

EASTERN HIMALAYAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON “BALANCING DEVELOPMENT, LIVELIHOODS AND RESOURCES”

LESSONS AND PROSPECTS FROM EXTERNALLY-AIDED PROJECTS

16th – 18th November 2023
Shillong

Co-hosted by

Meghalaya Basin Management Agency

&

Martin Luther Christian University



Community Led Landscape
Management Project, MBMA
Govt of Meghalaya, Shillong
&
The World Bank

Centre for Sustainable
Development Studies (CSDS),
and Internal Quality Assurance
Cell (IQAC), Martin Luther
Christian University (MLCU)



In association with

Lending Agencies, Faculty of Management, MLCU, Shillong

1. Overview and Background

The Eastern Himalayas extend from the eastern Nepal across Northeast India including the Darjeeling - Kalimpong hills of West Bengal, Bhutan, the Tibet Autonomous Region to Yunnan in China and northern Myanmar. Broadly, the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh may also be included as extended region of the Eastern Himalayas. The climate of this region is influenced by the monsoon of South Asia with high rainfall from June to September. Due to the altitudinal landscapes, diverse climatic zones are found in the region including the arctic, subarctic, temperate, subtropical, and mild and warm tropical climate. Moist, lush, evergreen, semi-evergreen, or temperate woods are found. The region receives a lot of rain and is generally humid in the lower altitudes. It is a biodiversity hotspot, with significant anthropological and biocultural diversity.



The region is rich in biodiversity but vulnerable to anthropogenic pressures. The region is also host to growing number of rural poor who are dependent on forest and ecosystem services for their livelihood. Local and global efforts to integrate poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation in the Eastern Himalayas remain challenging but with promising opportunities as well as pockets of emerging localised success stories. The key impediments in achieving sustainable development in the Himalayas are multi-faceted, ranging from sheer geophysical landscapes to the inadequate human, technical and financial resources. On the positive side, there are development and research organizations working in the region seeking to integrate biodiversity concerns with livelihood security. Despite the efforts, Eastern Himalayan region illustrate how development organizations are challenged to simultaneously address poverty and environmental issues.

Despite the ample natural resources of the region in the forms of forest, water, land, biodiversity including agrobiodiversity and traditional knowledge, the region is home to an increasing number of rural poor exacerbated by growing impacts of climate change leading to unavoidable environmental and economic migrations and displacement. The well-intended government-led local and global initiatives to address poverty reduction with biodiversity protection have so far proven challenging and inadequate. On the positive side, the Eastern Himalayan Region has been attracting increasing number of externally aided projects being implemented by the UN and multi-lateral, and bi-lateral agencies or support of the overseas development agencies (ODA) led by the local and/or national governments. The prominent externally-aided NRM-based programmes or projects in the region, either in the immediate past and at present, include those funded by multi-lateral agencies such as the World Bank, IFAD, FAO, UNDP,

etc. and the bi-lateral projects such as those funded by CIDA (Canada), JICA (Japan), and KfW & GIZ (Germany).

It is a fact that the externally-aided NRM-based development projects have triggered in the development of interesting and innovative development models. Some of the broad milestones achieved in respective project sites have been in the areas of enhanced forest/ tree cover with positive hydrological and biodiversity impacts, strengthening of community participation in natural resource management, augmentation of institutional capacities, gender empowerment and financial inclusion, creation of diverse community assets, generation of diversified gainful income sources, community-based biodiversity conservation, promotion of equitable sharing of benefits from natural resources including forest produce and NTFPs, enabling payments for ecosystem services (PES), climate change action, demonstration of replicable sustainable livelihoods, inter-sectoral convergence, and promotion of technologies in management such as GIS and MIS, generating awareness through inclusion of climate change in school curriculum etc. It is important that these innovative milestones achieved should be technically documented and shared among key stakeholders to derive benefits from each other, as well as replicate and scale-up good practices in the Eastern Himalayan Region, contributing to integrated livelihood generating activities with sustainable and equitable development agenda particularly restoring and improving the natural resource base of the communities. The better known ongoing externally aided projects from the Eastern Himalayas are given below (Table 1).

