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## Factors Influencing Institutional Arrangements for Effective Management of Non-timber Forest Products in Community Forest User Groups of Nepal

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### Abstract

The management of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) is considered as one of the approaches for poverty reduction in rural communities. In Nepal, several policy documents have emphasised the importance of effective management of NTFPs by community forests user groups (CFUGs) with specific emphasis on the involvement of marginalised people. The management of NTFPs, however, is governed by the institutional arrangements of the CFUGs, which are comprised of formal and informal provisions addressing NTFPs management in the forest, marketing, and benefit sharing among the CFUG members. The formation and development of the provisions can be influenced by several internal and external factors of CFUGs. This paper investigates the factors contributing to the formation and development of such provisions in two CFUGs in Dolakha district of Nepal. By using a case study approach, data was collected through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, formal and informal discussions, participant observations and the study of CFUG documents. The study results suggest that, on the one hand, representative inclusion in the executive committee, involvement of governmental and non-governmental organisations, and market linkage are positively influencing the formation and development of provisions for effective management of NTFPs. On the other hand, remoteness of the CFUG and the dominance of the executive committee by higher economic CFUG members have had negative effect on formation and development of the provisions and also on effective management of NTFPs. It is anticipated that these results will help to strengthen institutional mechanisms that support the effective management of NTFPs in CFUGs.

**Keywords:** Community forest user groups, inclusion, institutional arrangements, Nepal, non-timber forest product