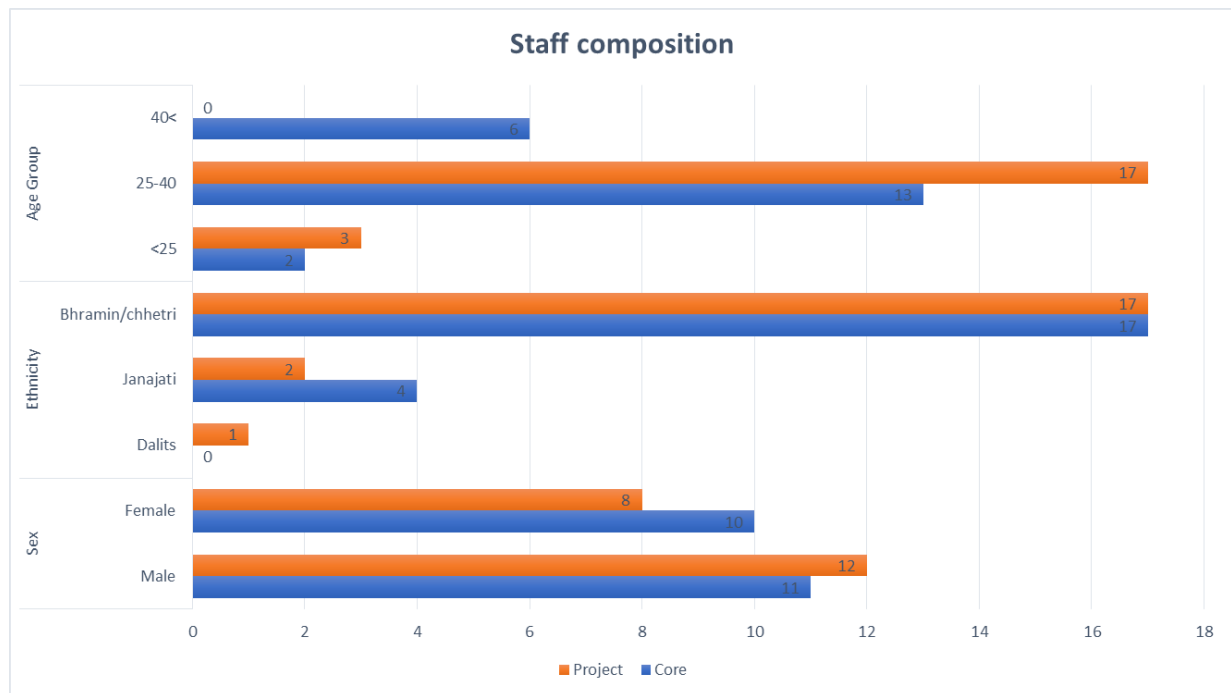


Figure 3. Employees composition of FECOFUN

However, FECOFUN is undergoing a transformative process to actively address diversity within its secretariat. As Figure 3 shows, the federation has recruited employees from different underrepresented groups. It also highlights areas where the federation needs to focus its efforts to improve diversity and inclusion. FECOFUN is in the process of reviewing its policy and internal documents with the aim of addressing the gaps and to comply with its own philosophy of social inclusion during recruitment processes, so that FECOFUN can ensure diversity in its internal management.

2.4.2 Monitoring and evaluating progress

FECOFUN organises regular reflection workshops to reassess its strategies to achieve its set goals and objectives. It always focuses on receiving ideas from a broad spectrum of its

network and implementing appropriate and innovative ideas. To this end, general assembly and committee meetings have been crucial platforms. Further, the learnings of executive members from international forums and from their interactions with grassroots members are highly valued and of great significance to achieving FECOFUN's set vision and goals. In addition to these, innovative ideas, practices, and recommendations from employees are also adapted.

FECOFUN's secretariat organises regular monthly meetings with employees and executive committee members where they share experiences, challenges, and achievements. This provides an opportunity for collective reflection on the organisation's values and goals. As FECOFUN prioritises inclusive decision-making processes, it provides equal opportunities for its members and employees to share their perspectives and views on setting organisational goals, visions and programmes, and an opportunity to add to meetings.