Table 1. On-going externally aided projects in NE India & Bhutan

Sl. No.	State	Project Name	Donor/ Funder
1	Manipur	Community Forestry and Water Conservation Society Manipur (COSFOM)	KfW
2	Meghalaya	Community Led Landscape Management Project	World Bank
3	Meghalaya	Meghalaya Livelihoods and Access to Markets Project	IFAD
4	Meghalaya	Community Based Forest Management & Livelihood Improvement in Meghalaya (MegLife)	JICA
5	Meghalaya	Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the Himalaya	KfW
6	Mizoram	Fostering Climate Resilient Upland Farming Systems in the North East (FOCUS)	IFAD
7	Mizoram	Biodiversity Conservation and Forest Enrichment Project	JICA
8	Nagaland	Fostering Climate Resilient Upland Farming Systems in the North East (FOCUS)	IFAD
9	Nagaland	Forest and Biodiversity Management Project (FBMP)	KfW
10	Nagaland	Nagaland Forest Management Project (NFMP)	JICA
11	Tripura	Project for Sustainable Catchment Forest Management in Tripura (SCATFORM)	JICA
12	Tripura	Climate Resilience of Forest Ecosystems, Biodiversity & Adaptive Capacities of Forest Dependent Communities in Tripura	KfW
13	Bhutan	Commercial Agriculture and Resilient Livelihoods Enhancement Programme (CARLEP)	IFAD

Efforts would also be made to link with the following recently (mostly in the last 10 years) completed externally-aided projects in NE India and Bhutan (Table 2).

Table 2. Some of the recently completed (over the last 10 years) externally-aided projects in NE India & Bhutan

States / Country	Name of the Projects	Funding Agency
INDIA		
Assam	Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project	World Bank
Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim & Tripura	North East Rural Livelihood Project	World Bank
Mizoram	Capacity Enhancement for Sustainable Agriculture and Irrigation Development in Mizoram	JICA
Sikkim	Sikkim Biodiversity and Forest Management Project	JICA
Assam, Manipur & Meghalaya	North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP I & NERCORMP II)	IFAD
Meghalaya	Meghalaya Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas	IFAD
Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim & Tripura	North East Rural Livelihood Project	World Bank
Nagaland	Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management in Nagaland	UNDP
Tripura	Tripura Forest Environmental Improvement and Poverty Alleviation Project	JICA
Tripura	Participatory Natural Resources Management Project Tripura	KfW
BHUTAN		
Eastern Bhutan	Market Access and Growth Intensification Project	IFAD

Lending Agencies Participation

- a) Lending Agencies are critical partners in all development investments from past and current projects on project design, financing patterns, procurement procedures, involvement of consultants, implementation mechanisms, reviews, monitoring, evaluation, missions, etc. The donor's participation in the seminar will contribute in sharing these experiences, contributing in writing papers, editing papers submitted by implementing agencies, etc.
- b) Support Inter-regional network: The donor's participation in the seminar will help the region (Eastern Himalayas) getting inter-regional and national and international network, widening the scope for future project design and implementation arrangements in achieved the desired goals.
- c) Exploring emerging trends such as payment for ecosystem services and integrating climate action plan with the existing project interventions.
- d) The Eastern Himalayan states have witnessed, donors influence and contribution to the state governments policies on environmental management. This seminar will certainly gear-up further policy intervention by the state governments in the region.

2. Broad Objectives of the Conference

The conference aims to initiate:

- (a) A collective dialogue among key externally aided projects and funding agencies to discuss the lessons and prospects in the region to address the challenges on rural and community development ensuring natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods.
- (b) Identify the replicable good practice development models and investment practices from the past and present externally aided projects and attempt in adopting, adapting, replicating and scaling up as per respective local situations.
- (c) Exploring emerging trends such as payment for ecosystem services and integrating climate action plan with the existing project interventions.
- (d) Lessons learned contributing to designing more robust investment program or projects in the region on natural resources, community development and sustainable livelihoods.

