

Working Together for Forests and People

Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Hariyo Ban Program Consortium



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
BSP	Biodiversity Support Program
CAPA	Community Adaptation Plan for Action
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CC	Climate Change
CFCC	Community Forest Coordination Committee
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
CHAL	Chitwan Annapurna Landscape
CLAC	Community Learning and Action Center
CLCC	Cluster Level Coordination Committee
CoP	Chief of Party
DCoP	Deputy Chief of Party
DFO	District Forest Office
DFSCC	District Forest Sector Coordination Committee
DoF	Department of Forests
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plan for Action
LLCC	Landscape Level Coordination Committee
MCAP	Manaslu Conservation Area Project
MoFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTNC	National Trust for Nature Conservation
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
PGA	Participatory Governance Assessment
PHPA	Public Hearing and Public Auditing
PMC	Program Management Committee
PSC	Program Steering Committee
PWBR	Participatory Well-Being Ranking
RBLCC	River Basin Level Coordination Committee
SAGUN	Strengthened Actions for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resources
SCAPES	Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems
SFM	Scientific Forest Management
SLCC	Site Level Coordination Committee
SWLCC	Sub-Watershed Level Coordination Committee
TAL	Terai Arc Landscape
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
UCPVA	Underlying Causes of Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WOO	Windows of Opportunity
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Executive Summary

The Hariyo Ban consortium comprises four organizations in Nepal: World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Federation of Community Users Nepal (FECOFUN) and the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC). An assessment of the Hariyo Ban consortium was conducted to explore how effective the consortium is in taking a multi-disciplinary approach, what factors govern successes and limitations, and how to distill this important learning. The study comprised review of relevant documents pertaining to the consortium partners and Hariyo Ban background documents, and interviews with key people from the Hariyo Ban consortium and people engaged with the consortium.

The assessment identified key successes and factors contributing to them, key challenges and difficulties, and key findings, in response to a set of sub-questions. It presents several recommendations on how to improve consortium effectiveness in the second phase of the Hariyo Ban Program (Hariyo Ban II).

Successes and Challenges

The key successes and achievements of the consortium include:

- The consortium has successfully overcome the discomfort of different and at times contradictory positions and perspectives among the partners, and consortium partners are now comfortable working with one another.
- A trust and mutual understanding has been developed, and the consortium has been able to capitalize on the strengths of the team.
- The strengths of the partners were leveraged in synergistic ways, and their comparative advantages were applied in many instances.
- The diversity of the partner institutions and their interactions have blended the different concepts, principles and beliefs of conservation and communities.
- The institutional and technical capacity of all four partners has been increased.
- The perceptions of partner organizations of each other and their impressions on the issues concerning biodiversity conservation have changed.

Factors that contribute to success include the **strategies and mechanisms** of the consortium; **roles, skills and behaviors** exhibited by staff and members; and **attitude, interest and commitment** demonstrated by the partners.

The consortium also faced a number of difficulties and challenges during implementation, including:

- Building and maintaining mutual trust and understanding was difficult at the beginning of the Program.
- There were challenges with managing group dynamics with a diversity of people with varying perspectives and competencies, and also challenges with managing informal groups.
- The partners worked in scattered, uncoordinated ways in many instances.
- There was difficulty breaking away from the past project modality in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL).
- Initially there was low government buy-in to the Program.
- Conservation, as the core business and mission of the principal partner, received priority over other themes.
- FECOFUN's reservations about the Community Forestry Coordination Committees (CFCCs), District Forestry Sector Coordination Committees (DFSCCs) and the concept of scientific forest management (SFM) presented a challenge.
- Duplication of efforts, varied unit costs of implementation, issues of landscape level reporting, and staff turnover were other issues.

- Opportunities were missed in, for example, capitalization of synergy and comparative advantages; learning among partners; cross learning; people-centric management; and demonstrating visible impacts.

Key findings

The performance of the consortium was assessed in several areas such as effectiveness, coordination and collaboration, impacts on partner organizations, integration of themes, capacity building and cross-learning. The findings on each of these are as follows:

- 1. Effectiveness of the consortium:** The consortium has been successful in bringing all partners closer, progressively building relationships, trust and confidence, and producing program outcomes. As a result, the consortium progressively matured and moved from ‘forming’ to ‘storming’ to ‘norming’ to ‘performing’ in its performance and team effectiveness. The partners used their comparative advantages to complement each other as the Program progressed. The use of different expertise has enhanced the cross learning and also demonstrated the fusion of the concepts, principles and beliefs of conservation and community approaches. Despite the complementarity, there were also a number of overlaps and scattered activities.
- 2. Coordination and collaboration:** A number of committees were formed and became functional for internal and external coordination and collaboration at various levels. The effectiveness of these committees varies across different levels and between the two landscapes. The Program Management Committee has been the most important mechanism for sharing learning, negotiating budget allocation, solving program issues and administrative differences, resolving conflicts and making important consortium decisions. A number of challenges and difficulties exist for effective coordination due to unclear roles, functions and structure of several coordination committees and structural differences of partners.
- 3. Impacts on partner organizations:** The impact of the consortium is evident in three areas among the partner organizations. First, changes in the functioning of the organization, organizational profile, organizational learning, and perceptions about other partner organizations. Second, there are changes in the bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships among the partner organizations and also with other agencies. Third, there are effects on organizational business and mission, and there is an improvement in operational practices and organizational capacities. FECOFUN members perceive some negative impacts too, though other partners did not explicitly mention negative impacts.
- 4. Integration of the thematic components:** The inter-relationships among the three thematic components and cross-cutting themes are internalized reasonably well. Though the integration of the themes began in the planning stage, the integration at the implementation level is occurring only at limited scales. There are important achievements with integration, including combining the climate change vulnerability and poverty assessment tools with conservation approaches. The coordination among consortium partners and the sequencing of activities was confused and lacked clarity in early years, but was reasonably well managed during later years of the Program. This still needs further improvement in Hariyo Ban II.
- 5. Capacity building:** A Training Needs Assessment (TNA) was conducted early on and identified trainings were regularly and reasonably well organized for consortium partners. The trainings and workshops contributed to substantially increasing the capacity of staff of all the partners. Capacity needs do remain, particularly in NTNC and FECOFUN. NTNC needs additional capacity in governance, gender and social inclusion (GESI) and social processes, and FECOFUN needs additional capacity on program development, planning, implementation and monitoring. More technical expertise is also needed in FECOFUN.

6. Technical and administrative cross-learning: The interface of two philosophies related to conservation and communities, across four institutions, resulted in a number of cross learnings among the partner organizations. With regard to administrative learning, all partners have learned improved compliance and grant management. However, there is still a lack of conscious, concerted and strategic efforts to enhance cross-learning among the partner organizations.

7. Key Lessons: The key lessons from the consortium include:

- Partners can work together even if there is disagreement over certain issues. However, the environment for building mutual trust and understanding has to be continuously created.
- Leadership is an important element in bringing the diverse partners together, keeping the partnership intact, and learning and adapting.
- Greater synergy and conceptual blending can be achieved through the interface of institutions with different areas of expertise to manage a multi-objective program.
- The knowledge system in conserving biodiversity has been enriched through the interaction of institutions on concepts focusing on communities and conservation.
- New and creative initiatives which may not be possible through efforts of individuals or single organizations can be pursued through collaboration.
- The consortium has created a foundation to shape and lead the way for conservation and natural resource management in Nepal.
- ‘Unity in diversity’ is demonstrated by using different expertise but respecting the individual freedom and identity of each organization.
- The approach of learning and adaptation should be a priority of the consortium so that there is continuous reflection, learning and adapting of strategies and mechanisms.

In order to apply these lessons to similar consortiums in the future, it is important to emphasize leadership qualities that bind together partners and staff; mechanisms for collective planning, coordination and decision making; strategies to establish a common understanding among partners regarding the tasks and activities at hand; and promoting an attitude, commitment and skills that connect and bring the consortium together. A learning and adaptive environment also has to be created to allow the consortium to grow as a living entity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The assessment concludes that the Hariyo Ban consortium made significant achievements in successfully delivering the Program, and also securing funding for another five-year phase. The partnership can flourish and produce outstanding results even if disagreements exist regarding certain issues. The following recommendations highlight ways to further strengthen and enhance the performance of the consortium:

- Further enhance the synergy of the partners in the consortium.
- Ensure participation of all partners in all important planning and decision making fora.
- Review and further strengthen the roles, functions and structure of coordination mechanisms.
- Give partners additional space and responsibility in policy engagement.
- Increase understanding of FECOFUN about CFCC, DFSCC and scientific forest management.
- Further strengthen blending and integration of themes.
- Develop additional capacity in consortium partners, particularly the national entities, NTNC and FECOFUN.
- Enhance further cross-learning between the partners.
- Reflect on the successes, limitations and lessons, and collectively plan and commit to continuously improving.

1. Background

The USAID-funded Hariyo Ban Program works in two large landscapes, the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) and the Chitwan-Annapurna Landscape (CHAL), with the aim of reducing climate impacts and threats to biodiversity in Nepal. The first phase of the Program was implemented from September 2011 to December 2016 by a non-government organization (NGO) consortium¹ comprising World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and the Federation of Community Forest Users in Nepal (FECOFUN), with WWF as the lead NGO. These consortium partners have different missions and working modalities; two are development organizations and two are conservation organizations. Of the four, two are international NGOs and two are national NGOs.

Early in the Program, Hariyo Ban developed a learning strategy with 29 learning questions to be answered during the course of the Program. One of these questions was related to the Hariyo Ban consortium: **How effective is the Hariyo Ban consortium in taking a multi-disciplinary approach, and what factors govern successes and limitations?**

This study assesses the effectiveness of the consortium by answering a number of questions, and distilling the learning. Audiences for this report include the Hariyo Ban consortium partners and core team; donors; other current and future consortia and coalitions in Nepal and beyond; and NGOs in Nepal.

2. Objective and Literature Review

Objective

The objective is to assess the effectiveness of the Hariyo Ban consortium in taking a multi-disciplinary approach, and identify the factors governing successes and limitations. The study answers the following learning question and sub-questions:

How effective is the Hariyo Ban consortium in taking a multi-disciplinary approach, and what factors govern successes and limitations?

Sub-questions:

- How have consortium partners defined **effectiveness** of the consortium? How effectively does Hariyo Ban take advantage of partner complementarity and deal with overlaps?
- What are the **challenges for coordination and collaboration**? What mechanisms are put in place to make sure that the coordination and collaboration is happening smoothly?
- How did the partners adjust? What were the **impacts on partner organizations** (positive and negative)? How are they building on the positive impacts, and addressing the negative ones?
- How effectively has Hariyo Ban **integrated the three thematic components** and cross-cutting themes? What factors helped and hindered the integration?
- What **capacity building** was needed? What capacity building has already been done, and how effective was it? Are there still capacity gaps?

