

Communities receive payments for carbon cleaning services

By A Staff Reporter

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Community representatives from three watershed projects in Dolakha, Gorkha and Chitwan received US\$ 95,000 from the Forest Carbon Trust Fund as payment for their forest conservation works and sustainable use of forest resources.

These projects claimed payments on the basis of scientifically measured performance in carbon sequestration. Receiving money from carbon polluters for the service

of absorbing this major greenhouse gas from atmosphere and storing it in the form of trees is known as forest carbon trade.

According to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the water sheds are the pilot projects focusing on carbon sequestration through community based forest management.

These are one of world's first carbon offset projects involving grassroots people in conserving forests, monitoring their carbon

status and providing necessary training to community members for these activities, ICIMOD said.

The Forest Carbon Trust Fund has been created as part of an international carbon trading and forest compensation scheme known as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus (REDD+).

Financed by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) under the climate and forest initiative, the

project covers over 10,000 hectares of community-managed forest and involves over 16,000 households and 89,000 forest-dependent people.

Norad provided a seed grant of US\$ 100,000 to initiate the fund.

The ICIMOD and its partners, the Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) and the Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio-researches (ANSAB) are implementing this initiative.

The 5,996 hectare Charnawati watershed in

Dolakha received US\$ 45,535 absorbing a total of almost 4.6 million tones of carbon dioxide in 2011. The carbon absorption was an increase of 51,483 tones of carbon dioxide compared to 2010.

The three pilot sites are different in nature in terms of their forest areas, population density, ethnic compositions and livelihood conditions. Therefore, the pilot fund addresses social equity issues by combining performance criteria with social and economic criteria, according to

ICIMOD.

The 1,888 hector Ludikhola watershed in Gorkha sequestered slightly less than 1.5 million tones of carbon dioxide in 2011 and was paid US\$ 27,560.

The 2,382 hector Kayarkhola watershed in Chitwan sequestered slightly more than 2.5 million tones in 2011.

Carbon trading is new concept globally and there is a need to build the capacity of local people who manage forests so that they can evaluate for themselves whether they can benefit from it.