

## **RRG Narrative Report Templates**

### **Final Narrative Report**

**Title of project:** *Securing Voices: Advocating for marginalized people (IP and LCs, Women, Dalit, Poor) rights in the Amendment of Bagmati Province Forest Act*

**Organization name:** Women Rights & Resources Network

**Contract number:** 25 WRRN 01

**Reporting period:** From April 15, 2025 to August 15, 2025

**Date of report submission:**

**Completion check-list:**

Are all deliverables attached?

- Draft gap analysis recommendation from provincial dialogue and an event report with photos, videos, and social media links (Act 1)
- Draft gap analysis recommendation from dialogue with Ministry of Tourism, Forest, & Environment and an event report with photos, videos, and social media links (Act 2)
- Final recommendation notes for the Amendment and an event report with photos, social media links, and news coverage (Act 3)
- An event report with photos, videos, social media links, and new coverage (Act 4)

Is the duly signed financial report attached?

When is the anticipated submission of the Audit? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **1. Overall project objective**

The objective of the project aims to integrate those rights of marginalized communities (including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women, Dalits, and poor) into the amended Bagmati Province Forest Act (promulgated on 19th September 2019 A.D.) which were not included previously.

#### **2. Outcome summary (max 1/2 page)**

*Insert a short description of how the project influenced key political and policy processes as well as key actors. This can include both potential long-term and short-term contributions to the broader agenda for collective rights recognition.*

The project has meaningfully shaped ongoing political and policy processes in Bagmati Province by directly connecting provincial assembly members, government officials, and marginalized communities in structured dialogues. The province-level dialogue created a participatory platform where critical issues such as triple taxation on forest products, recognition of Indigenous Peoples' cultural sites, and women's underrepresentation in forest governance were formally raised and documented. Provincial assembly members, including Hon. Bharati Pathak, acknowledged these inputs as essential for correcting contradictions between federal and provincial laws and emphasized that community voices must guide the amendment process.

Similarly, the dialogue with the Provincial Assembly’s Industry, Tourism, and Environment Committee allowed parliamentarians including Hon. Ananda Kumar Shrestha, Hon. Yamuna Devi Shrestha, and Hon. Ruku Chaulagain to publicly commit to prioritizing the recommendations of IPLCs and CFUGs in the amended Act. Their responses signaled an important shift in political will, with leaders recognizing that previous laws inadequately addressed collective rights.

In the short term, these processes have ensured that community-driven recommendations are feeding directly into the amendment process, while also creating pressure for immediate reforms in taxation, recognition of customary practices, and women’s participation. In the long term, they set precedents for participatory law-making in Nepal, where grassroots knowledge and lived experiences shape provincial legislation. By strengthening accountability between communities and policymakers, the project contributes to the broader agenda of collective rights recognition and lays a foundation for replication in other provinces.

### 3. Project report (max 1 page)

#### **Provide a short overview of the completed project.**

##### ➤ **What did you achieve through this project?**

The project effectively placed the rights and concerns of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities (IPLCs), women, Dalits, and other marginalized groups at the forefront of the Bagmati Province Forest Act amendment process. It secured formal recognition from provincial assembly members regarding the gaps and inconsistencies within the existing Act, with explicit commitments to prioritize recommendations from Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), IPLCs, and women’s organizations. A continuous series of meetings and workshops with parliament members played a crucial role in **shaping the successful drafting of the Bagmati Province Forest Act 2019 amendment**, the draft of which is attached in the Annex. This draft includes concrete commitments from provincial assembly members and government officials to address critical issues such as unfair taxation provisions, absence of recognition for cultural and customary rights, and the underrepresentation of women in forest governance. The project reflects a broad consensus on key reforms, including the elimination of unjust taxes, acknowledgment of Indigenous cultural and religious sites, support for forest-based enterprises, and the enhancement of women's roles in governance. Furthermore, collaboration with journalists and media partners has ensured strong amplification of these issues, raised public awareness and generated accountability pressure.