¹ Margoluis et al, (2000) has defined a consortium as a partnership of “three or more organizations working together on specific projects involving joint liability and joint decision making. The degree of responsibility and accountability, however, depends on predetermined arrangements among the participating organizations.”

- What technical and administrative **cross-learning** occurred?
- What are the **key lessons** from this consortium? How can these lessons be applied in similar consortiums in the future?

Literature review

Literature and research about the function and effectiveness of consortiums in conservation and natural resource management is limited. However, conservation alliances² were reviewed by the Biodiversity Support Program (BSP)³ and the Bushmeat⁴ Crisis Task Force⁵. A study of the BSP alliances reported that the effectiveness of alliances for conservation is generally determined by: level of simplicity of the alliance, appropriate levels of decision making, the quality of leadership, clarity in goals and effective negotiation, clarity in roles and responsibilities, adaptability to change, and management capacity (Margoluis et al., 2000). Also, the likelihood of success is greatly reduced if there is a lack of basic skills related to project design, management, monitoring, analysis, and communications (ibid). What happens to such alliances when they complete their assigned tasks is difficult to predict. However, the lesson from Tuckman's 5-stage theory on group development suggests that the consortium either adjourns or starts a new beginning, and the valuable lessons of group development prepares everyone for the future group work (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2003).

Given that the Hariyo Ban consortium is completing the first phase of the Program and the same consortium has secured funding to implement a second phase, the current study of the consortium's effectiveness provides the opportunity for the partners to assess costs and benefits. This will also provide the opportunity for the consortium partners to further improve the effectiveness of the consortium.

3. Methodology, Tools and Limitations

Methodology and tools

This study is based on a review of relevant documents pertaining to the consortium, coalitions, background documents related to Hariyo Ban, and interviews and discussions with key individuals from the Hariyo Ban consortium and individuals engaged with the consortium. Interviewees included focal people and select staff from the Hariyo Ban consortium partners; members of the core team; USAID staff; and government staff and beneficiaries. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were held with staff of individual consortium partners and program target groups in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Chitwan and Nepalgunj. The study attempted to discover the learning and lessons through a stepwise inductive process based on the process of "Grounded Theory"⁶. A set of questionnaires was developed for individual interviews and focus group discussions to help answer

² Alliances can be contractual agreements, partnerships, or consortia (Margoluis et al., 2000).

³ BSP was a consortium of World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, and World Resources Institute. The consortium ran from 1988 to 2001 with a mission to promote conservation of the world's biological diversity.

⁴ "In Africa, forest is often referred to as 'the bush', thus wildlife and the meat derived from it is referred to as 'bushmeat' (in French - viande de brousse). This term applies to all wildlife species, including threatened and endangered, used for meat" (www.bushmeet.org)

⁵ The Bushmeat Crisis Task Force, founded in 1999, was a consortium of conservation organizations and scientists dedicated to the conservation of wildlife populations threatened by commercial hunting of wildlife for sale as meat (Eves, 2009).

⁶ Grounded theory is a research methodology developed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, in which theory is developed through a systematic collection and analysis of data. The researcher identifies concepts and categories from data and looks for the conceptual answer to the question "what is going on here?" pertaining to the problem, issue, concern and matters.

the learning questions and sub-questions. The initial interviews aimed to discover the greatest opportunities and subsequent interviews tried to further elaborate and cross-verify the findings. The interviews and discussions with government officials, donors and beneficiaries were used to validate the findings. The interviews were recorded (with the interviewees' consent), kept confidential, and important points noted. This report was produced by compiling and analyzing the outcomes of the interviews and focus group discussions, as well as the answers to the learning questions and sub-questions. The draft report and key findings of this study were presented in a workshop of the consortium partners for feedback and comments. The report was then finalized by incorporating the comments and feedback.

Limitations of the study

The unavailability of any literature or research on the function and effectiveness of consortiums in Nepal is an important limitation of this study. Research and studies on organizational and management aspects are often the lowest priority area in the development arena, so there is limited information on either the performance or effectiveness of organizations, or on partnerships and consortiums in the field of development, including conservation and natural resource management. The findings of this study are based on the perceptions of the people engaged in the Hariyo Ban consortium partnership, so the perspectives and interpretations are affected by their subjectivity.

4. Findings of the Assessment

4.1. Key successes, challenges, and factors contributing to success

This section presents the key achievements in the development and functioning of the consortium and the challenges faced during the implementation of the Hariyo Ban Program. The factors that contributed to the success and the factors that helped address the challenges are also discussed. As the focus of this assessment is the consortium partnership, the achievements and the challenges identified are not of the Hariyo Ban Program as a whole, but concentrate on the sphere of the consortium.

A. Key successes and achievements

- 1. Overcoming discomfort and creating a comfortable environment working with one another:** The consortium partners have different and at times contradictory positions on particular issues, but have become comfortable working with one another after establishing a platform of shared understanding. FECOFUN and NTNC, and WWF to some extent, were the institutions with the greatest differences in beliefs, positions and objectives, and were in opposition about several issues concerning conservation and expansion of protected areas. The ability of these institutions to work in partnership for five years, and deliver program results without major difficulties and institutional conflicts, is an important achievement of the consortium. Common ground has now been established between these two institutions. Willingness to continue the partnership for another five years, and winning the bid for Hariyo Ban II, is another important achievement.
- 2. Development of trust and mutual understanding:** Trust and mutual understanding among consortium partners was a key challenge in the beginning of the Program. FECOFUN's perceived image of conservation organizations (NTNC and WWF) and vice versa was not positive or conducive to establishing the consortium. The consortium has managed to change the partners' perceptions of each other. As a result, the trust, mutual understanding and closeness among the partners progressively increased over time. The strengths of each partner were capitalized on and the consortium has demonstrated that differences can be minimized while each organization still maintains its individual mission. Both formal interactions and relationships including interpersonal ones have contributed to developing trust and mutual understanding.

- 3. Development of synergies and applying comparative advantages:** Initially, in the first and second years of the Program, the partners focused more on their own business and in their own working areas. It was as if community activities and conservation activities were being implemented in different sites. However, a number of discussions exploring integration and complementarity, together with the mid-term evaluation, contributed to building synergy and team effectiveness. As a result, the cross-fertilization of conservation (WWF and NTNC) and community approaches (CARE and FECOFUN) began emerging. By the third year the consortium was using the partners' relative strengths and complementarities better, with greater synergy. For example, in the policy advocacy arena, the partners cover a broad spectrum of roles. WWF and NTNC are quite close to the Government of Nepal (GoN), playing a strong advisory role in policy but do not advocate strongly. CARE is somewhat more distant from the GoN, but plays a convening role in specific instances. FECOFUN, whose main mission is advocacy on behalf of its members, plays a strong advocacy role in policy and is more critical of the GoN. These complementary policy roles among consortium members enable a space for all to play a part, and as a whole the consortium can influence policy more effectively. Synergy was seen not only in expertise and approaches, but also in geographical reach. For example, Hariyo Ban is known in Gulmi through FECOFUN and in Lamjung and Syangja through CARE, as they are the only partners present in those districts.
- 4. Fusion of the concepts, principles and beliefs of conservation and communities:** The diversity of institutions and their interactions has enabled a blend of the different concepts, principles and beliefs of conservation and communities. WWF, with a conservation focus, is the lead organization and CARE, community-focused, has the role of deputy leadership (Deputy Chief of Party). Among the other two partners, NTNC is conservation focused, and FECOFUN is community focused. This combination provided ample opportunity to balance the conservation interests and community interests. The blend was present in program planning, implementation, evaluation, and in conservation policies. There is an increased understanding among all partners that sustainable conservation cannot happen without integrating dimensions concerning people, communities and ecosystems. The consortium has contributed to developing a holistic perspective of conservation.
- While there are important differences among the missions of the four consortium partners, they have enough in common for the consortium to work. The overlapping areas in the missions of all four partners are the 'sweet spot' where the partners can work together and complement each other, while respecting that each partner has other areas of operation that are outside the consortium interest.
- 5. Institutional strengthening and capacity building of all consortium partners:** The technical capacity of all partners in all themes has increased. The management and leadership competency of WWF is enhanced, tested and established. There was a little confusion regarding who should lead the consortium in the beginning when the proposal was being developed. However, the confusion was managed by giving the leadership role to WWF, which is now well recognized and accepted by all partners. The stringent compliance requirements of USAID have contributed to developing project management and institutional capacity of all partners. The capacity of NTNC increased in climate change adaptation, GESI, governance and community conservation. CARE's understanding on biodiversity and integration of people's rights and GESI in conservation areas has broadened. FECOFUN considers it has experienced organizational strengthening at the central level, as well as in all 25 of its district chapters involved in Hariyo Ban. These offices are now equipped with office support, and their members are mobilized and their capacity on leadership, advocacy, networking, and technical matters in local adaptation plans for action (LAPAs)/community adaptation plans for action (CAPAs) has increased.
- 6. Change in the perception of other partners and the issues facing the Program:** There has been a change in the perception of partner organizations about each other. The perception about the issues related to biodiversity conservation has also changed. For example, FECOFUN

members perceived that WWF and NTNC never think about communities, only about tigers and bears. Working together on Hariyo Ban helped FECOFUN to understand that this is not the case. FECOFUN also previously perceived that conservation organizations think only about protected areas and conservation areas, while disregarding the role of community forestry in biodiversity conservation. FECOFUN now understands that the role and contribution of community forestry to biodiversity conservation is well recognized. FECOFUN also feels that their engagement in the consortium has infused community conservation approaches into the management of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), which is managed by NTNC.

In interviews with NTNC, the staff felt that community-based conservation and consideration of communities were in place since the organization was established. Interviewees from other Hariyo Ban partners, however, felt that there was a transformational change in the way NTNC integrated conservation and communities, and that this change came about through Hariyo Ban implementation. Also, an interviewee from NTNC reflected on how the organization is working toward the goal of 25% of the land area of Nepal under the protected area system. NTNC now, however, thinks that this goal can be achieved through community conserved areas and the community forestry system. This is an important shift in the perception of NTNC regarding the biodiversity conservation role of the community forestry system. Also, staff of NTNC used to perceive FECOFUN as a political institution that only protested and lodged complaints to gain power. The dialogue and interaction through the consortium provided the opportunity to understand each other's work.

