

A report on the field monitoring visit of activities carried out by the Division Forest Offices (DFO) of Sindhuli and Marin.

1. Background:

The MaWRiN project aims to support the government and local stakeholders in managing the Marin watershed while strengthening the long-term climate resilience of Indigenous peoples and local communities. The project's objective is "to enhance the climate resilience of Indigenous people and local communities in the Marin watershed through nature-based solutions and livelihood diversification".

A range of activities have been implemented under this initiative. Proper documentation and reporting of these efforts are essential to demonstrate the program's outputs, outcomes, and impacts to donors and stakeholders. In this context, a field visit conducted in the MaWRiN project areas on 24 April 2026. The visit focused on output level monitoring visits as well as providing necessary on-site support to ensure effective implementation of activities and to assess progress on the ground. The visit also aimed to evaluate interventions, identify challenges, and derive lessons for improving future program strategies. Moreover, the MaWRiN Project has three cost centers for implementing field activities. In this context, the current monitoring visit focused specifically on activities carried out in collaboration with the Division Forest Offices (DFOs).

2. Objectives of visit

The main objective of this monitoring visit was to enhance awareness of program interventions in the field and to gather feedback to support continuous improvement. In addition, the visit aimed to assess and analyze output-level results and to understand ground-level realities. These efforts are intended to strengthen ongoing activities and inform future strategies and actions.

Specific Objectives are following:

- To monitor the implementation and effectiveness of field activities.
- Status of Conservation Pond
- Coordination with GLAs
- Major issues and Challenges
- To provide recommendations for future intervention strategies, with a focus on program delivery, coordination, communication, and field monitoring.

3. Methodology:

The monitoring visit was conducted using a participatory approach, involving on-site visits to intervention areas as well as interactions with beneficiaries, community members, and other relevant stakeholders.

4. Major Findings

4.1 Forest Fire Management and Infrastructure

A monitoring visit was conducted to the forest fire-line construction sites in Kalika, Barahi, and Jaldevi Community Forests, which are being implemented with technical and institutional support from DFO Sindhuli. During the visit, an interaction meeting was also held with the CFUG members and forest watchers. Significant progress was observed in shifting from a reactive approach to a more preventive and systematic forest fire management system. Furthermore, the provision of forest fire control safety equipment to local communities has enhanced preparedness and contributed to a reduction in forest fire incidents.

4.1.1 Fireline Construction

Fire lines with a total length of 1,950 meters and a width of 3 meters have been constructed in Kalika, Barahi, and Jaldevi CFUGs. Kalika and Barahi CFUGs, as well as Jaldevi and Chure Deurali CFUGs, are adjacent to each other. Therefore, the communities have constructed control fire lines in fire-prone areas and along CFUG boundaries, which helps reduce conflicts between neighboring CFUGs.

Moreover, these fire lines have been developed following technical specifications to effectively interrupt the spread of surface fires. Previously, community-constructed fire lines were narrow and irregular, limiting their effectiveness. The

introduction of standardized fire lines is expected to significantly enhance fire containment capacity, particularly during the dry season when the risk of forest fires is highest.



Figure 1: forest fire control safety equipment-Barahi CFUG

Awareness and Impact, The Sub-Division Forest Office has implemented extensive awareness and capacity-building programs over the past year targeting local communities and school students. These initiatives have strengthened community ownership and responsibility toward forest conservation.

Reduction in Fire Incidents, Forest fire incidents have significantly decreased compared to previous years.

Improved awareness and preparedness have enabled communities to respond quickly and control small fire outbreaks before they escalate. **Capacity Building and Behavioral Change,** Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) now demonstrate a stronger understanding of preventive measures such as fire-line maintenance and monitoring of high-risk areas. This reflects a transition from passive reliance on external support to proactive community-led forest management.

Coordination Committees, Kalika and Barahi CFUGs have established inclusive coordination committees with representation from diverse community groups. These committees play a key role in decision-making, conflict resolution, and equitable responsibility sharing, thereby strengthening governance and social inclusion. **Fire Control Network,** A collaborative fire control network has been established among four Community Forests such as Jal Devi, Chure Deurali, Navadurga, and Satpatre. This network facilitates information sharing, joint patrolling, and coordinated response during fire incidents. It also serves as a replicable model for inter-community cooperation in addressing illegal activities such as encroachment and unauthorized resource extraction.