##### ➤ **How did you achieve these results?**

These results were achieved through a series of province-level dialogues with right holders and stakeholders, followed by targeted meetings with the Provincial Assembly members of the Industry, Tourism, and Environment Committee and Journalists. Provincial level dialogue with right holders were comprehended with the acquisition of feedback from more than 30 stakeholders, aligning recommendations with the Federal Forest Act 2076 and documenting gaps in provincial law. Provincial Assembly dialogues ensured secured political commitments to prioritize community-driven recommendations in the Act. Dialogue with journalists who are recognized as the crucial part of the advocacy sector had amplified stakeholders’ voices, highlight issues like inactive CFUGs and community-government disconnect, and build wider public pressure for reforms.

##### ➤ **What challenges, if any, did you face and how were they resolved or mitigated?**

Challenges included initial reluctance from some policymakers to reconsider entrenched provisions such as revenue-sharing and CFUG consolidation. These were mitigated by presenting evidence from the dialogues, showcasing lived experiences of affected communities (e.g., the *Bankariya Chepang* women’s case), and framing recommendations as solutions that strengthened not weakened provincial governance. Reports of inactive CFUGs and low timber sales created doubts about community readiness. This was addressed by emphasizing the need for clearer legal frameworks and better coordination between user groups and government agencies. While women were included in leadership, their active engagement was limited. The project reframed this issue, advocating for meaningful participation rather than empty talks.

➤ **Do you have any specific plans to follow-up this work?**

Looking ahead, we plan to continue monitoring the amendment process to ensure that the recommendations are incorporated into the final Act. We will also build on this momentum by supporting local communities and civil society organizations to replicate this participatory model in other provinces, thereby advancing the broader agenda of collective rights recognition across Nepal. We will support CFUGs, women, and Indigenous groups to sustain advocacy, ensuring their representation in implementation mechanisms. As one of the main stakeholders to bring changes, continuum in the collaboration with the media and CSOs to maintain public pressure and accountability will be maintained.

**4. Project log frame**

*Please update the log frame below.*

Activity	Targets	Results
Province level dialogue with Right Holders and Stakeholders	This event will be organized with the major motive of forming a draft documentation of the gaps and required amendments which will provide as a supporting document for the upcoming amendment process and provide recommendations that need to be discussed in upcoming events. The ultimate target of organizing this activity involves inclusion and participation of IPLCs and other related stakeholders in the amendment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of critical gaps and loopholes between the Bagmati province Forest Act and the Federal level Forest Act which both were promulgated on 2019.</li> <li>• Generation of important recommendations such as the elimination of regressive triple taxation on forest product sales, formal recognition and protection of cultural and religious sites of Indigenous Peoples, support for local forest-based enterprises, and empowerment of women in forest governance.</li> <li>• Creation of a platform for meaningful stakeholder engagement that directly contributed inputs to the ongoing amendment process of the Bagmati</li> </ul>

		Province Forest Act 2075 to better reflect the rights, contributions, and aspirations of rights holders and stakeholders across Bagmati Province.
Dialogue with representatives of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest, and Environment	These consecutive two dialogue events will involve 20 participants in each event. This dialogue event will be organized for the discussion of previously identified gaps of current Province Forest Act and for the amendments of such gaps. The output from dialogue will be well documented and disseminated to the concerned stakeholders for further amendment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dialogue successfully facilitated comprehensive discussions on the gaps and required amendments in the Bagmati Province Forest Act, particularly ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups' rights and the promotion of sustainable forest-based livelihoods.</li> <li>• Recommendations were made on eliminating regressive tax provisions, supporting community forest enterprises, incorporating women empowerment mandates, recognizing traditional indigenous practices, and promoting eco-tourism and watershed management through community forestry.</li> <li>• The parliamentary members and representatives of the Ministry expressed commitment to prioritize and incorporate these recommendations in the amendment of the Forest Act, reflecting a positive alignment between stakeholders and provincial legislative processes.</li> </ul>
Dialogue with media personnels	National and local media personnels will be targeted for this activity for briefing them about the process and then providing the draft recommendation on the Forest Act for the amendment. Since, the media sector is most powerful sector at present context, the pressure from media can be a wonderful measure for the positive change and can create pressure to government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journalists enhanced their understanding of the Forest Act Amendment and related community issues.</li> <li>• Media personnel committed to advocate and raise awareness on forest governance and IPLC rights.</li> <li>• Strengthened collaboration between WRRN and media for promoting inclusive forest policy dialogue.</li> </ul>
Post consultation discussion with Bagmati	The event will closely compose of the representatives of the local communities and CSOs who are directly impacted through the gaps and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key stakeholder inputs were reviewed and incorporated in the draft Bagmati Province Forest Act.</li> </ul>