Importantly, an interviewee from the government considers that the engagement of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) with the Hariyo Ban consortium partners has changed the way MoFSC engages across multi-stakeholder platforms.

B. Factors contributing to success

The consortium partners identified a number of factors contributing to the success of the consortium. These factors are a result of the strategies, mechanisms, roles, skills and behaviors, as well as attitude and commitment.

Strategies:

- All differences in opinion and issues among consortium partners were discussed and resolved through formal and informal arrangements. Formal arrangements included formal meetings, and agreements between WWF and FECOFUN, WWF and Barandabhar Community Forest User Group (CFUG), and an MoU with MoFSC. Informal arrangements included the facilitation by CARE of relationships between FECOFUN and other partners, and use of individual relationships between staff of the partners.
- Opportunities were provided for all partners to voice their concerns and openly discuss issues.
- Each partner's norms, values and identity were recognized and respected. Each organization had the ability to employ its own implementation modality and organizational norms to implement activities, providing freedom to the partners to make decisions.
- The provision of the Windows of Opportunity (WOO) component helped Hariyo Ban to engage with diverse organizations and address other pertinent issues.
- Each partner was encouraged to share its learning, perspectives and opinions, and the leadership and management was open to continuous learning and adaptation.
- A culture was developed within the partnership that no partner would intrude on other areas of work, recognizing the individual strengths of each organization.
- Continuous dialogue was a key tool that was extensively used to resolve issues and to keep the consortium together and functioning effectively.

Mechanisms:

- A number of consortium coordinating mechanisms were put in place that included the Project

Management Committee (PMC), Landscape Level Coordination Committees (LLCCs), Cluster Level Coordination Committees (CLCCs), and Site Level Coordination Committees (SLCCs). These mechanisms were important for coordinated planning, implementation, review, sharing and decision making. Setting the agendas and engaging in discussions were pursued in an open manner.

- Participation of members in these coordinating and decision making mechanisms was more open than structured so that partners were more comfortable. Organization staff and project technical teams worked together on different processes, which reduced the gap between the organizational interests and the needs for project delivery.
- The Program Steering Committee (PSC) and the working group of the PSC provided a positive and conducive environment to connect the partners.

Roles, skills and behaviors:

- Roles of facilitator, mentor and coach were played by several people among the partner organizations.
- Managerial and leadership skills (flexible, open, transparent, participatory and accountable) were employed in program management and consortium management.
- A positive, respectful environment was created by leadership and demonstrated by each partner.
- The core team and partners had a range of skills that enabled the consortium to come together and evolve. For example, the Chief of Party (CoP) had previous experience in leading consortia, establishing neutrality across the partners, and the Deputy Chief of Party (DCoP) had previous experience and relationships with FECOFUN and civil society. The personal relationships that many staff had with GoN and civil society also played an important role.

Attitudes, interest and commitment:

- Proactive senior management and motivated, mature leadership of thematic components made important contributions.
- Maturity, responsiveness and team environment were demonstrated by partners.
- There was an inner intent and commitment to keep the partners together. This was showcased in interviews with FECOFUN and WWF, with WWF considering that: a) community ownership and community governance is essential for conservation, and FECOFUN represents the communities; b) major forests of Nepal are now managed by the communities; and c) FECOFUN advocates for communities and all have to listen to communities. WWF cannot imagine conservation without communities' participation and ownership. This mindset aligns the core missions of both organizations.
- There was strong interest in gaining knowledge and learning new approaches from other consortium partners: e.g. climate adaptation, linking biodiversity conservation with community interests, further knowledge in governance improvement, and GESI.

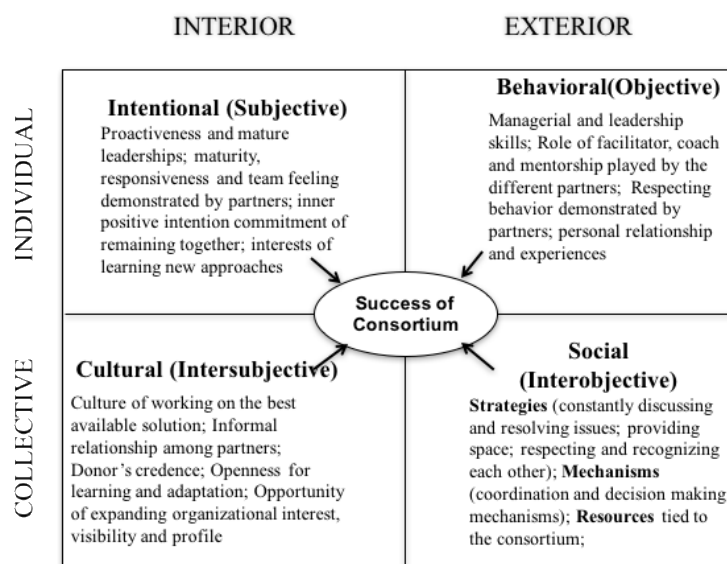
In addition to these factors, all partners saw the opportunity to expand organizational interests and broaden their organizational profiles by remaining in the consortium. As the 'reinforcement theory' suggests, "behavior is a function of its consequences", and the resources, the influencing environment, and the opportunity to improve the organizational profile was there for each partner if they stayed together. The partners recognized the mutual advantages, complementarity and synergies of being together in the consortium.

The factors that contributed to the success of the consortium can also be viewed from the integral theory, and its subjective and objective realms at the individual and collective levels⁷. The consortium

⁷ The subjective and objective domains at individual and collective levels constitute the four quadrants of the integral theory. These four quadrants consist of the quadrant of *intention and attitude*, the quadrant of *behavior and skills*, the quadrant of *culture and values*, and the quadrant of *systems and structure* (Wilber, 2007; Esbjorn-Hargens, 2009).

achieved success as a result of both subjective and objective factors within individuals and within the consortium. Figure 1 presents the four-dimensional key factors that contributed to success.

Figure 1: Four-dimensional factors contributing to the success of the Hariyo Ban consortium



4.2. Major Challenges and Difficulties

During the implementation of the Program the consortium faced a number of difficulties and challenges, including the following:

- Developing and maintaining trust and interpersonal relationships:** Building mutual trust and understanding was a major challenge in the beginning of the Program. Each consortium partner had organizational interests and objectives, and defended them. Negotiating around these interests and objectives was a big challenge. Formal and informal negotiations were effective, however, in reaching mutually agreeable solutions. Given the complexity and diversity of the partnership, maintaining trust, understanding and interpersonal relationships was important but challenging. A 6-point agreement between WWF and FECOFUN, for example, and the continuous dialogue among partners, contributed to building and maintaining trust, understanding and productive relationships.
- Challenges of managing group dynamics:** The consortium consisted not only of the formal members in the partnership, but also a diversity of people with different ways of thinking, and different competencies. It was a challenge to manage these different ways of thinking among the groups, as well as the group dynamics, to ensure the Program operated smoothly. Informal meetings helped with building understanding and managing group dynamics.
- Scattered activities and not capitalizing on synergies:** For various reasons there were missed opportunities to capitalize on synergies through the partnership. First, sometimes only one partner was present in an area, and would implement all activities despite not always having the full range of expertise needed. Second, though a conceptual understanding of focusing on threats and vulnerability existed, it was not fully implemented in practice. Thirdly, there was a culture of not recognizing the expertise of other partners until the project outcomes were assessed. As a result, opportunities to develop a number of models and test them for outcomes were missed. For example, community based anti-poaching units were formed to control the poaching of wildlife, which had both male and female youths. The engagement of female youths requires more security, different logistics and also different

norms and skills for working together. The capacity building of these units required different models, content and logistics, and it took a lot of time and effort for the partners to understand the specific needs.

- **Difficulty of breaking the continuity of the past:** A number of Hariyo Ban activities in TAL, in the beginning, were implemented to continue the previous projects implemented by WWF. This gave the impression among the WWF field staff who worked on the past projects, that the Program was a continuation of them, creating less of a sense of unity under Hariyo Ban. This was a challenge in the beginning and took a lot of effort from WWF and feedback and comments from the core team, donor and other partners to break the mindset of the past and develop a sense of all partners working together.
- **Low initial government buy-in to the Program, and the government feeling that they were not consulted:** USAID had indicated that the GoN would be involved in the selection process of original proposals for the Program, so it was not possible to consult with the government during proposal development, for risk of being disqualified for conflict of interest. However, after the consortium won the bid, the government had to be brought on board. Fully establishing buy-in for the Program, when the government had not been consulted previously, was an important challenge to overcome.
- **Agenda and influence:** Each partner has different objectives, priorities, beliefs and core business. Some of the interviewees in the consortium partners felt that the core business of the principal partner practicing conservation was prioritized in most situations. This was the result of several factors that were perceived to be connected to agenda and influence. The location of Program office within the premises of WWF Nepal, the donor relations, and access to information and knowledge including the budget were considered factors that favored the principal partner. FECOFUN and CARE staff thought that conservation related initiatives were getting through more easily compared to social initiatives related to governance, GESI and livelihoods.
- **Issues on DFSCCs, CFCCs and Scientific Forest Management (SFM):** The Hariyo Ban Program regarded the District Forestry Sector Coordination Committee (DFSCC) as an important pillar for planning and implementation of forestry activities in the district. Similarly, WWF had been implementing a number of programs through Community Forestry Coordination Committees (CFCCs). However, FECOFUN has long held reservations about DFSCCs and CFCCs, and does not fully cooperate with these working modalities. It was challenging for the Program to balance FECOFUN's reservations and at the same time respect the DFSCC and CFCC modalities. Similarly, the Department of Forests has been promoting the concept of scientific forest management, which is not fully accepted by FECOFUN. FECOFUN's resistance is often seen in meetings and workshops where the concept of scientific forest management is discussed. FECOFUN members think that scientific forest management is dominated by government, considering only technical forestry matters (e.g. timber production), and not social or biodiversity issues. It was a challenge for the Program to strike a balance between Department of Forests (DoF)'s willingness to promote SFM, and FECOFUN's stance. Piloting of SFM is, however, being pursued in several places such as Takanja Community Forest in Kaski district, and positive outcomes are emerging. Some interviewees consider that the positive outcomes could help increase FECOFUN's awareness and help them be more supportive of the concept.
- **Issues related to program management and implementation:** There is duplication among some of the programs implemented by different partners. For example, the governance assessment is done by most partners, and CAPA preparation is done by all partners. The unit cost and budget for implementation of, for example, CAPA preparation, varies across the partners. There is also no mechanism for the partners to report at the landscape level, and as a consequence, there is difficulty coordinating with government line agencies at the regional level. Hariyo Ban is often asked to share progress at regional level, but the partners often do not respond to regional needs. Staff retention is also an issue with most partners, particularly for FECOFUN, so maintaining institutional memory and relationships is more difficult.
- **Missed opportunities:** Although the partners have comparative advantages, they failed to

capitalize on these in a number of areas. More synergy could have been achieved if this had been strategic. Some of the missed opportunities shared by interviewees include: the working areas in TAL were selected based on animal movement rather than climate vulnerability, leading to climate adaptation issues being worked on at a localized level. A vision was lacking for REDD+. There could have been more cross learning among partners if this had been strategic, and more evidence could have generated in linking conservation and livelihoods. FECOFUN could have done further in-depth programming, and could have contributed more proactively in development of the CHAL Strategy and revision of the TAL Strategy. Hariyo Ban originally planned to support the transition of Annapurna Conservation Area management to the communities, but GoN decided to delay the process. If payments for ecosystem services (PES) work had started earlier, the Program could have demonstrated more visible impacts by the end of phase one. The CAPA/LAPA process could have been more closely linked with other ministries in order to mainstream it in planning at different levels.

