Final Report

Ex-Post Evaluation of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN) 2008-2019
and Final Evaluation of Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP) 2006-2022

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ASA	Department for the Americas and Asia (ASA) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Unit for South Asia.
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCO	Cross-Cutting Objectives
DAG	Disadvantaged Group
DDC	District Development Committees
DFID	Department for International Development/Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
DOLI	Department of Local Infrastructure
DoLIDAR	Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads
DMM	Dignified Menstruation Management
DPP	Development Policy Programme
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DWASH	District WASH
DWIG	District WASH Implementation Guideline
DWS	Drinking Water Scheme
DWSS	Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (until 2019)
DWSSM	Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management (from 2019)
EMS	Evaluation Management Services
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation TEam
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro (1 NPR equals 0,0076 Euro)
FCG	Finnish Consulting Group
FWSSMP	Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GOF	Government of Finland
GON	Government of Nepal
HDI	Human Development Index
HH	Household
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
ICS	Improved Cooking Stove
IDCP	International Development Cooperation Policy
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
IWM	Improved Water Mill
LIP	Livelihood Implementation Plans
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MIP	Multi-annual Indicative Programme
MLD	Ministry of Local Government

MOFAGA	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MoWS	Ministry of Water Supply
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MWASH-CC	Municipal WASH Coordination Committee
MWASH	Municipal WASH
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NMIP	National Management Information Project
NPR	Nepalese Rupee (1 NPR equals 0,0076 Euro)
N-WASH-MIS	National WASH Management Information System
NWASH-CC	National WASH Coordination Committee
NSHMP	National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
P-WASH-CC	Provincial-WASH-Coordination Committee
QA	Quality Assurance
RM	Rural Municipality
RMSU	Rural Municipality Support Unit
RVWRMP	Rural Village Water Resources Management Project
RWSSP-WN	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDP	Sector Development Plan
TA	Technical Assistance
TL	Team Leader
TOC	Theory of Change
UC	User Committee
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committees
VWASH	Village WASH
V-WASH-CC	Village WASH Coordination Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASH-CC	Ward WASH Coordination Committee
VMW	Village Maintenance Workers
WSP	Water Safety Plan
WUMP	Water Use Master Plan
WUSC	Water User and Sanitation Committee

1. Executive summary

This evaluation is commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. The aim is to provide the governments of Finland and Nepal with an external and independent evaluation of two projects implemented in Nepal: the 2008-19 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN) and the 2006-22 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP). The primary focus has been on WASH, livelihoods and accompanying capacity development, but also included gender and social inclusion (GESI – for more on GESI, please see the box to the right) and climate change. The evaluation was conducted by a team of five consultants during the first half of 2022, with two sub-teams conducting a field mission outside of Kathmandu from March 5 to March 22, 2022. The evaluation is conducted as per the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Box 1: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nepal
GESI is a concept that addresses improved access to livelihood assets and services for all, including women, the poor, and the excluded. This is an important concept in the project areas, where women and disadvantaged groups experience discriminatory practices that prevents them from fully exercising their rights and capabilities, keeping them in subordinate positions with less access to educational, social and economic opportunities that enable them to actively engage in their communities and pursue livelihoods. At policy level, Nepal has taken important steps to improve GESI. Nepal is signatory to 23 human rights treaties and international human rights instruments. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) guarantees equal rights, social justice and freedom from discrimination for all citizens. The GoN further reinforced GESI commitments through the 15th Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24) which includes quotas for disadvantaged groups in all civil service positions and committees of all levels, and through Gender Equality Policy 2021 ensuring meaningful participation in all parts of society and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices. Despite progress at policy level, gender, caste and ethnicity-based inequalities and violence remain prevalent.

The evaluation found that the relevance of the two projects was good as they responded to the needs of beneficiaries and were relevant to the policies of the GoF, GoN and the EU. The quality of the project designs was adequate, with some concerns regarding the result frameworks.

Both projects had good coherence insofar as there was coherence between the two projects, and they were well-coordinated with other interventions. The projects were well-aligned with local-level interventions and policies but less so at the national level.

The RWSSP-WN was very effective as it generally achieved its targets in terms of outputs and outcomes, with 360,000 people gaining access to water. It also contributed to ensuring that over 4 million people are now living in Open Defecation Free (ODF) communities. The project trained over half a million people, and municipalities have had support to increase their capacity. The project also developed and implemented a GESI strategy, women reduced the time spent fetching water, and the role of disadvantaged groups improved.

The RVWRMP was also very effective as it mostly achieved more than its targets, including the provision of water to over 600,000 people, contributing to over 2 million people now living in ODF communities, and over 750,000 people improving their livelihoods. The capacity of municipalities has been developed. Women have reduced the time they spent fetching water and benefitted from a reduction in discriminatory menstrual practices and taboos. Climate change adaptation became more prominent in the latter part of the project.

Both the RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP were very efficient with timely, high-quality interventions and cost-efficient implementation. The high quality was achieved through good hands-on monitoring. The cost of the project

interventions was efficient. Risk management, including climate change risks, improved during project implementation.

The RWSSP-WN had a very good impact as it is very likely to have contributed to a reduction in child mortality and to improvements in beneficiaries' health. It also contributed to the development of the capacity of the WASH sector at the local level. Women and girls, in particular, benefitted from the project, and both women and Dalits avoided discriminatory practices. An additional unintended impact was that women gained the confidence to stand for election to local councils due to the project.

The RVWRMP also had a very good impact as it is very likely to have contributed to improving the health of the beneficiaries, including a reduction in stunting. The RVWRMP contributed to a reduction in discriminatory practices towards Women and Dalits and, similar to the RWSSP-WN, increased the self-esteem of women, allowing them to increasingly assert their rights. The livelihood component of the project has contributed to reducing poverty. The RVWRMP also contributed to developing the capacity of the WASH sector, mainly at local levels.

It is likely that some benefits of the RWSSP-WN will continue, although the institutional setup is less strong, and it remains open if the May 2022 elections will affect the local-level WASH sector setup and whether climate change poses a risk to the sustainability of the future water supply. The RWSSP-WN is assessed to have good sustainability.

For the RVWRMP, it is very likely that people will continue to have access to water and sanitation and that beneficiaries will continue to benefit from livelihood opportunities. The local-level institutional set-up is more elaborate than is the case for the RWSSP-WN, although the May 2022 local elections create some uncertainty. The RVWRMP is therefore assessed to have good sustainability.

Based on the findings, a number of conclusions and recommendations were developed as per Table 1 below.

Table 1: Overview of conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions		Recommendations
RWSSP-WN	**RVWRMP**	
Relevance		**1:** In order to prove the impact of future projects, surveys should be conducted as part of collecting baseline data, not only in project areas but also in areas where projects are not implemented. This will allow for a better assessment of a project's contribution to, e.g. improvements in health. (Based on Conclusion 3. For GoF, EU) **2:** Targets and baselines in future results frameworks should when relevant be disaggregated by
1: The projects were relevant to the policies and plans of GoN, GoF, and the EU. **2:** The projects were relevant to the needs of the people of Nepal, including women and disadvantaged groups. **3:** The projects' designs had plausible logic but had shortcomings with regard to baseline and target data as well as indicators for objectives and purposes. **4:** Relevant targets and indicators were insufficiently disaggregated with regard to women and disadvantaged groups.		
Coherence		
5: The coherence of the projects was good at the local level but less pronounced at the national level.		
Effectiveness		

6: With the caveat that datasets were not complete or easily compared across phases, the ET finds that RWSSP-WN mainly achieved its outcomes in terms of increased access to and use of water and sanitation facilities combined with improved capacity at local and community levels to plan, implement and maintain facilities.	**9:** With the caveat that datasets were not complete or easily compared across phases, the ET finds that RVWRMP mainly achieved its outcomes in terms of increased access to and use of water and sanitation facilities and improved livelihoods combined with much-improved capacity at local and community levels to plan, implement and maintain facilities. A GESI approach was used.	gender, age, disadvantaged group, etc. (Based on Conclusion 4. For GoF, EU) **3:** Future projects should to a larger degree collaborate with relevant national-level institutions, and attempt to influence national-level policy making processes. (Based on Conclusion 5. For GoF, EU)
7: RWSSP-WN outputs related to drinking water supply, sanitation and hygiene have been achieved. A GESI approach was used. There was insufficient attention to climate change mitigation and adaptation.	**10:** RVWRMP outputs on water supply, sanitation and hygiene have been achieved using a GESI approach. The project used the MUS approach to diversify the use of water and linked it to improved livelihoods of beneficiaries. Climate change risks were not fully addressed.	**4:** Future projects should integrate livelihoods more systematically in WASH programmes to enhance relevancy and ownership from the communities (Based on Conclusions 9, 10, 23, 34. For GoF, EU)
8: RWSSP-WN outputs regarding the institutional strengthening of the local governments have been achieved.	**11:** RVWRMP has significantly contributed to strengthening the institutional capacity of the local government entities – also during the changing context of federalisation.	**5:** Future project should analyse in more detail climate change risks and develop interventions for climate change adaptation. (Based on Conclusions 7, 8, 10, 15, 18. For GoN, GOF, EU)
	12: RVWRMP has adopted a GESI responsive approach to project planning and management. With this support, there have been positive changes in the role of women and disadvantaged groups in the communities	**6:** Future projects should ensure delivery of high-quality outputs through frequent monitoring and hiring of high-quality staff. (Based on Conclusions 13, 16. For GoF, EU)
Efficiency		
13: RWSSP-WN outputs were implemented timely, of high quality, and accompanied by high-quality monitoring with quick follow-up.	**16:** RVWRMP outputs were implemented timely except for minor delays during the establishment of municipalities, mostly of high quality, and accompanied by high-quality monitoring with quick follow-up.	**7:** Future projects should replicate the model of working through municipalities as this will contribute to ensure impact and contribute to sustainability, and an extension of the RVWRMP to enhance the work done with municipalities could be considered. (Based on Conclusions 6, 8, 9, 11, 24, 26, 30, 33. For GoN, GOF, EU)
14: RWSSP-WN was implemented cost-efficiently.	**17:** RVWRMP was implemented cost-efficiently.	
15: Risk management in the RWSSP-WN was initially insufficient but improved with detailed mitigating measures, including for climate change risks.	**18:** Risk management in the RVWRMP was initially insufficient but improved with detailed mitigating measures, including climate change risks.	**8:** The experiences from the projects' unintended contributions to women's self-esteem and empowerment through e.g. GESI approaches should be used also in future projects. (Based on
Impact		
19: The RWSSP-WN is very likely to have contributed to improving the health of beneficiaries, including a reduction in child	**21:** The RVWRMP is very likely to have contributed to improving the health of the beneficiaries, including a reduction in stunting.	

mortality and diarrhoea, and it is very likely that the impact remains. **20:** The RWSSP-WN contributed to the reduction in menstrual taboos, improving health and self-esteem of women and girls, and increased school attendance of girls. The project unintentionally contributed to more women standing for local elections. Women and Dalits avoided discriminatory practices.	**22:** The RVWRMP contributed to the reduction in discrimination related to menstrual taboos and has improved the health and self-esteem of women and girls. Women and Dalits avoided discriminatory practices. **23:** The livelihood component of RVWRMP has contributed to reducing poverty and improving the nutritional status of beneficiaries.	Conclusions 7, 9, 12, 20, 22. For GoF, EU, GoN)
24: The RWSSP-WN and the RVWRMP both contributed to WASH guidelines and policies and technical capacity, first and foremost at local levels but also to some extent at the national level.		
Sustainability		
25: The sustainability of the RWSSP-WN is not ensured. There are uncertainties about the WUSCs and the local government set-up.	**30:** There is a solid foundation for ensuring the sustainability of the RVWRMP. Much has been done to ensure the local government set-up, although it is unknown how the May 2022 elections will affect the institutions.	
26: Although most WUSCs established by RWSSP-WN were functional, they were still requesting external support for maintenance.	**31:** More than half of the RVWRMP water schemes requested post-construction support for various reasons, indicating less sustainability.	
27: RWSSP-WN communities remain open defecation free (ODF).	**32:** RVWRMP communities is continuously now moving towards Total Sanitation.	
28: The institutional setup established by the RWSSP-WN at the municipality level seems robust, but May 2022 elections create uncertainty.	**33:** Institutional setup with WASH Boards, WASH Units, and WUSC networks established by RVWRMP will contribute to ensuring the sustainability of water interventions.	
29: There is a strong sense of ownership of RWSSP-WN interventions.	**34:** The livelihood interventions implemented by RVWRMP are sustainable, with beneficiaries recovering investments within a few years. **35:** The beneficiaries of RVWRMP have a strong sense of ownership.	

2. Introduction

2.1 Rationale and purpose

The evaluation is commissioned through the Evaluation Management Services, phase 2 (EMS2) framework agreement by the Department for the Americas and Asia (ASA) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Unit for South Asia. ASA is responsible for the overall management of the evaluation. To guarantee the evaluation process's utility, transparency, accountability, and credibility and validate the findings, the MFA established a reference group, which provided advisory support to the evaluation. The evaluation is implemented by an independent evaluation team (ET) contracted by Particip GmbH – Niras Finland Oy Consortium.

As stated in the Terms of Reference (TOR), the rationale of this evaluation is to provide the Governments of Finland and Nepal with an external, independent and objective analysis and assessment of the projects and whether their intended objectives were achieved. To improve on future project design and implementation, the governments also requested a summary of lessons learned and recommendations that are sufficiently general to serve this purpose, including best or worst practices to be scaled up/replicated or avoided, taking into consideration the different needs of the governments of Finland and Nepal, and the EU.

2.2 Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation encompasses two projects: A post-evaluation of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal Project (RWSSP-WN) which was implemented between 2008 and 2019, and a final evaluation of the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP), which has been implemented from 2006 to 2022. The primary focus has been on WASH and livelihoods with accompanying capacity development of related institutions, but also on climate change, environment, agriculture, gender, and social inclusion (GESI) and other cross-cutting issues. Expected outcomes and impacts are to be analysed at a range of levels, from households to local and federal governments.

Given the long timeframe for the evaluation, the scope also involves assessing the projects in relation to changing Finnish development policies as well as major changes that have occurred in Nepali policies and institutional structures, most notably those associated with the new constitution from 2015.

The two projects are quite comprehensive, especially the RVWRMP with the added livelihood activities. Given constraints in terms of the length of the report as well as a deliberate focus on overarching issues rather than all details, the evaluation does not analyse all aspects nor go into the same depth with all analyses but has attempted to cover the major components of the projects.

The evaluation has been conducted as per the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The ex-post evaluation of the RWSSP-WN (2008-2019) is intended to provide a better basis for conclusions on impact and sustainability, whereas the final evaluation of the RVWRMP (2006-2022) presents expectations of impact and sustainability.

3. Approach and methodology

3.1 Evaluation questions and matrix

The evaluation is conducted as per the OECD/DAC criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. In collaboration with the MFA, a series of overall evaluation questions were developed:

1.1 **Relevance:** To what extent did the project respond to the needs of the stakeholders and the policies of MFA and Nepal partners?
1.2 **Relevance:** What was the quality of the project design?
2.1 **Coherence:** To what extent was the project coherent with other MFA and partner interventions?
3.1 **Effectiveness:** To what extent were expected outcomes achieved, and were there any unexpected changes?
4.1 **Efficiency:** How efficiently was the project implemented?
4.2 **Efficiency:** To what extent were the inputs converted into high-quality outputs and outcomes?
5.1 **Impact:** What have the expected impacts of the project been, and what is the likelihood of future expected impact?
5.2 **Impact:** Were there any unintended positive or negative impacts?
6.1 **Sustainability:** What is the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the projects have ended?

Based on these questions, an evaluation matrix with judgement criteria, sources of evidence and potential guidance questions was developed. The full evaluation matrix is included in Annex 10.2.

The evaluation used a theory-based mixed-methods approach in which intended project objectives are established, tested and linked to the learning cycle.[1] This design captured thinking on the impact pathways and associated assumptions at different nodes of the result chain, which in turn helped understand how stakeholders perceived the overall theories of change for the projects and how they understand the projects to have adapted these theories to changes in policies and the overall evolving context over time**.**

As with most evaluations, attribution of impact to specific projects is nearly impossible. The evaluation, however, identified contributions of the projects to higher-level outcomes and impacts in relation to general trends in Nepal by comparing findings in the project areas with national/regional data.

3.2 Data collection

The main data sources for the evaluation were project documents, interviews with stakeholders, and field observations. The project documents included progress reports containing quantitative and qualitative data as well as reports from previous evaluations and reviews. Interviews were conducted with different categories of informants for obtaining qualitative data through the use of interview guidelines tailored to the different types of stakeholders. A simple form for recording observations of, e.g. physical structures were also used.

Interviews were conducted either online, mainly in Kathmandu, in Europe, with project staff, and outside of Kathmandu through face-to-face interviews. Group interviews, e.g. with women only, were also conducted. In

[1] See e.g., IIED (2017). *Theory-based impact evaluation, Better Evidence in Action*, 03/2017, http://pubs.iied.org/17404IIED

order to cover more areas, the ET split into two teams for the fieldwork outside of Kathmandu, and not all team members participated in all online interviews (an overview of the field mission outside of Kathmandu is included in annex 10.17). All interviews were conducted voluntary and anonymous, with interviewees informed hereof and given the opportunity to opt out of being interviewed if they so wished.

The ET visited 10 communities in 6 districts in Gandaki and Lumbini provinces for RWSSP-WN, and 12 municipalities in 6 districts in Sudurpachim Province for the RVWRMP. The districts, municipalities, and project sites were purposely selected to include more remote locations where support might have been less prominent, needs and poverty higher, implementation costs higher, or it was more difficult to attract staff. The ET also strived to cover different types of project interventions, e.g. water, sanitation, livelihood, etc. For a full schedule of the field mission outside of Kathmandu, please refer to annex 10.17. Each day, internet connectivity allowing, the entire ET held an end-of-day meeting during which initial findings were discussed. Statements from interviews and observations were continuously entered into predefined note-formats subdivided by evaluation criteria, allowing for easier subsequent processing.

3.3 Analysis

The analysis of data consisted of different steps. The first step was to copy and paste data from the notes from interviews and observations into six documents, one for each evaluation criteria. In these files, the data was arranged according to projects and per evaluation criteria. Based hereupon, some initial analysis/collection of the available evidence was developed for each evaluation criteria. During these initial analyses, data was triangulated across the data sources (interviews with different types of stakeholders, observations, project documents, and other literature) and with the reconstructed ToCs as a means of verifying findings and also to draw attention to the different perceptions and priorities of different stakeholder groups. The initial analyses were used as backgrounds to develop the narrative findings for each evaluation criteria, as presented in chapter 6.

Summaries of the findings provide brief responses to the Evaluation Questions along with an easy-to-grasp scoring on a scale from very good to very weak (Figure 1: Scoring scale). The scoring is derived from the ET's analysis of the evidence. When relevant, a separate scoring is developed for each project. Based on the findings, the ET developed conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations.

Figure 1: Scoring scale

Validation of the initial findings took place first during a Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations workshop with the MFA. Based on the results from this workshop, the draft evaluation report was completed. Stakeholders provided written comments to the draft report, based on which the final report was developed.

The analysis consists of an overall performance measurement based on a four-level colour scoring system (very weak, weak, good, very good) at the criteria level for each project. In addition, the ET assessed to what extent the human-rights based approach (HRBA) and cross-cutting objectives (CCO) of Finland's development policy had been integrated into the projects by mainstreaming them under each relevant criteria. The CCOs assessed are non-discrimination, gender equality and, climate resilience & low emission development.

While the CCOs of the Finnish development policy have varied during the evaluation timeframe of 2006-2022, gender equality and non-discrimination have been included (with slightly different definitions) since 2004 and climate since 2012. The CCO of combating HIV/AIDS was included in the development policy in 2007-2012,

but it was not considered in this evaluation as HIV/AIDS has not been included as a CCO in the last ten years, and because Nepal is a low HIV prevalence country.[2] The integration of HRBA is further assessed using the MFA's four-level scale of human rights 1) blind, 2) sensitive, 3) progressive, and 4) transformative; and the gender equality using the Global Environment Facility (GEF) rating 1) Not gender relevant, 2) Gender blind, 3) aware, 4) sensitive, 5) mainstreamed, 6) transformative.

4. Evaluation context

4.1 Nepal context and background

The overall context for the evaluation has been one of the profound institutional changes in Nepal during the course of implementation of the two projects, as well as local and global disasters. Changes include the 2015 constitution and steps towards a federal system reliant on strengthened local governance. Commitments to gender and social inclusion (GESI) are strong in the constitution and in terms of driving overall reforms and within Finland's Country Programme for Development Cooperation with Nepal. This is of relevance for understanding the contributions of the two projects to water governance and accountable service delivery. Other major contextual factors are the 2015 earthquake and, recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. Factors linking water governance to poverty, vulnerability to disasters and health have become apparent, with GESI objectives in many respects representing how these policies converge.

Some of the sector policies that guide the WASH sector are the 2004 Rural Water and Sanitation Policy and National Strategy, the 2011 National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan, the 1999 Local Self Governance Act, the 2015 National Drinking Water Quality Surveillance Guidelines, the 2014 Water Safety Plan, and the Draft Sector Development Plan (SDP 2016 -2030).

Overall, Nepal's development program is guided by five-year development plans coordinated by the National Planning Commission (NPC). Since the 10th five-year plan (2002-2007), poverty alleviation has been the overarching goal. The government has prioritised support for women, persons with disabilities, ethnic groups, backward areas and communities. Women are identified as a deprived group and left behind in terms of access to resources. Most women-headed households are extremely poor. Based on the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS), the literacy rate in 2000 for men was 65.8 per cent and 35.4 for women, illustrating the wide gap between the genders.

In 2005, access to improved drinking water supply and sanitation in Nepal was 81% and 39%, respectively. Progress has been made in access to improved water supply in Nepal, which in 2019 was 97%.[3] Sanitation coverage, at least partially driven by the National Hygiene and Sanitation Master Plan of 2011, has improved to now 93.8% of people having access to improved sanitation. Policy reforms and efforts to ensure equitable service delivery roll-out have been intertwined with initiatives to clarify local government responsibilities and strengthen relevant capacities.

In 2005 Nepal was halfway through its 10th five-year development plan as guided by the National Planning Commission. Nepal surpassed its MDG targets for water early on and was gearing towards achieving universal

[2] UNODC (2022) Nepal: New research on populations most vulnerable to HIV. https://www.unodc.org/southasia/frontpage/2012/February/nepal_-new-research-on-populations-most-vulnerable-to-hiv.html

[3] Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF (2019). Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS. <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/media/9076/file/NMICS_2019_-_Key_findings.pdf>

coverage by 2017 through emphasising efforts on backward communities, arsenic affected districts, women (especially regarding sanitation in Terai), persons with disabilities, and people affected by HIV/AIDS, among others. In subsequent planning periods, Nepal also set targets for improving the level of water supply services. In the 13th planning period (2013-2015), the target for a medium level of water service was set at 15% and in the 14th plan period (2016-2019) at 30% by 2019. With regard to sanitation, the target set for 2019 was 89%, to be achieved through the Open Defecation Free (ODF) approach.

Since the 1970s, policies and programs on environment management have been incorporated in the periodic plans of Nepal, with special priority accorded to the prevention of soil erosion, flooding and landslides, and conservation of forest resources. The 12th development plan (2010-2013) emphasised development interventions to mitigate climate change risk. One of the strategies suggested to mitigate the problem in the plan is to adopt Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) to area-wide basis water and sanitation and to implement environment and climate-friendly WASH programs with conservation of nature and environment. It specifically brought up the issue of "drying up" of sources due to climate change. The plan also gave priority to pico- and micro-hydro projects to combat climate change and excel development. It also recommends, in line with the Water Resource Strategy (2002), an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach to be applied in development by incorporating a basin-level approach.

4.1.1 Context in project areas

RWSSP-WN is implemented in two western provinces: Gandaki and Lumbini, whereas the RVWRMP is implemented in the two far-western project provinces of Surdurpaschim and two of the ten districts of Karnali (note that due to this, data on Karnali Province are not necessarily fully representative of the project area). These provinces are multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multilingual provinces. The caste system still holds strong sway in especially some parts of Karnali and Sudurpaschim. Poverty and social exclusion influence access to and control over resources (such as land, water and government services) and opportunities. In the project provinces, Brahmin and Chhetri together are the largest group overall, though ethnic groups are often clustered across different parts of the provinces.

Both Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces are less developed compared to other provinces, including Gandaki and Lumbini. Karnali and Surdurpaschim provinces are also very remote areas where physical infrastructure is limited and socio-economic indicators are below the national average. Lumbini and Gandaki provinces are more prosperous in terms of access to social services and roads. In Karnali and Sudurphaschim, most people depend on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods, with food security being a challenge.[4] Karnali Province has the highest levels of multidimensional poverty, with an MPI of 0.169, and the incidence of poverty is nearly 40%. Sudurpashchim Province ranks third in terms of multidimensional poverty.[5] Life expectancy in Gandaki Province stands at 71.7 years but only 66.8 years in Karnali Province. The per capita income in Karnali and Surdurpaschim provinces is around one-third of the per capita income of Bagmati Province.[6]

4.1.2 Water and sanitation context in project areas

Key WASH indicators for different provinces are presented in Table 2 below. Access to 'basic'[7] drinking water services has improved significantly in RVWRMP and RWSSP-WN regions (Sudurpaschhim and Karnali, and

[4] Food security Atlas, NPC

[5] NEPAL Multidimensional Poverty Index GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION In partnership with Empowered lives. Resilient nations. 2021

[6] NEPAL Beyond Graduation: Productive Transformation and Prosperity Government of Nepal National Planning Commission 2020. https://npc.gov.np/images/category/NHDR_2020.pdf

[7] SDG criteria for 'basic' drinking water service: Water from improved or unimproved sources, household members using improved water sources located on premises or requiring up to and including 30 minutes per trip for water collection.

Gandaki and Lumbini provinces). The reported use of improved sanitation facilities is also notable. However, the use of safely managed drinking water[8] is quite low in both program areas, particularly in Karnali province, where only 3.5% of the population is using safely managed drinking water, but also in the other three project provinces, where it is less than 15% of the population. With regard to other criteria, water quality is particularly poor across the country, both at source and at household. Hand washing facility with water and soap and menstrual hygiene management is better in the RWSSP-WN region compared to the RVWRMP region. See more details in the table below.

