

Two Cantilever Pathways improve access to Manaslu Conservation Area in Northern Gorkha

17 January 2018, Gorkha – Two cantilever pathways were formally handed over to local government representatives of Dharche and Tsum Numbri municipalities of northern Gorkha at a handover programme organised at the district co-ordination council office today by Samarth-Nepal Market Development Programme. The cantilever pathways not only provide safe access to the locals living in northern Gorkha, but has also enhanced two of Nepal’s popular trekking trails Manaslu Circuit and Tsum Valley Trail.

The earthquakes of 2015 had blocked access to rural villages in northern Gorkha and sections of the trails were badly damaged, adding time and cost for travellers. The locals were facing difficulty in accessing food and other daily supplies from Aarughat as the only alternative was to travel along a dangerously steep hill, which added two hours of travel and increased costs of daily supplies.

The construction of these cantilever pathways has relieved the locals and has helped in improving access with reduced transportation time for food and other daily supplies from Aarughat. In a recent survey conducted by Samarth-NMDP more than 53% of households living in remote villages in the area have had a positive income change as a result of the new cantilever pathways. The pathways also provide young children a safe and shorter route to school and have improved access to markets and hospitals for the local people. The popular Manaslu circuit trekking route, which was obstructed by the earthquake in 2015 has also been re-opened to foreign and domestic tourists. All of these benefits are expected to significantly improve the livelihoods of the local people.

The first cantilever pathway - built in Dharche along the Yaru banks of the Budhi Gandaki river was completed over a two-month period, at a total cost of NPR 37.5 million. The pathway has been in operation since 2016 June (Jestha 2073) and is a 195-meter-long steel structure with 55 meters of approach trail. The second pathway in Tsum Numbri along Syar Khola was completed over 4 months period, at a total cost of NRs. 41.5 million. The pathway is 90 meters of cantilever structure and 127 meters of access trail and has been in operation since March 2017 (Falgun 2073).

The pathways was designed and constructed by AF-ITECO Ltd, Switzerland, fabrication and installation at site was undertaken by Balaju Yantrashala P. Ltd Nepal with the help of local user committees. These pathways are a combination of rock benching and cement masonry work with cantilever steel structures anchored into the rock cliff with special bolts.

The construction of the cantilever pathways was initiated by Samarth-NMDP and was completed in coordination with the Gorkha District Coordination Committee and Manaslu Conservation Area Project (MCAP). Samarth-Nepal Market Development Programme is funded by UK aid and managed by Adam Smith International (ASI).

Note to Editors

1. The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to Nepal.
2. The Manaslu Conservation area is an emerging trekking destination and was receiving around 5,000 trekkers annually before the earthquake.
3. The UK aid-funded Samarth-NMDP works closely with stakeholders to upgrade trekking infrastructure in five trekking areas including Manaslu. In Manaslu, Samarth-NMDP is working to support stakeholders to make trekking trails fully functional before the start of the next peak trekking season.
4. Adam Smith International (ASI) is a