4.3. Issues, concerns and difficulties raised by FECOFUN members

Members of FECOFUN raised issues and concerns that they think are important for the consortium to function smoothly. Some of these issues and concerns are interpersonal, inter-organizational apprehensions, while others are indeed about the functioning of the partnership. Other partners did not raise any prevailing issues, concerns or difficulties that they considered important to detail in this section. The following points were shared by FECOFUN during interviews:

- FECOFUN's trust of CARE regarding community rights and community perspectives was one of the key deciding factors for FECOFUN to join the Hariyo Ban consortium. However, FECOFUN sometimes got the sense that CARE was not able to take a stand and looked to be diverting from its main value of 'people first'.
- FECOFUN's agenda of 'community first' and WWF and NTNC's agenda of 'conservation first' sometimes look extreme. Though the consortium often finds common ground, FECOFUN questions whether the scope of their work, and community forestry more broadly, is being reduced.
- FECOFUN has some hesitation about the corridor and bottleneck approach, as they consider this a more mechanical approach that is relying more on maps than people's voices and concerns. FECOFUN also fears that a new network might be promoted, bypassing the FECOFUN and community forestry model.
- FECOFUN's core interest is in issue based policy advocacy, and it advocates to protect community rights over natural resources. However, Hariyo Ban has provided FECOFUN only a narrow space for this.
- The Hariyo Ban Program has a Windows of Opportunity (WOO) fund that is administered by WWF Nepal under existing policies and procedures. Partners are engaged in developing the guidelines, in finalizing the list of awardees, and in supervision of the implementation if it is within the scope of any of the partners, but they are not fully engaged in selecting and deciding on the awards. This made FECOFUN feel somewhat disengaged in the process. This issue will likely be addressed in Hariyo Ban II, as a decision has already been made to involve all partners in the processes of proposal selection.
- Members stated that they do participate in a number of meetings and workshops, but the language, technical subjects and lack of capacity often hinder them from more effective contribution and influence.
- In the core team, only the staff of WWF and CARE are represented. Two partners (NTNC and FECOFUN) felt that there was a communication gap and disengagement in decision making with respect to Hariyo Ban operations. This issue was addressed by the PMC, with the decision to include NTNC and FECOFUN in core team meetings on a monthly basis in Hariyo Ban II.
- Financial management is a challenge in FECOFUN district chapters. It is the task of the

treasurer, who is neither full time staff nor paid staff. So the correct documentation required by the Program is difficult to obtain from the treasurer. The district chapters have hired part-time financial staff but they do not have adequate skills and there is frequent turnover. Another difficulty with financial reporting is that financial records from all district chapters are sent to the central FECOFUN office to compile, and it is difficult for two finance staff in FECOFUN headquarters to prepare the reports.

4.4. Findings for the sub-questions

Sub-question 1: How have consortium partners defined effectiveness of the consortium? How effectively does Hariyo Ban take advantage of partner complementarity and deal with overlaps?

Two elements are important with respect to the effectiveness of the consortium: first, the extent of the roles identified in the program document that are fulfilled by the partners complementing each other (see the expected roles of the partners in box 1); and second, the extent to which the activities, resources and processes are coordinated and managed, and lead to producing program outcomes. This section explores the extent to which these two elements are fulfilled by analyzing the dynamics of the relationships and performance that unfolded during the implementation of the Program over five years.

Relationship dynamics of the partners

In the beginning, the bi-lateral and multi-lateral dynamics of the consortium partners were complex. Some of the partners already had a history of partnering, with levels of mutual trust and understanding. Other partners had a more contradictory relationship and prior differences to overcome. WWF and CARE had a good level of understanding, as they are in a global alliance that works on integrated conservation and development programs with natural-resource dependent communities living in areas of global biodiversity importance. These two organizations had also worked together on the USAID-funded Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems (SCAPES) program in Nepal, and collaborated through the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Adaptation Network on developing an integrated community-ecosystem approach to climate adaptation. WWF and NTNC have many common areas of work, and have been partnering in conservation since the establishment of NTNC. They partnered in promoting community-based ecosystem management in Annapurna Conservation Area. Also, WWF, FECOFUN and CARE worked together on the USAID-funded Strengthened Actions for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resources (SAGUN) program to bring improved governance and livelihood practices to community forestry.

FECOFUN and NTNC had, however, opposing positions about the conservation of biodiversity and establishment of protected areas. NTNC has a history of promoting wildlife conservation through the protected area system, while FECOFUN has been vocally against this approach. FECOFUN has been advocating for community forestry, community rights and conservation through community forestry. The confrontation between these two was further triggered by the issue of whether the management agreement of ACAP be extended for NTNC, or if the management should be handed over to communities. FECOFUN advocated and lobbied for ACAP to be managed by communities and not by NTNC. FECOFUN also used to perceive WWF as they did NTNC, as an institution that promotes the protected area system while ignoring community needs and rights. CARE and WWF also had some differences of ‘means’ and ‘ends’ regarding competing priorities of people and conservation. CARE’s approach has been people-based and rights-based, and regards the ‘well-being of the people’ first before the conservation of biodiversity. WWF focuses on ‘biodiversity conservation’ first for the well-being of people. The bi-lateral and multi-lateral dynamics of the four partners was complex, and managing the complexity of the consortium was challenging. Many stakeholders, including government officials, doubted whether these partners would work effectively together. The consortium partners shared in interviews that despite such a complex team, the relationships and leadership, management, mechanisms and strategy of the Program were successful in bringing the partners closer, progressively

building trust and confidence, and were important in producing program outcomes.

How consortium partners defined effectiveness of the consortium

At the beginning of the Program, all partners were positioning themselves around their own organizational beliefs and missions. However, from the second year onwards, the partners began to understand their similarities and differences, and found space to work together in spite of their differences. Constant engagement and interactions increased their understanding of one another, helping the consortium to move from apprehension, reservation and suspicion towards ease in building trust and confidence. As a result, the consortium progressively matured and moved from 'forming' to 'performing' in performance and team effectiveness. The performance of the consortium from formation during proposal design to program completion can be compared with the five-stage theory of group development, which goes from 'forming' to 'storming' to 'norming' to 'performing' and to 'adjourning', as proposed by Tuckman⁸.

The interviewees of different consortium partners shared how the consortium performed in different years. The progression of the consortium development stages, with characteristics and actions in each stage, are presented in Figure 2. The initial 'forming' stage occurred when the partners came together to submit the proposal. The forming stage was also characterized by 'storming' as there was uncertainty, anxiety, confusion and contradictions. There was also a sense of competition between WWF and CARE to take leadership of the Program. Also, FECOFUN considered not joining the consortium because of NTNC's participation. A number of bi-lateral and multi-lateral meetings were held and FECOFUN later agreed to join.

The second stage of 'storming' began in the first year of the Program. In this stage, each organization was focusing on its own organizational objectives and was trying to influence others. Open communication was difficult, and there was confrontational behavior. Many of the processes and mechanisms were being developed and tested. Many of the difficulties were within FECOFUN, as there were many questions and concerns from their district chapters and stakeholders about why FECOFUN joined a consortium with WWF and NTNC. However, the leadership of the consortium and individual partners continued formal and informal interactions, leading the team to the stage of 'norming'. The norming stage was characterized by clarity of roles, and understanding of similarities and interdependencies. The partners began to recognize and respect the identity and purpose of other partners. Many issues were resolved through this continued dialogue. Mutual trust and understanding among the partners improved. The forming, storming and norming stages were completed by year two of the Program.

Year three onward was the 'performing' stage of the consortium. During this time, the consortium reached a more mature stage. There was more open communication, with supportive and trusting behavior among the partners. Partners were helping each other, and there was a feeling of closeness and friendship. Joint work also began during this time. This stage continued until the end of phase 1, though short-term fluctuations existed. In theory, the consortium could have reached a stage of 'adjourning' if it had not won the bid for the second phase of Hariyo Ban, with the incentive of further funding to continue working together and building on the work of the first five years. Without Hariyo Ban II, the relationships developed in the first phase would likely have created further avenues for collaboration, though probably not with the same level of formality.

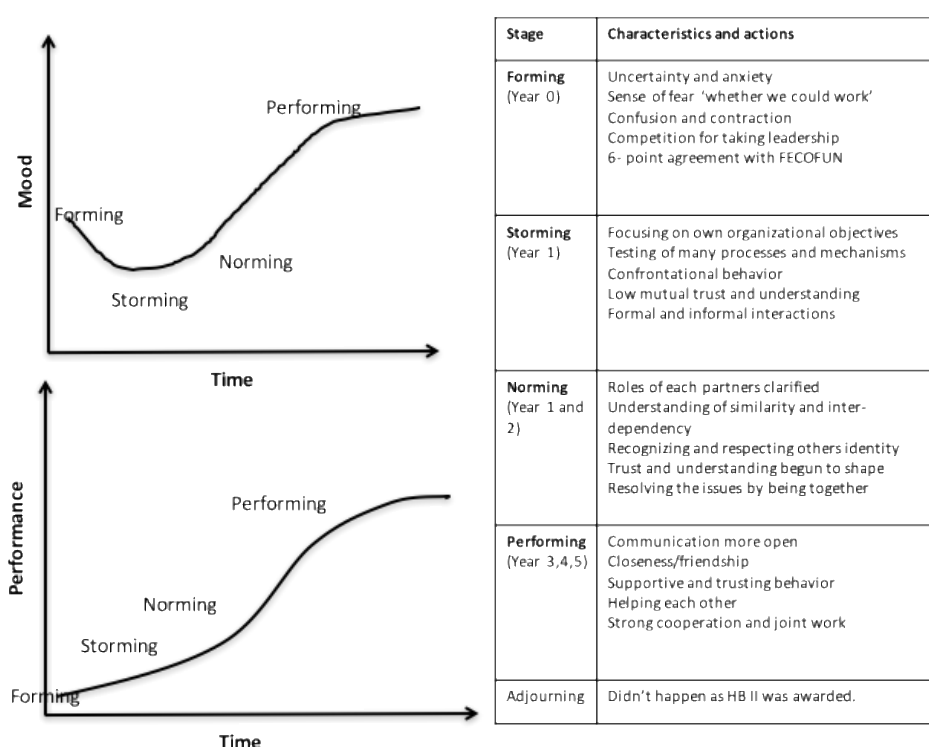
Constant dialogue among the partners was an important factor in bringing them closer and supporting the implementation of the Program. A sense of competition demonstrated in the beginning was replaced by a sense of cooperation and interdependence in later years. This demonstrated the 'living entity' quality of the consortium. Most interviewees felt that the sense of togetherness was developed

⁸ Educational Psychologist Bruce W Tuckman proposed five stages of group development that progress from forming, storming, norming, and performing to adjourning, and is referred as Tuckman's Five-Stage Theory of Group Development (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2003).

as the partners continually talked to each other and began understanding each other. This affirms the proposition of Wheatley (2002) that “when we begin listening to each other, and when we talk about things that matter to us, the world begins to change”.