Table 2: Percentage of the population with access to water, sanitation and hygiene services

					RWSSP-WN		RVWRMP	
Type of services	**Nepal**	**Province 1**	**Madhesh**	**Bagmati**	**Gandaki**	**Lumbini**	**Karnali**	**Sudur-pachhim**
Use of basic drinking water service	95.4	95.7	97.3	94.6	94.9	97.2	88.6	93.4
Faecal contamination of source water	75.3	60.7	67.4	76.7	85.1	86.2	89.1	83.2
Use of safely managed drinking water services	19.1	34.7	24.5	14.9	10.5	14.8	3.5	14.7
Use of improved sanitation facilities	94.5	96.6	84.1	98.3	99	95.3	94.9	96.6
Handwashing facility with water and soap	80.7	84.6	79.3	88.2	88.1	84.6	55.2	57.6
Menstrual hygiene management	83.1	73.4	84.8	93.7	81.7	87.5	69.9	65.5
Faecal contamination of household drinking water	85.1	81.8	89.8	73.1	82.9	90.9	90.3	98.9

Source: "Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS", Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 2019. (https://www.unicef.org/nepal/media/9076/file/NMICS_2019_-_Key_findings.pdf)

For more details on the context, please refer to Annex 10.4.

4.2 Finland's policy framework

The Finnish policy context in which the two projects were evaluated consists of not only the overall development policies over the years but also of Finnish Cross-Cutting Objectives (CCO). An overview is provided in this section.

4.2.1 Finland's development policies

Each new government in Finland, every four years, issues a Development Policy Programme (DPP), serving as guidance for Finnish development assistance[9]. From 2006 to 2022, Finland has had four DPP in place, published in 2004, 2007, 2012 and 2016 – in 2019, the current government decided to extend the 2016 policy. The goals and priorities of the DPPs are presented in the table in Annex 10.6. The overarching goal for all DPPs has been

[8] SDG criteria for safely managed drinking water: Households with improved sources accessible on premises, with sufficient quantities of water available when needed, and free from contamination

[9] Palenberg, M. et al. (2015.) Finland's Development Policy Programmes from a Results-Based Management Point of View 2003–2013. Ministry for Foreign Affaird of Finland.

to eradicate poverty. In 2012 priority areas of a green economy and environmental protection were included, and since 2016 the rights of women and girls have been a priority area.

In addition to the priority areas, the DPPs also had cross-cutting objectives (CCO) or themes. These have changed over time. While the wording has varied in the different policies, the broad themes during 2004-2016 and from 2020 onwards have been gender equality, non-discrimination and promotion of equal rights for all, and environment/climate. In 2020, a special focus on people with disabilities was introduced as part of non-discrimination. Not all development policies have included the same CCOs/themes. For more details on the CCOs, please refer to Annex 10.7.

4.2.2 Finland's development cooperation in Nepal

Development cooperation between Finland and Nepal started in the 1980s, and Nepal has remained Finland's long-term partner country ever since (Caldecott et al., 2012). Since 2013, Finland has defined clear objectives and expected impact in the country strategies. The focus from 2013 to 2016 was to strengthen public institutions, education, water, economic empowerment, especially for women and marginalised groups, forest and environment, and WASH policy and planning. From 2016 to 2019, the focus included improvement of health and living standards through WASH and livelihood, while education and economic empowerment continued. These same three objectives continued in the 2021-24 strategy, including the addition of people living with disabilities. More details of the country programmes can be found in Annex 10.8.

5. The evaluation objects

This chapter provides an overview of the two projects, with more details included in Annex 10.10. The two projects are both very complex, containing many different elements. RVWRMP is more comprehensive with water resource management covering water for drinking, irrigation and hydropower, and sanitation. The RWSSP-WN project was simpler as it focused on WASH and the accompanying institutional capacity development. An overview of the results framework for the two projects is included in Annex 10.16.

Previous mid-term reviews and evaluations found relatively few significant concerns about the projects, except for delays of the RVWRMP Phase II due to the federalisation process, and recommended no major changes. This is a striking finding in itself, given that the projects have been implemented during a long and eventful period of time.

5.1.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal

The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN) 2008-2019 was a bilateral project funded by the GoN and GoF. It partially builds on the experiences of RVWRMP and other earlier Finnish support projects.

The total value of the project was almost EUR 68 million, of which the GoF provided almost 25 million, the GoN almost 11 million, local governments almost 2 million, and beneficiaries 5 million in the form of in-kind and cash contributions to the construction of water schemes and until the introduction of ODF also to latrines.

The main objective of RWSSP-WN was to achieve "improved health and fulfilment of the equal right to water and sanitation for the inhabitants and to increase the wellbeing of the poorest and excluded of the Project area". The purpose of RWSSP-WN was to fulfil the basic needs and ensure rights of access of the poorest and

excluded households to safe domestic water, good health and hygiene through decentralised governance. The scope of the project is the provision of water supply and sanitation facilities and support to develop the capacity of WASH-related local government entities.

The RWSSP-WN reached over 4.4 million people with sanitation interventions, of which 350.000 were provided access to water, and more than half a million had training on income generation. The project was implemented in 14 districts in Gandaki and Lumbini provinces.

5.1.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project

The RVWRMP is funded by the GoN, the EU and the GoF and builds on financial and technical water sector support that GoF has provided to Nepal since 1989. The project was implemented in three phases from 2006 to 2022, with the EU financing provided from late 2017.

The total value of the project is EUR 111.5 million, of which the GoF provided 43.5 million, the EU provided 20 million, the GoN 20.6 million, local governments over 10 million, and beneficiaries over 17 million in the form of in-kind or cash contributions to, e.g. construction of water schemes, to livelihood interventions, and until the introduction of ODF also for latrines. Contributions were for institutional sanitation and water schemes with funding from districts' development funds and/or in-kind or cash support from beneficiaries.

The overall objective is to improve health and reduce multidimensional poverty, and the purpose is to achieve universal access to basic WASH services and improved livelihoods with the establishment of functional planning and implementation frameworks for all water users as well as livelihoods promotion in the project area. The scope of RVWRMP includes water supply and sanitation and support for water-based livelihood activities in communities. The project is designed with an integrated concept that recognises that water, energy, food, finance, human and other resources are interlinked and have complex interactions, leading to synergies and trade-offs.

The RVWRMP provided access to water for over 600.000 people, ensured sanitation for over half a million people, and trained 650-000 people in livelihoods. It was implemented in 63 municipalities in ten districts in Sudurpashchim and Karnali provinces.

6. Findings

This section contains findings from interviews, document reviews, and observations. The findings are divided as per evaluation criteria (Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability).

6.1 Relevance of RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP

EQ 1.1: To what extent did the project respond to the needs of the stakeholders and the policies of MFA and Nepal partners?
EQ 1.2: What was the quality of the project design?

Relevance: RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP: Good

The two projects responded to the needs of beneficiaries. The two projects were relevant to the policies of the GoF and GoN and the RVWRMP, also to the EU. The quality of the project designs was generally sufficient with a plausible logic but had insufficient baseline and target data as well as indicators for objectives and purposes, and disaggregated data collected on gender and disadvantaged groups were not always reported.

The Relevance criteria are concerned with if the projects were doing the right things. There are two evaluation questions for this criterion. The evaluation found no major differences between the two projects in terms of responding to needs and policies, and the findings are therefore presented together.

At the overall level, the two projects were relevant for GoN's fulfilment of its policies and plans. This includes the five-year development plans that, since the 10th plan in 2002, have had overarching goals to alleviate poverty, including special attention to the role of women and persons with disabilities, ethnic groups, and remote areas. The projects' support for agricultural production, climate change adaptation and climate-induced disaster risk reduction are also aligned with other sectoral policies such as the 2011[10] and 2019 climate change policies[11], the 2011 Local Adaptation Plan of Action[12] and the 2015 Agriculture Development Strategy[13]. In particular, the RVWRMP also had a focus on poverty reduction due to its livelihood components. Water remained a priority also in subsequent development plans. As per the Nepali policies and plans, a focus on water, sanitation and income generation was relevant. Stakeholders confirmed this, and as put by one interviewee: the projects were working through the local governments, ensuring that it was in line with GoN policies.

The two projects have also been relevant for the fulfilment of Finnish Development Policies with a focus on poverty eradication and activities that were environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. The RVWRMP is especially relevant for this as it is a more comprehensive water resources management program dealing with water for livelihoods, drinking, hydropower, and the ecosystem. Both projects are also aligned with Finland's 2009 international strategy for the water sector with the long-term vision of "In cooperation with their partners, actors in Finland's water sector promote water security. Operations in the water sector are based on holistic approaches and the promotion of the three pillars of sustainable development, good governance and equality". The projects were also relevant to the achievement of first the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and later the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

With regard to the EU support, the support provided to the last phase of the RVWMRP was relevant to the 2014-20 Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) of the EU, especially with regard to the sectors of Sustainable Rural Development and Strengthening Democracy and Decentralisation. The RVWRMP remained relevant also for the 2021-27 MIP that includes multi-sector programmes such as e.g. WASH services provision. The 2021-27 MIP also envisages support to 'Sector Government and Civil Society' in order to enable stronger governance at all three levels of government, which is also aligned with the RVWRMP.

Around the time the two projects commenced, in 2005, 81% and 39% of Nepalese had access to improved water supply and sanitation, respectively. A later study from 2019 shows that although access to basic water supply had increased to 95% for Nepal as a whole, only 19% had access to safely managed water sources. The

[10] "Climate Change Policy, 2011, unofficial translation": https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/laws/1494.pdf
[11] "National Climate Change Policy 2076 (2019)": https://mofe.gov.np/downloadfile/climatechange_policy_english_1580984322.pdf
[12] "National Framework on Local Adaptation Plans for Action", Government of Nepal, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change Management Division, November 2011: https://climate.mohp.gov.np/downloads/National_Framework_Local_Adaptation_Plan.pdf
[13] "Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) 2015 to 2035", Government of Nepal, Ministry of Agricultural Development: http://www.dls.gov.np/uploads/files/ADS%20Final.pdf.

western part of Nepal, where the two projects were implemented, was, according to the 2019 MICS, even slightly worse off compared to the rest of Nepal, with less than 15% having access to safely managed water sources, and Karnali province even worse with only 3.5% of the population having access to safely managed water sources. The projects fitted well to address the low level of services already existing in Nepal.

Climate change risks were first emphasised in GoN's 12th development plan covering 2010 to 2013 with the 2011 National Adaptation Plan of Action and the climate change policies and long-term development plans such as the 14th and 15th development plans describing how Nepal is one of the countries vulnerable to climate change. The major climate-induced risks included too much water (landslides and floods), too little water (drought), water sources depletion, agricultural land erosion and damage to physical infrastructures. All these risks affect the livelihoods of people and overall sustainable development goals. The 12th plan also prioritised small hydropower plants, which the RVWRMP took on board - this is an example of an intervention that became irrelevant over time as the national electricity grid expanded faster than anticipated, providing a more efficient solution. Mitigation of risks related to climate change was lacking in the first project document but became more prominent in subsequent ones. The project implemented a number of activities to this effect, including promoting improved cooking stoves that would reduce firewood consumption, which could support climate change mitigation. The projects also conducted some analysis of climate risks related to WASH in the planning on follow up to water schemes, e.g. in Water Use Master Plans (WUMP), Water Safety Plans, development of municipalities' capacity for disaster risk management, etc.

An indication of the different stakeholders' interest in the projects is the communities' and the municipalities' above-target contributions to the RVWRMP Phase III[14]: the contributions increased from a budgeted amount of EUR 60.2 million - of which 5.2 million was from local government and 5 million from beneficiaries - to 70.1 million as the local government contributions increased to 8.7 million, and beneficiaries' contributions more than doubled to 11 million. The local government and beneficiaries' contribution thus increased from 17% to an impressive 27%.[15] Adding the GoN's contribution of 15 million, the total Nepali contributions amounted to almost half of the total budget. The stakeholders' interest in the two projects is also expressed in praise of the ownership felt by communities and local governments due to the inclusive and participatory approaches used by the projects. Contrasting the projects' participatory approach, a local government representative described how other projects, implemented without proper consultations, could lead to conflict within and among communities.

In terms of the specific choices of support in the form of water supply facilities, training, etc., there were very few concerns. Only a few beneficiaries of the RWSSP-WN project stated that they would have preferred a different type of water scheme that was less costly in terms of Operation and Maintenance (O&M), such as gravity, instead of a solar system. That, however, was not possible due to the local hydrology and is outside the control of the project. Another objection was that solar panels might not work when cloudy, as complained about by two communities benefiting from RWSSP-WN interventions. Others again want to have literacy classes, which would clearly be outside the scope of the projects.

There is no doubt that the two projects corresponded to the needs of the right-holders. All final beneficiaries expressed their appreciation of the project interventions, not only when it came to water, sanitation and hygiene, but also in the case of the RVWRMP project with regard to livelihood interventions. The expressions used by interviewees ranged from 'important' and 'served our needs well' to 'very appropriate', 'very relevant',

[14] Contributions were for institutional sanitation and water schemes with funding from districts' development funds and/or in-kind or cash support from beneficiaries.

[15] RVWRMP Phase III project document and the Final Draft RVWRMP MASTER Semi-Annual Progress Report FY07 from March 2022.

and 'very useful'. Water was high, especially on beneficiaries' wish lists. And it was not only beneficiaries or their representatives, such as user committees, that expressed the relevance of the projects, but representatives from municipalities also found the projects relevant, as did representatives of the donors and project staff and central government representatives. The different MTR/Es conducted on the two projects over the years also all found that the projects were relevant or 'highly relevant' to the needs of beneficiaries.

The documents of both projects showed that the rights of women and girls were considered and that gender and social equality were promoted, including some support for toilets in schools for people living with disabilities in schools and training of people living with disability in the construction of Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS).[16] The projects had an inclusive approach to WASH, focusing on increased well-being of the poorest and excluded and ensuring their basic needs and rights of access to safe water, good health, and hygiene. The RWSSP-WN Phase I project document was revised completely based on a situational analysis, and as a result, GESI aspects were better integrated as central to the project design rather than seen as a separate element.[17]

Interviewees agreed that the projects were targeting and including women, the poor, the ethnic minorities to ensure the interventions were relevant also for them. More specifically, women told the evaluation team that the projects were relevant also to their specific needs in terms of reducing time and resources spent on fetching water from far away – an hour or more each way on steep mountainsides. Given the cultural taboos surrounding menstruation in Nepal, which are often very damaging to women, the project's focus on menstrual hygiene was highly relevant with regard to women's rights. The evaluation team also found that the GESI and HRBA tools and guidelines developed and used by the projects were relevant in the sense that women, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged groups became aware of their rights through, e.g. participating in various events that improved their knowledge/understanding of their rights.

The design of the two projects did not include explicit ToCs, but the ET developed reconstructed ToCs as per Annex 10.3. The ET has assessed the ToCs as plausible with a straightforward approach. The main changes during the projects' duration were the contextual changes brought about by the federalisation in 2016. This necessitated a change in the number of local government institutions the projects cooperated with, but the overall approach remained the same.

The RWSSP-WN objective has five indicators.[18] They are relevant but do not have targets, and except for two of the indicators, the incidence of diarrhoea in under-5 children and the under-5 child mortality, the indicators are not easily measurable without a clearer definition of how to measure, e.g. improved capacity. In the Phase I logframe of the RWSSP-WN, as also pointed out by the first MTR of the RWSSP-WN, the linkages between outcomes and indicators were uncertain, indicators were not specific or measurable, and targets and baselines were missing, including for GESI-related indicators. For the RVWRMP project, three indicators were available, but the ET has only been able to identify local-level data on a reduction in the number of stunted children, and only at the regional level, not the municipality or district level.[19]

[16] RWSSP-WN2 completion report.

[17] RWSSP-WN phase I Inception Report (2009).

[18] The five indicators are i) Incidence of diarrhoea in under-5 children reduced; •ii) Under 5 child mortality reduced; iii) Incidence of water and sanitation related diseases reduced; iv) Improved capacity of the local governance to provide effective WASH service delivery; and v) Decreasing disparity between the worst- and best-served VDCs with regards to sanitation and water supply coverage. From RWSSP-WN Phase II project document.

[19] The three indicators are: i) 0.05 improvement in HDI in the municipalities in the which the project is operating, the proportion (no target) of the population living below the national poverty line in the municipalities or district, and 30% reduction in the prevalence of stunting in children below 5 in the municipalities or districts.

The GESI Impact Study (2013) found that the District WASH Implementation Guidelines (DWIG) should have clearer GESI targets. The Phase II logframe does not include many GESI-related indicators as such, but many indicators have a GESI dimension as they concern everyone in the project municipalities and thus cannot be achieved without attention to GESI. For RVWRMP, the logframe included some disaggregated indicators on participation in Water User and Sanitation Committee (WUSC) and training with improvements over time. The indicators were based on 50% participation by women and proportional representation for Dalit and Janajati. The project document also clarified that girls and boys should have separate toilets with handwashing facilities in schools. The GESI indicators are aligned with but higher than national targets. The results framework indicators of the first phases were not tailored to capture a focus on women and disadvantaged groups (despite the strong GESI focus of RWSSP-WN Phase I in the outcome level). This improved in the latter phases, as RVWRMP Phase II and III results frameworks included more GESI disaggregated indicators (while a few relevant indicators remained non-disaggregated), and RWSSP-WN Phase II results framework included indicators that concerned everyone in the project municipalities (i.e. also the disadvantaged). The completion reports included more disaggregated information than required as per the results frameworks. As the baselines were also short on such disaggregated data (mainly the reporting on the number of training participants), the results frameworks were less relevant for assessing if women and disadvantaged groups were indeed proportionally represented in trainings, committees, etc., and if they benefitted proportionally from the projects' outputs and outcomes.

The GESI and HRBA strategy (2015) for both projects stated that attention would also be "given to widows, people living with disability, female-headed households, and household clusters in more geographically remote areas.". Such disaggregated data were, however, not reported. The RWSSP-WN Phase II purpose was to ensure the poorest and excluded households' rights, with the project document defining "Poor and Excluded" as Groups, individuals and households politically, economically, socially, culturally and self-discriminated on the basis of their gender, caste, ethnicity, age, marital, status, sexual orientation, religion, language, disability, HIV status and where they live. Such data (apart from gender and caste) is not reflected in the results framework or reporting.

In general, the project documents contain limited breakdowns of who was – or, perhaps more interesting: who was not - served by water in the communities in which not all were provided with water. The projects did collect detailed monitoring data, but these data were not all reported on, with the result that the overall reporting had less of the detailed intersectionality introduced in the project documents and strategies.

The projects overall integrated well the HRBA and the CCOs of gender equality and non-discrimination in the project design and activities, and to some extent, climate resilience and low emission development. The integration of HRBA and CCOs improved in the later phases of the projects. The integration of HRBA and CCOs is further described in box 2 below.

Box 2: Alignment with Human-rights based approach (HRBA) and Finland's cross-cutting objectives

Alignment with the Human-rights based approach (HRBA) and Finland's cross-cutting objectives

HRBA, gender and non-discrimination

The projects are assessed (overall) as human rights progressive (or human rights transformative with some limitations) and gender transformative (using the GEF ranking, see more details in annex 10.14), except for the first phases of both projects, which are assessed as human rights sensitive. While both projects had certain limitations and could only be assessed human rights sensitive in some aspects (see further details in annex 10.12), they overall integrated HRBA, gender equality and non-discrimination well and improved in the latter phases (RVWRMP having more focus on transformative aspects). The projects generally adhered to human rights principles (equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and transparency, universality). The human rights and GESI aspects were analysed, the disadvantaged groups identified, and key challenges and opportunities for equal participation and benefit assessed. The objectives, purposes and outcomes were designed to further the fulfilment of human rights. The basic needs and strategic interests of the disadvantaged groups were considered during implementation. The planning processes included consultation of disadvantaged groups and mechanisms to ensure responses to problems and claims. A proportionate participation of the disadvantaged groups was aimed for in the decision-making. The projects built the capacities related to GESI among stakeholders, and supported the inclusion of GESI aspects in local and to some extent in national strategies. The projects also contributed to creating systems that support gender equality e.g. by addressing menstrual taboos affecting negatively the lives of women and girls. The main weaknesses related to the non-systematic integration of GESI disaggregated indicators, baselines and targets mainly in the first phases as well as inconsistency in the level of intersectionality in the project documents,/strategies and the reporting.

Climate resilience and low emission development

Climate resilience and low-emission development started already in the first prhases in the form of spring recharge, and was further developed in the projects' second phases. RWSSP-WN Phase II integrated climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the WASH process, supported low-emission technologies such as solar-powered pumps, toilets with biogas, and improved cooking stoves (ICS) and included CCA and DRR consideration in the District Strategic WASH Plan (DSWASHP) Guideline.[1] RVWRMP Phase II incorporated climate resilience and low-emission development through e.g. water resource management, ICS, recharge ponds, rainwater harvesting, renewable energy schemes and climate-smart livelihood approach, climate-resilient design, water source protection, improved drainage systems and awareness-raising.[1] After the EU joined as a donor in the Phase III, climate change issues became more prominent with a separate result area. Overall, the projects mainstreamed climate resilience and low emission development in the latter phases but were not adequate given the scale of increasing climate related risks. The ET also noted that a comprehensive and systematic climate risks assessment was not conducted.

6.2 Coherence of RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP

EQ 2.1: To what extent was the project coherent with other MFA and partner interventions?

Coherence: RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP: Good

The two projects were coherent with each other, using similar approaches but in different geographical areas. The projects were less well-coordinated with other partners' interventions. The projects were well-aligned with local-level interventions and policies but less so at the national level.

The coherence criterion is concerned with how well the interventions fit. There is one evaluation question for this criterion. Both projects are analysed together.

Both RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP are building on previous projects, both were learning from each other, and both were also influencing other Finnish funded WASH and livelihood-related initiatives, e.g. a UNICEF WASH

recovery and reconstruction programme (2016-18) and UNICEF's Country Programme Action Plan 2018–22, and until 2013 a forest and livestock programme with funding channelled through FAO.

The two projects supplemented each other well, working within the same sector but in different geographical areas. There was an attempt to increase coherence back in 2011 when the embassy tried to harmonise four Finnish-funded projects, including RVWRMP and RWSSP-WN, to work strategically for greater impact. The work was never completed as it was realised that given the programmes working through and with the municipalities rather than at the national level, harmonisation would best take place within each of the projects and how they were working with municipalities rather than at the national level. The two projects were harmonising practices and learnings, conducting joint training events, and some staff exchange also taking place.[20] This helped in developing synergies and linkages. In 2014, the two projects also prepared a joint HRBA and GESI Strategy and Action Plan to be used at the local level and anchored at the national level with the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR) as an implementation partner.

Other donors have also supported the WASH sector in Nepal, most notably perhaps World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), UK Department for International Development (DFID), UNICEF, Plan, WaterAid, and others. A central government representative interviewed for this evaluation stated that there had been inadequate coordination with other partners at the national level and that it had not been strategic. This was also noted in the MTR of Phase II of the RWSSP-WN, which stated that as long as the two main supporters of rural WASH (GoF and the World Bank) did not partner with the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS), there was "little hope – if any – to have the sustainable institutional capacity" to efficiently support community-based rural WASH. DOLI/DoLIDAR was in the view of the ET; nevertheless, back then, a reasonable choice as the main partner to the project as it had the mandate to deal with the project at VDC/municipality level, whereas DWESS dealt with larger projects only. Perhaps there could have been more collaboration at the national level, but the projects did contribute to national-level policies. The RVWRMP was an active member of the Menstruation Hygiene Management Partner's Alliance, thereby contributing to sector coherence. The projects also contributed to the development of the 2011 National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (NSHMP), WASH Joint Sector Reviews (JSR), the National WUMP guidelines, and WASH Sector Development Plan. Furthermore, the RVWRMP also contributed to policy development at the national level by sharing with other stakeholders the concept of WASH Boards and WASH Units at the municipality level. The UNICEF WASH project, also supported by Finland, took up learning and best practices from the projects, leading to impact at the policy level.

The two projects were aligned with existing institutional structures at the local level, ensuring coherence with local interventions and policies. Coordination was increasingly done through the relevant local government entities, which, according to project staff, provided a good platform for sharing knowledge, manuals, guidelines, etc., and a forum for discussing approaches to working with communities.

6.3 Effectiveness

EQ 3.1: To what extent were expected outcomes achieved, and were there any unexpected changes?

[20] RWSSP-WN2 completion report.

Effectiveness: RWSSP-WN: Very good

The RWSSP-WN generally achieved and, in some cases, more than achieved its targets in terms of outputs and outcomes. The project provided 360,000 people with access to water versus a target of 230,000; over 4 million people are now living in ODF communities, over half a million people have been trained, and 52 municipalities have been supported to establish WASH Boards and WASH Units. The project also developed and implemented a GESI strategy that ensures gender and ethnic representation in a majority of WUSCs. And tens of thousands of households have increased their income. Women have reduced the time spent fetching water. The role of disadvantaged groups has mostly improved, although some have not been able to gain access to services. Climate change adaptation became gradually more prominent during the project's lifespan.

Effectiveness: RVWRMP: Very good

The RVWRMP achieved more than expected for most of the project's major indicators. This includes the provision of water to over 600,000 people through 1,500 water schemes, over 2 million people living in ODF communities, and over 750,000 people have improved their livelihoods through multi-use of water, for e.g. larger irrigation schemes as well home gardening, benefitting almost 6,000 households. The capacity of 27 municipalities to develop policies and institutions such as WASH Boards and WASH Units has been developed. Women reduced the time they spent fetching water, increased their positions in WUSCs, and benefitted from a reduction in discriminatory menstrual practices and taboos. Climate change adaptation was included from the onset in the form of, e.g. improved cooking stoves and recharge ponds for water schemes, and became more prominent in the latter part of the project.

The Effectiveness criterion is concerned with if the projects are achieving their objectives. There is one evaluation question for this criterion.