FECOFUN also organises national workshops inviting district, province and central FECOFUN members to allow them to share their thoughts on the overall organisation's values, culture and performance. Every year, FECOFUN invites representatives from 77 districts and seven provinces to review and reflect on progress, performance and challenges faced during this period. These events create a dedicated space for members and employees to engage in open and honest discussion about the organisation's directions and to share valuable insights.

When developing its five-year strategic plans, FECOFUN learns from both its successes and failures, and applies these lessons to refine its strategies. Strategic planning sessions provide a structured and intentional framework for organisational reflection. They also guide the organisation in evaluating its past, understanding its present context, and charting a course for the future – all while ensuring alignment to its core values and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. While its vision statement has remained constant, the wording is reviewed every five years to ensure it remains current.

2.4.3 Training, advocacy and team building

FECOFUN develops and implements training, awareness-raising and advocacy campaigning related to forest users' rights, as well as training in leadership development from federal to local levels. These initiatives contribute to an enabling environment and plenty of opportunities for its members and employees.

FECOFUN's employees and its members follow a culture of co-working. FECOFUN encourages its members and employees to connect, recognise each other's strengths, and collaborate effectively. This has been a great opportunity for employees and communities to work together, get to know each other and foster mutual respect. Regular monthly meetings, coordinated outreach activities and monitoring-related activities ensure that there is a collaborative effort. Many internal subcommittees for implementing tasks are composed of both employees and members (such as procurement committees). This approach has played a significant role in team building and building a sense of community within the organisation. Key practices implemented by FECOFUN include:

- **Organising workshops and social gatherings:** FECOFUN organises team-building events that provide opportunities for members and employees to engage in both professional and social settings, fostering stronger relationships. It also organises social gatherings such as outdoor picnics, inviting members, employees, different committee members, other stakeholders and donors. These informal events create a positive and supportive community culture.
- **Member and employee recognition:** FECOFUN regularly acknowledges the contributions of its members and employees during its general assemblies or through letters of appreciation and salary increases. This helps to maintain motivation.

- **Coaching:** FECOFUN provides orientation sessions for its employees so that they can envision the goals and objectives of FECOFUN and its projects. Besides regular monitoring and feedback, coaching has been a great way to build individual employee's capacities. Regular performance evaluations are also done to identify individual employee's strengths and areas for improvement.

2.4.4 Fostering equity and creativity

The central-level secretariat's regular monthly meetings provide employees and the executive committee with a sense of ownership. Likewise, the chapters at local, district and provincial levels practice the same strategy. FECOFUN supports equal opportunities for aspiring executive members and committee members. In addition, FECOFUN continuously supports innovative and creative ideas, and adopts those that are feasible. For example, FECOFUN is in the process of establishing an innovative programme for forest fire insurance, which is crucial for minimising losses following forest fire disasters. In the majority of cases, new ideas are consolidated through review meetings and other platforms.

2.4.5 Communication practices

FECOFUN's strength lies in its vigilant communication channels connecting its topmost level and the grassroots, working both vertically and horizontally. This effective communicative network plays a catalytic role in keeping everyone up to date about every aspect of FECOFUN's work, including social media, emails, published and printed media, and its website.

- **Internal communication platforms:** FECOFUN uses its website and social media (Facebook, Viber, WhatsApp) to share internal communications, news and other programme-related information among its members. This creates a virtual space for interaction.
- **Strategic federation-wide meetings:** FECOFUN has developed a 25-year roadmap, a five-year strategic plan and annual action plans in order to achieve its set targets. Every level of FECOFUN contributes to the development of these plans through consultations, providing a space for feedback and recommendations. This has been established as a practice of valuing the voices of FECOFUN's members at all levels.

2.4.6 Safeguarding practices

FECOFUN has a diverse and inclusive leadership with members from different backgrounds and communities. This creates an environment where employees feel confident and secure that their concerns will be understood and addressed. FECOFUN has created an appropriate workplace environment where members and employees feel comfortable voicing their concerns about in relation to the workplace. This is crucial for fostering a culture of openness and to ensure wellbeing.