Consortium partners also regarded the successful implementation of Hariyo Ban as evidence of the success of the consortium. The Program proposed a vision, goal and objectives, and designed a number of interventions to achieve them. The Program completed five years and produced results, which were assessed in the mid-term evaluation and the evaluation of the WOO. Based on these evaluations, USAID announced a competitive call for Hariyo Ban II, where it endorsed the success of Hariyo Ban. Most importantly, the original consortium partners all decided to stay together with the same consortium composition and to produce a proposal for Hariyo Ban II. Hariyo Ban II was awarded to the same consortium. This suggests that the consortium performed well, with outstanding achievements.

Figure 2: Group Development Stages of Hariyo Ban Consortium



How effectively does Hariyo Ban take advantage of partner complementarity and deal with overlaps?

The Program expected the consortium partners to complement each other with their diverse expertise, experiences, and presence in the program areas, and generate synergies to achieve expected goals and objectives. WWF and CARE, as international NGOs working in Nepal for a long time, brought technical expertise, international learning and experience to the Program. FECOFUN and NTNC, national NGOs with a long history of forest and biodiversity conservation, and strong ground level presence in the program areas, provided reach at the grassroots level. FECOFUN's community forestry network and presence was strong in all districts of the program area; NTNC's presence was strong in the two conservation areas (ACAP and Manaslu Conservation Area Project (MCAP)) in CHAL and in three protected areas and buffer zones (Chitwan National Park, Bardia National Park, and Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve) in TAL. The partners worked to fulfill their expected roles as identified in the program document (see Box 1 below).

Box 1: Expected roles of the partners

The program document defined the primary roles of the partners, as per their capacity and constituency, as follows:

WWF: WWF Nepal is responsible for managing the Program and coordinating with government and partners. As Prime, WWF provides technical leadership and is accountable for program management and reporting. It is responsible to USAID for agreement, performance, communications and all technical, financial and administrative tasks. On the technical side, WWF is responsible for natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem related activities, policy inputs and leads the biodiversity and sustainable landscapes components.

CARE: CARE is responsible for bringing its global experience and local knowledge in leading the climate change adaptation component while contributing to various elements across the Program. It is also responsible for support to natural resource management (NRM) groups for good governance practices, social/environmental standards in REDD+, carbon literacy and community based carbon monitoring, and training.

FECOFUN: FECOFUN is responsible for mobilizing, networking, and synergy of CFUGs for their participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Program. It is also responsible for issue-based advocacy, community based enterprises, awareness raising, and ensuring good governance among NRM groups.

NTNC: NTNC is responsible for wildlife monitoring, research and management. It is also responsible for activities related to protected areas and buffer zone management.

The partners have utilized their comparative advantages to complement each other in the Program, leveraging this to deliver program outcomes. WWF utilized its managerial and leadership capacity and technical capacity in conservation, biological science and climate change adaptation and mitigation. CARE used its capacity on climate change adaptation, governance and GESI. NTNC utilized its knowledge and expertise in conservation science, species research and monitoring. FECOFUN unleashed its potential in engaging and mobilizing communities, and improving governance of community groups.

The use of different expertise enhanced learning among partner organizations, and also demonstrated the fusion of concepts, principles and beliefs of conservation and communities. Examples of this fusion is demonstrated in the governance improvement initiatives in conservation areas and buffer zone management committees through governance assessment, public hearing and public auditing, and governance improvement actions. Also important were the preparation of guidelines, approach papers, tools for governance, GESI and livelihoods, and the awareness and training of consortium partners on these tools. Community empowerment and governance strengthening are increasingly accepted among the consortium partners as preconditions for enhancing community engagement in conservation. The modalities for community mobilization for conservation, and community based anti-poaching approaches, are other important areas integrated through the consortium partner comparative advantages.

The role of community forestry in the conservation of biodiversity is widely recognized. There is now discussion on how conservation can be further enhanced in community forestry and how community needs and concerns can be better addressed in conservation areas. All partners putting their energy and expertise to support community efforts to conserve ghoral in Nawalparasi using the existing community forestry system is an example of synergetic efforts of the consortium.

The linkage of biodiversity conservation with climate change adaptation is another example of complementarity and collaboration among partners. The Program recognizes the vulnerability of ecosystems and species to climate change, and has worked to build resilience and promote adaptation through, for example, reestablishing populations of vulnerable species and climate smarting

conservation management plans. Unlike many other climate adaptation programs, the climate change adaptation work has taken an integrated ecosystem-community approach, helping communities to become more resilient through approaches that include ecosystem services, while at the same time examining ecosystem vulnerability to climate and non-climate stresses, and reducing non-climate threats and restoring ecosystems in order to build ecosystem resilience for the benefit of both people and conservation.

Despite much complementarity of partners, there existed a number of overlaps and scattered activities, particularly in the early years. While joint work planning was undertaken in the two landscapes and at the central level, the partners in the field had little discussion about how to implement the Program after the work plan was approved. As a result, implementation was scattered and not very integrated. The mid-term evaluation identified this as a gap in program planning and implementation. In many instances, partners were planning similar activities though they were not always in their area of expertise. The preparation of CAPAs/LAPAs, governance assessment and livelihood improvement activities are some of the overlap areas, but the quality assurance by the thematic lead could have been better. Another reason for overlap is that the different partners have a presence in certain areas where they would like to do everything irrespective of their expertise. These practices of planning and implementation missed the potential for synergy in many instances. Though the scattered activities and overlaps lessened in later years, it is still important to further bundle and sequence improved site level planning and review and reflection, and have quality assurance by the partner with the relevant expertise.

Sub-question 2: What mechanisms are put in place to make sure that the coordination and collaboration is happening smoothly? What are the challenges for coordination and collaboration?

A number of committees were formed for internal and external coordination and collaboration at the Central, Landscape, Cluster and Site level. They include: Program Steering Committee (PSC) and PSC Working Group, Program Management Committee (PMC), Program Core Team, Landscape Level Coordination Committee (LLCC), Cluster Level Coordination Committee (CLCC), River Basin Coordination Committee (RBLCC), and Site Level Coordination Committee (SLCC). The roles and responsibilities, membership and frequency of meetings of these committees are presented in Annex 1.

The PSC and PSC Working Group are the mechanisms for external coordination and synergy with other national programs and sectors, while the other committees are mechanisms for the internal coordination and synergy among consortium partners. At the central level, the Program Management Committee (PMC) is the most important coordinating mechanism among the four partners. It is an important forum for sharing learning, negotiating budget allocation, solving program issues and administrative differences, resolving conflicts and making important decisions concerning the Program. The committee is chaired by the Senior Conservation Program Director of WWF Nepal with the Hariyo Ban Deputy Chief of Party as the Member Secretary. The membership in the PMC was initially started with two members from each organization. However, in later years the membership was made more flexible, with a number of invitees as required by the agenda so that each organization is able to engage and fulfill expected roles. The committee employs a participatory process of decision making and any partner can propose agenda items. Any conflicts, if not resolved by the PMC, are dealt with through bi-lateral mechanisms. The PMC has been instrumental in clarifying ambiguous issues and strengthening understanding and trust among the core partners.

Another mechanism for the day to day operations and program communication is the Program Core Team which is led by the Chief of Party and meets every week. Initially, the program document conceived of a Program Management Unit (PMU), but in practice the weekly meetings of the Program Core Team took the place of formal PMU meetings. The membership in the core team is not representative of all the consortium partners, as its staff are employed only by WWF and CARE. This

made the two other partners, NTNC and FECOFUN, feel disengaged, and resulted in communication gaps in decision making about Hariyo Ban operations. The issue was discussed in the PMC and a decision made to include NTNC and FECOFUN in core team meetings of Hariyo Ban once a month.

There was also flexibility to establish new mechanisms to fill needs and gaps. Specific mechanisms such as the finance team, policy group, communications team, and GESI group (that now includes other organizations too) were formed to help strengthen coordination and participation of consortium partners in policy work, program management and issue discussion. The policy group emerged out of the learning of Hariyo Ban activities. Hariyo Ban has been receiving a number of requests to review and prepare forest and conservation policies, strategies, and guidelines. For these requests, thematic coordinators have been reviewing and deciding how to provide Hariyo Ban support. However, the consortium partners were not comfortable, as they were not involved in the policy support discussions. To address this, a policy group of four members representing all the consortium partners was formed in the third year. Through the policy group, the consortium partners came together for policy support discussions. All other coordination committees established at the field level (such as LLCC, CLCC, RBCC, SLCC) are the mechanisms to coordinate, plan, review and address specific issues at those levels. The effectiveness of these committees varies and is affected by the different staffing structure of different partners, and also how proactive the leadership is of the committees.

The Site Level Coordination Committees (SLCC) are important mechanisms for coordinating all consortium partners at the implementation level. A corridor is regarded as a site in TAL whereas it is a district in CHAL. The committee meets every 2-3 months and has a role of planning, supporting the work of the partners, eliminating duplication, reviewing the implementation of the work and organizing joint monitoring. In TAL, the SLCC is specifically focused on coordination among the consortium partners, and in CHAL it is less structured, contextual and is used for wider coordination with participation of other district line agencies. The wider coordination mechanism practiced in CHAL provided important learning for programmatic effectiveness, which needs to be further reviewed and strengthened in Hariyo Ban II. However, for the site level coordination among the consortium partners, another more structured mechanism is needed.

