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Policy Interventions Accelerating Investment and Adoption of Agroforestry in South Asia

JAVED RIZVI¹, V. PAL SINGH¹, DEVASHREE NAYAK¹, SUNIL LONDHE¹, RAKESH BHUSHAN SINHA², SUROJ POKHREL³, BISHWA NATH OLI⁴, RAM HARI PANTHA⁴, KESHAB ADHIKARI³, GIASHUDDIN MIAH⁵, TAYAN GURUNG⁶, S.M. BOKTIAR⁶

¹World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), South Asia Regional Program, India

²Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India

³Ministry of Agriculture Development, Nepal

⁴Ministry of Population and Environment, Nepal

⁵Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU), Bangladesh

⁶SAARC Agriculture Center, Bangladesh

Abstract

In 2014 India approved a national agroforestry policy to resolve the bottlenecks like prohibition of felling and transport of tree (agroforestry) species. In its third year of implementation, the policy has been effective in freeing a good number of farm-grown tree species from felling and transit regulations in many of the Indian states, in upgrading a national research centre on agroforestry, and establishing a National Sub-Mission on Agroforestry to promote agroforestry. ICRAF contributes to the technical group which supports the implementation of the newly created mission. In this short period, policy has been instrumental in channelizing large investments. For 2016–2020, through the newly created agroforestry mission, India has committed about \$ 410 million, and India's finance commission has invested an additional \$ 9.0 billion to encourage states increasing their green cover. India identified agroforestry as the major tool to fulfil its INDC commitment, and State Governments are investing in agroforestry for increased mitigation, adaptation, and resilience to climate change. Sixty per cent of timber requirement of India is sourced through agroforestry, and timber to the value of \$ 8 billion/year is still imported which is about 20% of the total requirement of the country.

Success of agroforestry policy in India is causing a ripple effect. Through a National Consultation held in Nepal, stakeholders' identified the need to develop a national agroforestry policy for Nepal. Recommendations of the consultation were jointly issued by the Ministries of Agriculture and Forest of Nepal as “Kathmandu Declaration on Agroforestry”. As a follow up, ICRAF with funding from the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) works with Nepal to develop its policy. Other South Asia countries through South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have expressed deep interest to work with ICRAF either on policy/ advocacy related issues, or to implement a regional agroforestry programme in eight member countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh in collaboration with ICRAF, has initiated developing its own agroforestry policy.

This paper will discuss in details how the Indian policy is enhancing adoption of agroforestry not only in India, but creating a ripple effect in the region as well.

Keywords: Agroforestry, India, Nepal, policies, ripple effect