Province Parliament to ensure inputs were incorporated in the amendment	loopholes in previous Forest Act. After the completion of all the events for the amendment of Forest Act, this activity will be taken as a validation event for checking out whether the issues raised are ensured in amended Forest Act or not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added provisions for sustainable forest management and inclusion of Indigenous practices.</li> <li>• Ensured 50% women’s representation in Community Forest User Groups.</li> <li>• Strengthened alignment of the provincial Act with the Federal Forest Act (2019).</li> <li>• Draft of Bagmati Province Forest Act formed through frequent consultations and meetings was reviewed.</li> </ul>
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## 5. Lessons learned (max 1/2 page)

One of the key lessons from this project is that multi-stakeholder engagement significantly enhances the legitimacy and impact of policy advocacy. By creating platforms where IPLCs, CFUGs, women, Dalits, government officials, and parliamentarians could openly discuss the gaps in the Bagmati Province Forest Act, the project built a sense of shared ownership that compelled policymakers to take community concerns seriously. Direct engagement with provincial assembly members proved especially effective, as it not only secured verbal commitments but also shifted political will toward addressing sensitive provisions such as taxation and CFUG consolidation. Similarly, involving the media amplified advocacy efforts by broadening public awareness and applying external pressure on policymakers, while also contributing new perspectives such as the issue of inactive CFUGs-that enriched the dialogue.

The table represents the disaggregated summary of the target beneficiaries that were engaged and benefited through this project as mentioned below:

Activities	Bhramin/Chettri/Thakuri/Dasnami	IPs	Dalit
Activity 1: Province level dialogue in Bagmati	19	6	-
Activity 2: Dialogue with ministry representatives	12	7	-
Activity 3: Dialogue with media personnel	16	3	2
Activity 4: Post Consultation discussion with Bagmati province	13	4	1

At the same time, we experienced the gaps between policy formed and policy in practice. Although women were included in leadership positions, their active participation in discussions and decision-making remained limited, pointing to the gap between formal representation and meaningful engagement. Likewise, the evidence of existence of numerous inactive CFUGs with expired operational plans and low timber sales weakened the bargaining position of communities in some discussions. Another challenge was the persistent confusion created by contradictions between provincial and federal forest laws, which slowed the resource mobilization, use practice by the CFUGs and amendment momentum by the provincial government and required repeated clarification and negotiation.

From these experiences, several new insights emerged. First, journalists should be recognized not only as messengers but also as a key stakeholder who can shape policy debates by highlighting overlooked issues. Another insight we gained from this experience is that policymakers initially hesitant to reconsider long-standing provisions became more receptive when confronted with evidence from grassroots consultations. This project demonstrated that provincial-level reforms, when inclusive and participatory, can serve as models for other provinces and can be replicated in other reforms.

**6. Stakeholder voices** (max 1/2 page)

What are some quotes or stories that showcase stakeholder or community perspectives about the project?

**Hon. Bharati Pathak**, Provincial Assembly Member, remarked during the province-level dialogue: *“The community interacts with the forest more than law makers do, and they carry lived experiences that must inform legal structures.”* She emphasized that the amendment process was an opportunity to correct past mistakes where grassroots voices had been sidelined.