For cluster level planning and coordination, the Cluster Level Coordination Committee (CLCC), chaired by WWF staff and CARE staff as the member secretary, is in practice in TAL. In CHAL, the sub-landscape structures are the River Basin Level Coordination Committee (RBLCC) and Sub-Watershed Level Coordination Committee (SWLCC) with varied levels of success.

Another mechanism that is in practice is the Landscape Level Coordination Committee (LLCC). The committees met more regularly in the first few years but did not meet regularly in later years. There were difficulties with each consortium partner having a different structure and staffing, which in some cases does not align well with the landscape approach. In CHAL, NTNC has offices in two conservation areas, and in Pokhara. WWF and CARE have a shared office set up in Pokhara. WWF has separate staff coordinating in TAL, and CARE coordinates all of its TAL and CHAL activities from Nepalgunj and Pokhara. FECOFUN has a presence in all districts but has no structure at the landscape level. Landscape level coordination is more complex in TAL compared to CHAL. In TAL, Hariyo Ban started while WWF projects were already underway. WWF has two existing projects (Protected Area Buffer Zone Project based in Chitwan and Corridor and Bottleneck Restoration Project focusing on community forest areas outside the protected areas, based in Kohalpur), with one coordinator in each. The coordination would have been more effective if there was one Hariyo Ban coordinator for the whole landscape employed by WWF. Also, FECOFUN had regional coordinators in each landscape who would coordinate and bring together the district chapters. FECOFUN changed this model two years ago and now the national Hariyo Ban focal person has to coordinate with all district chapters. NTNC has offices in three protected areas in TAL. All these structural differences made coordination difficult across the landscapes.

While these coordination mechanisms at different levels are functional and effective to varying degrees, the challenges still exist concerning who is doing what, why and how. Field staff of CARE

reported that they understand more about FECOFUN's work but less about NTNC and WWF, as they are closely working with FECOFUN. The committees are important fora, if well organized, to understand what each partner is doing, where the work is happening, and how it is going. An interviewee shared the opinion that the committees should not only focus on sharing the best aspects of the partners' work, but also critically reflect on what is happening and how things can be further improved. Frequent turnover of field level staff among all partners, though somewhat more in FECOFUN, has made it difficult to retain institutional memory among staff on the committees. In many cases the incoming staff were not properly oriented before their assignment to a particular site.

Another challenge exists in the coordination with wider stakeholders and development agencies at the district level and regional level. Some partners are not represented in all districts and the one who has representation may not be able to represent Hariyo Ban. CHAL has tried to include other stakeholders in the existing SLCC. Whether beneficiaries and other stakeholders should also be included in the LLCC has been discussed among the consortium in CHAL, but no decision has yet been made.

The coordination committees at the central level and at the site level seem to be more functional and effective than the other middle level coordination committees. The Program has target indicators at program level and landscape level, but these indicators are not well translated to cluster level and site level. The implementing partners in the field felt that they do not have a common understanding about what the program wanted to achieve in each corridor and cluster. Improving this understanding among the consortium partners would help to improve each partner's work and focus, and also help clarify the roles, integrate the themes and identify areas of complementarity. This will also help to reduce scattered activities and duplication, and enhance bundling and synergy. To establish this, the consortium partners need to have a full understanding of the principles behind the work plan, and regularity and effective preparation of coordination meetings. Apart from sharing information about each other's work, the mechanism at the landscape, cluster and site level can also drive strategic planning and implementation, identify and prioritize implementation sites, bundle the programs to avoid scattered activities and improve coordination internally and externally.

The effectiveness of different coordination committees varies across the different levels and also between the two landscapes. All these committees are created to focus on programmatic areas and issues. However, it would be worthwhile to initiate a mechanism to review and reflect upon the overall functioning of the consortium and partner relations. Heads of the partner organizations, along with the focal points and core team representatives, could be members of such a mechanism and could meet once or twice a year. Some of the committees (such as RBLCC, SWLCC, and LLCC) need further clarity about their roles, functions and structures. It would be worthwhile to review the performance of these coordination committees, further testing and strengthening the roles and responsibilities.

Sub-question 3: How did the partners adjust? What were the impacts on partner organizations (positive and negative)? How are they building positive impacts, and addressing the negative ones?

How did the partners adjust?

Among the consortium partners, FECOFUN had the toughest time in making the decision to join the consortium. The majority of members in FECOFUN, in the beginning, were not in favor of joining the consortium. For a long time, there were for and against views in FECOFUN. One FECOFUN member shared that FECOFUN's norms and value is to promote rights and benefits to communities, and does not want to compromise on these values. FECOFUN perceived that NTNC curtails the rights of people and communities to promote wild animal protection. So, joining the consortium with NTNC was out of the question in the beginning. However, other members thought that FECOFUN would be able to have more influence for change by being inside than by being outside the discourse on the protected area system. FECOFUN had a solid level of trust with CARE while working in SAGUN, so

if a decision was made to join the consortium, the preference was to join under the leadership of CARE. Through extensive discussions and deliberations, members began to realize the value and benefit for community forests and FECOFUN being in the consortium. The leadership of FECOFUN agreed to join the consortium under WWF's leadership, under the condition that no Hariyo Ban funding would be used for the expansion of the protection area system in Nepal. Despite the decision to join the consortium, a larger number of members continued to question and critique the decision. A 6-point agreement was made with WWF, however, greatly helping to convince the members and constituency who were against the consortium.

FECOFUN also began to more fully understand that NTNC no longer has a Historical Royal Image, does not favor total state control and strict conservation, but promotes community engagement through Conservation Area Management Committees (CAMCs) and Buffer Zone Management Committees (BZMC). FECOFUN also had the opportunity to see the similarities and differences of community engagement processes in conservation areas and in community forestry. NTNC also began to understand the need for governance improvement in CAMCs. The willingness of NTNC to adopt the governance practices of community forestry and the governance provisions of community forest guidelines into the CAMC, and CARE's facilitation of this process, further improved FECOFUN's perception of NTNC, and vice versa.

The consortium was an opportunity for CARE and WWF to understand that program activities were not people versus conservation, rather about their interrelationship. WWF learned the value of social mobilization and letting people decide what is important to them. CARE began to understand the comprehensiveness of conservation and the value of scientific knowledge, and how to bring long term management perspectives and reach people. Both CARE and WWF better understand the benefits of conservation that is blended with social processes. These gradual understanding developed through sharing and reflection reduced the gaps between partners, and provided the space to complement each other and work together.

What were the impacts on partner organizations (positive and negative)? How they are building on the positive impacts, and addressing the negative ones?

The impact of the consortium is seen in three areas of the partner organizations. First, the changes in the functioning of the organization, organizational profile, organizational learning and its perceptions about other partner organizations. Second, the changes in the bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships among the partner organizations, and with other agencies. Third, the effect in the organizational business and mission.

The organizational capacity of all partners has increased with respect to managing and implementing a multi-dimensional project. As lead partner, WWF has able to demonstrate competency in leading and managing the consortium, and implementing the Program. WWF's operational systems had to adapt to handling a greater level of funding than in the past. The operational practices of NTNC and FECOFUN have improved as a result of strict compliance measures, keeping program funds separate, and introducing a time sheet system. The capacity of FECOFUN district chapters to manage money has improved.

FECOFUN's strategic plan has been reviewed and updated through the support of Hariyo Ban and consortium partners. The newly updated strategic plan has five directives with benchmarks for each. The GESI strategy for FECOFUN has been prepared. There is a visible institutional strengthening of 25 FECOFUN district chapters in Hariyo Ban districts and central secretariat. They are reasonably equipped with office materials and logistics. The capacity of FECOFUN staff and members has been built in a number of organizational processes, biodiversity conservation, livelihood improvement, governance, GESI and climate change adaptation. The capacity to mobilize district chapters has increased and the connection and engagement with CFUGs greatly increased. FECOFUN's exposure to the international arena has also increased through participation in a number of international events.

CARE benefitted from the successful partnership through value addition to the CARE-WWF global alliance, the commitments to bringing together conservation and livelihoods, and emergence of additional opportunities to work together. There are also a number of changes in WWF and NTNC. Social processes and gender and social inclusion are increasingly internalized and regarded as important elements in biodiversity conservation. GESI is also included in the national strategy of WWF, and staff members have been trained in GESI. NTNC is carrying out a number of activities to institutionalize GESI, and has conducted a GESI perception survey, gender budgeting and has increased the engagement of GESI focal persons. The stakeholders and FECOFUN perceive the broadening of the community conservation concept within WWF and NTNC. However, the senior management in WWF believes that the community conservation concept was already there in WWF, but the partnership has successfully removed the false perception of WWF as a 'protectionist' organization. The interviewee in NTNC believes that the consortium has contributed to the emergence and consolidation of the concept of community conserved areas through the existing community forestry system such as community conserved area for ghoral conservation in Nawalparasi. FECOFUN, since it is a network of community forestry user groups, is now much more open to other community-based conservation practices, such as conservation areas and buffer zone management. FECOFUN realized the need to protect biodiversity, and this is an important result of the consortium and constant engagement of FECOFUN.

The perception of partner organizations and the relationships among partners have also improved. Before joining the consortium, the members of FECOFUN thought that their role was to protest against the programs of WWF and NTNC. Now, the members engage the Program not to protest but to see how they can advocate for community rights and people's livelihoods. WWF and NTNC also previously thought of FECOFUN as an institution that always protested against conservation. The shift in the perception and relationship happened through a number of coordination and sharing events from the central to field level. The relationships have improved not only among consortium partners but also with the government. Hariyo Ban has provided the opportunity for FECOFUN to positively engage with the government and develop a relationship built on trust. The relationship between FECOFUN and MoFSC has improved specifically, and the declaration of Shrawan 25 as Community Forest Day by the government, and celebration of the day together, is an example of this improved relationship.

Some of the interviewees from FECOFUN did think, however, that participation in the consortium has forced them to remain in the project realm, having to focus on project management and participation. This has narrowed their advocacy role and capacity. Several other members in the field also expressed that FECOFUN is becoming weak in raising its voice to establish people's and communities' rights. Since starting to participate in Hariyo Ban FECOFUN has received funding for other projects, putting it at risk of becoming project driven and drifting away from its core advocacy function. FECOFUN has also commenced a study to assess the effect of the Hariyo Ban consortium on the advocacy role of FECOFUN. However, other members in the field do not think that FECOFUN needs to pursue advocacy only, and that there may be other important opportunities for the organization. These interviewees point out FECOFUN's stand against expansion of conventional protected areas, and the fact that formation of CFCCs and DFSCCs is intact, and state that if FECOFUN only focuses on advocacy, then there is no scope for further growth. Hariyo Ban has opened up an avenue to advance into new arenas, such as managing programs to benefit people and conserve biodiversity.