6.3.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN)

Following the logic of the reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC), the project significantly contributed to the achievement of immediate project outcomes and provided a foundation to achieve longer-term outcomes. The project has helped to increase the access to WASH facilities and changed the behaviour of people to use WASH services (such as the use of toilets, cleaning houses regularly and personal hygiene); water user communities at the community level managed to water schemes and sanitation facilities and increased the institutional capacities of the local governments. This has created a foundation to ensure the rights and sustainable use of safe water and sanitation facilities at the local level and further strengthen federal governance systems at the municipal level while integrating the cross-cutting objectives.

The project completion reports described how the project achieved most of the outputs within the specified timeframe and sometimes achieved more than planned. It was difficult to retrieve data to be used to aggregate across the project phases as the reporting format and targets were not the same during the different phases. Some of the major achievements, as shown in the project reports, are provided in the table below.

Table 3: Major RWSSP-WN achievements

Component/no of beneficiaries	Phase I[21]		Phase II[22]		Total	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Water schemes	80,000	130,739	150,000	217,850	230,000	350,000
No. of DWS schemes	400	446	n/a	661	n/a	1,107
Post-construction support	n/a	n/a	207,600	200,000	n/a	200,000
ODF	250,000	1,236,183	All declared ODF	4,410,737 (100%)[23]	n/a	4,410,737
No. of institutional toilets	213	284	246	237	459	521
ODF (local government entities)	n/a	376	n/a	675	n/a	1,051
Arsenic mitigation	10,000	14,125	0	0	10,000	14,125
Capacity building including income generation	200,000	166,337	250,000	337,863	450,000	504,000

All the stakeholders viewed that the project supported the poorest and excluded households' rights to access safe and sustainable domestic water, good health, and hygiene while working closely with the local governments. There were, however, no major reports noted of unintended or unexpected results from the interventions.

Achievement of institutional targets

The project mainly worked with the local governments. As the local governments are mandated to develop and enact development policies and guidelines at the local level, the project was relevant to local governments[24]. During the project period, different types of policies and guidelines were supported, such as GESI responsive WASH sector policies, guidelines and strategies, creation of WASH Boards and Units (for example, 52 Municipal WASH Units in the second phase) with operational policies and procedures, development water board directive, guidelines for WUSC registration & Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) guidelines at the municipal level. The project also provided capacity-building support to the WASH actors and institutions at the national, district and local levels, such as training on accounting, WASH planning, climate

> *"Poor and disadvantaged communities from remote areas have water and sanitation facilities that helped to reduce drudgery and have made their life easy. Now women do not spend too much time in collecting water and can focus on other productive work".* (A local government representative commenting on the projects results)

[21] RWSSP-WN Completion Report, Phase I Synopsis (VS3). (2013), p. 2.
[22] RWSSP-WN II Completion Report Final 24.3.2020 with annexes.pdf (pages 27 and 43, Annex 1, page 7 and 8)
[23] The figure represents the total ODF declared population in the districts where the project was operating.
[24] Before the federalisation, the relevant local governments were the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and the District Development Committees (DDCs), while after the federalisation it was the municipalities.

change and disaster risk reduction.[25] Stakeholders, including the Municipal representatives, viewed that the project support was highly relevant to providing basic services of WASH and had supported reducing the drudgery of the women.

The project drew some lessons at the national level and shared them through various workshops. It is noted that the model of WASH implementation guideline (2009) prepared by the project was used while preparing the national level WASH manuals. The learning has also been used in the National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan of Nepal (draft 2011)[26]. Despite challenges at the national level in terms of political instability[27], lack of elected representatives in the local governments, and the long federalisation process, the ET finds that the project did not contribute as much as it could have to the national policy-making or revision process.

Achievement of service provision targets in the results frameworks

Sanitation and hygiene

The project provided ODF and sanitation-related support in the project areas. The project supported 1,051 VDCs with a total population of 4.4 million to be declared ODF. The project also provided 521 institutional toilets to schools, safe drinking water facilities and water filters, and supported sanitation. For example, 83,290 (target was 50,000) households are declared as total sanitation (see more on total sanitation in the box to the right) households, and 54% of toilets were described as 'perfect case' in terms of being used, hygienic and having water available[28]. According to a performance survey carried out in the first phase, more than 60% of the students and teachers had replicated the water treatment and storage at their homes with the learning from institutional filters.[29] All these interventions supported the national campaign of ODF communities.

Box 3: Total sanitation

What is Total Sanitation?

Total Sanitation is the next step after communities have been declared ODF. Total Sanitation is an opportunity to address issues related to environmental sanitation and personal hygiene, including addressing menstruation-related issues, indoor air pollution, solid waste and drainage problems, vector control and food hygiene. As per the 2016 Nepal Total Sanitation guidelines the following key indicators need to be fulfilled for any area to achieve total sanitation:

1. Prepared WASH plan and its implementation.
2. Toilets at institutions and public places are user friendly, no open defecation and handwashing facilities at toilets.
3. Personal hygiene: availability of hand washing facility, menstruation hygiene management at places such as schools, offices etc.
4. Access to safe drinking water at households, schools and public places.
5. Safe food hygiene and management.
6. Household, institutional and public places have environmental sanitation.

Most stakeholders stated that the project mostly achieved its sanitation targets and that it helped to increase the awareness of communities and government agencies regarding the importance of ending open defecation and household sanitation. The beneficiaries further stated that they had changed their behaviour by keeping their households and surroundings clean due to knowledge gained from the project, which the ET also observed.

Access to water and water use

[25] In the phase II, the project also supported various types of capacity building and institutional strengthening activities and some of them included development of district WASH plan (in 11 districts with 92% achievement), VDC WASH plan (in 90 VDCs with 100% achievement),
[26] RWSSP WN Phase I Completion Report Synopsis vs3. p. 5.
[27] Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN), Completion Report of First Phase Synopsis (Aug, 2013), p. 2.
[28] RWSSP-WN Phase II Completion Report (annex 1 – logical framework with results) page 8/32.
[29] Reported in RWSSP-WN, Phase I Completion Report.

Good progress was noted in accessing drinking water by communities in both phases. The project provided 360,000 beneficiaries with about 1,100 Drinking Water Schemes (DWS) in both phases. The target was 240,000 people. The project also supported the creation of water users and sanitation groups and supported the institutionalisation of these groups. To avoid the risk of arsenic contamination of drinking water in Terai (where people drink water from tube wells), the project supported the development of an arsenic mitigation strategy and promoted the 'avoidance of arsenic' approach.[30] The main technologies employed for arsenic mitigation were switching to safe tube wells, installation of wells in arsenic-free aquifers (deep wells) and well improvements, which provided water support to a little over 14,000 people.

The performance of the institutional capacity developed in relation to drinking water schemes was also found impressive, with most of the WUSCs established for the water schemes being registered, having O&M plans, collecting water fees, and managing the water schemes through Village Maintenance Workers (VMW).

All stakeholders agreed that access to safe water in their community reduced the drudgery of women in water collection from long and steep terrain and provided more time for women to pursue livelihood activities (vegetable farming) and community work.

Livelihood support

The livelihoods support was not a major component of the RWSSP-WN. There was, however, some support provided by coordinating with the district agriculture offices to facilitate livelihood-related activities. Most of the stakeholders mentioned that there was a weak connection between WASH activities and the use of water for irrigation for income generation, which could have been improved with minimum support through training on multiple use of water and support to vegetable cultivation.

Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion

The project was GESI sensitive, and the interventions effectively translated gender equality and social inclusion policies into practice. In 2015, the project developed a GESI strategy and action plan and integrated GESI into planning and implementation guidelines. As per this integration, there was an increasing gender balance with at least one female or member from disadvantaged groups (DAG) in key positions of WUSCs, and half of the WUSC members were women. It was noted that gender participation has increased over the years. For example, 74% of WUSCs had both gender and ethnic representation in phase II. The phase II MTE found that GESI was systematically included in the training-related activities. The project also emphasised reaching the unreached communities. Out of a total of 386 new schemes started in this phase II, 77% served households that had not received external support earlier.[31]

The stakeholders also report all these positive results. All beneficiary interviews and local government interviews reported that women's time to collect water and drudgery have drastically reduced and provided them time to actively participate in the user committees (UC). The role of women and socially excluded communities (such as Dalits and Janajatis) increased in UCs and their decision-making process (beneficiary groups). However, the ET noted some challenges with regard to the poor and Dalits' access to water as they were unable to pay the initial cost (registration fee). In addition, different stakeholders, including beneficiaries, also mentioned that due to the existing socio-cultural values and norms, women, the poor and the Dalits were yet to play a fair role in the actual decision-making process – although the social change has continued.

[30] RWSSP-WN, 2010. Model District Arsenic Mitigation Strategy (https://www.rwsspwn.org.np/_files/ugd/b4f988_439cbcc72795432fb08366f5f31f791d.pdf)
[31] RWSSP-WN The Completion Report, Phase II.

Capacity development

The project has supported awareness-raising and capacity strengthening of communities, local governments and district stakeholders. In total, the project provided awareness and capacity-building support (bookkeeping, WASH plan preparation, procurement/quality inspection, etc.) to about 500,000 people. The main topics of awareness and capacity development were sanitation and hygiene (70%), water supply (20%), and institutional capacity building (9%) in the second phase. Women were particularly targeted (i.e. 51% of participants were women in phase II).

Climate change

Although climate change issues were not prominent in Phase I of the project, it was increasingly recognised as an important component in Phase II. Climate change issues were integrated into project planning and implementation through inclusion in district WASH plans and support to communities to address climate-induced hazards, e.g. through construction of groundwater recharge ponds. The approach got further attention in the second phase when a Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCA/DRR) concept was integrated with WASH plans and water schemes. The project worked to reduce climate-induced risks such as water source depletion, landslides and floods by promoting climate-resilient approaches such as recharge ponds, water harvesting and spring-sheds management. The ET, however, also observed an example of a pipeline that had been damaged by a landslide possibly caused by climate changes. The project also promoted renewable energy through solar lift water supply schemes and improved cookstoves that are directly linked with the low-emission development approach.

6.3.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP)

Based on the project reports, interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries and observations, the ET finds that the project had a strong and positive contribution to achieving the project outcomes. Compared to RWSSP-WN, the project emphasised the livelihoods approach in addition to water, sanitation and GESI while working closely with the municipalities in the later part of the project. It has strongly contributed to the three immediate outcomes as outlined in the reconstructed theory of change. The project's main achievements are increased access of communities to water and sanitation facilities, improved livelihoods, and the local governments' strengthened capacity in WASH. These achievements have further contributed to the realisation of sustainable use of water and sanitation facilities at the local level by supporting local policy frameworks while enhancing food security and climate resilience. Stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed during the evaluation agreed that the project has been instrumental in achieving the outcomes. Due to different reporting formats and indicators and the changes from working with VDCs to municipalities, aggregating data from different phases was not straightforward, but an attempt to collate some of the main achievements across the three project phases is presented in Table 4: Major RVWRMP achievements.

Table 4: Major RVWRMP achievements

Components/ No of beneficiaries	**Phase I[32]**		**Phase II[33]**		**Phase III[34]**		**Total**	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Water schemes	120,000	98,962	140,722	137,978	357,500	380,485	618,222	617,425
Sanitation	60,000	104,335	300,000	452,362	n/a	50,288[35]	360,000	556,697

[32] RVWRMP Phase I Completion Report Vol I (page 11, 37 & 49).
[33] RVWRMP Phase II Completion Report – Result indicators in Annex 7.pdf (page 24/100).
[34] Semi-annual progress report Fiscal year 07.
[35] This only include the achievements with regard to institutional sanitation.

ODF[36]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,413,897
Renewable Energy	6,000	9176	30,400	24,754	195,000	227 095	231,500	261,025
Irrigation	15,000	9,329	27,650	15,571	69 677	82,509	112,327	94,577
Livelihoods (i.e. home gardens)	n/a	1,098	301,000	329,094	281,500	322 350	333,350	651,444

While the project's name refers to water resource management, the project's scope included the use of water (drinking, sanitation, cultivation, energy production) and protection of water sources, but not broader issues of watershed management considering larger water catchment areas.

Achievement of institutional targets

The project worked directly with VDCs and DDCs before the federalisation process started and with municipalities after the enactment of the Local Government Operation Act (2017). From the very beginning, the project supported the preparation WUMPs (learning from the RWSSP-WN), which is an integrated water management plan of the local governments. The project supported the preparation of WUMPs at the VDC-level in the earlier phases with institutional capacity building support to the key stakeholders at both district and village levels. After the establishment of municipalities, the work on WUMPs expanded to cover entire municipalities.

In the last phase, the project worked with the municipalities to facilitate their executive and legislative roles (such as the institutional set-up and development of local-level acts and policies), focusing on WASH and livelihoods. The project has supported municipalities in formulating the relevant policies to regulate the implementation of WASH and livelihood activities. For instance, in the last phase, the project supported the development of 175 policy documents of municipalities in the project area.[37] The policy frameworks (directives, operation procedure, act, regulation) included Water Sanitation and Hygiene Management Directive (in all core 27 municipalities), Dignified Menstruation Management Directives (in 24 municipalities), municipalities level Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme Repair Fund Operation Procedure (in 15 municipalities), Water Resources Act (in 15 municipalities) and Water resources Regulation (in 27 municipalities), among others. All of the municipalities' representatives mentioned that they received instrumental support from the project to develop policies and institutions in their municipalities. For the majority of the stakeholders, the project's working modality can be scaled up by other development agencies through the use of, e.g. policies and guidelines developed by the project. The project also participated in various national level dialogues, workshops and interactions, including through the Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu with the WASH donor coordination group, and has contributed to the development of sector-related policies and guidelines. Given the enormous amount of learning the project had at the field level, stakeholders noted that the experiences were yet to be adequately utilised at the national policy level.

Achievement of service provision

Access to water:

The proposed targets are mostly achieved. The project supported about 1,500 DWS and served about 620,000 people. In addition, the project also provided water supply services to schools and supported rainwater

[36] The number of people living in ODF communities in the 10 districts in which the project was operational. Source: The RVWRMP, Phase III Project Document.

[37] Phase III - Semi-Annual Progress Report Fiscal Year 07 FY2078/2079 (16/07/2021 – 14/01/2022)

harvesting jars, arsenic bio-sand filters, and solar lifting systems. For example, 150 schools with about 33,000 students were supported for improved water supply and toilets and were provided with 266 rainwater harvesting jars and 1,698 arsenic bio-sand filters.[38] In addition, the project supported about 1,800 km of hand-dug pipelines, 1,074 intake tanks and 4,783 public taps.[39] The project made further progress in Phase III in terms of the provision of water schemes and support to institutionalise WUSCs. In this phase, the project supported 92,491 beneficiaries at schools.[40]

Most of the stakeholders mentioned that the project helped to improve access to safe drinking water, reduced water collection time (ranging from 30- mins to 2 hours), and decreased women's drudgery in collecting water on the hilly terrains. To ensure sustainability, the project also assisted in establishing WUSCs that would collect water fees and manage VMWs for O&M. WUSCs were also encouraged by the project to participate in local cooperatives to improve the management of the fund the water fees collected. In phase III, 33% of WUSCs were affiliated with the local cooperatives. Stakeholders also mentioned that the project supported creating and developing the capacity of WUSCs along with a provision of having VMWs in each scheme. Municipalities and the project jointly worked on engaging the UCs in networks. The ET, however, noted during the field mission that in a couple of cases, WUSCs did not meet regularly and did collect water tariffs regularly. It is noted that VMWs were generally able to maintain the water schemes.

Sanitation and hygiene

More than 600,000 people benefitted from different sanitation support. The project supported 141 community sanitation interventions benefiting 104,335 people and 141 school sanitation interventions in the first phase, whereas 112 out of 113 Project VDCs and 16 non-project VDCs were declared ODF in phase II with the support continuing in phase III – eventually, a total 2.4 million were living in ODF environments in the areas where the project was operating. There was a cumulative total of 208 user-friendly (child, disabled and gender-friendly) school toilets. In the case of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), it was reported that about 80% of the households, menstruating women, can use the toilet, which can be attributed to the awareness programme and support provided to the municipalities. Out of a planned 12,723 households, 83% meet the Total Sanitation criteria, which will be further increased by the end of the project.[41]

Livelihoods, value chain and income

One of the important contributions of this project was on using the water for livelihoods (such as micro-irrigation for vegetable farming) by following a Multiple Use of Water Systems / Services (MUS) approach. In total, the project provided livelihood support (awareness, knowledge and materials) to about 650,000 people. Interviewees stated that support for livelihood improvement activities (such as irrigation, drip irrigation, and tunnel farming) effectively generated a broader range of livelihood benefits in the communities. Most of the beneficiaries confirmed that the MUS approach helped them meet their domestic and productive needs. Stakeholders and project staff perceived this as an appealing model to work with communities which can be easily scaled up. Stakeholders mentioned that the project provided various support such as capacity building and material support (irrigation materials, tunnels, seeds) for irrigation and growing vegetables that serve the twin objective of improving household income by selling the vegetables in the nearby market and improving nutrition by increasing consumption of vegetables.

Project reports show that the project supported basic livelihood support (such as kitchen gardening), and the support advanced in the second and third phases. To provide livelihood opportunities, the project supported 96 irrigation schemes in Phases I and II and helped to irrigate 720 hectares of land, which benefitted 7,430

[38] Phase I Project Completion Report, p 38
[39] Phase II Project Completion Report
[40] Phase III bi-annual report (Jan 2022) page 20
[41] Phase III – biannual report January 2022

households (HHs). The micro-irrigation systems support livelihood activities through home gardening and commercial production of vegetables, spices and fruits. Apart from designing irrigation schemes, the project supported drip irrigation in poly houses in the second phase. Altogether 551 drip irrigation systems have been installed in the project area. Phase III further strengthens the livelihood approach by moving from basic level to advanced value chains. For this, Livelihood Implementation Plans (LIP) were developed in collaboration with municipalities. In phase III, the project supported poly houses for off-season farming, multi-purpose nurseries, value chain support (market information), Agri-product collection centres, and support to form farmers' groups. By Jan 2022, there were a total of 5,965 home garden beneficiaries (exceeding the target of 4,000), and more than 500,000 people received rural advisory services. Beneficiaries reported that their annual income has increased due to the project support (see Box 4).

Box 4: Livelihood support

One farmer in Shivanath municipality, Baitadi district mentioned that she earned 28,000 NPRs (EUR 200) by selling tomatoes in one season on top of consuming them at the household and sharing with relatives and other community members (Final beneficiary group interview RVWRMP).

Another farmer mentioned that he earned 38,000 NPRs (ca. EUR 290) from 80 cucumber plants, and 13,000 NPR (ca. EUR 115) from tomatoes in the last seasons (Final beneficiary interview, RVWRMP).

The project's support for the agricultural value chains was also significant. This component was added when the EU joined as a new funding partner. The project supported five value chain interventions based on the communities' needs, technical feasibilities and financial partnership with municipalities. Those value chains include orange, vegetables, Chiuri (butternut), large cardamon and ginger by forming and strengthening cooperatives. For example, a Chiuri processing plant has been securing communities a good source of income and helped reduce soap imports from India. The project hired an agriculture and value chain expert to carry out these activities. Project staff and beneficiaries also stated that they had connected with the government agriculture extension systems and some with another donor project - GRAPE.[42] Similarly, an orange value chain – led by women- has also engaged in the production, collection, grading and marketing of oranges from their area. The ET noted that all these value chain enterprises are relatively new and cooperatives are emerging, but they may not be in a position to manage the risk related to the production, processing and marketing of these value chains.

Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI)

From the beginning, the project actively promoted social change by empowering women and disadvantaged groups through an inclusive development process. For this, the project adopted a GESI strategy with four thematic areas[43] and the GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2014) to promote and support the socio-economic empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups (DAGs). Based on the GESI strategy, the project improved the participation of women in decision-making and reduced social discrimination and social taboos (such as *chhaupadi*[44]). For example, the project helped to make 16 VDCs free of *Chhau* huts[45]. Due to this and continuous campaigns within the communities and municipalities, stakeholders described how there had been reduced practices of staying at Chhau huts (staying outside their own homes) during menstruation. In collaboration with the project, five municipalities have appointed a Dignified Menstruation Management

[42] Local and Provincial Economic Development – Green Resilient Agricultural Productive Ecosystems (LPED-GRAPE), commissioned by: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Co-financed by: European Union (EU), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and Government of Germany. https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/17956.html

[43] Ensure that project interventions are gender, caste/ethnicity and pro-poor responsive; Develop skilled and diversified (balanced) staffing and participation in capacity building activities; Promote income generation and livelihood opportunities, encouraging especially women and DAGs to get involved; and Advocate for social change at all levels (GESI awareness/sensitization; with specific attention to highly discriminatory practices such as isolation of women during menstruation).

[44] Chhaupadi is a tradition practiced in Nepal during menstruation mainly in Far Western and Karnali region of Nepal. Women and girls are not allowed to use toilets and water taps during menstruation.

[45] Part of chhaupadi is to force menstruating women and girls to live in a small hut (chhau hut) situated at some distance from the home.

(DMM) facilitator to support activities related to menstruation and related taboos to improve access of women to water and sanitation facilities during their menstruating periods. Female beneficiaries reported that social taboos related to menstruation have also been reduced in the community. For example, a female beneficiary mentioned that there had been an improving understanding of Chhaupadi – now, the social taboo that menstruating women cannot drink milk and eat curd has been reduced.

It was noted that the participation of women in development interventions has been increasing over the years, which can be partially attributed to the project support through continuous awareness-raising and capacity building. The project reports indicated an increase in the percentages of women and disadvantaged groups holding key positions in UCs. By the end of Phase II, 34% of key positions were held by women, 13% by Dalits, and 8% by Janajatis, whereas the shares were 51%, 15% and 11%, respectively, in January 2022[46].

Stakeholders, including female beneficiaries, reported that access to water has reduced significantly the time spent on collecting water, grinding food grain, and generally reduced drudgery and improved health status (such as uterus prolapse) of women. In addition, the saved time from fetching water has been partially used for productive activities such as vegetable farming and social activities. Similarly, most of the stakeholders also mentioned that girl students benefitted from the school sanitation support, leading to increased school attendance.

Climate and renewable energy

Climate change and disaster risk reduction-related activities became more prominent in the latter part of the project. Phase I 'recognised' that climate change adds a layer of complexity and unpredictability to WASH, whereas in phase II, the project 'integrated' climate-resilience and DRR in the project activities such as soil conservation, planting, recharge ponds, and improved cooking stoves (ICS).

Another important shift is noted in the third phase once the EU joined as a funding partner. CCA/DRR activities were emphasised, and some of the major interventions included renewable energy, climate-resilient infrastructure development, and capacity building. The project prepared a CCA-DRR concept paper that provided a comprehensive view of the integrated activities of the project.[47] The approach helped integrate CCA/DRR into different phases of DWSs and livelihoods related activities.

The project staff mentioned that the project has focused on CCA/DRR aspects by sensitising project staff and stakeholders about the potential risks, such as the increasing drying-up of water springs and the increasing trend of landslides and floods. Some of the project staff mentioned that these issues are considered during the development of WUMP, design of DWS and actual implementation to the extent possible, but they also viewed that they did not have adequate comprehensive assessment tools to assess the risks and integrate. Most of the stakeholders mentioned that climate-induced risks are increasing year after year.

The project supported low-emission technologies such as IWMs and ICS. Initially, Micro-Hydro power plans were also in the project plans but were cancelled during phase III due to the change of the government policy (to provide electricity from the centre grid), the requirement of specialised technical knowledge and the longer than anticipated time required to complete the interventions.

6.4 Efficiency

EQ 4.1: How efficiently was the project implemented?
EQ 4.2: To what extent were the inputs converted into high-quality outputs and outcomes?

[46] Phase III, Semi-annual report (Jan 2022)
[47] "Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction' Component - Concept Paper", RVWRMP Phase II , July 2019. (https://www.rvwrmp.org.np/_files/ugd/b72297_4c5256de2ee341f3bfc43b856fcebc27.pdf)

Efficiency: RWSSP-WN: Very good

The RWSSP-WN interventions were of high technical quality. The high quality was achieved through good hands-on monitoring. The project was implemented on time. The cost of the project interventions was efficient, with an even staffing level throughout the project. Risk management, including climate change risks, was initially weak but improved during project implementation.

Efficiency: RVWRMP: Very good

RVWRMP outputs were of high quality and accompanied by high-quality monitoring with quick follow-up. The project was implemented timely except for delays during the establishment of municipalities and was implemented cost-efficiently with high-quality staff. Risk management in the RVWRMP was initially insufficient but improved with detailed mitigating measures, including climate change risks.

The Efficiency criterion is concerned with how well resources are used in terms of quality of outputs, timeliness, staffing, cost, and risk management. There are two evaluation questions for this criterion.

6.4.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN)

The RWSSP-WN interventions were eventually mainly of technically high quality. There were some concerns regarding the quality of construction of some water facilities in Phase I. The quality generally improved during Phase II, as agreed by beneficiaries generally and witnessed by the ET, who saw many examples of this during the field mission and was told so with regard to the 'soft' parts, e.g. the processes, the approaches, and the training. There were, however, also examples of less efficient interventions in Phase II, such as a water system that was never used and a water system used only by 50 HHs out of the 250 HHs living there.

Almost all types of stakeholders, including regional and local government representatives and many of the final beneficiaries, found that the project interventions were implemented on time. Part of the reason for this, they said, was the involvement of communities leading to increased ownership. Project staff were also praised by local and regional government representatives for their clear roles and responsibilities, leading to timely and relevant contributions. Examples were given of construction completed ahead of time, use of existing structures if possible, and at a lower cost than budgeted for – and some beneficiaries stated that project inventions were implemented more timely than government projects normally were. The two MTR/MTEs of the project also found that the project was implemented timely and that there were qualified staff, although high turn-overs in both project phases caused some initial delays.

The project was able to reduce expenditure on the budget for Technical Assistance (TA), and both phases were extended due to savings on the TA budgets. The ET does not consider the TA budget excessive (around 23%) given the extensive support provided for planning, implementation and monitoring.