**WRRN Chairperson Aarati Pathak** shared the story of Bankariya women who had completed a soap-making training funded by the Industry and Commerce Office. Despite their enthusiasm and skill, all the products they produced were taken back by the Office due to existing rules. *“The products they created could have been sold to generate financial aid for future production. Laws like this need serious reconsideration,”* she explained. This story highlighted how current policies often discourage rather than support local enterprise development.

**Journalist Bibash Adhikari** reflected on his conversation with a CFUG member, noting: *“Many community forests are inactive, as operational plans have not been renewed. Neither the government nor the user groups are addressing this, leaving forests unmanaged and timber sales very low.”* His account shed light on the governance vacuum that must be addressed in the amended Act.

**Mr. Baal Krishna Adhikari**, Chairperson of the Federation of Nepali Journalists in Makwanpur, emphasized during the media dialogue: *“The Forest Act must be practical, ensuring both forest protection and sustainable use. It should listen to all stakeholders, including disadvantaged groups, and ensure their inclusion in leadership positions. But leadership must be meaningful-not tokenistic.”*

**7. Updated list of key actors and roles**

Full name	Acronym	Role (e.g. project lead, collaborator, advisory)
Women Rights & Resources Network	WRRN	Project Lead
Green Foundation Nepal	GFN	Collaborator

Federation of Community Users, Nepal	FECOFUN	Collaborator
Nepal Indigenous Women's Federation	NIWF	Collaborator
Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities	NEFIN	Collaborator

## 8. Media demonstrating achievement

As appropriate, please include any additional available details, such as web links, press articles, photos with an identifying caption or file name. Please share it as an annex at the end of the document.

### प्रदेश राष्ट्रिय वन विधेयकको संशोधन बारे हेटौडामा छलफल

प्रदेश दैनिक

हेटौडा। बागमती प्रदेश सरकारले बनाउँदै गरेको प्रदेश वन विधेयकको संशोधनमा प्राकृतिक श्रोत महिला आँखाकार संजामले एकै संशोधनमा मुकाबल गर्नको लागि।

सबलवार प्राकृतिक श्रोत महिला आँखाकार संजामका केटीय आकाश आरती पाठकले मकवानपुर, सिन्धुली, काभ्रे, भक्तपुर, रामेछाप, काठमाण्डौ र रसुवाबाट संलग्न भएका मुकामका बायो पब्लिकरहरुसँग छलफल गरेको हुन्। बागमती प्रदेशका उपोच, पर्यटन, वन तथा वातावरण समिति सभापति आनन्दकुमार श्रेष्ठसँग सावधानसँग भेटेर उक्त मुकाम समेत बुझाइएको छ। छलफलका सहभागीहरूले ऐनमा राख्न नपर्ने र बच गर्नुपर्ने विषयमा विस्तृत मुकाम प्रस्तुत गरेका थिए।

वन सम्बन्धन प्रशासकीय परिषद, सामुदायिक वनबाट विचि हुने वनपैदावारमा कर वा शुल्क लगाउने व्यवस्था, सशोधनबाट हटाइएको चकना वन सम्बन्धी प्रावधान, भूमि हस्तान्तरण सम्बन्धी व्यवस्था, समुदायका आधारित उपभोक्ता समूहको परिषद, सामुदायिक वनबाट विचि हुने व्यवस्था र दल भएको वन क्षेत्र रक्षित वन हुने प्रावधान प्रदेश ऐनमा राख्नुपर्ने प्रावधान राखेका थिए। यसै सामुदायिक



वन उपभोक्ता समितिमा कम्तीमा १० प्रतिशत महिला प्रतिनिधित्व सुनिश्चित गर्नुपर्ने, आदिवासी जनजाति तथा सीमान्तकृत समुदायको समानुपातिक सभासद्वेरी प्रतिनिधित्व हुने व्यवस्था गर्नुपर्ने, सामुदायिक वनको आम्दानीको कम्तीमा १० प्रतिशत रकम महिला सशोधनकर्ता, पर्यटन विकास र उच्च विकासका सचि गर्नुपर्ने सुझाव दिइएको थियो।