Another negative impact the FECOFUN members perceived was that the Hariyo Ban Program kept FECOFUN within the framework of community mobilization but out of policy engagement. They cited the TAL and CHAL strategies and PES policy as examples where they missed an opportunity to make policy more community oriented. However, others perceived that though they may not be able to influence policy, they are at least informed about what is happening in the policy realm. Though there is no new policy specifically favoring communities, there are no policies against community forestry either. One of the interviewees commented that FECOFUN has contributed to policy work, such as the REDD strategy and forestry sector policy development. However, in policy advocacy

there were also instances where FECOFUN's eagerness, preparedness, and influencing of other partners was missing. FECOFUN is represented in the policy group formed by the consortium, but needs to be more active and also needs to be provided space for increased engagement in policy discussions and policy advocacy.

Sub-question 4: How effectively has Hariyo Ban integrated the three thematic components and cross-cutting themes? What factors helped and hindered the integration?

The inter-relationships of the three thematic components and cross-cutting themes are reasonably well internalized by the consortium partners. The understanding of how the components are linked and how the work in one component complements the results in the other components is reflected in the work planning of each component. All drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are also threats to biodiversity. So anything done to address deforestation/forest degradation also contributes to biodiversity conservation. There are several examples demonstrating the linkages of the components in the work planning and implementation, such as sub-watershed management and reforestation of degraded areas in Component 1 contributing to Component 2 in addressing deforestation/degradation. The community adaptation, including disaster risk reduction, also contributes to addressing deforestation/degradation. Building the capacity of women for adaptation under GESI, improving governance of conservation institutions and the work on alternative energy and livelihoods are also contributing to other themes. The linkages and integration became stronger in the later years of Hariyo Ban.

Thematic integration was explored from the beginning of the Program, starting in the planning stage. Planning has been done by thematic teams, with technical experts from all partners and the expertise of cross-cutting themes. Thematic team meetings for planning, review and reflection were organized every 6 months to ensure integration. These thematic meetings and the core team meetings help to prepare work plans ensuring prioritized drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, biodiversity threats, and human, ecosystem and species vulnerability to climate change.

Integration at the implementation level, however, occurs in more limited ways. For example, a number of activities in Bhimoli and Rani Khola CFUG in CHAL are integrated to address biodiversity threats, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and climate change vulnerabilities. An example that demonstrates integration in TAL is the work of all partners in the Ghoral Conservation Area in Nawalparasi, where different activities are implemented according to the expertise of the consortium partners. In five village development committees (VDCs) (Deurali, Dhaubadi, Naram, Ruwang, and Hopsekot) in Nawalparasi and one VDC (Jhirubas) in Palpa district, WWF is supporting livelihood improvement, improved cook stoves, and homestays; CARE is working on LAPA and CAPA preparation in 5 VDCs (5 LAPAs and 2 CAPAs) and GESI in CFUGs; FECOFUN is working on capacity building, awareness raising and governance improvement of CFUGs; and NTNC is working on ghoral assessment. The climate smarting of the Manaslu Conservation Area Management Plan and governance improvement initiated in the conservation area management committees are also good examples of integration, which should be further strengthened and expanded.

Coordination among consortium partners and the sequencing of activities are important aspects in promoting integration at the implementation level. In CHAL, for example, this implementation process is demonstrated by the participatory well-being ranking (PWBR) to identify target households in CFUGs; and underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability assessment (UCPVA) to identify vulnerable households and communities at the VDC level; followed by implementation of other activities in these selected households, communities and wards. There was confusion and lack of clarity in early years of Hariyo Ban implementation, but things were reasonably well managed in later years. In order to strengthen integration in implementation, coordination among partners and sequencing of activities has to be increased and improved.

An important achievement in the integration of themes is the blending of climate change vulnerability and poverty assessment tools with the approaches of conservation. These adapted tools include public hearing and public auditing (PHPA) and participatory governance assessment (PGA) to assess and strengthen governance of natural resource management groups; PWBR tool to identify poor and disadvantaged households; underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability assessment (UCPVA) for community learning and action centers (CLACs) to identify vulnerable households and communities; and the CAPA and LAPA climate vulnerability assessment and planning processes. The livelihood improvement approaches helped to link different components based on the expertise and experiences of consortium partners. However, these tools and approaches need to be further integrated with technical aspects of biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

The interest among consortium partners in performing all activities, and not focusing on their own area of expertise, hindered integration. One of the interviewees cited an example related to plantation, where WWF should have been focusing on technical matters and FECOFUN and CARE should be focusing on social concerns. In plantation, a number of technical aspects are important, such as seasonality, plantation area, soil condition, species selection and number of plants required, which is the expertise area of WWF. CARE and FECOFUN should have been focusing on who would benefit, how to secure the plantation, how to change the behavior of community members affected by it, and what alternatives existed for the dependents. There were several instances in which CARE and FECOFUN did not focus on their areas of expertise, but rather on the technical aspects of plantation, and thus did not fully capitalize on their expertise. Despite the challenges and issues, the institutional commitment, leadership, and accountability of management, particularly of the principal consortium partners, were important for effective integration across themes.

Sub-question 5: What capacity building was needed? What capacity building has been already done, and how effective was it? Are there still capacity gaps?

The Hariyo Ban Program carried out a training needs assessment (TNA) in early 2013 and identified training needs at the central, landscape/district and local level in all thematic and cross-cutting components. The TNA identified seven strategies to address the training gaps and also to strengthen training design, delivery and evaluations. It also recommended training packages in the thematic and cross-cutting components. Specific to the Hariyo Ban consortium, the TNA identified team building events, study visits and periodic round-table discussions to promote cross-fertilization of learning, to keep up to date on emerging issues, and to develop a common understanding about key issues.

Training identified in the TNA was regularly organized for consortium partners. Apart from learning events, staff of the consortium partners from the center to the field level received a number of trainings in the different thematic areas. A number of review, learning and sharing workshops also contributed to enhancing the capacity of consortium partners. Interviewees across the consortium partners feel that the capacity of staff of all partners has substantially increased through participation in trainings and workshops organized at different levels. The capacity of NTNC and FECOFUN on climate change adaptation increased, and operational practices in both organizations improved as a result of the Program. FECOFUN in particular has improved in organizational management including scheduling regular meetings, knowledge enhancement in different areas, record keeping, accounting, and fund management. WWF's capacity to lead the complex consortium and manage a big program increased. CARE's capacity to link and integrate GESI, governance and climate adaptation with biodiversity issues, threats, and vulnerability has been built. CARE is also now able to conceptualize, plan and implement activities at the larger river basin level.

Some capacity gaps still exist, particularly in NTNC and FECOFUN. NTNC needs further capacity on governance, GESI and social processes so that it can better facilitate community empowerment, GESI and governance in buffer zone committees and CAMCs. In order for FECOFUN to manage projects in NRM, it has to develop its capacity on program development, planning, implementation and monitoring. More technical personnel need to be hired and retained by FECOFUN, as they have the

potential to manage NRM and conservation programs in addition to the organization's traditional advocacy role. One interviewee suggested that FECOFUN should learn from Nepal Family Planning Association and Nepal Red Cross Society, both of which are volunteer based organizations but professionally competent.

Sub-question 6: What technical and administrative cross-learning occurred?

The consortium created an environment for interaction and blending of two very different philosophies. The first is the rights based philosophy, embraced by CARE and FECOFUN, where the focus is on people (particularly the poor and marginalized, and communities), and the second philosophy is that of nature conservation, embraced by WWF and NTNC, where the focus is on species, ecosystems, landscapes and threats. The effect of this interface of two philosophies and four institutions resulted in a number of learning opportunities among the partner organizations (included in Table 1).

WWF has been working with poor and marginalized groups, focusing on threats to biodiversity using behavior change methodology. However, CARE introduced the Community Learning and Action Center (CLAC) methodology, which analyses the condition of the poor, women and marginalized and prepares them through participatory processes to take part in community conservation and climate change. This was an eye opening process for WWF, broadening perspectives on engaging communities, and increasing benefits for both vulnerable and resource dependent communities and for ecosystems. The governance tools and CLACs have been instrumental in engaging people in conservation and expanding the boundary of conservation. The governance improvement, GESI, and climate change adaptation work provided important lessons for WWF. Important lessons learned for CARE were scoping and integration of the CLACs, governance, GESI, and climate change in biodiversity threats, bottlenecks, and watershed and conservation management approaches.

Table 1: Cross learning among the consortium partners

To	WWF	CARE	FECOFUN	NTNC
From				
WWF		Species conservation Alternative energy	Species conservation Alternative energy	Protected area climate smarting
CARE	CLAC Climate change (CC) adaptation Further knowledge in Governance GESI		CLAC CC adaptation Further knowledge in Governance GESI	CLAC CC adaptation Further knowledge in Governance GESI
FECOFUN	Community rights	Community participation		Community conservation and rights
NTNC	Species research	Biodiversity	Biodiversity	

NTNC learned about climate change adaptation. Using this learning, NTNC helped complete nine LAPAs in Mustang, which contributed to declaring Mustang a LAPA complete district. Seven LAPAs were prepared in MCAP and another 30 LAPAs are planned for ACAP. NTNC further enhanced its understanding of governance and GESI in conservation management, increasing its ability to provide support to improve the governance of user committees and CAMCs.

The key learning for FECOFUN was around climate change adaptation, use of different governance tools, GESI, and awareness about biodiversity conservation. The increase in FECOFUN's perception, awareness, and knowledge on biodiversity is showcased in its annual plan and programs, which now include programs to manage grassland and wetland, and conservation of bijaya sal and sati sal. With regard to administrative learning, all partners learned compliance and grant management, and FECOFUN and NTNC have improved their reporting systems. NTNC is in the process of establishing a digital, computer-based accounting system. WWF learned how to better manage grants, ensure compliance, and coordinate financial planning and reporting.

Although there has been good level of cross-learning, there was not enough concerted effort to enhance cross-learning among the partner organizations. Each partner can benefit from more strategic efforts in Hariyo Ban II to enhance cross learning.

Sub-question 7: What are the key lessons from this consortium? How can these lessons be applied in similar consortiums in the future?