Central government staff pointed out that the projects had a large number of staff, and thus were expensive, but also that there were high-quality outputs and monitoring. Many interviewees described the rigorous monitoring set-up with several layers of monitoring visits. As per beneficiaries and the 2016 MTE of Phase II, feedback from monitoring visits was provided on the spot, contributing to efficient implementation as problems were quickly resolved. The recommendations from the two MTR/MTE were taken up by the project and resulted, among other things, in improved monitoring. The human resources related to GESI were thin,

which may have contributed to the limitations in integrating GESI and intersectionality in monitoring, as described in section 6.1, as well as in ensuring that the disadvantaged groups are not only members of the decision-making structures but that they equally participate and benefit as described in section 6.5.2.

The two MTR/MTEs of the project both compared the cost of the water interventions with other interventions in Nepal and found that the project was efficient. As noted, however, by the Phase I MTR: "cost comparisons are treacherous" due to differences in hydrology, transport infrastructure, population density, etc. In the completion report of Phase II, calculation of min, max and means of different types of water technologies implemented were included. There are huge variations also for the same type of technology depending on, e.g. length and head of pipes, types of pipes required, etc., making calculating average costs obsolete. The Phase II completion report also shows that per capita cost has gone up over time due to working in more and more remote/difficult locations. Instead of calculating the cost per water scheme, the ET has calculated the changes in staff per water scheme over time to see if there have been changes and did not see any major differences between the two phases. The results show a comparable level of staffing for the two phases, with 3 or fewer international staff and less than 20 national staff, who implemented almost 450 water supply projects. An analysis of the staffing of Phase II over the years shows an increase after year one and, again, a decrease for the last year with no apparent spikes that could indicate insufficient planning.[48] As expected, the financial expenditures have followed a trend with a gradual increase at the beginning and fewer expenditures in the last year.[49]

Management of risks progressed during the implementation of the project. There was a list of some risks and some mitigating factors in the Phase I project document, whereas the Phase II project document lists the risks from Phase I, how they were dealt with, and new risks, including very detailed mitigation measures to take. Along the same line, the completion reports improved, with the report for phase II providing a very detailed analysis of the risks encountered. The management of GESI and climate-related risks in the project documents improved from Phase I to Phase II. In both phases, the GESI-related risks concerned the inclusion of the poor, excluded and hard-to-reach. In Phase I, no mitigation measures were presented, whereas the Phase II project document includes concrete risk management measures, such as accepting higher unit costs and lower targets. The risks related to climate were not included in the Phase I project document, but the Phase II project document included risks related to climate resilience and mitigation measures such as training and consideration of DRR in design and construction.

6.4.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP)

Comprehensive and regular monitoring at different levels also contributed to timely completion at high quality and quick rectification of problems. The 2013 MTR of Phase II also found that there was substantial attention to monitoring. The tangible outputs observed by the ET were of high technical quality. There were, however, concerns regarding the non-WASH components as per, e.g. the 2019 MTE. Especially the hydropower component in Phase II, implemented by an external partner but with supervision and monitoring by the project, was suffering from insufficient expertise, with only one expert covering four districts.

Different types of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, agreed that interventions were generally implemented and completed as per timetable. According to local government representatives, one reason for that was the committed project staff and the quality of the technical support they provided. Another reason, as pointed out

[48] Completion Report, RWSSP, PII.
[49] Completion Report, RWSSP, PII.

by a community group, was that the project staff was based in the municipalities, with capable staff assigned to each project site, facilitating support throughout implementation for technical aspects and community management aspects. As per the beneficiaries' statement, the strong sense of ownership contributed to the timely completion of interventions. According to local government staff, the interventions were completed timely in comparison with GoN interventions. The ET met a female-majority WUSC, Chhado Khola WUSC, in Bajhang district. The chair, the vice-chair, the secretary and the treasurer were all female. The scheme was implemented within 6 months compared to the usual 9-12 months. The ET met with 11 chairs/vice-chair of WUSCs from both projects, all of whom suggested that women now need to hold leadership positions in WUSCs as women are more serious and committed to performing their roles once they are given the opportunity.

The RVWRMP did experience some delays in 2017 after establishing municipalities for which more staff had to be hired, new modalities for transferring funds etc., had to be developed. The incorporation of the additional EU funding necessitated a redesign in the form of an expansion of the livelihood components, which also caused delays. Basically, the project went from working with a few districts with many VDCs to working with a large number of newly established municipalities. The changes in the federal structure meant that the investment in capacity development at district and VDC levels were lost to the project, although perhaps not to Nepal, as they presumably went on to work somewhere else. There were also challenges related to the new labour law. The project was also able to continue operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, with staff remaining in municipalities and national staff continuing to work during the absence of international staff.

An analysis of the staffing levels of the RVWRMP's phases shows similar levels, with more staff after year one and fewer in the last year of each phase. In addition, the expenditure follows a similar trend except in the last year of Phase II, where there is a small increase in expenditure, explained by the fact that the project did not have to slow down as the third phase had already been agreed prior to the end of phase II.[50]

The 2009 MTR of Phase I found that the unit cost for water supply schemes and micro-hydropower schemes was reasonable – especially considering the remoteness of some project sites - and that the support to local government was implemented at a reasonable cost too. The MTR also found that there had been difficulties, and thus delays, in hiring qualified staff, which in turn delayed implementation. The 2019 MTE of Phase III found that efficiency was only moderate, with staffing and operation cost being high due to, e.g. a lack of a risk management plan that had anticipated the federalisation process and the new labour law. The evaluation team finds that given the complexity of the project, the remoteness of some project sites, and the impact of the federalisation process, a moderate efficiency is satisfactory.

The 2007 Phase I and the 2011 Phase II project documents listed possible risks but no mitigation measures. The 2017 Phase III project document, on the other hand, included appropriate mitigation measures. The Project Documents of Phase I and II do not include GESI-related risks. The Phase III project document identifies some GESI-related risks but does not include mitigation measures. In Phase I, Gender and Social Discrimination Study (2008) was conducted to identify GESI risks, and the HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan identifies and mitigates GESI-related risks. The Phase II and III project documents mention climate change and natural calamities as the most significant risk to the project. Whereas the Phase II project document states that such risks are outside the project's control, the Phase III project document includes training and application of climate change infrastructure development guidelines as mitigation measures. The 2019 MTE found that a more comprehensive analysis of climate change trends would have been useful, and the project did indeed

[50] Completion Report, RVWRMP, PI and Completion Report, RVWRMP, PII.

subsequently develop a paper elaborating on how climate change issues should be addressed.[51] The ET observed an example of insufficient analysis and mitigation: At a drinking water scheme, the ET observed how a drinking water pipeline had been damaged by a landslide, partially affecting the drinking water pipe. Possibly this would be averted for schemes established after mid-2019, i.e. from the word of the beneficiaries, by choosing a different but longer route for the pipeline.

6.5 Impact

EQ 5.1: What have the expected impacts of the project been, and what is the likelihood of future expected impact?
EQ 5.2: Were there any unintended positive or negative impacts?

Impact: RWSSP-WN: Very good

The RWSSP-WN is almost certain to have contributed to a reduction in child mortality and, through the provision of access to water and sanitation, to have contributed to improvements in beneficiaries' health. The project has also contributed to the development of governance in the WASH sector as well as a general increase in the WASH sector's technical capacity. Women and girls, in particular, have benefitted through saving time and energy fetching water. Unintendedly, the latrines constructed as a result of the project have improved the safety of women, have contributed to women and Dalits avoiding discriminatory practices when fetching water, and spared women from discriminatory practises during menstruation. An additional unintended impact was that women, due to the project, have gained confidence to stand for election to local councils.

Impact: RVWRMP: Very good

The RVWRMP is very likely to have contributed to improving the health of the beneficiaries, including a reduction in stunting. The RVWRMP also contributed to the reduction in discrimination practices related to menstrual taboos. An unintended impact of the project was the increased self-esteem of women, allowing them to assert their rights increasingly. Women and Dalits are now able to avoid discriminatory practices. The livelihood component of RVWRMP has contributed to reducing poverty and improving the nutritional status of beneficiaries. The RVWRMP contributed to national-level WASH guidelines and policies and has contributed to increasing the technical capacity within the WASH sector, mainly at local levels and, to some extent, at the national level. The project has also served as a model for how to work with municipalities.

The Impact criterion is concerned with what differences the projects made. There are two evaluation questions for this criterion. As described in the Approach and Methodology section, attribution of impact is not possible, but the ET will strive to describe the perceived contributions to broader impacts.

6.5.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN)

The overall objective of the last phase of the project was to ensure 'Improved health and fulfilment of the equal right to water and sanitation' with the purpose that the poorest and excluded households' right to access safe

[51] "Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction' Component - Concept Paper", RVWRMP Phase III, July 2019.

and sustainable domestic water, good health and hygiene was ensured through a decentralised governance system. As described in the relevance sector, two indicators can be used for measuring the achievement of the objective: the incidence of diarrhoea in under-5 children and the under-5 child mortality. The ET has used data from the 2006 and 2016 DHS to calculate a 47% reduction in child mortality in Western Region compared to a 36% reduction nationally.[52] Prevalence of diarrhoea has reduced by 58% in Western Region and 36% nationally; in other words: there has been a larger reduction in child mortality and incidences of diarrhoea in the Western region compared to mortality at the national level. The project is almost certain to have contributed to this reduction in child mortality, although the exact level of contribution is unknown.

The above findings correspond well with what the beneficiaries explained, namely that they had noticed a decrease in water-borne diseases. Some women took it a step further and said that they had more time available as they now spent less time on care for the sick children and elderly, and a pharmacy owner stated that the demand for gastrointestinal medicine had reduced by 90%. The 2016 MTE of the last phase (Phase II) conducted a local study that also hinted at a reduction in water-borne diseases from 2013 to 2015. Additionally, other research shows various levels of impact of WASH interventions on water-borne diseases; a good overview of how sanitation impacts water-borne diseases and child mortality is included in the 2019 completion report. A health impact study carried out in 2013 found that there were fewer malnourished children in the study area after having been declared ODF.[53] As predicted per the pathways in the RWSSP-WN TOC, the project is likely to have impacted access to water and sanitation and peoples' health.

The indicators for the logframe's purpose read mostly like indicators for outputs, and only two indicators had targets, i.e. 214,000 people were expected to benefit from improved water supply, and 326.000 people were expected to benefit from capacity development training, but not if people actually used the water, or if they actually learned something from the training. The project ensured almost 220.000 people gained access to improved water through the implementation of 94 water schemes, and a number of communities with a population of more than 4 million people were declared ODF.[54] A study, however, shows that there is a small risk of slippage back from ODF: data from five districts that were declared ODF in 2013 showed that three years later, 3.5% of households were back to practising open defecation, more so among the Dalits.[55] A regional government representative explained how the project had contributed significantly to declaring Nepal ODF in 2019. A UN representative also explained how he found that the project had contributed to improving the sanitation situation in the western part of Nepal.

Beneficiaries reported that they have easier access to water, saving time and energy fetching water, and data from completion reports showed that especially women and girls save more than two hours every day per household. Water is also used for productive purposes, such as kitchen gardens, which would also, to some extent, contribute to the improved health of beneficiaries due to better access to more (nutritious) food.

More generally, beneficiaries report that their quality of life has improved. Women and girls praised having a more convenient life with improved privacy and reduced daily chores. The availability of latrines has led to it being safer for women as they no longer have to go to isolated places for defecation during darkness. Although many interviewees claimed that the discrimination against women and girls during menstruation has been eliminated due to household connections and that Dalits no longer faced discrimination at the water points, it is the ETs view that discrimination has not gone away totally but that it is no longer visible because some of

[52] https://www.mohp.gov.np/eng/publications/nepal-demographic-health-survey.
[53] "Health Impact Study of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSSP-WN) Program", Prof. Ritu Prasad Gartoulla, Hospital Chowk, Pokhara, February-April 2013.
[54] RWSSP-WN Phase II completion report.
[55] https://wedc-knowledge.lboro.ac.uk/resources/conference/41/Shrestha-2874.pdf.

the situations during which it was expressed no longer exist. The WASH interventions in schools allegedly led to increased attendance of girls during menstruation – due to better access to sanitary pads by either producing them themselves or buying them, as well as the discreet systems for disposal of sanitary pads – there is, however, no evidence for this. In addition, girls have more time and energy for school attendance and homework as they spend less time fetching water.[56]

Women have also benefited in more general terms: some interviewees described how women, especially those affiliated with WUSCs, have now been able to successfully stand for election to municipality councils. Beneficiaries explained how they had increased confidence to introduce themselves and attend meetings. It is not possible to prove that this is because of the project, perhaps it would have happened anyhow, but some interviewees find that at least the project somehow laid the foundation for this, including the confidence-building training offered by the project. It should be noted that some interviewees informed the ET that although female participation was accepted and allowed to put forward their views, there were limits: one woman said that although she was the treasurer and had been trained, the chair of the group insisted on doing all the bookkeeping.

At the national level, the RWSSP-WN contributed to developing the capacity of technicians, social mobilisers and community management experts in the WASH sector. It contributed to improved sector governance through better planning processes such as using District WASH (DWASH) and Village WASH (V-WASH) plans, and later Municipal WASH (MWASH) plans as a planning tool for water and sanitation interventions as well as through support to the development of various policies and guidelines on Water Safety Plans (WSP), Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), post-ODF and post-construction support activities. It has also supported the institutionalisation of WASH first in districts and later in municipalities by establishing district/municipality WASH Units.

Almost all stakeholders described the project – ranging from central government representatives, UN staff, national and international NGO staff, and those more directly involved in the project, e.g. project staff and donor representatives – as having contributed to improved governance in the water sector. The project trained a total of 326,000 people with most training related to WASH and helped establish WASH Units and ensure districts had WASH plans. The project has prepared various WASH guidelines, and policies on post-ODF development and development of WASH plans to be used at local levels, such as Water Resources Regulation ,Total Sanitation Promotion Procedure, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Management Procedure, User Committee Formation and Mobilisation Procedure and WASH Unit Operation Procedure. The project has also contributed to the development of policies at the national level, e.g. National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (NSHMP)[57] and the National WASH Management Information System (N-WASH-MIS)[58]. The different types of stakeholders also stated that the project, through its training programmes, had contributed significantly to developing the sector's technical capacity in general, as those trained are still working within the WASH sector.

6.5.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP)

The overall objective of Phase III of the RVWRMP is to improve health and reduce multidimensional poverty in the project area. The purpose is to achieve universal access to basic WASH services and improved livelihoods with the establishment of functional planning and implementation frameworks for all water users and for livelihood promotion in the project area. Data on stunted children shows that the national prevalence of

[56] RWSSP-WN Phase II completion report.
[57] https://docplayer.net/3750178-Government-of-nepal-sanitation-and-hygiene-master-plan.html
[58] http://nwash.mowss.gov.np/

stunting in Nepal decreased from 49% in 2006 to 36% in 2016 or a 26% reduction from 2006 to 2016, and in Far Western Region, from 53% to 36%, a reduction of 32%. The target of a 30% reduction appears to have been achieved. Taking into consideration that studies show that WASH and livelihoods are some of the factors being stunting, it is very likely that the project contributed to a decrease in stunting as WASH and livelihoods are some of the factors behind stunting.[59] Health data obtained by the ET from Ramaroshan Rural Municipality in Achham district is non-conclusive with regard to a reduction in incidences of diarrhoea, another health indicator, with cases going up in 2020/21 and falling back again 2021/22.

As per the project's result framework, indicators of the project purpose are the percentage of people using safely managed drinking water, that districts are ODF, that household incomes have increased as measured through a 20% increase in vegetable production, the municipalities have prepared WUMPS, and that 90% of cooperatives are operationally self-sufficient. All municipalities have prepared WUMPs, but data on the increase in vegetable production or the operation of cooperatives is not yet available, with studies ongoing at the time of writing (May 2022). In 2019, in Province 7, where the RVWRMP project is being implemented, 91% had access to basic water supply, only slightly less than the national level (95%).[60] Although access to water has increased, access to safely managed water remains low; in 2019, only 6.3% of the population had access to safely managed water (no data on access to safely managed water was available prior to 2019). The increased access to basic water is also confirmed by the data presented in the previous section on effectiveness and is readily confirmed by all stakeholders interviewed, including, in particular, the beneficiaries. As described in section 6.3.2, more than half a million people are living in communities that have received support for sanitation.

Women, in particular, benefited from the project with easier access to water and informed the ET that they were saving time on fetching water and no longer had to get up early in the morning as compared to before the project interventions. A community group also explained to the ET how females occupying key positions in the WUSC now have a collective voice and have increased confidence in asserting their rights with local governments on issues related to GESI and human rights.

Beneficiaries of the project explained how there had been a reduction in discrimination against Dalits and increased resistance against the chhaupadi practices. It was also noted that these changes had started prior to the project, and there are now laws in place against discrimination, but community representatives felt the trend had been reinforced by the project. In any case, household connections established by the project and access to sanitation have contributed to perhaps not fully eliminating discriminatory attitudes but at least contributed to avoiding situations where discrimination occurs, such as when fetching water at public taps. The project has also managed to ensure substantial representation of Dalits and Janajatis in WUSCs, with more than one in four members being from one of the two groups and more than one in ten in a key position, although the ET also was told in one instance that women in one WUSC were not being heard.

The multi-use of water also for livelihood activities has created opportunities for vegetable farming, providing beneficiaries with an income and thus contributing to reducing poverty and malnutrition. Some female beneficiaries explained to the ET how their income has changed how other people perceive them, recognising them as someone earning an income. Some of the women explained how that had given them increased self-confidence and how they are now making decisions on household expenditures. Most women with poly-

[59] "Stunting Among Under 5-Year-Olds in Nepal: Trends and Risk Factors", Budhathoki, S. et al, Maternal and Child Health Journal volume 24, pages 39–47 (2020). https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10995-019-02817-1 and https://www.mohp.gov.np/eng/publications/nepal-demographic-health-survey.

[60] "Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS", Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 2019. (https://www.unicef.org/nepal/media/9076/file/NMICS_2019_-_Key_findings.pdf)

houses also explained how they now had access to fresh vegetables and a more diverse diet, especially in the more remote areas where market access was limited.

The improved cooking stoves (ICS) contribute to both reducing climate change mitigation and improved health. In the locations visited by the ET, households reported that the ICSs had saved them time in collecting fuelwood as less is needed now – a study by the RVWRMP showed that there was up to 40% reduction in firewood consumption.[61] They also stated that there was less smoke in the house, expected to improve the health of household members although this could not be verified.

Almost all stakeholders described the project – ranging from central government representatives, UN staff, national and international NGO staff, and those more directly involved in the project, e.g. project staff and donor representatives – as having contributed to improved governance in the water sector. The project has prepared various WASH guidelines, and policies on post-ODF development and development of WASH plans to be used at local levels, such as Water Resources Regulation.Total Sanitation Promotion Procedure, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Management Procedure, User Committee Formation and Mobilisation Procedure and WASH Unit Operation Procedure. The project has also contributed to the development of policies at the national level, e.g. NSHMP[62] and N-WASH-MIS[63].

Different types of stakeholders also stated that the project, through its training programmes, had contributed significantly to developing the sector's capacity in general as those trained are still working within the WASH sector. Like the RWSSP-WN, the RVWRMP also contributed to developing the national capacity of technicians, social mobilisers and community management experts in the WASH sector. It also contributed to improved sector governance through better planning processes such as using District WASH (DWASH) and Village WASH (VWASH) plans, and later Municipal WASH (MWASH) plans as well as WUMps as planning tools for water and sanitation interventions as well as through support to the development of various policies and guidelines on Water Safety Plan (WSP), MHM, post-ODF and post-construction support activities. It has also supported the institutionalisation of WASH first in districts and later in municipalities by establishing district /municipality WASH Boards and Units.

The capacity of the participating municipalities has increased, according to local government representatives. The introduction of WUMPs was regarded as an effective planning tool and was used as the basis for the development of the N-WASH-MIS databases. Many local government representatives also stated that the experiences from RVWRMP have assisted them in executing other development projects in an effective and transparent manner. The District WASH Implementation Guideline developed by the project has also been used as input to the National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (NHSMP). Many interviewees also saw the project as a good model for how projects can work with municipalities, supporting the municipalities' priorities and plans while preserving hands-on monitoring while the municipalities' capacities are being further developed.

6.6 Sustainability

EQ 6.1: What is the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the project has ended?

[61] "Improved Cooking Stoves Impact Study - RVWRMP Phase III Research Report"; Haapala, J.; January 2020 (https://www.rvwrmp.org.np/_files/ugd/962d0b_8052692324a7408eb93ab7a480344343.pdf)
[62] https://docplayer.net/3750178-Government-of-nepal-sanitation-and-hygiene-master-plan.html
[63] http://nwash.mowss.gov.np/

Sustainability: RWSSP-WN: Good

It is likely that the benefits of the RWSSP-WN will continue. Many, but not all, institutions set up to ensure O&M remain operational and, depending on the outcomes of the May 2022 local elections, might continue to do so. It is uncertain if climate change risk mitigation measures have been sufficient to secure future water supply.

Sustainability: RVWRMP: Good

It is very likely that the benefits of the RVWRMP will continue with people continuing to have access to water and sanitation and beneficiaries continuing to benefit from investments in improved livelihood opportunities. An elaborate system of local-level institutions is in place in most municipalities and communities, although the May 2022 local elections create uncertainty. The beneficiaries of RVWRMP have a strong sense of ownership.

The Sustainability criterion is concerned with if the benefits of the projects will last. There is one evaluation question for this criterion.

6.6.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN)

Phase II, the last phase of the RWSSP-WN, was "essential in ensuring continuation and replication of the innovations by local and national stakeholders".[64] This was to be achieved through WASH Plans in districts and VDCs; sufficient and skilled staff; increased accountability and efficiency; and higher emphasis on sustainability and O&M by creating a post-construction services system covering each district; integrated watershed management with attention to water source conservation and DRR; and more gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) actions. The project, therefore, focused on post-construction support in the form of the provision of technical assistance to relevant local government stakeholders to ensure sustainability. The project would also develop the capacity of WUSCs, including training them in costs and needs and linking them to insurance providers and financial services.[65] GESI aspects were included in training packages, but given that women are more affected if water schemes break down, it could have been emphasised more in the capacity building component, as also pointed out by the 2013 GESI Impact Study.

The expected results of the RWSSP-WN were that all WUSCs were functional, and all districts and VDCs were expected to have WASH plans – this was later changed to municipalities. Of the 872 water schemes supported by RWSSP-WN, more than half (493) received post-construction support.[66] WUSCs were established for gravity, lift and overhead tank schemes, and of these, more than 87% fulfilled all criteria for being functional, including the criteria of having more than three women out of 7 WUSC members.[67]

The ET visited 10 WUSCs, six of which had requested refresher training of the VMWs, and the ET also met VMWs that that had refresher training. The VMWs informed the ET that the refresher training was necessary due to, e.g. problems that were not anticipated during the original training now needing attention or a change of the systems, i.e. from a gravity scheme to a solar system. Encouragingly, the refresher training had been done by the relevant WASH Units. Less encouraging was that some WUSCs complained that tools needed to

[64] Prodoc, RWSSP-WN Phase II.
[65] Prodoc, RWSSP-WN Phase II.
[66] Completion report, RWSSP-WN Phase II.
[67] Completion report, RWSSP-WN Phase II.

be replaced as they were worn out, broken or lost. That the WUSCs were requesting replacement instead of purchasing new tools might be a sign of concern with regard to sustainability, and along the same lines, two communities reported that they would seek assistance from other organisations rather than repair the systems themselves.

That half of the schemes constructed, most of them from Phase I, needed post-construction support indicates that insufficient attention had been paid to O&M during Phase I. That Phase II ensured functionality of WUSC, on the other hand, points towards improved future sustainability. This is confirmed by the field visits conducted by the ET. The WUSCs met were generally operational, collecting fees, paying VMW, etc. The team only saw two out of 10 WUSCs that were not collecting fees, or there was no VMW present. The ET was told by municipalities that some VMWs have migrated and that in some of these cases, the municipalities had provided refreshing or training for new VMWs.

The ET notes that the use of Water Safety Plans, which among other things, was expected to assist in maintaining water schemes, was used mainly as a one-off training without achieving the intended longer-term effect.

A strong feeling of ownership of the water schemes enhances sustainability. Beneficiaries and others described to the ET how a sense of ownership was instilled right from the beginning of the interventions due to the communities' involvement in the planning and identification of the interventions. This sense of ownership bodes well for sustainability. Some stakeholders also believe that the one household, one tap policy improves sustainability as people are more willing to pay for this improved service, possibly ensuring an even stronger sense of ownership.

As for developing the capacity of the districts and VDCs, later the municipalities, the project aimed at all entities having WASH plans. There was progress on this until the establishment of municipalities in the fifth year of the project – due to the project having ended, there is no data on how many of the municipalities developed WASH plans. The ET, however, spoke to three municipalities that all confirmed that they had developed WASH plans.

After the establishment of the municipalities, the project supported the establishment of WASH Units in the municipalities. Out of 50 WASH Units established, 41 (82%) continued operating at least until October 2019, although the project had phased out earlier. The ET visited a WASH unit that remained functional.

The project has attempted to contribute to ensuring a continued water source by constructing recharge ponds and pits, one of which was visited that was used to recharge the water source, which, according to the community, was showing signs of an increasingly stable yield. It is unknown if these interventions will be sufficient in the long run to ensure the continued availability of water. Stakeholders also told the ET about how landslides and flooding increasingly pose a threat to the water supply facilities by washing away pipes.

The other major component of the project, sanitation, consisted of declaring municipalities ODF, which was done for 29 out of 34 municipalities in which the RWSSP-WN operated, in some cases done already before the municipalities were formed, e.g. whole districts or VDCs. A study shows that most communities remain ODF some years after achieving ODF status.[68] Maintaining ODF can be a challenge, especially for the poorest

[68] A study from 2018 indicated that 96.5% of households still used a latrine three years after their district was declared ODF. Shrestha, S., Tameez Ahmad, and Prem Krishna Shrestha. 2019. "Sustainability of ODF in Nepal". figshare. https://hdl.handle.net/2134/35932, and a UNHABITAT study from 2017 found that three years after ODF declaration, 85% of HHs had no members defecating in the open.

households, and continued efforts will be required. According to the RWSSP-WN Phase II completion report, all ODF districts have developed post-ODF strategies,

6.6.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP)

As per the Phase III project document from 2017, the 'main thrust' of the third and last completion phase of the project is to enhance the local level governments' capacities to implement, maintain and further advance the objectives of the project. The outline of an exit plan was included in the project document defining that the completion phase should ensure local capacity existed to manage the WASH and livelihood investments, with livelihood described as relying on NGO and private sector initiatives, while for WASH, the attention would be paid to capacity development and ownership at the government levels.