आदिवासी जनजातिका परम्परागत अभ्यासलाई कार्यान्वयनमा समावेश गर्ने, उपभोक्ता समूहका नाममा वनमा आधारित उपोच दत्त गर्ने, सीमान्तकृत

धर परिचाललाई वन पैदावार विस्तृत उपलब्ध गराउने, दलित, विपन्न तथा महिला घरघरमा परिचाललाई विशेष वन क्षेत्र प्रयोगको सुझाव दिन र सामुदायिक वनको सहकार्यमा सार्वजनिक वनको तथा उच्च सम्भालनको व्यवस्था गर्नुपर्ने पत्र भेट दिइएको छ। कार्यक्रममा मानव अधिकारकर्मीहरूको संघीय र प्रदेश कानुनी सल्लाहकारको स्पष्ट सम्बन्ध आवश्यक भएको र ऐन संशोधनमा महिला, दलित, आदिवासी जनजाति तथा सीमान्तकृत समुदायको अधिकारलाई प्राथमिकतामा राख्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता औपचार्यको थियो।

### बागमती प्रदेश राष्ट्रिय वन विधेयक संशोधन विषयक छलफल हेटौडामा सम्पन्न

संशोधन

हेटौडा: बागमती प्रदेश सरकारले तयार पारेको राष्ट्रिय वन विधेयकको संशोधनमा प्राकृतिक श्रोत महिला आँखाकार संजामले मुकाम संलग्न गरी छलफल गरेको छ। मकवानपुर, सिन्धुली, काभ्रे, भक्तपुर, रामेछाप, काठमाण्डौ र रसुवाबाट संलग्नित मुकामहरू मंगलवार पब्लिकरहरूसँग साझा गरिएका थिए।

संजामकी केटीय आकाश आरती पाठकले उपोच, पर्यटन, वन तथा वातावरण समितिमा सभासद्वेरी आनन्द कुमार श्रेष्ठसँग सावधानसँग भेटेर उक्त मुकाम बुझाइएको जानकारी दिनु। छलफलमा सहभागीहरूले विधेयकमा गराउनु पर्ने र बच गर्नु पर्ने विषयमा विस्तृत मुकाम दिएका थिए।

वन सम्बन्धन प्रशासकीय परिषद, सामुदायिक वनबाट विचि हुने वनपैदावारमा कर वा शुल्क लगाउने, सशोधनबाट हटाइएको चकना वन सम्बन्धी प्रावधान



गर्नुपर्ने, भूमि हानी गर्ने वन्यजन्तु व्यवस्थाको समुचित समावेशीकरण, समुदायका आधारित उपभोक्ता समूहको परिषद स्पष्ट गर्ने लगायतका विषयमा जोड दिइएको थियो।

सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समितिमा कम्तीमा १० प्रतिशत महिला प्रतिनिधित्व सुनिश्चित गर्ने, आदिवासी जनजाति र सीमान्तकृत समुदायको समानुपातिक सभासद्वेरी करण गर्ने, र सामुदायिक वनको आम्दानीको कम्तीमा १० प्रतिशत र

उच्च विकासका सचि गर्नुपर्ने सुझाव प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। तपौगरी, आदिवासी जनजातिका

परम्परागत अभ्यास विधेयकमा समावेश गर्ने, उपभोक्ता समूहको नाममा वन उपोच दत्त गर्ने, दलित, विपन्न र महिला परिवारलाई वनपैदावार नि:शुल्क उपलब्ध गराउने, तथा सामुदायिक वनहरूको सहकार्यमा सार्वजनिक वनको र उच्च संभालनको व्यवस्था गर्ने विषयमा पनि जोड दिइएको थियो।

कार्यक्रममा मानव अधिकार संरक्षणसहित संघीय र प्रदेश कानुनी संरक्षणसहित सम्बन्ध आवश्यक भएको र संशोधन विधेयकमा महिला, दलित, आदिवासी जनजाति तथा सीमान्तकृत समुदायको अधिकारलाई प्राथमिकतामा राख्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता औपचार्यका थिए।

महत्त्वपूर्ण फोन नम्बरहरू