The key lessons from the consortium include the following:

- **Partners can work together even if there is disagreement over certain issues.** However, the environment for building mutual trust has to be continuously fostered. For this, partners need to demonstrate openness, interact continuously (formally and informally), complement each other, enhance shared understanding, and remain close for learning and adaptation. Instead of focusing on areas of disagreement, each needs to focus on areas of compatibility and constantly build on this. Whatever differences there are within the consortium, they should be solved internally, and while communicating externally there should be one voice.
- **Leadership is an important element for bringing the diverse partners together, keeping the partnership intact to learn and adapt.** The qualities of leadership that demonstrate success are: being down to earth in order to be able to talk to anyone without any hierarchy or protocol; having enough knowledge so that people respect the leader; having enough skills so that he/she can negotiate; and being honest so that people see him/her as neutral. Developing a second generation of leadership and transferring the current understanding of the consortium is equally important for the smooth functioning of the consortium.
- **Greater synergy and conceptual blending can be achieved through the interface of institutions with different areas of expertise to manage a multi-objective program.** It was very valuable to have INGOs and NGOs together, as INGOs bring learning and cutting-edge practices from outside and national NGOs are able to reach the grassroots level and develop local capacities. The consortium also opens up avenues for other collaborative work to enhance each partner's mission and agenda.
- **The knowledge system in conserving biodiversity has been enriched through the interaction of institutions and concepts focusing on community and conservation.** Such interactions bring about community development and conservation, which thrive when they are supporting each other.
- **New and creative initiatives which may not be possible through the efforts of individual people or organizations can be pursued through collaboration.**
- The consortium has created a foundation to shape and lead the way for conservation and natural resource management in Nepal. The checks and balances created by the diversity of consortium partners can create lasting change, and continue in the long term. If an infrastructure or sustainable development partner is added, it will make a considerable impact in the communities and conservation.
- **'Unity in diversity' is demonstrated by using different expertise but respecting individual organizations' freedom and identity.** Each partner has its own norms, values and modality of implementation, and not developing a common modality is a strength of the consortium that respects partner freedom and identity.
- **The consortium's approach of learning and adapting has made it continuously reflect,**

learn and change strategies and mechanisms. The coordination mechanisms at different levels, and open discussions in these fora, made important contributions for learning and adapting. The PSC and its working group enhanced the acceptance of Hariyo Ban among all stakeholders within GoN, and also contributed to better understanding among the partners regarding the limitations and challenges.

In order to apply these lessons to similar consortiums in the future, several elements need to be emphasized that keep partners together. These include: leadership qualities to bind together; mechanisms for collective planning, coordination and decision making; strategies for bringing common understanding; and attitude, commitment and skills for connecting and remaining together. It is also important to understand that each consortium is unique, and it has to learn and grow in its own way. However, a learning and adapting environment has to be created to let it grow as a living entity.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concludes that the Hariyo Ban consortium made significant achievements in successfully delivering Program results while also securing funding for another five-year phase. The Hariyo Ban consortium was able to overcome initial bi-lateral and multi-lateral conflicts and contradictions, and is functioning well. The most important lesson learned is that the partnership can flourish and produce outstanding results even if disagreements exist. However, there has to be effective leadership, strategy, mechanisms, attitudes and commitment to keeping everybody together, and consortium members must be open to learning and adapting. To make this kind of consortium a success, it is necessary to go through a process whereby pre-conceived ideas and misgivings are set aside. This was the case with FECOFUN and NTNC. Instead of retaining previous opinions and viewpoints about the other organization, they opened up for dialogue, which removed barriers and helped them to better understand each other and contributed to the success of the Program.

The achievement of Hariyo Ban in terms of institutional relationships, particularly among FECOFUN, NTNC and WWF, can reach beyond Hariyo Ban. The improved relationships can positively contribute to further strengthening community friendly conservation policies and practices across the country. In order to further strengthen and enhance the performance of the Hariyo Ban consortium, the assessment has the following recommendations:

- **Further enhance synergies:** Build an even stronger team from the central to field level, aligning strengths and comparative advantages, and compensating for weaknesses to maximize the delivery of outcomes. Comparative advantages can be utilized if the capacity of all partners is further increased and there is quality assurance by thematic leads. Also important is supporting each other to grow by enhancing leadership and management capacity through coaching, mentoring, learning and reflection.
- **Ensure participation of all partners in all important planning and decision making fora:** Engage all partners in important planning, sharing and coordinating mechanisms from central to field level, particularly in the PSC working group, core team and policy groups, and make sure that their voices are heard.
- **Review and further strengthen the roles, functions and structure of coordination mechanisms:** Review the roles, function and structure of different coordination committees at different levels. This includes regularly organizing site and cluster level coordination committees; strengthening sub-watershed level coordination committees; making landscape level coordination committees more functional; exploring the possibility of river basin level coordination committees; strengthening the policy committee; exploring the mechanism of coordinating with other stakeholders and line agencies in districts and regions; and giving additional responsibilities in strategic planning, prioritizing implementation sites and bundling of programs.

- **Give partners further space in policy engagement:** FECOFUN members perceived that they were less engaged in policy processes, and so were not able to adequately voice the needs and concerns of communities. They also shared that they are vigilant and worry if any policies come that could curtail communities' rights. This sense of worry needs to be addressed by giving FECOFUN additional space for policy engagement, including space for agenda setting and participation in policy discourse.
- **Increase understanding of FECOFUN about CFCCs, DFSCCs and Scientific Forest Management:** The differences in understanding about CFCCs between FECOFUN and WWF, and the understanding about DFSCCs and Scientific Forest Management between DoF and FECOFUN, did not result in the type of program synergy needed for conservation, NRM and program implementation. An increase in understanding of FECOFUN on these structures and issues would help bring closure and channel energy and efforts toward positive outcomes.
- **Strengthen further blending and integration of themes:** Increase joint planning, review-reflection and implementation, and sequencing of activities for further integration and blending of themes. Also, provide additional space and voice for all themes in order to support better integration.
- **Develop additional capacity of consortium partners, particularly of NTNC and FECOFUN:** Assess the capacity needs of consortium partners and develop capacity, particularly of national partners. NTNC needs additional capacity in governance, GESI and social processes. FECOFUN has the potential to manage NRM and conservation programs in addition to its traditional role of advocacy; there is a need to explore and capacitate FECOFUN to capitalize on this potential. NTNC and FECOFUN can also reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, identifying their capacity needs and pursuing this capacity.
- **Enhance further cross-learning between the partners:** Cross learning increases the integration of community and conservation approaches, and also amplifies the expertise and knowledge of each partner institution. It is important to increase the sharing, learning and review fora at different levels, promote reflective learning, and strategize for cross-learning.
- **Reflect, learn and improve performance:** There is a need to reflect on the successes, limitations and lessons of the consortium partnership, and collectively plan and commit to continuous improvement. The mission, vision and value should be reaffirmed, and enthusiasm and commitment should be reinvigorated in order to remain in the performing stage of the group. Though the consortium is in this stage, individual organizations may not be at the same stage. The performance effectiveness of each partner should be reviewed and its performance and effectiveness should be further enhanced.

6. Areas for Further Inquiry

The key findings of the assessment were presented in a sharing workshop of the consortium partners. Participants raised several questions which were not part of the assessment questions. They are listed below, and could be explored in future research:

- a. What was the transaction cost of each partner for being in the consortium?
- b. How much may each partner have compromised its identity, values and mission to be part of the consortium?
- c. What methodologies have partners employed to retain and transfer their institutional memory? How best can they enhance institutional memory in situations where staff turnover is significant?
- d. There is government leadership and representation in the PSC and PSC working group. Is there any impact on the effectiveness of the government as a result of improved relationships with the four partners?
- e. How successful is the consortium in enabling conservation and ensuring benefits reach local people?
- f. All partners are also implementing a number of other projects/programs. Is there any cross-

- learning from Hariyo Ban to other programs, and vice versa?
- g. There are several instances where the quality of the Program's work may have been compromised. What quality has been compromised due to the relationships among partners? What is the best way to ensure program quality?
 - h. How effective are individual partners in organizational management, governance and program management? How can the consortium play a role in continuously improving the performance of each partner?

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Annex 1. People/institutions consulted

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3. Mr Sushan Pradhan, Accountant

Annex 2. Existing coordination mechanisms and their functions

SN	Mechanisms	Roles and responsibilities	Memberships	Frequency of meetings
1.	Program Steering Committee (PSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide policy and strategic guidance and feedback to the Program • Endorse annual work plan • Review and monitor Hariyo Ban Program results • Ensure alignment with GoN policies and priorities • Promote and facilitate synergy with other national programs and other relevant sectors 	Chaired by the Secretary of MoFSC; Chief, Planning and Human Resource Division of MoFSC as member-secretary and members from several other Ministries, Departments, Divisions, consortium partners, development partners, and Hariyo Ban.	At least once a year
2.	PSC Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in annual plan preparation and review • Review and provide inputs in AWP and propose AWP for endorsement in PSC • Support PSC in fulfilling the functions as specified in its ToR • Review and provide inputs in reports including annual and study reports of national and landscape significance 	Coordinated by the Chief of Planning & Human Resource Division of MoFSC with members from three departments (DoF, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, and DSCWM) and theme coordinators of Hariyo Ban.	At least quarterly
3.	Program Management Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate coordination among the four consortium partners • Review “Windows of Opportunity” proposals • Review progress including conducting semi-annual reviews • Identify bottlenecks, make necessary adjustments • Advise Program Core Team • Advise on annual work plans 	Chaired by the Conservation Program Director of WWF Nepal; Member secretary as the Deputy Chief of Party; Initially started with two members from each partner, however it is now open for the comfort of partners.	Quarterly
4.	Program Core Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall program planning • Day to day program management, and implementation • Monitoring and reporting • Overall coordination and communication 	Component coordinators of Hariyo Ban, CoP, DCoP, Finance head, other coordinators.	Weekly/as needed

5.	Landscape Level Coordination Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Joint monitoring • Review and reflection • Coordination at the landscape level 	CHAL Coordinator of WWF Nepal, Hariyo Ban Team Leader, CARE Nepal, TAL PA/BZ Manager and TAL CBRP Manager	At least twice a year
6.	Cluster Level Coordination Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Facilitate implementation • Joint monitoring, review and reflection • Coordination • Reporting 	Field staff of consortium partners	quarterly
7.	River Basin/Sub-Watershed Level Coordination Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yet to define 	Yet to define	Monthly/quarterly
8.	Site Level Coordination Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program planning • Addressing site-specific issues • Local coordination to ensure smooth implementation of Hariyo Ban activities 	Field staff of consortium partners (TAL) Field staff of consortium partners, district line agencies and other implementing partners (CHAL)	Monthly/quarterly

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