

Saving Mount Everest Project, EcoHimal Interim Report November 2011 Summary

In the reporting period, October 2010 to October 2011, the project followed the project plan and all activities were implemented successfully without any deviations.

During the initial phase of the project, intensive meetings and workshop were held with government, national and local stakeholders, donors and supporters for their full support to ensure long-term effectiveness of the project and to develop a sustainable mechanism for waste management in the National Park region.

The successful Clean-Up Campaign on Mount Everest was implemented from mid April to June 2011. Total 8,110 kilo of wastes were collected from Mt. Everest South Summit to its base camp and brought to Namche Bazar. On May 29th, a press conference was organized in Namche Bazar and displayed the wastes to the locals and held a photo exhibition on the occasion of Mount Everest Day. Joint secretaries from Ministry of Tourism and Journalists came from Kathmandu to participate in this occasion where representatives of various local institutions were present. 3210 kilo of biodegradable and burnable wastes was handed over to Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) in Namche to dispose locally and the rest were transported to Lukla to be airlifted to Kathmandu.

To mark the "Environment Day" on June 5th, a function was organized in Kathmandu by Government of Nepal, Ministry of Local Development, where the wastes brought from Mount Everest were put on display along with a photo exhibition. On this occasion, Ministry of Environment presented "Letter of Appreciation" to all the climbers and institutions that helped make this campaign a success. The recyclable wastes were then handed over to Nepal Dalaut Udyog, a recycle company in Kathmandu to recycle properly.

With the success of massive Cleanup campaign, photo exhibition, continued public relation and awareness among the local community helped in establishing stronger working relationship and trust with Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone Management Committee, GON and various private companies active in the field of tourism, waste management, etc. This relationship and trust guarantees a participative and sustainable implementation of the project. Ban on plastic bags in Sagarmatha National Park and its buffer zone area and gradually replacing it with cloth bags starting May 2011 is the result of growing concern and local awareness about the urgency to address the increasing environmental problems created by the hazardous waste.

The Government of Nepal and local communities have been seriously seeking to introduce and implement a sustainable waste management system for mountaineering expeditions to Mount Everest as well as for all the tourists trekking in the region. To address this, a steering committee (Himalaya Environmental Conservation, Monitoring and Management Committee) was formed under the leadership of GON, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. This steering committee involves representatives from line ministries, National stakeholders working in tourism and mountaineering sector, EcoHimal and ESA. Although the GON with the help of steering committee made progress in developing the new regulations and code of conduct regarding waste management, the new law still has to be passed from the cabinet. The unstable political situation in Nepal and bureaucratic shuffle within the ministries slowed this process. However, the local waste management concept developed by the project will provide a good framework for the region to carry out the 2nd phase – waste management project.

Experts from Vienna University of Technology, Austria, Research Center of Waste and Resource Management and the Ministry of Local Development, Solid Waste Management

and Resource Mobilization Department, Nepal carried out a detailed survey in the target area. Similarly, a study on Awareness, Behaviour and Knowledge about Waste and Waste Management in the SNPBZ was conducted. The findings and concepts will serve as a basis for further planning, implementing and monitoring next phase of the project. The reports will also represent a comparing guideline for final analysis of the effects of the project once it is terminated.

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