Being a huge member-based organisation, FECOFUN needs effective safeguarding practices to allow its employees and members to feel safe and comfortable. FECOFUN has endorsed anti-harassment policies that explicitly outline what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and has ensured that all employees and executive members are aware of these policies. There is a well-established zero tolerance policy with a transparent investigation process. FECOFUN provides regular orientation to reinforce the organisation's commitment to ensuring a respectful workplace. FECOFUN also has a judicial committee that works freely and independently to investigate transgressions and to appropriate action where necessary.

3 Tactics that improve FECOFUN's internal governance

3.1 Tactics that improve members' trust and sense of belonging

Since the beginning, FECOFUN has adopted a rights-based approach, focusing on capacity enhancement and empowerment of community forestry user groups. It has played a significant role in coordinating with major stakeholders regarding the concerns of CFUGs across Nepal. Being affiliated with FECOFUN, members have had opportunities for capacity enhancement and leadership development. As an outcome, several individuals (around 2,500) have assumed positions of leadership at different levels of government. FECOFUN is also a major stakeholder in different national and international forums and has contributed to developing national and local-level acts, policies and procedures.

FECOFUN employs democratic approaches in its leadership selection and decision-making, provides opportunities for its members, and acts as a guardian of their interests and wellbeing. FECOFUN's strategy to generate consensus for each major decision it takes has been a key factor in creating a sense of ownership for every member group federated within FECOFUN. This strategy has not only been able to mitigate conflicts relating to leadership issues, but also holds appointed leaders responsible for binding themselves to the federation's ethical and moral values. The third factor that strongly binds its members is its regular and vigilant channels of communication that are key to ensuring connections and interactions between central and local chapters. These are the main factors that have created an affinity between the organisation and its members and a sense of ownership and belonging.

3.2 Tactics that have improved external relations with banks, markets and government

As an apex body, FECOFUN federates over 22,000 community forestry user groups. Its wide-ranging network covering all of Nepal means that it is recognised as a major stakeholder, working with other private, government and international agencies. As such, FECOFUN participates in and regularly organises advocacy actions and events with different stakeholders, working in solidarity on the issues that concern FECOFUN and its members.

FECOFUN has also gained attention for its principle of volunteerism. Every executive committee member works on a voluntary basis to achieve the federation's objectives and targets, especially capacity development, leadership development, and building social recognition and social capital. This has been a motivating factor for members to become affiliated. FECOFUN claims that it can achieve maximum output with nominal investment/expenditure through this approach. Its commitment to transparency and to being held accountable to its stakeholders has been the main catalyst for maintaining their goodwill. Furthermore, FECOFUN has produced tangible, scalable and sustainable outcomes which have gained it recognition. It receives regular support from government and funding agencies and is an experienced long-term partner (such as contributing to developing the Forest Act, bylaws and forest operational guidelines at federal, provincial, and local levels).

3.3 Tactics that improve the delivery of FECOFUN's vision and mission

FECOFUN claims that its innovative and locally led approaches are central to achieving its vision. FECOFUN's chairperson can hold only that one position while in office, which itself is unique in nature. However, the provincial, district and local chapter presidents can hold more than one position. Elected executive committee members are recommended by the local,

district and provincial chapters, which demonstrates the capacity of FECOFUN's leadership. This process also makes the central-level executive committee members accountable to its user groups at local, district and provincial levels.

FECOFUN's practice of allocating responsibilities according to its members' expertise, experience and knowledge has been another factor that has improved the delivery of its vision and mission. Valuing the voices of every unit of FECOFUN through regular consultations and seeking feedback has also contributed to its organisational achievements as chapters from every level are involved in planning strategies and targets.

4 Future plans to improve FECOFUN's internal governance

4.1 Future plans

FECOFUN is one of the few civil society organisations in Nepal that is socially inclusive and gender sensitive and that follows democratic principles in the governance, management and utilisation of its resources. FECOFUN intends to further its work to engage youth and people living with disabilities in its organisational leadership and to formalise various new thematic subcommittees. Furthermore, FECOFUN aims to mainstream the inclusion of disadvantaged, Indigenous and marginalised groups within its structure. These dimensions of inclusion are currently being endorsed and are under discussion within FECOFUN.