Figure 2 Interaction with community members and forest guards, and inspection of the forest fire control line at Jal Devi CFUG

4.2 Newly Constructed Conservation Pond (Recharge Pits)

To complement fire management and enhance forest resilience, each Community Forest has planned the construction of 13 recharge pits. These structures play an important role in reducing

surface runoff, enhancing groundwater recharge, and maintaining soil moisture, thereby indirectly reducing forest fire vulnerability.

At present, 6 recharge pits per site have been completed, while the remaining are under active construction. Each pit measures $4 \times 4 \times 1$ meters. Once completed, these structures are expected to improve microclimatic conditions within the forest ecosystem.



Figure 3 Conservation Pond (Recharge Pit) at Kalika CFUG



Figure 4 Interaction meeting with Chairperson and users of Barahi CFUG

4.3 Rehabilitation of Existing Conservation Pond

The restoration of Lohasur Conservation Pond represents a notable success in ecosystem rehabilitation. Previously on the verge of drying up, the pond has been fully revitalized through strategic excavation and infrastructure improvements implemented by the DFO Hariharpurgadi Sub-Division Office.

Infrastructure Development, Foot trails constructed around the pond have improved accessibility for local residents and pilgrims visiting the nearby temple, enhancing both usability and aesthetic value.

Promotion of Eco-tourism, improved environmental



Figure 5 Rehabilitation of conservation Pond- Pokhari LFUG

conditions and accessibility have created opportunities for local eco-tourism, with potential to contribute to community livelihoods. **Ecological Restoration,** the pond now serves as a reliable water source for wildlife during dry periods and supports local biodiversity. It also functions as a natural recharge basin, helping to replenish groundwater and sustain downstream water systems.

4.4. Planting Seeds and Fencing

Sanjibani Community Forest is currently undergoing restoration to improve its ecological condition and ensure long-term sustainability. **Forest Restoration Efforts,** Activities are being implemented to enhance forest cover and prevent degradation caused by encroachment and uncontrolled grazing. **Planting Acacia Catechu Seeds,** Seeds of Acacia catechu (Khayar), a species with both ecological and economic value, have been sown. This is expected to contribute to soil stabilization and future livelihood opportunities. **Protection Measures,** Fencing construction is ongoing to protect newly planted seedlings during their critical early growth stage, ensuring higher survival rates and reducing external disturbances.



Figure 6: Forest Restoration – Sanjibani CFUG

5. Recommendations

- A follow-up monitoring visit to Sanjibani Community Forest should be conducted after completion of fencing to assess germination success and seedling survival rates.
- Institutional mechanisms should be strengthened through regular coordination meetings, joint patrolling, and shared responsibilities, particularly during high-risk dry seasons, to ensure long-term effectiveness of the fire control network.
- A sustainable mechanism for annual maintenance of fire-lines should be established, including dedicated budgeting, volunteer mobilization, or integration into CFUG operational plans.
- The remaining recharge pits should be completed before the onset of the monsoon season to maximize their effectiveness in water retention and soil conservation.
- Wild animals, especially young ones, are often unable to escape if they enter the pond. Therefore, the pond should be made wildlife-friendly by creating a gently sloped, low-height escape pathway on one side.
- A hoarding board should be installed with essential information so that visitors can easily understand and learn about the activities.
- During the interaction with community members of Sanjibini CFUG, it was reported that a road passes through the restoration area. In this regard, pillars and fencing have been damaged multiple times. Therefore, it is necessary to restrict vehicle movement through the middle of the area.
- The materials (Mud) excavated from the pond located in the middle of the land under the Sanjibani CFUG are currently unmanaged and require proper leveling or disposal within the plantation area or around the pond vicinity so that the site remains safe and minimizes the risk of accidental falls or other unforeseen accidents in and around the pond area.

6. Conclusion

The monitoring findings indicate substantial progress in forest fire management, ecosystem restoration, and community-based natural resource governance. The shift from reactive to preventive fire management, supported by infrastructure development such as standardized fire-lines and recharge pits, has significantly improved forest resilience and reduced fire incidents.

Similarly, the successful restoration of Lohasur Conservation Pond demonstrates the effectiveness of targeted ecological rehabilitation interventions in enhancing biodiversity, water availability, and eco-tourism potential. Ongoing efforts in Sanjibani Community Forest, including plantation and protective fencing, further reflect a strong commitment to forest restoration and long-term sustainability.

Overall, the active participation of Community Forest User Groups, strengthened coordination mechanisms, and improved institutional collaboration have played a crucial role in achieving these outcomes. Continued support, timely completion of ongoing works, and sustained community engagement will be essential to ensure long-term ecological stability and resilience in the region.