The project has fostered a sense of ownership of water facilities within communities and households. Most beneficiaries and community representatives told the ET that there was ownership of water schemes. A high level of ownership is one of the key foundations of sustainability, without which users are unlikely to take on the responsibility of ensuring proper operation and maintenance of facilities. Some stakeholders believe that the one household, one tap policy enforces ownership and, thus, sustainability.

Phase III of the project had 500 requests for post-construction support to water supply schemes, of which 144, according to project staff, will be completed before the closure of the project. This high number of requests, constituting a third of the total water schemes, includes minor and major repairs, some due to landslides and insufficient maintenance, others mainly due to the simple fact that as the project is still around, it might be easier to approach the project rather than do it yourself, regardless of the feeling of ownership.

All 12 project sites visited where water interventions had been implemented had well-functioning O&M setups with funds collected on a regular basis, with all 12 having savings for minor repairs, collecting just enough funds to pay the salaries of the VMWs and minor maintenance. In one location visited, the cooperative established by the project had set aside 10% of their profit for emergency maintenance of the water system. However, not all interventions have been equally durable: one irrigation system was not functioning due to design fault, and two big water systems did not work optimally from the beginning due to inadequate planning. The sustainability of such faulty designs is naturally in question. A 2022 study brief conducted by project staff found that only 48 (68%) out of 71 schemes surveyed, WUSC were active, while at the same time found that 85% of the schemes had VMWs maintaining the schemes.[69] The study recommended that special emphasis should be placed on establishing active user committees and O&M processes for all schemes. Project staff interviewed also narrated how some WUSCs ceased to operate and cases during which women had lost their husbands' support to continue participation in WUSCs. As for the RWSSP-WN, the ET notes that also in RVWRMP, the use of Water Safety Plans was used mainly for one-off training.

At the municipality level, the project facilitated the establishment of Water Management Boards, WASH Units and WUSC networks in all 27 municipalities in which Phase III of the project operates.[70] The municipalities establish the Water Management Boards to promote WASH governance at the local level by planning and funding WASH interventions. The WASH Units, working under the supervision of the WASH Management Boards, are the operative body ensuring that WASH programmes are implemented and monitored. The project also facilitated the establishment of Rural Municipality Level O&M Funds that can fund WUSCs that need

[69] "RVWRMP III Study Brief Water Tariff Analysis in Private Tap - Systems of Water Supply Schemes", Pandey, B. et al, January 2022.

[70] "Rural Municipality Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Management Board Concept", Rural Village Water Resources Management Project Phase III, Project Support Unit, Dadeldhura, Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal/FCG, non-dated, most likely from 2022.

support for repair and maintenance.[71] The project also established WUSC Networks in municipalities with the aim of identifying sectoral problems related to O&M and to identify solutions. The ET believes that if these layers of O&M do indeed function, also in the longer term, there is an increased probability of sustainability of the water schemes due to increased collaboration and communication between municipalities and the communities.

All the communities visited by the ET had been declared ODF and were now moving towards Total Sanitation, with most of the households already having built a toilet. A local government representative explained that because toilets are a basic need, women will continue to make sure they have a toilet. The ET believes that female beneficiaries will prioritise having a toilet as it reduces exposure to discriminatory practices during menstruation. On menstrual hygiene, the training in the production of sanitary pads and access to buy them in some locations, coupled with the satisfaction expressed by women and girls regarding the benefits of using sanitary pads, such as the freedom to go to markets or school while menstruating, means that the gains are likely to endure.

All stakeholders praised the livelihood interventions, and the investments made by beneficiaries in terms of time, energy, and inputs are a good indication that users deem it worthwhile. Production might continue for their own consumption and might continue to generate an income if market opportunities remain. The cost of plastic for the poly-houses used for producing vegetables is recovered already after 1-2 years, and as the plastic lasts up to 4-5 years, there is a surplus for 2-3 years that will provide a profit. A total of 60 cooperatives have been established, indicating a strong interest and potential viability of the livelihood component.

Much of the future sustainability of the project will depend on the future resourcing and commitment of municipalities, with 8 municipalities at the time of the ET already having endorsed the concept of WASH Boards. The results of the May 2022 elections, who will be elected, what will be their level of commitment to communities in general, and to preserve existing infrastructure and institutions such as WASH Boards and the WASH Units in the municipalities remain to be seen – some municipalities informed the ET that they planned to retain some of the staff originally hired because of the project. The village-level structures with the collection of funds for regular/minor maintenance and payment of VMW can continue to function also after elections.

Different types of stakeholders informed the ET that the processes being used by the project in working with communities had been replicated by other organisations and for other projects within the municipalities. The municipality staff trained by the project are also performing other functions within the municipalities, e.g. trained accountants are also working on non-RVWRMP projects, and the transparent model with public auditing has also been sustained at least in some places.

The project has constructed 143 recharge ponds and built 4,000 recharge trenches, all of which will contribute to climate change adaptation. The project has also adopted low-emission technologies such as solar-powered pumps, toilets with biogas, and improved cooking stoves, which are also examples of climate change mitigation.

[71] "Rural Municipality Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Management Board Concept", Rural Village Water Resources Management Project Phase III, Project Support Unit, Dadeldhura, Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal/FCG, non-dated, most likely from 2022.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Relevance

Conclusion 1: The projects were relevant to the policies and plans of GoN, GoF, and RVWRMP also of the EU.

The two projects were very relevant for the fulfilment of the policies and plans of the Government of Nepal in terms of alleviating poverty with a special focus on marginalised groups. In terms of access to water and sanitation facilities and poverty levels, the two projects were also relevant as there, in general, was a need for improvements, for access to water, especially in the provinces where the two projects were operating. The two projects were also very relevant to the objectives of Finland's development cooperation and the RVWRMP Phase III also to the EU's MIP.

Conclusion 2: The projects were relevant to the needs of the people of Nepal, including women and disadvantaged groups.

Given the limited access to water and sanitation and the poverty levels in Nepal, the two projects were relevant, in particular, in their focus on western Nepal, where access to water was below other parts of Nepal. All stakeholders perceived the projects as relevant.

Conclusion 3: The projects' designs had plausible logic but had shortcomings with regard to baseline and target data as well as indicators for objectives and purposes.

Both projects had plausible theories of change, but the indicators for the objectives were not measurable or precise, and baseline and target data were, in some instances, missing.

Conclusion 4: Relevant targets and indicators were insufficiently disaggregated with regard to women and disadvantaged groups.

The projects were also responsive to the special needs of women, ethnic groups, etc., partly due to the participatory and inclusive approach used. Although there were improvements over time, the results frameworks did, however, especially initially, not sufficiently reflect the projects' focus on women and disadvantaged groups as not all relevant indicators and targets were disaggregated by such groups. Reporting also did not look at different sub-groups of, e.g. women, such as who were female-headed households, etc.

7.2 Coherence

Conclusion 5: The coherence of the projects was good at the local level but less pronounced at the national level.

The internal coherence was sufficient, with the cross-fertilisation of approaches and tools. At the local level, coherence was ensured through working closely with local government, first districts and VDC, and later municipalities. This also ensured coherence with other local-level interventions.

7.3 Effectiveness

7.3.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal

Conclusion 6: With the caveat that datasets were not complete or easily compared across phases, the ET finds that RWSSP-WN mainly achieved its outcomes in terms of increased access to and use of water and sanitation facilities combined with improved capacity at local and community levels to plan, implement and maintain facilities.

It was difficult to compare data across the different phases of the project. The ET, nevertheless, found that the achievement of the project's outputs in terms of improved access to water and sanitation coupled with a GESI

approach and the improved capacity of communities and local government entities to plan, implement, and maintenance of the facilities all contributed to the achievement of the expected outcome in terms of increased use and improved management of water and sanitation facilities. The situation of women, Dalits and Janajatis has improved.

Conclusion 7: RWSSP-WN outputs related to drinking water supply, sanitation and hygiene have been achieved. A GESI approach was used. There was insufficient attention to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

RWSSP-WN interventions related to drinking water supply facilities, along with the formation of WUSCs, capacity building of them, collection of water fees, and maintenance of the schemes through VMWs, were mostly implemented. Similarly, the project contributed to the declaration of ODF in the project area and provided institutional and household level sanitation and hygiene support as planned. There has been an increase in participation of women, Dalit and Janajatis, and they can access the services, although their roles in the decision-making process are less than expected. The increasing risk of climate change has not been fully addressed in the RWSSP-WN.

Conclusion 8: RWSSP-WN outputs regarding the institutional strengthening of the local governments have been achieved.

RWSSP-WN worked closely and supported local governments to develop their institutional capacity in integrating GESI, creating of WASH Board, developing policies, and integrating climate change in the WASH sector.

7.3.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project

Conclusion 9: With the caveat that datasets were not complete or easily compared across phases, the ET finds that RVWRMP mainly achieved its outcomes in terms of increased access to and use of water and sanitation facilities and improved livelihoods combined with much-improved capacity at local and community levels to plan, implement and maintain facilities. A GESI approach was used.

It was difficult to compare data across the different phases of the project. The ET, nevertheless, found that beneficiaries had increased access to operational water and sanitation facilities services with communities in the project areas declared ODF. Beneficiaries have improved their livelihoods. Communities and municipalities have improved their capacity to plan, implement and maintain facilities. The situation of women and Janajatis has improved.

Conclusion 10: RVWRMP outputs on water supply, sanitation and hygiene have been achieved using a GESI approach. The project used the MUS approach to diversify the use of water and linked it to improved livelihoods of beneficiaries. Climate change risks were not fully addressed.

RVWRMP provided GESI responsive water supply and sanitation services (including ODF) to the communities, providing opportunities to communities to use water for income generation and piloted value chain activities of the selected agricultural products in close collaboration with the municipalities. To improve the performance and quality of the services, the project also provided renewable energy technologies. The water and sanitation services were operational, and communities started to get additional income from home gardening. The increasing risk of climate change has, however, not been fully addressed through the project interventions.

Conclusion 11: RVWRMP has significantly contributed to strengthening the institutional capacity of the local government entities – also during the changing context of federalisation.

The RVWRMP has worked closely with the local government entities - municipalities in the last phase. The project supported institutional capacity building of the municipalities. Municipalities received support to

develop WUMPs and development of policy frameworks. With the May 2022 municipal elections, there is some uncertainty as to if newly elected representatives will resume support for the WASH section.

Conclusion 12: RVWRMP has adopted a GESI responsive approach to project planning and management. With this support, there have been positive changes in the role of women and disadvantaged groups in the communities.

RVWRMP adopted a GESI strategy and action plan to integrate GESI responsive approach into the project. Women, Dalits and Janajatis were given special focus in order to increase their capacity and improve their participation in the project interventions. Through this support, there has been improvement in the participation of women, Dalit and Janajatis in project activities, and menstruation taboos and discrimination against Dalits have reduced over time, although their roles in the decision-making process have not yet been fully achieved.

7.4 Efficiency

7.4.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal

Conclusion 13: RWSSP-WN outputs were implemented timely, of high quality, and accompanied by high-quality monitoring with quick follow-up.

RWSSP-WN Interventions were generally of high quality after some initial concerns during Phase I, and were implemented timely. This was due to the high quality of staff and rigorous monitoring with immediate follow-up.

Conclusion 14: RWSSP-WN was implemented cost-efficiently.

The ET finds that the RWSSP-WN was implemented efficiently and that the cost of TAs was reasonable given the high quality of the outputs.

Conclusion 15: Risk management in the RWSSP-WN was initially insufficient but improved with detailed mitigating measures, including for climate change risks.

Risk management, including GESI and climate change risks, was less prominent initially, but both improved during Phase II of the project.

7.4.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project

Conclusion 16: RVWRMP outputs were implemented timely except for minor delays during the establishment of municipalities, mostly of high quality, and accompanied by high-quality monitoring with quick follow-up.

RVWRMP interventions were generally implemented in a timely manner. Staff were highly qualified and committed, which contributed to the timely implementation as well as mainly high-quality outputs. Hands-on real-time monitoring also contributed to the timeliness of interventions and the quality of outputs. Anecdotal evidence indicates that increased female membership of WUSCs speeds up implementation.

Conclusion 17: RVWRMP was implemented cost-efficiently.

Taking into consideration the remoteness of some of the project sites, the project is found to have been implemented cost-efficiently.

Conclusion 18: Risk management in the RVWRMP was initially insufficient but improved with detailed mitigating measures, including climate change risks.

RVWRMP risk management was improving over time with better analysis in Phase III. Handling of climate change risks less developed.

7.5 Impact

7.5.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal

Conclusion 19: The RWSSP-WN is very likely to have contributed to improving the health of beneficiaries, including a reduction in child mortality and diarrhoea, and it is very likely that the impact remains.

In Western Region, there has been a larger than the national reduction in child mortality and diarrhoea incidence in children under 5. Although it cannot be attributed to the project, it has likely contributed through increased access to water and better sanitation. Beneficiaries also informed the ET that they had observed a reduction in water-borne diseases. At the same time, the areas have continued to develop in terms of better education, more information, higher incomes, etc., which most likely means that the project's impact remains.

Conclusion 20: The RWSSP-WN contributed to the reduction in menstrual taboos, improving the health and self-esteem of women and girls, and increased school attendance of girls. The project unintentionally contributed to more women standing for local elections. Women and Dalits avoided discriminatory practices.

Women and other groups, such as Dalits and Janajatis, in particular, have benefitted from access to water and sanitation. There has been tremendous change over the years for these groups, many of which the project has contributed. Women and girls are saving up to several hours per day on fetching water, and some women and others are now growing vegetables for their consumption, which can contribute to improved health. Girls' school attendance has increased as they can now attend during menstruation periods. Women, Dalits and other groups also now face less discrimination, partly because the project has provided them with access to private water and sanitation facilities.

7.5.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project

Conclusion 21: The RVWRMP is very likely to have contributed to improving the health of the beneficiaries, including a reduction in stunting.

Increased access to water, ODF and improved nutrition through livelihood interventions can all contribute to reducing stunting. Therefore, although it is impossible to attribute the reduction to the RVWRMP, it is very likely to have contributed.

Conclusion 22: The RVWRMP contributed to the reduction in discrimination related to menstrual taboos and has improved the health and self-esteem of women and girls. Women and Dalits avoided discriminatory practices.

Women and girls have benefitted from water closer to home, saving hours of fetching water. Women and Dalits also no longer experience discrimination related to menstruation. The income-generating activities such as poly-houses have contributed to better access to nutritious food and the economic empowerment of women in particular, and to increased household income in general. Through participation in various training and experiences from holding decision-making positions in committees, women have increased their self-confidence and are better at asserting their rights.

Conclusion 23: The livelihood component of RVWRMP has contributed to reducing poverty and improving the nutritional status of beneficiaries.
Beneficiaries now have opportunities for vegetable farming, earning them an income that contributes to reducing poverty and providing them with more nutritious food.

7.5.3 Commonalities

Conclusion 24: The RWSSP-WN and the RVWRMP both contributed to WASH guidelines and policies and technical capacity, first and foremost at local levels and at the national level.
With regard to capacity improvements, the project has contributed to developing the capacity of municipalities and communities/beneficiaries to better plan, implement and manage WASH interventions. The project has also contributed to preparing various water and sanitation-related policies.

7.6 Sustainability

7.6.1 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal

Conclusion 25: The sustainability of the RWSSP-WN is not ensured. There are uncertainties about the WUSCs and the local government set-up.
Although much has been done, there was less time to work with especially the municipalities, and changes to the priorities of the leadership of the municipalities after the May 2022 elections can make sustainability less certain.

Conclusion 26: Although most WUSCs established by RWSSP-WN were functional, they still requested external maintenance support.
More than half of the water schemes requested construction support, indicating that not all maintenance was conducted as requested. Most WUSCs, however, are functional, but some were not collecting fees, and some communities, instead of conducting repairs themselves, are waiting for external assistance.

Conclusion 27: RWSSP-WN communities remain open defecation free (ODF).
The ET did not encounter any communities that were no longer ODF, and studies show most communities remain ODF.

Conclusion 28: The institutional setup established by the RWSSP-WN at the municipality level seems robust, but May 2022 elections create uncertainty.
Most WASH Units in municipalities and most WUSCs are still operating. Any future potential changes in the leadership of municipalities might change incentives/priorities of municipalities, thus also jeopardising future maintenance support.

Conclusion 29: There is a strong sense of ownership of RWSSP-WN interventions.
A strong sense of ownership, in combination with the continued existence of many WUSC and continued functioning WASH Units provided, the ET finds, is a good basis for the continued operation of water supply schemes during regular day-to-day O&M.

7.6.2 Rural Village Water Resources Management Project

Conclusion 30: There is a solid foundation for ensuring the sustainability of the RVWRMP. Much has been done to ensure the local government set-up, although it is unknown how the May 2022 elections will affect the institutions.

Given the extensive work with municipalities and beneficiaries as well as the livelihood gains, the RVWMRP has the potential to become sustainable. There are, however, concerns if the gains have been institutionalised sufficiently to withstand any changes to the leadership of the municipalities following the May 2022 elections.

Conclusion 31: More than half of the RVWRMP water schemes requested post-construction support for various reasons, indicating less sustainability.

The reasons for requesting the support included landslides, insufficient maintenance and because it was easy to ask the project for assistance also with minor repairs.

Conclusion 32: RVWRMP communities are continuously moving towards Total Sanitation.

The focus now is to move towards total sanitation to ensure the sustainability of ODF and also to address a number of issues that have to do with environmental sanitation and personal hygiene, including addressing menstruation-related issues, indoor air pollution, solid waste, surface water drainage and food hygiene.

Conclusion 33: Institutional setup with WASH Boards, WASH Units, and WUSC networks established by RVWRMP will contribute to ensuring the sustainability of water interventions, but May 2022 elections create uncertainty.

The WASH Boards and WASH Units established in 27 municipalities can continue working. The project also assisted in establishing WUSC networks in most municipalities for sharing information on the status of schemes and prioritisation of support requirements. Although the May 2022 elections could change municipalities' incentives/priorities, the more elaborate institutional setup of the RVWRMP compared to the RWSSP-WN is likely to increase the likelihood of increasing sustainability - certainly partly because the RVWRMP had more time to engage with the municipalities after their establishment.[72]

Conclusion 34: The livelihood interventions implemented by RVWRMP are sustainable, with beneficiaries recovering investments within a few years.

Beneficiaries are earning an income, and their commitment to invest their time and resources is a good indication of the benefits they get.

Conclusion 35: The beneficiaries of RVWRMP have a strong sense of ownership.

Beneficiaries feel a strong sense of ownership of the water facilities constructed as well as of the livelihood interventions.

[72] The ET does not think that the private sector as of yet is able to play a meaningful role - studies are being carried out by others to investigate further which opportunities for private sector involvement might exist.

8. Recommendations

This chapter includes the lessons learned and recommendations coming out of the conclusion. For each recommendation, the conclusions that led to the recommendation are listed. The main stakeholder/target for each of the recommendations is also listed.

Based on Conclusion 3. For GoF, EU.

Recommendation 1: In order to prove the impact of future projects, surveys should be conducted as part of collecting baseline data, not only in project areas but also in areas where projects are not implemented. This will allow for a better assessment of a project's contribution to, e.g. improvements in health.

In order to assess impact, there need to be relevant indicators with clear baselines and targets, and it should be possible to compare developments in project areas with areas where the project was not operational.

Based on Conclusion 4. For GoF, EU.

Recommendation 2: Targets and baselines in future results frameworks should, when relevant, be disaggregated by gender, age, disadvantaged group, etc.

The ET finds that a useful starting point for increasing attention to and participation of different target groups is to ensure that baselines and targets consider these sufficiently. This does not necessarily lead to increased participation of these groups, nor that their concerns and needs are more likely to be considered, but it is an important starting point that will assist in ensuring they are not overlooked.

Based on Conclusion 5. For GoF, EU.

Recommendation 3: Future projects should, to a larger degree, collaborate with relevant national-level institutions and attempt to influence national-level policy-making processes.

The ET finds that although the projects were adept at coordinating and collaborating with local authorities and, through this, able to impact local policies and guidelines, there was a missed opportunity for achieving the same level of impact at the national level. Ministry of Water Supply (MoWS), the leading entity for policy formulation, which also has cluster units across the country, would be the logical choice.

Based on Conclusion 9, 10, 23, 34 For GoF, EU.

Recommendation 4: Future projects should integrate livelihoods more systematically in WASH programmes to enhance relevancy and ownership from the communities.

The ET finds that the livelihoods approach has been integrated into RVWRMP projects, but there are some challenges related to capacity building and accessing the market due to the difficult geopolitical situation. We recommend integrating the livelihoods approach, which requires a small incremental cost, through a systematic analysis of livelihoods context, assessment and market dynamics to improve the ownership of the communities and other stakeholders. The livelihood support should also work through and with the municipalities.

Based on Conclusions 7, 8, 10, 15, 18. For GoN, GOF, EU.

Recommendation 5: Future projects should analyse in more detail climate change risks and develop interventions for climate change adaptation.

Taking into consideration the rapidly changing climate and in-depth analysis of climate change risks, there is a need to fully embrace climate change adaptations in future projects.

Based on Conclusions 13, 16. For GoF, EU.

Recommendation 6: Future projects should ensure the delivery of high-quality outputs through frequent monitoring and hiring of high-quality staff.

Hands-on monitoring by high-quality staff with immediate feedback and suggestions for rectification contributes to high quality of outputs and high-quality outputs.

Based on Conclusions 6, 8, 9, 11, 24, 26, 30, 33. For GoN, GOF, EU.

Recommendation 7: Future projects should replicate the model of working through municipalities as this will contribute to ensuring impact and contribute to sustainability, and an extension of the RVWRMP to enhance the work done with municipalities could be considered.

Working through and with the municipalities has contributed to developing their capacity to implement not only WASH projects, but also other development projects. Anchoring future projects at the local government level will also contribute to ensuring sustainability. More specifically, it could be considered if the RVWRMP support for capacity development should be extended to cater to any changes in the municipalities as a result of the May 2022 elections.

Based on Conclusions 7, 9, 12, 20, 22. For GoF, EU, GoN.

Recommendation 8: The experiences from the projects' unintended contributions to women's self-esteem and empowerment through, e.g. GESI approaches should also be used in future projects.

The projects have been successful in including women in committees in key positions in various committees, which, together with the income ensured through livelihood interventions, has contributed to increased self-esteem of women and their economic empowerment, in some instances leading to them standing for local elections. The impact on the lives of women and disadvantaged groups has been enormous and should be enhanced through the continued use of GESI approaches.

9. Lessons learned

This chapter includes lessons learned as seen through the lens of the ET.

1. More could have been done to collaborate with relevant institutions at the national level. The ET is aware that GoN has been stretched due to many different reasons in the past decades, including becoming a republic with internal strife leading to a new constitution, a devastating earthquake in 2015, then the federalisation process in 2017, and from 2020 onwards, the COVID-19 pandemic. However, given the scale and duration of the projects, the ET finds that the large-scale implementation success provided an opportunity for more influence also at the national level, facilitating the uptake of experiences also by other stakeholders.

2. It is possible to continue delivering high-quality outputs also through major changes such as federalisation and pandemics if sufficient high-quality staff are in place.

3. Working with local governments has been important for the projects' successes and has ensured coherence at the local levels.

4. The Finnish supported projects' way of working with municipalities and the support provided to municipalities to establish WASH Units is being also utilised by other WASH projects. The EU is now using also this model of collaborating with and working through municipalities as a modality for other projects.

5. A stringent due diligence process in planning, technical design, water quality assessment and implementation phase will enhance the sustainability of the project.

6. Integrating GESI as a central part of the project design rather than as a separate component has been successful.

10. Annexes

10.1 Terms of reference

The Final Terms of Reference
Ex-Post Evaluation of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN) 2008-2019 and Final Evaluation of Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP) 2006-2022
21.12.2021

1. Background to the evaluation

1.1. Programme context

The design and implementation of the two projects to be evaluated should be guided by Finland's development policy. The Government of Finland approved a development cooperation programme in February 2004, which influenced the initial design of these projects. Later on, Finland's development policy of 2012 introduced a stronger human rights-based approach (HRBA), which was the basis for the design of Phase II of the RWSSP-WN programme that was initiated in 2013 and Phase III of RVWRMP from 2016. The primary goal of Finnish development policy by then and still today is the eradication of extreme poverty. The current priority areas of Finland's development policy are:

- Rights of women and girls
- Sustainable economies and decent work
- Education and peaceful democratic societies
- Climate and natural resources
- Humanitarian assistance

Each priority area has from 2020 a theory of change (TOC) with aggregate indicators and outputs, outcomes, impact and related assumptions.
There are five expected outcomes for the Climate and natural resources area: Forestry and biodiversity, Energy, Meteorology and disaster risk reduction, Food and nutrition security, and Water. Even though "water" is most strongly related to the projects under evaluation, also "forests and biodiversity" and "food and nutrition security" are highly relevant:

OUTCOME 1 Forests and biodiversity: All people benefit increasingly from clean environment and healthy ecosystems, conservation, sustainable management and use of renewable natural resources, such as forests and water bodies (SDG 12.2, 15.1. 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, supports also SDG 6.5, 13.1, 13.3, 15.9.

OUTCOME 4 Food and Nutrition Security: All people have improved possibilities to produce and access safe, nutritious, and adequate food (SDG 2.1); also supports SDG 13.1 and 13.3).

OUTCOME 5 Water: All people have improved and equitable access to basic and sustainable drinking water, adequate sanitation services, and improved hygiene practices (SDG 6.1-6.2: also supports SDG 13.1 and 13.3).
Both Nepal and Finland have witnessed fundamental changes during the past decades and their policies and strategies for bilateral cooperation. Nepal has the vision of graduating the country from the category Least Developed Country (LDC) to a low-income country status by 2026 and attain a middle-income country status by 2030. Nepal has made significant progress in poverty reduction in recent years and took a great step forward

by transforming the country's old unitary system into a federal system. This has significantly improved the local government autonomy and the possibility of service delivery at the local level, as well as a gradual reduction of the disparity between the provinces. However, Nepal's economic development remains undermined by unequal access to basic services and economic opportunities.