FECOFUN is also striving to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its membership management and enrolment processes for CFUGs within its network. Another target is to improve its human resources management and internal management system in response to changing contexts and to make its internal management more inclusive, just and informative. Furthermore, it also plans to implement evidence-based research so that its advocacy work is based on tangible evidence, including research on GESI, social justice, good governance and knowledge management. FECOFUN has been working to establish a functional national-level resource centre so that its learning and knowledge can be shared.

4.2 Prospectus for replication

To replicate FECOFUN, natural-resource-based FFPOs must be able to incorporate diverse communities into their organisational structure and work to ensure social inclusion and use consensus-based and democratic processes for leadership selection to ensure they are accountable to their members.

4.2.1 Potential challenges in achieving organisational goals

- The lack of highly professional and motivated employees may hinder the organisation's ability to inspire a high-performance culture. Cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing may suffer as a result.
- Without effective communication of successful projects and innovations, the organisation may miss opportunities to showcase its capabilities. It may also lead to misunderstandings and a lack of clarity about the organisation's goals and achievements. Similar organisations that more effectively highlighted their accomplishments may gain a competitive advantage.
- Employees may struggle to understand how their individual contributions align with the overall goals and success of the organisation.

- Organisations may also face practical challenges in terms of implementing inclusive recruitment processes.

4.2.2 Recommendations to tackle organisational challenges

- Addressing these challenges involves investing in communication training, establishing clear communication channels, fostering a culture that values recognition, and creating guidelines for sharing success stories effectively. Leadership should also actively promote a culture of celebrating achievements, encouraging employees to share their successes, and recognising the collective accomplishments of the organisation.
- FFPOs should also leverage various platforms to showcase achievements. Regularly celebrating successes, both big and small, helps foster a positive and motivated workforce, contributing to long-term organisational success.
- If certain groups are underrepresented on its staff, the FFPO can implement targeted initiatives to enhance recruitment, retention and career-development opportunities for those groups. In order to implement inclusive recruitment processes, appropriate hiring policies could be developed.
- FFPOs should assess the current state of knowledge within their organisation by conducting a knowledge audit. Identify what knowledge exists, where it is located, and how it is being utilised. If gaps are found, recruit a professional with expertise in knowledge management. FFPO should invest in and implement knowledge-management systems that can facilitate the creation, sharing and retrieval of knowledge within the organisation. Choose systems that align with the organisation's needs and goals.
- Prioritise organisational management and other priorities by allocating dedicated leadership time to focus on addressing knowledge-management challenges and developing solutions. Integrate knowledge management into business processes and align knowledge management with business goals.

5 Main conclusions

5.1 Innovations

- FECOFUN has a well-defined organisational structure, guided by its statute, which undergoes periodic amendments to align with changing contexts and political structures.
- The organisation maintains an inclusive leadership system, with a focus on gender diversity, and conducts regular elections facilitated by an independent committee.
- FECOFUN emphasises consensus in decision-making but has a democratic process in place for when consensus is not achievable.
- Major decisions are usually ratified by the AGM/NGM, and a special assembly is called for time-critical decisions, showcasing a commitment to transparency and accountability.
- FECOFUN follows a rigorous financial accounting system, including an accrual system and double-entry bookkeeping, ensuring transparency and compliance with national policies. The organisation undergoes regular financial audits, review meetings, and monitoring and evaluation visits to maintain financial accountability.
- FECOFUN has well-defined human resources policies that distinguish between voluntary members and salaried employees.
- FECOFUN is recognised for its initiatives in gender equality and social inclusion, with specific provisions in its statute and policies to ensure the meaningful inclusion of women and marginalised communities. However, the federation faces challenges in

implementing inclusive human resource policies due to practical constraints such as a lack of applicants from targeted communities.