3. Expected Outputs and Outcomes

- (a) To enable a platform and fostering network of opportunities for an interface between and among diverse externally-aided development projects working in the Eastern Himalayas, more so in different states of North East India, enabling for exchange and sharing of experiences and learning, as well as cross-fertilization of ideas around good practices and challenges.
- (b) A follow-up exploration in promoting a network of development professionals which may be styled as “Eastern Hindu-Kush Himalayan Ecosystem Services Network” to be hosted by a volunteer University or agency in the region for online exchange of ideas, practices and experiences, contributing to practical development of integrated natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods aligned with, and contributing to state-specific to national development goals including the SDGs.
- (c) To provide an enabling interface between the academia and development agencies with strong narrative of importance of timely documentation and dissemination of field experiences and lessons learned for wider communication for regional, national and international learning in integrated environmental, social and community development focusing on indigenous and tribal people.
- (d) To bring out a formal publication compiling lessons and best practices, based on the technical and semi-technical papers submitted by various participants, that are relevant to EAPs and development programs in the Eastern Himalayas, particularly the Northeast India, and endorsed by government/doners/lenders that would be useful for development planners and academic researchers linking with development projects.

- (e) Learning from failures/delayed success: To learn from failures/delayed success of completed and ongoing projects, which will aid in enhancing the performance of ongoing projects as well as in the design of future externally aided projects.

4. Tracks and Threads of the Conference Themes

a. Track 1: Resources

- i. *Thread 1a: Natural Resources* that include land, forest, water, biodiversity, agriculture, horticulture, livestock, fisheries, apiculture, sericulture, etc.
- ii. *Thread 1b: Human Resources* that includes indigenous community, youth, women, differently abled, etc.
- iii. *Thread 1c: Technical Resources* that include skills, capacities, technology, methods, etc.
- iv. *Thread 1d: Financial Resources* that include access to finance as credit and/or revolving fund, direct benefit transfer, subsidy, insurance, etc.

b. Track 2: Development

- i. *Thread 2a: Development Models* that include project conceptualization, design, modelling, etc.
- ii. *Thread 2b: Project Planning & Implementation Model*
- iii. *Thread 2c: Technical Support and Supervision Models* that include Joint Reviews, Management Information System (MIS), Geographical Information System (GIS), Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) System, Learning System, Theory of Change, Project Logical Framework, Measuring Results, Result-based Management, etc.
- iv. *Thread 2d: Monitoring, Evaluation, Documentation & Knowledge Management* including result-based M&E or RBM&E.

c. Track 3: Livelihoods

- i. *Thread 3a: Land-based on-farm livelihoods* include farm-based (agriculture, livestock, fishery, apiculture, sericulture), forest-based (NTFPs), common-based (pasture), nature-based solutions for augmenting income and livelihood such as nature/eco-tourism, etc.
- ii. *Thread 3b: Off farm-based livelihoods* that include forest-based ecosystem services viz. water for irrigation; agri-business (such as sale of agri-horti-livestock products at farmers or other markets), etc.
- iii. *Thread 3c: Non-Farm-based livelihood* that includes skill-based employment, enterprise promotion, start-up, FPO, FPC, women and youth led enterprises, etc.
- iv. *Thread 3d: Nature based solutions and payment for ecosystem services* enabling the communities to harness income through conservation models.