Nepal's historical legal provisions to promote water supply and sanitation include the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation National Policy 2004, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation National Strategy and Action Plan 2004, and the Local Self-Governance Act 1999. The Water Resources Strategy Nepal, 2002 is a cross-cutting document that sets out a comprehensive approach to water planning. Nepal's Constitution (2015) states water supply and sanitation as human rights. The Constitution has made policy provisions to make multi-purpose development of water resources. The Constitution envisions policy regarding the conservation, management and use of natural resources, which states that the State shall pursue a policy of prioritising national investment in water resources based on people's participation and making a multi-utility development of water resources. Although the Constitution indicates the jurisdictions of each level of government, it has yet to clarify its precise responsibilities.

The Local Government Operational Act of 2017 made these categories clear for local government, but the distribution among provincial and federal governments is still being worked out. This could be further elucidated with the Electricity Act, Water Resources Act, Irrigation Act, and River Basin Master Plan, but these new acts are not yet promulgated[73]. The Government of Nepal formulated the National Water Resources Policy-2020 with a long-term vision for making multi-dynamic, equitable and sustainable development of water resources.

Access to both drinking water and sanitation in Nepal has significantly improved in the last decade. The share of people living without safe drinking water and basic sanitation has more than halved since the nineties, complying with one of the Nepal targets for the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 7. During the 2000s, according to UNDP, the access to "clean water" rose from 73 to 89%. However, according to the National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the share of the population that uses "safe drinking water" was in 2019 only 25%, while the target for that year was 35% (see table below). According to the UNICEF (2019) Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, it was even lower (18.4%) in rural areas. Also, the functionality of the schemes must be taken into account, where major and minor repair rehabilitation and reconstruction are issues.
Very encouraging and internationally recognised progress has been achieved in sanitation coverage since the National Hygiene and Sanitation Master Plan of 2011, with 86.5% coverage in 2019. The same year, Nepal was declared an open defecation free (ODF) country. However, many challenges remain in making the universal coverage on sanitation possible and especially in providing safe drinking water. A number of physical and socio-economic drivers of change could reduce water security in future. They can be, for e.g. physical (climate change and disaster risk); and socio-economic (population growth and competing water uses, including industrial wastewater.

Table 1. Nepal SDG 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all[74]

[73] See Nepal Law Commission https://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/category-prevailing-law-statues-acts
[74] Government of Nepal 2020. National Review of Sustainable Development Goals. National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, June 2020.

Targets and Indicators		Baseline 2015*	Target 2019*	Progress 2019**	Target 2030*
Target 6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all					
6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services				
1	Population using safe drinking water (%)	15	35	25	90
2	Households with access to piped water supply (%)	49.5	60.3	49.6	90
3	Basic water supply coverage (%)	87	90.2	88	99
Target 6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all					
6.2.1	Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water				
1	Households using improved sanitation facilities which are not shared (%)	60	69.3	62	95
2	Proportion of population using latrines (%)	67.6	75.7	85	98
3	Sanitation coverage (%)	82	86.5	99	99
Target 6.3 By 2030, improve water quality					
6.3.1	Proportion of safely treated waste water				
1	Proportion of untreated industrial waste water (%)	99	75.3	95	10

Source: *SDGs Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030; **SDGs Progress Report (2016-2019).

Finland has supported a range of sectors in Nepal through the years, most notably education, environment, forestry, the Nepalese peace process, human rights and the rule of law, and water and sanitation. Human rights, gender, climate change and other cross-cutting objectives are systematically mainstreamed into the programming and planning of the Finnish development cooperation. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are one of the main sectors of present Finnish development cooperation in Nepal.

Finland's country programme for development cooperation with Nepal (2021-2024) has one expected outcome with two expected outputs that are clearly linked to the TOC and Water outcome mentioned above:

OUTCOME 1.1: People in the municipalities supported by Finland have improved and equitable access to safe and sustainable water and sanitation services and improved hygiene practices in households and institutions. This outcome focuses on access to safe and sustainable water and sanitation services and improved hygiene practices in both households and institutions. It requires improvement of public sector and community capacity, as well as the sanitation and hygiene services.

Output 1.1.1: Improved public sector and community capacity to deliver and sustain climate-resilient, safely managed and accessible drinking water services. Finland aims at supporting efficient and transparent governance of local governments to deliver safe, sustainable, accessible and affordable water supply services in the municipalities that are being supported by Finland.

Output 1.1.2: Improved sanitation and hygiene services and capacity of people to adopt good sanitation and hygiene practices, including dignified menstruation management. This covers sustaining open defecation free behaviour, supporting safely managed sanitation services, promoting good hygiene practices such as hand washing, and enabling dignified menstruation management that is specifically challenged by the menstruation-related taboos.
The two projects are also relevant for Sustainable Livelihoods as determined in the Nepal Country Programme:

OUTCOME 1.2: People benefit from climate resilient livelihood development in the municipalities supported by Finland. This outcome aims at climate-resilient livelihood development. It requires a multidimensional approach to improve the capacity of diverse livelihood actors to support and participate in sustainable value chains. Furthermore, it requires improving the climate resilience and productivity of agroecosystems through integrated water resources management and climate-smart agricultural practices. It is assumed that the

Government of Nepal allocates budget to climate-smart sustainable rural livelihoods and climate-resilient infrastructure and that the urgency to act on climate change is translated into practical inputs.

OUTPUT 1.2.1: Increased capacity of livelihood actors to support and participate in sustainable value chains. This output aims to strengthen the capacity of diverse actors such as community groups, smallholder farmers, cooperatives and businesses to participate in sustainable value chains. Furthermore, it increases the capacity of local governments to support and govern those processes in the municipalities supported by Finland. It is envisioned that the value chain functionality will be improved through support for increased coordination and linkage between value chain actors, addressing gaps in services and capacities, and overcoming constraints through investments and advocacy. This includes the development of relevant skills and businesses as well as the availability of technology. It is assumed that the stakeholders are committed to participating in capacity development and improving value chain functionality.

OUTPUT 1.2.2: Climate resilience and productivity of agroecosystems improved through integrated water resources management and climate-smart agricultural practices. This output is composed of multiple interlinked activities on water resources and agricultural production that apply climate-smart practices. Improved agroecosystem resilience and sustainability will be the result of the adoption of innovations by producers, increased access to water, generation of tested and proven agroecosystem management practices, and availability of climate and weather information technologies. Finnish learnings on integrated water resources management, local planning processes, multiple-use water systems, irrigation and livelihood development will be consolidated. Adequate water availability improves agricultural production and diversification, hence strengthening food security and nutrition as well. It is assumed that the stakeholders are committed to participating in the capacity and infrastructure development interventions in the municipalities supported by Finland.

The First Joint Sector Review (JSR) on WASH was carried out in 2011 and the second in 2014. Sector Efficiency Improvement Unit (SEIU) under the Ministry of Water Supply (MoWS) used to be active but has been less visible over the last couple of years. A draft Sector Development Plan (2016-2030) was developed in 2016 but has so far not been approved by the government.

1.2. Description of the programme to be evaluated

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN)

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal, Phase I and II 2008-2019 (RWSSP-WN) was a bilateral project between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Finland. The duration of Phase I was August 2008 – August 2013, and Phase II was from September 2013 to November 2019. RWSSP-WN was implemented through the decentralised governance system following the rules and regulations of the Government of Nepal. The responsible agencies at the national level were then the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and its Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR), now MoFAGA and DOLI. The Technical Assistant (TA) consultant for RWSSP-WN I was Ramboll and for Phase II Finnish Consulting Group (FCG).

The main objective of RWSSP-WN was to achieve "improved health and fulfilment of the equal right to water and sanitation for the inhabitants and to increase the wellbeing of the poorest and excluded of the Project area". The purpose of RWSSP-WN was to fulfil the basic needs and ensure rights of access of the poorest and excluded households to safe domestic water, good health and hygiene through a decentralised governance system. The program components were (i) hygiene and sanitation; (ii) domestic water supply; (iii) arsenic mitigation (in the three Terai districts); and (iv) WASH governance.

The Project first phase was implemented in Baglung, Myagdi, Parbat, Syangja, Tanahun, Kapilvastu, Rupandehi, Nawalparasi and Pyuthan districts. The total number of program Village Development Committees (VDCs) was 54. During Phase II, the project worked in 14 districts. These districts were further categorised as core, sanitation only, and district-driven mode, depending on the scope and type of support received from the project.

Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP)
RVWRMP is a water resources management project, which, in addition to water supply and sanitation, supports water-based livelihood activities. As the previously mentioned project it was designed not as a 'stand-alone' WASH project but with an integrated concept recognising that water, energy, food, finance, human and other resources are interlinked and have complex interactions, leading to synergies and trade-offs. The implementing partners of the project are the newly elected local level governments, Municipalities (M) and Rural Municipalities (RM), as well as the residents of these areas through users' committees, cooperatives and other groups formed by the beneficiaries.

The RVWRMP is supported by the Government of Nepal (GoN), the European Union (EU) and the Government of Finland (GoF). It is a continuation of the financial and technical support that GoF has provided to the water sector in Nepal since 1989. However, most of the implementation period has been in parallel with the project mentioned above. **Phase I** (2006-2010) and **Phase II** (2010-2016) are now followed by **Phase III** (2016-2022). Even though the project should end in 2022, nearly all activities have ended, so the evaluation will have the characteristics of a terminal evaluation. The EU started financing the Project in November 2017 through an arrangement of delegated management to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The TA consultant for RVWRMP is FCG.

The Overall Objective of the Project is to improve health and reduce multidimensional poverty within the project's working area. The purpose of the project is to achieve universal access to basic WASH services and improved livelihoods with the establishment of functional planning and implementation frameworks for all water users and livelihoods promotion in the project area. The project interventions are grouped under four result areas: (i) Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene; (ii) Livelihoods development; (iii) Renewable energy and climate change; and (iv) Governance.

RVWRMP first phase started in 53 VDCs, while in the second Phase, the VDCs from the first Phase were continued, and 61 more were added. In total, ten districts were covered by Phases I and II: Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Dailekh, Darchula, Doti, Humla and Kailali, and in each of these districts there was a District Development Committee (DDC) in charge as the local government body. The planned project investments were fully completed in 46 hills and 6 Tarai VDCs. Note that after the federal restructuring of Nepal in 2015, VDCs and municipalities were merged and became Rural Municipalities and Municipalities.
Phase III covers 10 districts (the same covered in Phase I and II), as well as 27 core municipalities and 36 non-core municipalities in Sudur Pashchim province and Karnali province. Core RMs have been supported by the project's institutional support unit (RMSU), RM-based project funded staff and the fully-fledged project package, including water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), irrigation, multiple-use systems (MUS), livelihoods, improved water mills, improved cooking stoves, institutional toilets, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) capacity building, and governance. Non-core RMs only have the project's limited interventions like WASH with basic nutrition and Improved Cooking Stoves. There are also competitive proposal-based water supply schemes, as well as home garden support as part of the scheme.

1.3. Results of previous evaluations

The Government of Nepal has not commissioned any major evaluation on the cooperation. The Government of Finland has evaluated the country programme between Finland and Nepal in 2012. A Mid-term Review (MTR) of RWSSP-WN Phase I was conducted in 2011 and advised not to make dramatic changes to the Project modalities and approaches while proposing to launch a completion phase. An MTR of RVWRMP II was made in 2013, stating that the project had achieved initial progress on indicators of the overall project objective. A Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the RWSSP-WN II in 2016 found that the project had achieved its interim targets and considered it likely to achieve most of the end results and objectives.

A Mid-term Evaluation of the RVWRMP Phase III MTR was done in 2019, stating that the project so far had achieved important outcomes for WASH and nutrition, but modest ones for income, energy and governance. The evaluation considered that the project's time and staff resources had become insufficient to achieve the very ambitious targets by 2022, mainly due to periods of uncertainty and delays, an increased focus on livelihoods and capacity building, as well as staff needs and the government was completely restructured during the reform to federalism (see reference document in Annex 1).

2. Rationale and purpose of the evaluation

The main rationale of the evaluation is the need of the Governments of Finland and Nepal to achieve comparative evidence of whether the two projects' objectives were achieved, based on an external, independent and objective analysis, as well as to get a summary of lessons learned, to improve future project design and implementation.

The two main purposes are to assure accountability of results and provide lessons learned.

Table 2. Overview of the two projects to be evaluated

Name of project	Funding sources	Phases
Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Western Nepal Project (RWSSP-WN)	Government of Nepal (GoN) and Government of Finland (GoF)	I (2008-2013) II (2013-2019)
Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP)	GoN and GoF	I (2006-2010) II (2010-2016)
	GoN, GoF and the EU	III (2016-2022)

The main stakeholders in the evaluation are the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland through the Department for the Americas and Asia (ASA) and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MOFAGA) Nepal, particularly its Department of Local Infrastructure (DOLI), as well as the EU regarding the RVWRMP Phase III. FCG is an important stakeholder, including personnel that was contracted in previous project phases and are no longer with the company, if they can be contacted. In Nepal, apart from the central government agencies, it is necessary to interview local governments who participated in the project management (RMs).

The purpose of the evaluation of both projects is to provide the Governments of Finland and Nepal as well as the European Union with an external, independent and objective analysis and assessment of the projects with regard to whether their intended objectives were achieved. Thus the focus is on the lessons learned with regard to the continued validity of the impact, outcome and outputs as set out in the project documents (PD) and their results frameworks. The focus is oriented towards MFA's future involvement in the identification, formulation, design, appraisal, funding and implementation of similar but more impactful projects. The evaluation team is, therefore, encouraged to identify and formulate lessons learned that are sufficiently general to be valuable for other projects. The team should also locate best practices that could be replicated or scaled-up and negative practices that should be avoided in the future.

The documentation of the evaluation should take into consideration the different needs of the three major clients (GoN, GoF and EU). All of them need to find readable and straightforward analyses and recommendations that benefit their contemporary needs.

The evaluation is expected to provide an impartial view on all the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, being relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the two projects. The ex-post evaluation is, however, expected to have a stronger basis for drawing conclusions on impact and sustainability, while evaluation of the other project would only be able to present expectations of impact and sustainability of the project outcomes.

The evaluation team should especially assess whether the operational set-up of the projects, including Technical Assistance (TA), human resources, and related financial aspects, was good enough to achieve the project objectives. The team should analyse the chosen implementation approaches for each result area and measurement of the related outcomes, sustainability of project results, impacts of a changed working modality and legal and federal government structure on project approaches and implementation, as well as expertise and institution building, to extract lessons for improvement of future projects.

The cross-cutting objectives of the Finnish development cooperation policy will be integrated into the application of all the evaluation criteria, including gender equality, HRBA and non-discrimination (focus on disabilities)[75], climate resilience and low emission development.

3. Scope of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluations is to carry out an analysis and assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the two projects to guide MFA's future involvement in the identification, formulation, design, appraisal, funding and implementation of similar but more impactful projects.

The ex-post evaluation of the RWSSP-WN will cover the duration of the project phases from 2008-2019, and the final evaluation of RVWRMP will cover the period from 2006 until the moment of the evaluation. The scope of both evaluations is WASH and livelihoods, with linkages to poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, environment, agriculture/forestry, local governance processes and GESI. It is noteworthy that the target groups of both projects have been wide. While some activities focus on households, others focus on community groups, user committees, cooperatives, previous VDCs or current municipalities. The wide variety of the targeted communities and beneficiaries and project components from the water supply, irrigation, home garden, value chain development and market management, capacity development to micro-hydro and solar power development have widened the scope of the project. The scope of the evaluation covers all stakeholder levels from the federal government to local level stakeholders. The scope covers basic information on other relevant donor-supported WASH projects in Nepal. Also, comparative data on the approaches of other Finland funded WASH interventions (UNICEF WASH) is welcome. The rationale here is to find comparative evidence of what has been achieved according to evaluation reports, to strengthen the vision on how future project interventions in Nepal and comparable countries/sectors can be conceptualised through this evaluation.

Finland had development policies of 2007, 2012 and 2016 in operation during the studied period. The development policy is currently mostly guided by the Government Programme 2019, the Theories of Change 2020, Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives 2020, and HRBA guidance note 2015. Hence, the policy issues

[75] In the Nepal context also the social inclusion of all caste and other groups is very relevant.

like cross-cutting objectives need to be analysed against the policies that were valid for the moment each project phase was approved – not against the current policy only. The evaluation should be seen as a participatory, open, transparent learning process for all stakeholders, including the final beneficiaries. It will follow an approach to ensure that all the relevant stakeholder groups are heard during the mission. A partnership approach should be followed, especially with MFA/ASA, FCG, the Project Management Team (PMT) and Government units in charge, however, without sacrificing the needed independence of the evaluators.
Evaluation of both RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP will give an opportunity for MFA to compare approaches and results. The evaluation will include the usability of the project's substantial products (infrastructure and knowledge) by all relevant stakeholders and the replication/extension of the projects' expected results. This will include human resources and capacity building at different levels.

4. Issues to be addressed and evaluation questions

Both evaluations will follow the MFA Evaluation manual and the OECD DAC development evaluation quality standards. As mentioned earlier, it will cover all the DAC criteria for project evaluations while at the same time paying attention to specific issues that are given high priority by MFA. The degree of importance of the DAC criteria will vary for the two evaluations.

The evaluations should comply with the following principles, to be applied throughout the process:
a) Free and open evaluation process, transparent and independent from project management and policy-making, to enhance credibility;
b) Evaluation ethics that abides by relevant professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct, while the evaluation is undertaken with integrity and honesty;
c) Partnership approach to building development ownership and mutual accountability for results. A participatory approach should be used on all levels (MFA, PMT institutions, partners, beneficiaries);
d) Coordination and alignment, to consider national and local evaluations and help strengthen country systems, plans, activities and policies;
e) Capacity development of partners by improving evaluation knowledge and skills, stimulating demand for and use of evaluation findings, and supporting accountability and learning; and
f) Quality control throughout the process (arrows represent the direction of control): MFA → NIRAS → TL → Team.

The evaluation team should apply the OECD DAC evaluation criteria mentioned above: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact. The evaluation team should also cover the cross-cutting objectives of Finland development cooperation – gender equality, non-discrimination (with a focus on disabilities), climate resilience and low emission development, as well as the human-rights-based approach. The cross-cutting issues should be considered under all criteria as appropriate and are, therefore, not repeated under each criterion.

The evaluation of two different projects under the same contract, one that is finalised and one that is ongoing, requires two slightly different approaches:

The RWSSP-WN project that was finalised in 2019 will be carried out as a typical ex-post evaluation. That means giving special emphasis to the DAC criteria of impact and sustainability. However, since it is only two years since the project ended, and the Covid-19 epidemic has since then completely changed the situation, it is possible that the project outcomes still could be "in the process" towards impact and sustainability, or in an intermediary state. Some key issues to pay attention are if training and capacity building carried out made a real change and improved national and local governance, directly in the sector and indirectly in other sectors, and if the infrastructure financing is still in working conditions and in use by the intended beneficiaries.

The RVWRMP project is still ongoing but expected to close in 2022. It will therefore be carried out similar to a final evaluation. This means to give more emphasis than on the other project to the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency, to strengthen the accountability of expected results, and give recommendations to finalise any outstanding targets, as well as recommendations to assure a good process for the closing period. In this case, there will be more focus on effectiveness in complying with the project targets. Since impact and sustainability would not yet be clearly confirmed, these issues should rather be reviewed as "the progress towards impact and sustainability".

The project progress reports with an updated results framework on achieved outputs and outcomes will be the main tool to review effectiveness. However, in case of large variations (positive or negative) compared with the targets, the role of the evaluator is to ask the important question **-***Why?* This will help discover challenges during implementation, including potential weaknesses in the design and the reasons for success or failure, where there might be different opinions among the stakeholders to interview.

The evaluation should aim at resulting in mutual learning of the Governments of Finland and Nepal, the partner donor (EU) and local partner institutions, as well as other stakeholders. The previously mentioned "partnership approach" would be beneficial for all stakeholders involved by assuring mutual trust and evaluation results based on all available information.

It is important that the results of the evaluation are available to all relevant stakeholders and the partners have the opportunity to comment on draft reports during the process. The final reports should be available for results information to foster learning and to support decision-making based on lessons learned.
The inception phase should start with a review of the TOC for each project and the relation with the TOC for Finland's development cooperation and country programme in Nepal. A review of the quality of the project design should also be carried out because the design could be the key to the success or failure of a project.

Relevance: Is the project doing the right things? -The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.
The topic of relevance should cover the extent to which the programme's objectives, approaches and promoted technologies are consistent with different beneficiary groups' requirements and absorption capacities, country priorities, global priorities and partners' and Finland's policies. This includes an evaluation of how the promotion of human rights and gender equality, reduction of inequalities and promotion of climate resilience and low emission development as defined by international and regional conventions, national policies and strategies have been integrated into project designs and implementation. This should include an analysis of the continued relevance of the project outcomes and impacts in light of significant changes in the context (i.e. new Constitution).

1. To what extent did the project respond to the needs of the stakeholders and the policies of MFA and Nepal partners?
2. What was the quality of the project design?

Coherence: *Is the project compatible with what is done by MFA and by others?* -The compatibility of the project activities with other interventions in the country, sector or institution supported by Finland and by other donors, as relevant.

3. To what extent the project was coherent with other MFA and partner interventions?

Effectiveness: *Are the expected results achieved?* -The extent to which the project's objectives and results have been achieved so far or are expected to be achieved.

The evaluation report should include the achievement of the programme purpose (i.e. the immediate objective), or if it is expected to do so in the future. The analysis should also estimate the level of compliance with the project targets considering baselines and indicators for expected outputs and outcomes.

4. To what extent expected outcomes were achieved?
5. Were there any unexpected results?

Efficiency: *Are the resources being used well?* -The extent to which the project delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way.

Efficiency should be reviewed by the evaluation Team based on how efficient the various activities have transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Furthermore, the management and administrative arrangements should be analysed.

6. How efficiently was the project implemented?
7. To what extent the inputs were converted into high-quality outputs and outcomes?

Impact: *What difference will it make?* -The extent to which the project has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

The report should describe how the programme has succeeded in contributing to its wider impact level for its final beneficiaries. The evaluation of impact covers intended and unintended, short- and long-term, positive and negative impacts. It should, however, be made a clear distinction between short-term social and environmental impacts (where potentially negative impacts are covered by safeguards) and long-term impact, which is typically the result of the project outcomes (e.g. improved health based on the added volume of quality drinking water). This kind of long-term impact would be found in statistics and other sources, but most clearly after a project has closed. An exception could, in this case, be the impact of previous project phases, where some years have passed since they ended.

8. What have been the expected impacts of the project, and what is the likelihood of future expected impact?
9. Were there any unintended positive or negative impacts?

Sustainability: *Will the benefits last?* -The extent to which the net benefits of the project continue and are likely to continue in the future, considering the financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

In other words, sustainability refers to the likely continuation of programme achievements when external support comes to an end. Sustainability analysis will include elements such as project relevance, acceptability, political expediency, viability and adaptability of the project outcomes. Other factors such as financial analysis, risk analysis, communication and network determination, operational plan, training, human resource development and capacity building, environmental and community analysis, all help to determine the sustainability of results. For a comprehensive analysis of water, sanitation, livelihood and cooperative beneficiary assessment, value chain development and marketing analysis, policy and regulatory framework analysis, partnership development, and institutional analysis have to be evaluated. Evaluation of exit strategy / phasing out plans should be part of the sustainability analysis.

10. What is the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the project has ended?

5. Methodology

The assignment will begin with online kick-off briefing meetings between the team, Niras, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Helsinki and the Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu. During these meetings, additional support materials, combined with sector and program-specific briefings, will be given. During the inception phase, the consultants will further assess whether and how the project can be adequately evaluated by reviewing targets, indicators, availability of data on results against those targets and the ability to verify the results during fieldwork. The evaluation team is expected to make revisions or adjustments in their approach and methodology on the basis of these discussions.

The evaluation is expected to summarise the evidence-based findings of the overall performance of the project under each OECD-DAC evaluation criteria using a four-level colour grading system: (4/green = very good), (3/yellow = good), (2/orange = problems) and (1/red = serious deficiencies). The overall performance grading must reflect the findings of all evaluation questions under each evaluation criteria.
The final project completion Report of RWSSP-WN and annual progress reports of RVWRMP, the project's Management Information System (MIS) will provide the project results and data, and the evaluation Team will verify those data through targeted and random assessments. The results will be reviewed against the aims, indicators and plans outlined in the Project Documents, notably its results framework and the Inception Reports. Reviews of WASH and other facilities' sustainability should also be assessed in a sample of the geographic project areas. Because of the limited time for the field mission and the risks due to COVID-19, the evaluation team should be able to collect primary data to a large extent through virtual communications and online sources.
The Corona pandemic has changed the working modality and limited physical mobility. If the current situation continues for a longer period, field visits and physical meetings could be replaced by online meetings, telephone conversations and interviews. This could be decided at any moment in the dialogue between MFA, Niras, the evaluation team and the Embassy. The evaluation Team should apply a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gather information and evidence that is representative, verifiable and justified in order to carry out the assignment successfully. Depending on the pandemic situation and potential international and national travel restrictions, the methodology should be further detailed and adjusted during the inception phase.

Sources of information: The evaluation should use a combination of different sources: (i) Background documents provided by MFA, PMT and project partners; (ii) Additional written sources collected during the evaluation (including online sources); (iii) Stakeholder interviews through online platforms and phone; (iv) Stakeholder interviews face-to-face (by national consultants and by international consultants during the mission); and (v) focus groups (e.g. during workshops). One such focus group could be women from the same community, who would often give clearer answers and more information if they were interviewed separately from the men. The evaluation team should also consider the possibility of carrying out an online survey, especially if an international mission could not be carried out. Triangulation of information should be done on all major topics and be strengthened on issues where there is contradictory information from different sources. Regarding the sampling size, the goal is that it should be statistically relevant, considering a combination of factors such as project areas and their ecology/problems, communities covered, types of intervention, stakeholder groups, including ethnicities and gender. The main challenges to comply with this goal are the available time during the mission and logistics, including possible local travel restrictions due to COVID-19. A specially important challenge is the time and difficulties of reaching the most remote communities. The team should discuss with PMT, FCG and the Embassy to try to achieve a balance between geographic distribution and the number of sites, with the purpose of getting a sample with as much reliable information as possible within the available mission time.