- The organisation is in the process of developing strategies to enhance youth engagement within its network.
- FECOFUN has established a multi-tiered conflict-resolution system, involving judicial committees at different levels, to efficiently handle disputes. The organisation is planning to enhance its complaints response mechanism for more effective conflict resolution.
- The organisation organises regular reflection meetings, workshops and events to reassess values, foster team efforts and recognise the contributions of members and employees.
- To summarise, FECOFUN demonstrates a commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and continuous improvement in its organisational practices. Its emphasis on consensus-building, financial transparency and addressing challenges in areas such as human resources and youth engagement reflects its adaptive and forward-thinking approach.

5.2 Lessons learnt

Based on the findings derived from document analysis, field visits and extensive discussions, several noteworthy conclusions can be drawn pertaining to FECOFUN's organisational framework, policies, practices and approaches across diverse facets including leadership, decision-making, diversity and communications. The following are some key conclusions:

- **Transparent decision-making:** The validation of major decisions through the NGM, coupled with the convening of special assemblies for crucial matters, underscores FECOFUN's steadfast commitment to transparency and accountability.
- **Conflict resolution:** FECOFUN has implemented a multi-tiered conflict-resolution mechanism, involving judicial committees at various levels. Recognising the need for continuous improvement, the organisation is poised to enhance its complaints response system to achieve more effective conflict resolution.
- **Ethical leadership:** The consensus-driven and uniquely crafted leadership selection process within FECOFUN has significantly contributed to fostering a harmonious and discrepancy-free organisational environment.
- **Leadership development:** FECOFUN's leadership development training has resulted in over 2,500 affiliated members assuming diverse positions within the government's political structure, thereby positively influencing the advocacy process.
- **Resource-based network:** FECOFUN operates as a network of forest user groups, strategically anchored in the systematic utilisation of available forest resources. This approach resonates with every member of the user group.
- **Inclusive practices:** FECOFUN actively promotes gender inclusion, as evidenced by the implementation of initiatives fostering the integration of women within its organisational structure.
- **Volunteerism in the network:** The spirit of volunteerism permeates FECOFUN's network, reflecting a collective dedication to shared goals and objectives.

References and bibliography

Dhungana, SP, Pokharel BK, Bhattarai B and Ojha, H (2007) Discourses on poverty reduction from forestry in Nepal: a shift from community to household approach? In: *Proceedings, International Conference on Poverty Reduction and Forests*, Bangkok, September 2007. <https://lib.icimod.org/record/12893>

FECOFUN, Organizational structure. <https://fecofun.org.np/organizational-structure>

FECOFUN (1996) Statute of FECOFUN 1996, fifth amendment 2016. Internal document.

FECOFUN (2024) From community forest to policy formulation, information of elected members in house of representatives of federal and provincial house of Nepal, 2080. Internal document.

FECOFUN (2024) Book on good government promotion in community forestry user groups, training and community of practice. Internal document.

FECOFUN (2024) Organisational, financial, accounting and monitoring committee, and judicial committee report. Internal document.

FECOFUN (2021) A silver jubilee (2052–2077). Internal document.

FECOFUN (2021) Gender equality and social inclusion strategy (2075–2080). Internal document.

FECOFUN (2023) 25-year roadmap of FECOFUN (2078–2102), FECOFUN.

FECOFUN (2009) Financial and employee administrative regulations (2065). Internal document.

Government of Nepal (2019) Forests Act 2019 (2076). www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Forest-Act-2019-2076.pdf

Khanal, D (2020) Contribution of community forestry to sustainable development goals. FECOFUN. Internal document.

Khanal, D (2020) Five-year strategic plan (2075–2079). FECOFUN. Internal document.

Ojha, H, Khanal, DR, Sharma, N, Sharma, H and Pathak, B (2007) Federation of Community Forest User Groups in Nepal: an innovation in democratic forest governance. In: *Proceedings, International Conference on Poverty Reduction and Forests*, Bangkok, September 2007. <https://lib.icimod.org/record/12892>

Poudel, S (2024) Women power, a story of women leaders working in natural resource management and social sector, FECOFUN.