5. Conference Dates

Dates	Key events	Remarks
16 th – 18 th November 2023	Conference Technical Sessions	Technical Papers Presentations, etc.
18 th November 2023	Field visit (Optional)	Sponsored by the Organizers
NB: Check-in on 15 th November; Check-out on 19 th November		

6. Who can Participate in the Conference?

- All project staff, on deputation and/or recruited professionals, in the project Hq / PMU / PMA and the districts/block level project management offices.
- All partner NGOs of the projects, past and present.
- Project Management Consultants / Project Consultants.
- Funding agencies.
- Universities/R&D institutions working with the externally aided projects or similarly funded programmes including by government agencies but working in the same state/areas of externally-aided projects, having complementarity.

7. Conference Timelines

Conference Milestones	Timeline
Last date for Abstract/summary of presentation submission	30 th August 2023
Confirmation on the acceptance of abstracts/presentation	15 th September 2023
Last date for Online Registration for presenting a paper (Selected participants)	30 th September 2023
Last date for Online Registration (All participants)	30 th September 2023
Last date for submission of Full Technical Papers and PPTs to be presented	16 th October 2023

8. Guidelines for Submissions for Abstract/ Paper Presentation

- Submit Abstracts for presentation of individual / joint papers by 30th August, 2023
- Confirmation of acceptance of abstracts will be given by 15th September, 2023
- Submit the full Technical Paper and PPTs by 16th October, 2023
Send via Email (see the section on Abstract / Paper submission in Annexure 1).
- **Abstracts should be between 800 to 1200 words and to be submitted in MS Word format, Times New Roman, Font size 14 for Headline/ Title: 12 for Text & 11 for Tables. Abstracts less than 800 words may not be reviewed.**

- Abstract selection for presentation is on the basis of a double-blind peer-review process. Criteria are
 - a. Relevance to conference thematic tracks but based on respective project designs.
 - b. Evidence-based and methodological appropriateness
 - c. Innovative and new in ideas, processes, presentation of results, etc.
 - d. Significance of findings for policy or research agenda
 - e. Clarity of contents and sequences of presentation.
- More than one abstract can be submitted for presentation / publication; however, due to space limitation only one accepted abstract can be presented by a participant under each thread or track. The abstract which are not included for presentation in the conference may be considered for poster presentation during the conference. However, decision on this regard will be taken during the assessment of the abstracts.
- Kindly note that inclusion of an accepted presentation in final conference program is conditional on timely conference registration and submission of full paper.
- Full paper writing and submission will follow the APA style and submission of full papers only in Microsoft word file.

9. Submission of Abstracts / Full Papers

All abstracts / full papers are to be submitted to the following:

Organizing Secretary, EHRC-BDLR 2023

Phone: +91-9436961857/ 7085719252/ 8014577390/ 6009461695

Email: ehrconference@mlcuniv.in, cllmpdpdjude@gmail.com

(cc: sairabell@mlcuniv.in; xalxojude@gmail.com, iadonlangtynsong@mlcuniv.in)

10. Conference Venue, Registration Methods, Fee & Banking Instructions

10.1 Conference Venue:

VIVANTA MEGHALAYA

Police Bazar, Opposite Old Assembly

Shillong, Meghalaya – 793001

10.2 Registration Methods:

The mode of registration is online and all the participants, paper presenter, attendees are to register using the following link. Abstract submission without registration will not be accepted.

Link for Online Registration: <https://forms.gle/VbpEmwxk3ynnGLqJ6>

*(NB: In case of difficulty in online submission of abstracts and/or Registration for participation, please contact directly the **Organizing Secretary or anyone else as given at Para 14.3**)*

10.3 Payment Mode for Registration Fees:

There is no Registration Fee for participating in the conference.

11. Important Information

1. All participants from externally funded projects will be self-financed for travel. Local hospitality (stay and food cost) in Shillong for the conference duration would be provided by the Organizers for the first author or presenter of the accepted Abstract/Paper for 4 nights (check-in date, conference dates and check-out dates).
2. Project staff wanting to participate but not presenting any paper would have to be fully self-financed, both for travel and stay; however, the Conference Organizers will be happy to facilitate in booking hotels locally if required.
3. The Organizers will provide (a) working lunch tea & snacks during the conference and (b) transport from hotel to conference venue & back as required. Field visit as well will be organised on the 3rd day of the conference. Expenses will be borne by the organiser.
4. The month of November being tourist season, booking of accommodation should be done well in advance. The Organizing Committee will provide all necessary support.

