CDM based Forest Restoration in Dabat-Rod Jamun Landscape in the Foothills of Shri Naina Ji Temple, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh

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Introduction
The forest landscape restoration work was implemented in the foothills of a highly revered hilltop temple of Shri Naina Ji in Bilaspur district in the Shivalik hills in the Outer Himalayan region of the mountainous Indian state of Himachal Pradesh as a part of a statewide Clean Development Mechanism Afforestation/Reforestation Project titled ‘Himachal Pradesh Reforestation Project – Improving Livelihoods and Watersheds’.

The restoration activities undertaken in 11 land parcels having a total area of 578.67 ha and the project was developed through a series of consultations with its stakeholders constitutents Forest Department, local Gram Panchayats and the World Bank.

Project stakeholders
The Village Forest Development Societies (VFDS) formed with the help of locals took the responsibility for implementation of the project along with the Project staff. The staff involved in the restoration activities was technically sound and skilled. The model currently adopted is the distribution of carbon revenue in the ratio of 20:80 between VFDS and Gram Panchayat.

Technical design
Restoration forestry model was used for reforestation of degraded un-demarcated forestland with a tree density of 1100 plants/ha. The Community forestry model has been use for reforestation of degraded community lands or common lands.

Monitoring
Consolidated afforestation and reforestation baseline and monitoring methodology “Afforestation and reforestation of degraded land” (AR-ACM0001/version 03) was applied and monitoring of the project activities was done as per CDM Monitoring Report Form Version 6.0. Monitoring was conducted for the parameters/activities: area & species planted, and survival of seedlings. The survival percentage of various plant species planted in different parcel varied from 29% to 82% at the end of December, 2017.

Social, economic and ecological benefits
Main economic benefits is the flow of carbon revenues to Gram Panchayats and individual families. Fodder production increased from 5-6 tons/year to 120-125 tons/year in the landscape.

Employment generation resulted from the various activities under the project. Revenues from carbon credits has been transferred to individual families and farmers. Carbon revenues have contributed to the empowerment of women Self-Help Groups. Local communities have been permitted to collect dead and fallen twigs and branches form the pre-existing trees as well as the planted trees.

The activities of the CDM project have brought ecological benefits like improvement in soil fertility and suppression of alien invasive species. It has also helped stabilize the top soils in these lands and help to reduce their susceptibility to landslides.

References
CDM fact Sheet of Areas. Dy. Project Director, Bilaspur, Integrated Development Project, HP.