12. Conference Secretariat / Whom to Contact for any assistance

12.1 Secretariat Address:

Co-Chairperson from MBMA
(Attn: T. Jude Xalxo)
Meghalaya Basin Management Agency
Shillong 793003

Organizing Secretary (EHRC-BDLR 2023)
(Attn: Prof. Dr. Sairabell Kurbah)
Martin Luther Christian University
Dongkatieh, Block-1, Nongrah,
Shillong 793006, Meghalaya

12.2 Conference Email ID:

ehrconference@mlcuniv.in, cllmpdpdjude@gmail.com
(cc: sairabell@mlcuniv.in; xalxojade@gmail.com, iadonlangtynsong@mlcuniv.in)

12.3 Whom to contact:

Subject Matters	Contact Persons
Abstracts / Full papers / Technical / Sponsorship matters	Shri T. Jude Xalxo, Co-Chairperson Email: cllmpdpdjude@gmail.com Mobile: 9856083501

	Dr Sairabell Kurbah, Organizing Secretary Email: sairabell@mlcuniv.in Mobile: 91-9436961857/ 7085719252/ 8014577390/ 6009461695
Hotel Booking & related matters	Shri Mihin Dollo, Jt. Organizing Secretary (Logistics) Email: mihindollo@gmail.com Mobile: 8787478328 / 9436223597
	Dr. Subhasish Das Gupta, Jt. Organizing Secretary (Admin) Email: subhasishdasgupta2@gmail.com Mobile: 9436117205 / 8586886942
Field visits	Dr. Iadonlang Tynsong, Jt. Organizing Secretary (Field visits) Email: iadonlangtynsong@mlcuniv.in Mobile: 7085719252

13. Field visit Registration

Please send an email directly to **Dr. Iadonlang Tynsong, Jt. Organizing Secretary** (Field visits) to register for field visit at Email: iadonlangtynsong@mlcuniv.in; Mobile: 7085719252.

ANNEXURE-I

Suggested Outline of Presentations / Technical Papers

(Relevant for projects with at least 3-4 years of interventions or post-mid term or closed projects)

1. Introduction
 - What is the project theme or technical intervention being presented or written; reason for and importance of this particular technical work/theme.
 - Brief background to the area/location/people and problems statement in relation to the technical theme/intervention.
 - Statement of purpose /goals of the works/presentation/paper in relation to the project in general but specific to the technical theme presented/written.
2. About the Project
 - Brief about the project including key components, implementation arrangement and strategies, and expected outcomes.
3. Brief significance of the particular technical theme/intervention.
 - Significance or importance of the theme/specific intervention in the overall development objectives of the project.
 - Approaches to intervention processes;
 - Scale of intervention;
 - What is the innovation in this particular theme or intervention, if any.
4. Key results achieved against the expected targets.
 - Key milestones of the results
 - One or two examples or case story of human interest.
 - Replications and scaling up.
 - Results validations including participatory monitoring and evaluation; documentation.
5. Challenges, if under-achieved, or during the course of implementation.
 - Brief analytical reflections on the challenges encountered;
 - How the project re-oriented to address the challenges, or intends to address the challenges including failure or delayed success.
 - Exit strategies including grounding of indicators of sustainability.
6. Lessons learned from failures and recommendations
 - Lessons learned, generally on what worked well, what did not.
 - Recommendations for future projects including process interventions; scale of investment; what to do or consider and not to do or consider.
 - Possible key questions for follow-up or future research queries.
7. Overall conclusion
 - Overview of the extent of the thematic contribution to the overall development objectives of the project.
8. Reference documents