Approach to stakeholder interviews: The Team should decide on who will carry out which interviews, based on several factors, including responsibilities of each Team member (see section 8), as well as geographic situation, language skills, available translation, etc. The evaluation questions mentioned in the previous section are what the team should be able to respond, based on information from multiple sources. The concrete questions to the interviewees should vary according to the stakeholder groups and background of the person interviewed.

Mission: Depending on the issues mentioned above, the international mission would probably be carried out in the month of February or March 2022. This would be discussed between MFA/Embassy and Niras/Team,

considering the Covid-19 situation and internal travel restrictions in Nepal. If the mission shall be carried out, it is highly important that it is not postponed until the later stage of the evaluation, which could give a complicated organisation of the work. In case the international mission is cancelled at any moment, the time of the team members would be adjusted, giving more time to the national evaluation expert. Both the national consultants would still go to the project areas if internal travel regulations permit it.

6. Management of the assessment (MFA)

The assessment is commissioned by the Department for the Americas and Asia (ASA) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Unit for South Asia. The Evaluation Manager at ASA will be responsible for the overall management of the process. The Evaluation Manager will work closely with other units/departments of the MFA and other stakeholders in Finland and abroad.

This assessment is managed through the EMS, and it will be conducted by an independent assessment team recruited by the EMS service provider (Particip GmbH – Niras Finland Oy).
There will be one Management Team responsible for the overall coordination of the assessment. This consists of the ASA Evaluation Manager, the Team Leader, and the EMS Deputy Service Coordinator (EMSC&D).

A reference group for the evaluation will be established and chaired by the ASA Evaluation Manager. The use of a reference group is a key step in guaranteeing the transparency, accountability and credibility of an evaluation process and plays a crucial role in validating the findings.

The reference group's mandate is to provide advisory support and inputs to the evaluation, e.g. through participating in the planning of the evaluation and commenting on the consultant's deliverables.

The tasks of the reference group are to:

- act as a source of knowledge for the evaluation;
- participate in the planning of the evaluation (providing input to the ToR, identifying key external stakeholders to be consulted during the process etc.);
- participate in the relevant meetings (e.g. start-up meeting, meeting to discuss the evaluation plan, debriefing and validation meetings after the field visits);
- comment on the deliverables of the consultant (i.e. inception report, draft final report, final report) to ensure that the evaluation is based on factual knowledge about the subject of the evaluation and
- play a key role in disseminating the findings of the evaluation and support the implementation, dissemination and follow-up on the agreed evaluation recommendations.

The evaluation team will be managed by the Team Leader. This requires careful planning to ensure that a common, consistent approach is used in order to achieve comparability of the data gathered and the approach used in the analysis. The Team Leader will develop a set of clear protocols for the team to use and convene regular team meetings to discuss the approach. During the process, particular attention should be paid to strong inter-team coordination and information sharing within the team.

The evaluation team is responsible for identifying relevant stakeholders to be interviewed and organising the interviews. The MFA and embassies will not organise these interviews or meetings on behalf of the evaluation team but will assist in identifying people and organisations to be included in the evaluation.

7. The evaluation process and time schedule

Phase A: Planning phase: Preparation of the draft Terms of Reference for discussion with the evaluation Reference Group (RG):

- Deadline for the draft ToR: 16 December 2021

Phase B: Start-up Phase:

- Start-up meeting (online): 13 December 2021
- Finalisation of the ToR and submission for approval: 22 December 2021

Phase C: Inception phase:

- Submission of Draft Inception Report, by 21 January 2021
- Inception meeting, 31 January 2022
- Administrative meeting, 31 January 2022
- Final Inception Report, 14 February 2022

Phase D: Implementation phase:

- From 16 February onwards

Phase E: Reporting/Dissemination Phase:

- Findings, conclusion and recommendations (FCR) workshop 15 April 2022 (TBC)
- Draft Final Report submission **by 29 April 2022**
- Meeting on draft final report **week of 9 May 2022 (TBC)**
- Final Report by 17 May 2022 (TBC)
- Public Presentations (possible catered to specific audiences) **by the end of May 2022 (TBC)**

The timetables is tentative.

During the process, particular attention should be paid to strong inter-team coordination and information sharing within the team. The MFA will establish a Focal Point in ASA that will represent the Ministry in the crucial fluent communication with the Team Leader. The evaluation process will include the following steps:

I) Desk Review: Prior to the inception report and fieldwork, documentation review is to be undertaken by the Evaluation Team. In addition to the Project Document, MFA and the Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu will assist the team by providing materials relevant to the project. The desk review could include a few online interviews with key persons to facilitate understanding of the documentation. These contacts will also provide the team with an assessment of data available for each indicator and other aspects to be evaluated.

II) Inception report: The desk review results should be included in the inception report as a concise analysis of the policies, guidelines, and other documents studied, including an analysis of the quality of project design and the Theory of Change for each project. This analysis could, however, be updated during the evaluation process based on additional information. The inception report shall also contain a description of work methodologies, a detailed and updated work plan for the rest of the assignment, division of labour within the evaluation team, list of major meetings and interviews (this can be done in consultation with the Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu) as well as detailed evaluation questions linked to the evaluation criteria. In addition to the narrative part, the inception report should include an evaluation matrix in which the tasks and issues of the evaluation are presented in a table format. The work plan may be presented in the form of an activity schedule.

III) Interviews and field visits: The interviews of key stakeholders in Nepal and Finland would start early in the evaluation process and could continue after the international mission. In parallel, the national consultants should start some interviews in Nepal under the guidance of the TL. During the international mission, work will be based on discussions in Kathmandu and substantive in-depth interviews in the project areas, in districts, municipalities and communities. The interviews should be extended to major donors in the water sector as well as donors working with complementary topics in the project areas. In-depth discussions, observation and use

of participatory methods should be utilised to comply with these tasks. The meeting arrangement and logistics shall be made in close cooperation between the evaluation team and the project implementing agencies. The mission will be carried out in close cooperation with the Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu that will notify the Nepalese authorities, and through these and the PMT help facilitate access to stakeholders at national, provincial and local levels.

IV) Mission debriefing: At the end of the field mission, the Evaluation Team shall prepare and organise a presentation of the main mission findings and preliminary conclusions. The meeting will be held at the Finnish Embassy in Kathmandu with the online participation of the MFA/reference group in Helsinki.

V) Drafting the first version of the report: On the basis of the desk study, mission and online interviews, the Evaluation Team shall put its findings in a draft evaluation report. This should include a list of synthesised findings and recommendations, presented in tables or bullets to guide the discussions at a meeting with the MFA/reference group after the presentation of the draft evaluation report.

VI) Drafting the final report: The evaluation Team should produce one evaluation report consisting of the following section: (i) relevance, coherence, and quality of project designs, as well as a summary of findings on main issues that are found to be common for the two projects evaluated (max 10 pages); (ii) two separate report sections with an evaluation of the two projects (max 15 pages each) covering all evaluation questions except relevance and coherence. The draft and final evaluation report should present findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and numbered recommendations for the formulation of similar projects in the future. For the ongoing project, it shall also present specific recommendations for closing, exit strategy and transfer process of the project results to national authorities. The final report, including the three mentioned sections, would be a maximum of 40 pages long, excluding annexes.

Niras will submit the first draft report to the reference group for correction of any potential factual data. After a first update (if necessary), Niras will present the draft final report to MFA for distribution to the main stakeholders in Finland and Nepal, including the Finnish Embassy in Kathmandu, FCG and the Government of Nepal. The draft report should include a table of recommended actions indicating responsible institutions and timelines.

The MFA Focal Point will receive all comments to the Draft Evaluation Report and present the team with one coherent list of comments where any potentially contradictory requests for changes have been resolved or taken out. The revised report from the evaluation team should be accompanied by a table of main comments received, as well as responses and arguments from the team in case any requested changes were not accepted. Minor comments and corrections to the text that are directly accepted by the team do not have to be included in this table.

VII) Final report: The final report, updated based on the comments, should be presented by Niras to MFA for approval, publication and further distribution. The approved report will also be the basis for a Project Seminar in Helsinki.

Table 3. Evaluation process with expected periods of phases

No.	Evaluation phase	Months					
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
1	Desk Review						
2	Prepare Inception report						
3	Interviews						
4	Mission + debriefing						
5a	Draft report 1st version						
5b	MFA review of the draft report						
6	Draft report final version						
7	Submit final report						

8	Project seminar								

The language of all reports will be English. The reports should be written in clear, unambiguous and explicit language. The reference material and sources of information must be clearly stated and carefully checked, and a list of referenced document material added to the report. Abbreviations and acronyms must be clearly explained. Annexes can be used for additional information. The terms of reference and the people interviewed will appear in Annex 1 and 2, and other annexes can be used if required. The findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations must be clearly based on evidence collected. The number of recommendations should be restricted to the minimum necessary, and their formulation must be clear and unambiguous so as to deliver explicit messages to the decision-makers.

8. Quality assurance

The Team Leader, with support from a representative of the consortium, play a key role in making sure that the internal Quality Assurance system is adequately applied, especially for each deliverable prepared by the team. Quality assurance encompasses both ensuring that the evaluation process follows evaluation principles as well as the high quality of the final reports. If required, corrective measures will be initiated by the Team leader at the earliest possible stage to avoid the accumulation of quality deficiencies that may be hard to remedy at a later stage.
The consortium implementing this evaluation will put in place a three-layer system of quality assurance for all products/reports: at the level of the Team Leader of the individual evaluation, through the Service Coordinator and through in-house senior QA advisors.

The final draft report(s) will be sent for a round of comments by ASA. The purpose of the comments is only to correct any misunderstandings or factual errors.

9. Expertise required

In line with the Evaluation Management Service (EMS) framework agreement, the final ToR, including the final evaluation questions, methodology, Team composition, schedule and tentative budget, will be drafted in close cooperation between the Team Leader and the evaluation reference group. It is expected that this process will start soon and that the full team could start working in January 2022.
Composition of the Team:
The evaluation team will consist of

- Team Leader
- Senior Evaluator (Sector expert)
- Senior Evaluator (Country expert)
- Senior Evaluator (Country expert & Gender and social inclusion expert)
- Emerging Evaluator

Niras will support the team's work with its staff members during different moments of the evaluation process. The TL will be responsible for the complete evaluation report and also supervise and provide quality control for the team members, as well as be in charge of the fluent relation with Niras. All team members will participate in the evaluation of both projects, while the first four mentioned consultants will participate in the field missions. At least one team member should speak Finnish – most probably the emerging evaluator.
The evaluation team will consider the Covid-19 situation and possible travel restrictions. Carrying out the fieldwork has to be decided, considering especially the local situation in Nepal. If it is not possible to reach the rural project areas, one option could be a shorter mission, however, considering the cost-benefit and carbon footprint of that alternative compared with a remote solution.

The evaluation team will contain both international and Nepalese experts. The team shall demonstrate solid experience and knowledge at least in the following fields:

- **Technical expertise relevant to the project,** including water supply, sanitation, water resource management, rural livelihoods and energy, and value chain development.
- **Programme/project evaluation and planning**: Project cycle management and Result Framework and their usage in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E). Thorough understanding of key elements of results-based programme management. Also, experience in managing EU-funded projects.
- **Institutional and human resources development, organisational change management:** Experience with assessment of institutional capacity (part of sustainability analysis).
- **Experience and knowledge should also be demonstrated in the fields of** Poverty reduction, Human rights based approach, Cross-cutting objectives in the Finnish development policy, and the application of these issues in project design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Working languages:** Fluency in English both in speaking and writing. Also Nepali and Finnish knowledge are essential in the team.

10. Budget

The total available budget for this evaluation is EUR 225,000, excluding VAT, which cannot be exceeded.

11. Mandate

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organisations. However, it is not authorised to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland. The evaluation team does not represent the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in any capacity.

All intellectual property rights to the result of the Service referred to in the contract will be the exclusive property of the Ministry, including the right to make modifications and hand over material to a third party. The Ministry may publish the end result under Creative Commons license in order to promote openness and public use of evaluation results.

ANNEX 1: Some key reference documents

Policy documents

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Evaluation Manual for Development Cooperation 2018. MFA. 16.6.2020.

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Guideline for the cross-cutting objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation. MFA.

Human Rights and Gender

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Mid-term evaluation on Rural Village Water Resources Management Project. Particip & Niras 2019.
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ANNEX 2: Brief outline of the evaluation report

The quality criteria of the evaluation report should follow those defined by the OECD/DAC and the EU (see table 11 of the evaluation manual). The main components of an evaluation report are outlined below. The outline is not compulsory, but intended as a guideline in defining the appropriate table of contents for a

specific evaluation. It is recommended that based on this general outline, the evaluators propose a report outline in the Inception Report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Providing an overview of the report, highlighting the main findings, conclusions, recommendations and any overall lessons.
- Includes a summary table presenting main findings, conclusions and recommendations and their logical links

  Relevance: findings – conclusions – recommendations
  Coherence
  Effectiveness: findings – conclusions – recommendations
  Efficiency: findings – conclusions – recommendations
  Impact: findings – conclusions – recommendations
  Sustainability: findings – conclusions – recommendations
  Etc.

INTRODUCTION

- Evaluation's rationale, purpose and objectives, scope and main evaluation questions

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXT AND THE EVALUATED PROJECT/PROGRAMME

- Description of the broader context and its influence on the performance of the project/programme.
- Introduction of the intervention being evaluated: objectives including the cross-cutting objectives, implementation strategies, resources for implementation.
- Introduction of the stakeholders and their roles, including both final beneficiaries and involved institutions

KEY FINDINGS

- Empirical data, facts, evidence relevant to the indicators of the evaluation questions.
- Overall progress in the implementation.
- Findings by evaluation criteria / issue (e.g. Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability)

CONCLUSIONS

- The evaluators' assessment of the performance of the project/programme based on the findings in relation to the set evaluation criteria, performance standards or policy issues (e.g. Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Proposed improvements, changes, action to remedy problems in performance or to capitalise on strengths. Recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions. There should be a clear indication of
  - to whom is the recommendation directed (MFA, partner institutions, consultant providing support services, etc.)
  - who is responsible for implementing the recommendation, and
  - when the recommendation should be implemented.

NOTE: Findings, conclusions and recommendations should be summarised in a table in the Executive Summary of the evaluation report.

LESSONS LEARNED and WAY FORWARD

- Are there any general conclusions that are likely to have the potential for wider application and use and future engagement in similar projects?

ANNEXES

- The terms of reference for the evaluation
- People interviewed
- Documents consulted
- Other annexes (to decide by the Evaluation Team)

10.2 Evaluation matrix

Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
1 Relevance (OECD/DAC definition: is the intervention doing the right things)		
EQ 1.1: To what extent did the project respond to the needs of the stakeholders and the policies of MFA and Nepal partners?		
Scope (Target group / duty-bearers[76], final beneficiaries / right-holders[77], range/selection of institutional partners)	- Monitoring data - National data on WASH coverage - Interviews with local government and programme implementation stakeholders	- How does the present area coverage relate to the whole area's needs in terms of WASH, livelihoods and maintenance? - In which way or through which mechanisms the needs of the beneficiaries at all levels are taken into consideration? - Who are the primary beneficiaries of the project? - To what extent have the projects been consistent with the needs and priorities of beneficiaries (including women and girls and easily marginalised groups)? - Have the basic needs and strategic interests of women, men, girls and boys, and easily marginalised groups been taken into account in project implementation? - Are there special measures in place to ensure non-discrimination? - Do all rights holders, including marginalized groups, have equal access to and benefit from the intervention? - Have the projects addressed the root causes of non – fulfilment of human rights and discrimination at different levels (legislation, policy, customs, traditional practices, attitudes, knowledge) - To what extent have the projects incorporated initiatives for mitigation and adaptation to climate change? - What potential opportunities might have been ignored in this regard? - Have the projects analysed the climate change risks?
Policy alignment (Nepali government policies, MFA development policies including Finland's CCOs)	- Evaluations and annual reporting - Literature on Nepali policy reform - Interviews with high-level government stakeholders	- What has been the relevance of RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP towards the objective of strengthening WASH administration and management in Nepal from the perspective of evolving Nepalese WASH policies?
EQ: 1.2 What was the quality of the project design?		

[77] Includes women, girls, men, boys, easily marginalised groups such as people with disabilities. Herein after the term rights-holder refers to all these groups.

Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
Theory of Change (plausibility of initial TOC, adaptability, relation to evolving results frameworks/context)	- Review of programme documentation - Evaluations - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders - Interviews with stakeholders involved in project design	- What major changes have been made in the original strategies, results and outputs? Why were those changes made? What have been the structural and financial implications of the changes? Is the Project following the status of safely managed water in an appropriate manner? - Have the projects had specific targets, activities and indicators designed to monitor the integration of non-discrimination and gender? -
Context (to what extent context and external factors were considered and applied, as per rights-holder/duty-bearer group, as relevant)	- Review of programme documentation - Evaluations - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders - Interviews with stakeholders involved in project design - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders	- How appropriate are the present result and impact indicators, and how are they being used, considering the drive to harmonize Nepal´s WASH and agriculture sectors across the programmes and projects with the national level indicators.
Lessons learnt from previous projects (MFA, other agencies, existing government service provision praxis)	- Evaluations and annual reporting - Literature on Nepali policy reform - Interviews with stakeholders involved in project design	- How have the projects taken into account experience and lessons from past experience of Finnish and other development cooperation as well as that of ongoing Nepali government service provision?
2 Coherence (OECD/DAC definition: how well does the intervention fit)		
2.1 To what extent was the project coherent with other MFA and partner interventions?		
Internal coherence (MFA only)	- Review of programme documentation - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders	- How does the project coordinate with other interventions supported by Finland? Are complementarity issues identified?

Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
External coherence (other donors/initiatives)	- Evaluations and annual reporting - Literature on Nepali policy reform - Interviews with stakeholders in Finnish programming and other agency programming involved in project design	- Are the project's efforts towards result sustainability mutually supportive and compatible with the efforts and systems by the government and other sector actors? - Does the project systematically coordinate and/or harmonize its work with other relevant actors in Nepal? - What are the level and specific mechanisms of donor coordination and communication in the project working area? Are these mechanisms contributing to the complementarity of activities? - How has the Project utilized the opportunities to cooperate with other programmes (e.g. UNICEF, Finnish Meteorological Institute) operating in the area? - What has the project achieved in terms of contributing to sector-wide coherence around the objectives of sound WASH governance?
3 Effectiveness (OECD/DAC definition: is the intervention achieving its objectives?)		
EQ 3.1: To what extent were expected outcomes achieved, and were there any unexpected changes?		
Achievement of institutional targets in the results frameworks (Institutional strengthening and governance of project partners, and other duty-bearers)	- Review of programme documentation - Evaluations - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders	- Assess the extent to which RVWRMP implementation policy has influenced the national agenda. - What kind of impact the RVWRMP and RWSSP-WN have had on the development of national WASH policies in Nepal? - Has the project been able to influence to relevant policies and strategies at different levels (national, provincial and local) and how that could be improved in the new governance context? - How has the state restructuring of the Nepalese administration affected the project implementation and project implementation strategy? - Have the projects built capacity on human rights and gender among stakeholders? -

Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
Achievement of service provision targets in the results frameworks (WASH facilities constructed, maintenance provided) taking into account different groups of beneficiaries (men, women, ethnic groups, age groups, and other right-holders)	- Review of programme documentation - Evaluations - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders	- Are the rural development/service provision activities leading to the expected outcomes in each result area? Are the approach and assumptions accurate? - What has been the overall contributions of the projects within the context of local and national development challenges?
4 Efficiency (OECD/DAC definition: how well are resources being used?)		
EQ 4.1: How efficiently was the project implemented?		
Overall management efficiency (timeliness, financial management, staff management)	- Review of programme documentation - Interviews with programme implementation staff	- How effective has been the project management in working towards the set project results? - How effective have been the project steering mechanisms in directing the project towards the set objectives? - Is resourcing, both human and financial, used in a cost-efficient manner? Have the changes in TA personnel affected the efficiency, and if yes, how? - Is resource allocation well balanced between technical capacity and institutional capacity? - What is the absorption capacity of the project? Is it able to use all funds allocated to it? - How do the project stakeholders perceive the TA support, and what do they think is the appropriate role of donors in future technical assistance? - How has the project promoted federalism on the local level? How has it promoted RM level capacity and planning efficiency? - How can the annual planning and budgeting of project activities be improved in the new governance context?

Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
Efficiency of the steering structure (project planning and monitoring, quality of monitoring and evaluation systems)	- Review of programme documentation - Interviews with programme planning and implementation staff - Interviews with staff and partners involved in monitoring and evaluation	- What kind of working modalities/administrative conventions/approaches have improved/hindered the project to monitor and adapt efforts to reach the target groups? - Are sufficient resources allocated for systematic skill/knowledge transfer in terms of the set objectives for skills/knowledge transfer in the Project? - What are the monitoring, reporting and accountability practices? Do they facilitate learning and accountability? - How efficient has the project management structure been in supporting the achievement of the project results? How has the project management and human resources structure adjusted to federalisation? - In how far did the interventions and approaches suit the absorption capacity of beneficiaries and institutional stakeholders? - Are the indicators used suitable for showing achievement of results? - Has compliance with human rights principles been monitored during the intervention? -
Risk management (climate, adaptation to Covid-19, response to 'surprises', internal risk management, lack of cultural understanding from the perspective of non-discrimination)	- Review of programme documentation - Interviews with programme implementation staff	- How prepared was the project for risks and unforeseen events, and how effective was it in dealing with them? - What was the effect of realized risks on the achieved results?
EQ 4.2 To what extent were the inputs converted into high-quality outputs and outcomes?		
Basic cost assessment taking into account the context. See efficiency in other reports (MTR)	- Review of programme documentation - Interviews with programme implementation staff - Interviews and document review related to similar programmes	- Could the same results be achieved through other means? If yes, what would be the pros and cons?
5 Impact (OECD/DAC definition: what difference does the intervention make)		
EQ 5.1: What have the impacts of the project been, and what is the likely future impact?		

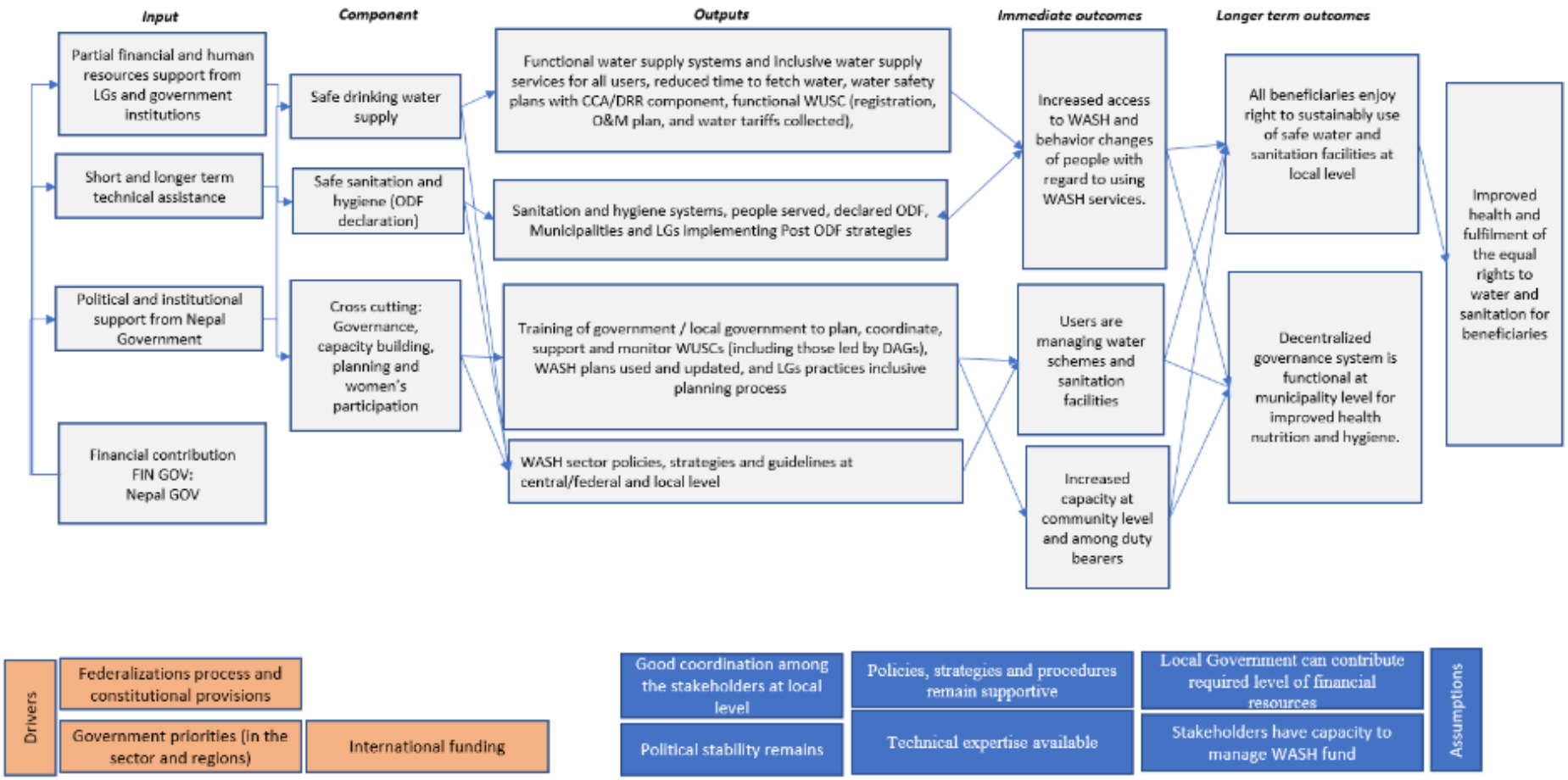
Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
Impacts achieved and expected (Short-term impacts, expected long-term impacts of the current outcomes in relation to final beneficiaries/rights-holders of WASH services)	- Programme monitoring and evaluation documentation - National data on WASH service provision and health - Interviews with staff and partners involved in monitoring and evaluation - Interviews with programme implementation staff - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders - Interviews and document review related to similar programmes	- What have been the impacts of RVWRMP and RWSSP-WN in enhancing water governance and WASH policies in the project area? - What has been the performance of the projects against its objectives as set out in the programme documents, and how can implementation over the remaining term be supported? - What have been the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
Impacts achieved and expected (Short-term impacts, expected long-term impacts of the current outcomes in relation to strengthened institutions/duty-bearers)	- Programme monitoring and evaluation documentation - National data on WASH service provision and health - Interviews with staff and partners involved in monitoring and evaluation - Interviews with programme implementation staff - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders - Interviews and document review related to similar programmes	- What have been the impacts of RVWRMP and RWSSP-WN in enhancing water governance and WASH policies in the project area? - What has been the performance of the projects against its objectives as set out in the project documents, and how can implementation over the remaining term be supported? - What have been the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
EQ 5.2 Were there any unintended positive or negative impacts?		

Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
Challenges during implementation sensitivity, economic-financial, institutional, environmental). Unintended impacts observed to rights-holders	- Programme monitoring and evaluation documentation - Review of environmental impact assessments - Interviews with national and local stakeholders involved with disaster risk reduction and climate change efforts - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders	- What have been the positive and negative environmental impacts as related to disaster risk reduction, current environment, longer-term climate change adaptation and mitigation? - What have been the positive and negative impact on social cohesion and public accountability? - What was the impact of the projects on Nepal policies?
6 Sustainability (OECD/DAC definition: will the benefits last)		
6.1 What is the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the project has ended?		
Capacity related to know-how and ownership of rights-holders and duty-bearers (e.g. final beneficiaries, local authorities, stakeholders responsible for maintenance, stakeholders responsible for replication)	- Programme plans and monitoring and evaluation documentation - Evaluations and annual reporting - Literature on Nepali policy reform - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders	- What is the sustainability of institutional strengthening? - Are investments conducted in an institutionally sustainable manner? - How are operations and maintenance been planned to be taken care of (training, repair, post-construction, ongoing service provision, etc.) after the external funding ceases? - Are these plans plausible? - What are the roles of community and government institutions and the private sector, and how have they been capacitated for those roles? - What are the major factors influencing project sustainability? What are the threats, and what are the enhancing factors? - Will the RM, Provincial government, User committee and cooperatives be able to continue with project-initiated interventions even after the project is phased out? - What has the project done to promote local ownership, development results and mutual accountability and local commitment towards the project goals? How successful has it been? Who was involved in critical decisions making? - Have climate risks been taken into account in the sustainability of results, e.g. in the design of infrastructure and its maintenance? -

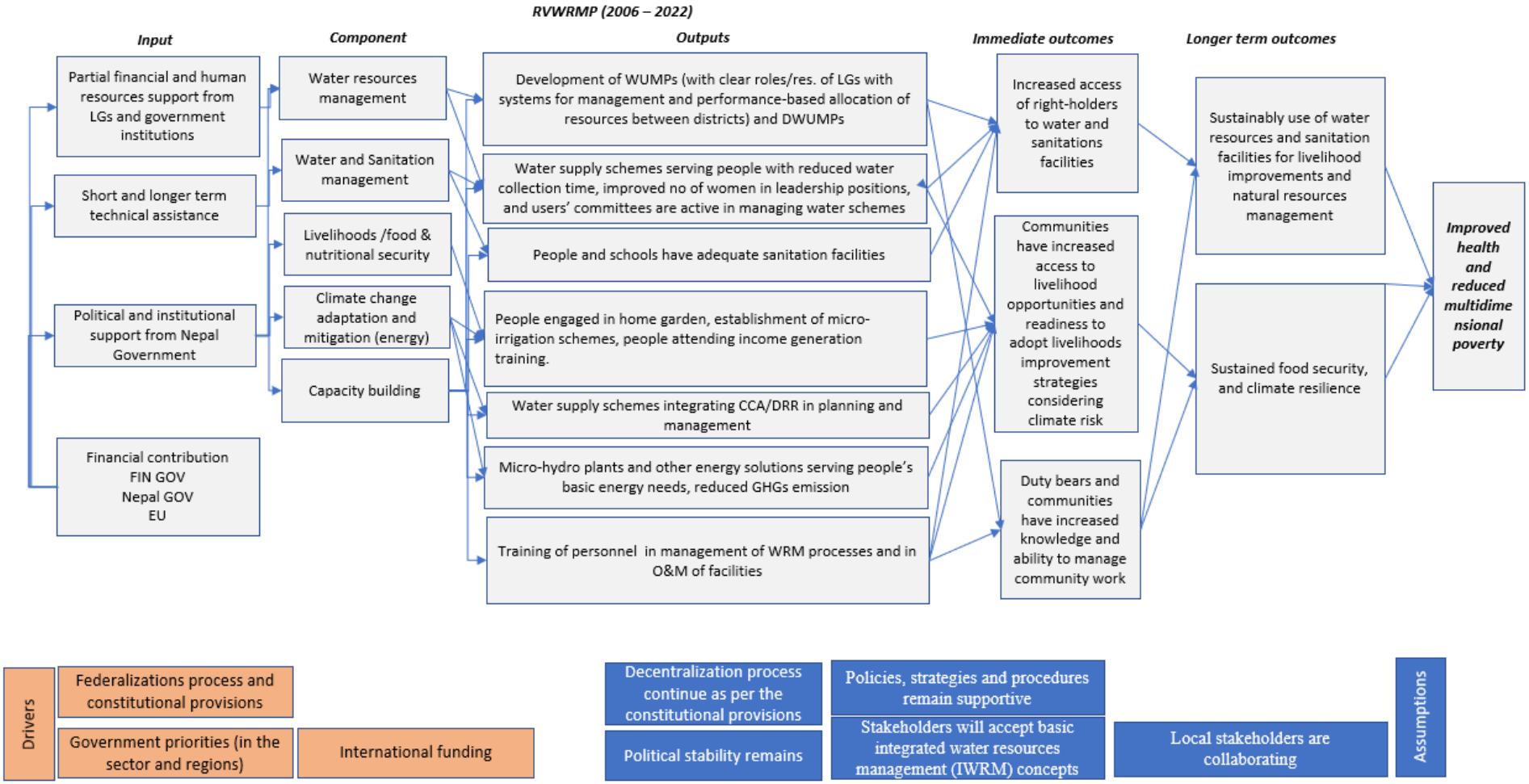
Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence/data collection methods	Potential guidance questions for interviews adapted from original TOR
Financial capacities of duty-bearers (for ongoing service provision, maintenance, replication, maintaining human resources)	- Programme plans and monitoring and evaluation documentation - Evaluations and annual reporting - Literature on Nepali policy reform - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders	- Are investments conducted in a financially sustainable manner? - How are operations and maintenance been planned to be financed (training, repair, post-construction, ongoing service provision, etc.) after the external funding ceases? - Are these plans plausible?
Exit strategies (Current project support, development cooperation inputs in general, maintaining future ownership)	- Programme plans and monitoring and evaluation documentation - Evaluations and annual reporting - Literature on Nepali policy reform - Interviews with high level Nepali/Finnish government stakeholders - Interviews with local government, programme implementation stakeholders and beneficiaries/rights holders	- Did the exit strategy prepare for completion of the project(s) and did it contribute to sustainability? What kind of project results are likely to sustain still 10-20 years after the project completion? - By which concrete measures does the GoN (particularly local government) demonstrate ownership of the project? Does the Government have plans to continue the activities of the Project independently, and if yes, what kind? - What are the key recommendations for the project phase-out (RVWRMP) for ensuring sustainability and gradual handing over? - What are the best practices and project components that could ensure long term sustainability? - What are the key recommendations for ensuring the sustainability of MIS developed and implemented by the project?

10.3 Theories of Change

Reconstructed RWSSP-WN TOC



Reconstructed RVWRMP TOC



10.4 Context overview

Nepal is a lower-middle-income country with a population of an estimated 29.1 million.[78] It is a landlocked, mountainous country except for a thin strip of plains, the Terai. Nepal has made steady improvements in human development, transitioning to the medium human development category in 2016.[79] Nepal's 2019 human development index (HDI) value is 0.602, 142th out of 189 countries and territories.

Nepal's Multidimensional Poverty Index (2021[80]) shows that multidimensional poverty nationally fell from 30% in 2014 to 17.4% in 2019. The report shows that 28% of rural dwellers are poor as compared with 12% in urban areas. There are also differences across provinces: Karnali Province has the highest percentage of poor people (40%), while in Bagmati Province, it is only 7%.

Nepal's Gender Inequality Index value in 2019 was 0.452, ranking it 110th of 162 countries.[81] Nepal has introduced reforms to address social exclusion and gender inequality, such as establishing a quota of women's seats and participation of marginalized groups in parliament.[82] Nepal has also adopted new legislation to strengthen government functioning and 'leave no one behind' protections.[83]

Women constitute 51.5% of the total population, with a literacy rate of 57% compared to a male literacy rate of 75%[84]. Due to the existing traditional cultural practices (dowry system, early marriages, polygamy, son preferences, widow stigmatization, seclusion (pardha), segregation during menstruation (Chhaupadi), caste/ethnicity and location), women and girls face discriminations that subordinate their position. Women and girls are mainly responsible for household work, including water and sanitation management. Due to prescribed gender roles, women have less access to decision making positions.

In order to address human rights and gender equality, and inclusion of women and socially excluded groups (DAGs), the government aims to increase women's participation at all levels of decision-making positions, mainly socially, politically and economically. The 2015 constitution guarantees equal rights to men and women irrespective of gender, caste, ethnicity, or geographical location.

The economy of Nepal is largely dependent on agriculture and remittances[85]. Agriculture remains Nepal's principal economic activity, employing about 65% of the population and providing a quarter of GDP. Until the COVID-19 pandemic drastically the economy, Nepal experienced strong economic growth.[86]

Nepal is endowed with natural resources, on which large parts of the rural population for their livelihood. The sub-national government levels are responsible for managing local developments, including promoting agriculture, water, climate change disasters, sanitation, irrigation, water management and other sectors related to people's livelihoods upliftment (LGOA, 2017). Unregulated urbanization of plains and fertile land has put

[78] CBS Nepal.

[79] Government of Nepal National Planning Commission (NPC) and UNDP, Nepal Human Development Report (HDR) 2020 –Beyond Graduation: Productive Transformation and Prosperity, 2020, p. 17.

[80] Nepal Multidimensional Poverty Index (2021). NPC/Government of Nepal, Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Downloads/UNDP-NP-MPI-Report-2021.pdf

[81] http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NPL

[82] The National Human Rights Commission, National Women Commission, National Dalit Commission, National Inclusion Commission, Indigenous Nationalities Commission, Madhesi Commission, Tharu Commission, and Muslim Commission. NepalNPC, National Review of SDGs, 2020, p. 8.

[83] In 2017, Nepal passed the Local Government Operations Act, Inter-Governmental Operations Act, the National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission Act, The Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and acts supporting rights to food,housing, employment, reproductive health, and education. Nepal NPC, National Review of SDGs, 2020, p. 1.

[84] as per the Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal 2011

[85] "The World Factbook". CIA.gov. Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/nepal/

[86] Government of Nepal. Economic Survey, 2019/2020. Kathmandu; the 2020 data comes from the FY2021/22 Budget Statement in Parliament (see Ministry of Finance, 2021).

downward pressure on the country's food supply, which has led to poverty and vulnerability to natural disasters such as droughts, floods, earthquakes, and landslides, instabilities in global prices, civil conflicts, and poor infrastructure and the risks of climate change are all factors contributing to Nepal's food insecurity. Undernourishment is still a concern, particularly among vulnerable populations in rural areas.

The forestry sector is important for local communities. Almost half of the land is forest, providing wood and non-timber products for crop and livestock sectors and household consumption and balancing the natural ecosystems and conserving biodiversity.

Nepal's diverse geo-climatic system, combining heavy monsoons, steep terrain, and remoteness, renders it vulnerable to climate risks. Climate change is projected to impact the country's farming systems significantly. Reduced water availability during dry periods could exacerbate agricultural water needs. Floods, drought, hailstorms and temperature extremes are some effects of climate change that have impacted the country in the past few years, with significant effects on agriculture and livelihood. Shifting monsoons affect planting and harvesting seasons, and these shifts are likely to become more erratic under a changing climate. As a result, crop yields of major cereals are projected to decrease substantially.

Water resources: Nepal has a total drainage area of 194,471 square kilometres comprising more than 6,000 rivers. The rivers flow from mountains in the north to hills and plains in the south and finally discharge in the Ganges in India, contributing 47% of its monsoon flow. Widespread water pollution has resulted in increased water scarcity, poorer public health, lower agricultural yields, and declining quality of aquatic life in lakes and rivers. When forest area is lost, it causes watershed degradation, biodiversity loss, landslides and erosion, frequent flooding, and diminished groundwater recharge. Farm livelihoods, including those of the poor, become precarious, and the cycle of poverty is entrenched.

Renewable energy in Nepal is a sector that is rapidly developing. While Nepal mainly relies on burning biomass for its energy needs, solar and wind power are being seen as important supplements to solve its energy crisis. The most common form of renewable energy in Nepal is hydroelectricity. Electricity is becoming increasingly important.

Nepal has undergone an immense social change in the last decades. It emerged from a decade long-conflict in 2006, followed by a decade of political transition leading to a new federal constitution in 2015.[87] The constitution puts in place a federal structure of government with a central (federal) government, seven provincial, 77 districts, and 753 local governments (Municipalities and Rural Municipalities).[88] Elections at all levels were successfully held in 2017, and elected representatives assumed office in 2018. However, political wrangling in 2020-21 demonstrated that political instability continues to prevail.[89]

Nepal adopted the 'International Development Cooperation Policy (IDCP 2019[90])', which is expected to align the development cooperation with the principles of Nepal's Constitution, including the federal structure. IDCP 2019, however, focuses more on hardware support for physical infrastructure, social sector, science and technology, climate change and disaster. It also emphasises budgetary support and a Sector-Wide Approach or program-based approach with primarily on-budget on-treasury modality.

[87] Nepal NPC, National Review of SDGs, 2020, p. 1.

[88] The seven provinces are: Province 1, Province 2, Bagmati Province, Gandaki Province, Lumbini Province, Karnali Province, and Sudurpashchim Province. The first two provinces (in the east and southeast of the country have not yet been able to agree on a name for themselves.

[89] At the request of the Prime Minister, the President dissolved the parliament in December 2020 and again in May 2021 and called for early election. The Supreme Court overturned the decision, reinstating the Parliament. A new Prime Minister - Sher Bahadur Deuba - was appointed and assumed office in July 2021.

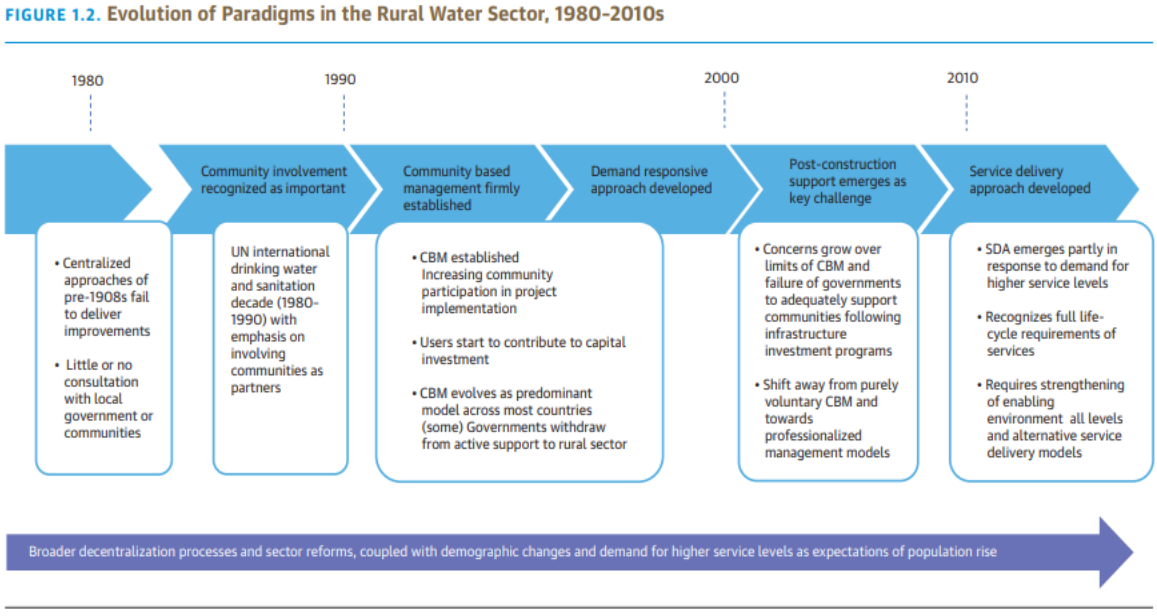
[90] MoF, 2019. International Development Cooperation Policy (2019). Available at https://mof.gov.np/uploads/document/file/print_copy_IDCMP-2019_Eng-fullpage_20191107071739.pdf

10.5 Water and Sanitation overview

Evolution of WASH sector Globally and in Nepal

Globally and in Nepal, the WASH sector had been evolved over the past eight decades (Figure 2). The centralized provision of water supply was prevalent from the 1950s and 1960s onwards and faced a number of challenges as the service developed in rural areas. The community-based management model came as an alternative to the centralized provision of water supply. The community-based management model has been widely implemented across the developing world since the 1980s (UNICEF 2016).

Figure 2 Evolution of paradigms in the Rural Water Sector, 1980-2010s



Source: Lockwood, Harold & Smits, Stef (2011) Supporting Rural Water Supply: Moving towards a Service Delivery Approach

In general, supply-driven water supply interventions have not succeeded in providing poor communities with sustainable water supplies. Communities who simply receive a water point and who play a minor or symbolic role in project implementation understandably do not feel a sense of ownership of the project. On the other hand, Demand Responsive Approach (DRA) proved insufficient to address the requirements for support mechanisms to rural populations beyond project implementation (World Bank 2012) and the critical role of enabling institutions and policies beyond the community level. Since the 2000s, more emphasis has been placed on post-construction support to rural service providers, professionalization, and diversification of service delivery models, including various forms of private sector involvement (Smits and Lockwood 2011). A service delivery approach is now emerging with the increasing demand for higher service levels. This approach recognizes the importance of wider systems of governance and the enabling environment, political economy aspects, life cycle costs, and the role of local institutions (Whaley and Cleaver 2017).

Water and sanitation in Nepal

Nepal promulgated a new constitution in 2015. Articles 35 and 4 of the constitution recognize access to safe water and sanitation as a citizen's fundamental right. The present federal structure comprises a Central or Federal

Government, 7 Provincial Governments, 753 Local Governments.[91] The constitution has clearly mentioned the functions of federal, provincial and local government for water supply and sanitation service delivery allocating responsibility depending on the population coverage, among others. While the role of local government is more or less clear, the clarity of roles among the province and the federal government is in the making.

As Nepal has made remarkable progress on providing "basic service level",[92] The GoN has prioritised water supply service level upgrading in Water Supply and Sanitation Policy and in the 15th Development Plan (2020—2024), is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relevant to WASH: 6.1 and 6.2. They are also guided by the draft Sector Development Plan (SDP) 2016-2030.

The SDP foresees to provide WASH services in three phases:

- Phase I/Short Term (2016-2020): Universal access to basic WASH services, improved service levels (medium 25%, high 15% population, reconstruction)[93]; ·
- Phase II/Medium Term (2021-2025): Improved service levels (medium 40%, high 30% population), functionality and sustainability improvement; and ·
- Phase III/Long Term (2026-2030): Improved service levels (medium 50%, high 50% population), impact assessment.

The Ministry of Water Supply (MoWS) is the key ministry related to water and sanitation at the federal level. The Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management (DWSSM) under MoWS is responsible for planning, implementation, operation, repair, and maintenance of water supply and sanitation systems throughout the country. DWSSM has established 15 Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project (FWSSMP) offices in the country. Schemes serving more than 5,000 people in the hills and more than 1,000 in the mountains belong under the responsibility of FWSSMP offices.

Provincial governments have the mandate to develop WASH policies and acts and facilitate WASH services at the local level. Provinces provide specific funding and technical support on a demand basis to municipalities and have a budget allocation for match funding for water schemes. As per the constitution of Nepal (2015), the Provincial government has the mandate to provide water and sanitation services for schemes covering 5.000-10,000 people in Terai Madhesh, schemes covering 3.000-5.000 people in Hill and 500-1.000 people in Mountain regions.

There are various coordination mechanisms set at all levels. At the national level, the National WASH coordination committee (NWASH-CC) is led by MoWS. At the provincial level, Provincial-WASH-Coordination Committee (P-WASH-CC) ensures coordination among the WASH stakeholders in the province and is chaired by the Chief Secretary of the Province. Within municipalities, the key institutions are the Municipal WASH Coordination Committee (MWASH-CC), the Village WASH Coordination Committee (V-WASH-CC), and the Ward WASH Coordination Committee (WASH-CC).

The key sector policies that guide the sector are Rural Water and Sanitation National policies and implementing strategies 2004, National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (2011), Local Self Governance act (1999), National Drinking Water Quality Surveillance Guideline 2015, Water Safety Plan (2014) and Draft Sector Development Plan (SDP 2016 -2030).

[91] which includes 6 Metropolitan Cities (Mahanagarpalika), 11 Sub Metropolitan Cities (Upa-Mahanagarpalika), 276 Municipalities (Nagarpalika) and 460 Rural Municipalities (Gaunpalika) and 6,743 wards.
[92] 45-65 lpcd.
[93] The service levels are defined in policies.

In the past decades, access to drinking water and sanitation in Nepal has significantly improved (Table 5). The share of people living without safe drinking water and basic sanitation has more than halved since the nineties, complying with one of the Nepal targets for the Millennium Development Goal 7 (MDG). Since the National Hygiene and Sanitation Master Plan (2011) was rolled out, very encouraging and internationally recognised progress has been achieved in sanitation coverage. In 2019, Nepal was also declared an Open Defecation Free (ODF) country.

Table 5: Progress of WASH over the years

Indicator	1990[a]	2000[a]	2005[a]	2010[a]	2011[a]	2014[b] (NMIP)	2015[c] (DWSS)	Set Targets	
								MDG 2015	National 2017
Proportion of the population (%) using an improved water supply	46	73	81	80.4	85	83.59	86.45	73	100
Proportion of the population (%) using an improved sanitation facility	6	30	39	43	62	72	81.95	53	100

Source: (a) MDG Progress Report, NPC, 2013 (b) NMIP, 2014 (c) DWSS annual review, 2015

However, there are setbacks to this progress. On April 25 and May 12, 2015, Nepal's central and surrounding regions were ravaged by major earthquakes, which damaged water and sanitation infrastructure. According to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment report, around 1,570 systems[94] were totally damaged, and a further 3,663 suffered partial damage and still require repair. The earthquake also destroyed more than an estimated 180,000 household toilets and damaged more than 4,416 school toilets. The total net value of damages to the water and sanitation sector is estimated at NPR 11.4 billion (EUR 87 million), and the total needed for recovery and reconstruction, using the principle of 'building back better', is estimated at NPR 18.1 billion (EUR 138 million).

Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster survey (Table 2), data indicates the new challenges in WASH sector. While access to[95] basic drinking water reached 95.4%, the share of the population that uses "safe drinking water" was only 19.1%, whereas the target for that year was 25%, as set by SDP 2016-2030. Most of the unserved population are in remote locations and poses a challenge for universal access. Nepal's WASH sector is confronted with poor quality of water supply provided to the communities as the same survey indicated that a staggering 75% of the water sources are found to have faecal contamination, and the faecal contamination of household drinking water stands at 85.1%.

Providing safely managed drinking water services remain a major challenge. In addition, a number of physical and socioeconomic drivers of change could reduce water security in future. They can be, e.g. physical (climate change and disaster risk); and socio-economic (population growth and competing water uses, including industrial

[94] 42,039 water supply schemes recorded in the National Management Information Project (NMIP) database.
[95] Improved sources of drinking water either in their dwelling/yard/plot or within 30 minutes round trip collection time

wastewater). The functionality of the schemes is a serious concern [96]. The new federal political structure has brought a more accountable government at the local level. However, the capacity to deliver the services remains an issue. Moreover, the harmonization of roles and responsibilities in three tiers of government is still in the making. Challenges remain in sustaining the ODF as well.

Table 6: MICS 2019 data on access to water, sanitation and hygiene services

Type of services	Nepal	Province 1	Province 2	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpachhim
Use of basic drinking water service	95.4	95.7	97.3	94.6	94.9	97.2	88.6	93.4
Faecal contamination of source water	75.3	60.7	67.4	76.7	85.1	86.2	89.1	83.2
Use of safely managed drinking water services	19.1	34.7	24.5	14.9	10.5	14.8	3.5	14.7
Use of improved sanitation facilities	94.5	96.6	84.1	98.3	99	95.3	94.9	96.6
Handwashing facility with water and soap	80.7	84.6	79.3	88.2	88.1	84.6	55.2	57.6
Menstrual hygiene management	83.1	73.4	84.8	93.7	81.7	87.5	69.9	65.5
Faecal contamination of household drinking water	85.1	81.8	89.8	73.1	82.9	90.9	90.3	98.9

Source: "Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS", Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 2019. (https://www.unicef.org/nepal/media/9076/file/NMICS_2019_-_Key_findings.pdf)

In the project area of RWSSP-WN, a number of other organisations have been working in the WASH sector. They are mainly Gorkha Welfare Trust (GWT), World Bank-funded Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board (RWSSFDB) and Nepal Water for Health, a national NGO.

[96] According to National Management Information Project (NMIP 2018) only 28% of the existing water supply schemes are functioning well and 36% need minor repair. More than 39% of the schemes have been identified needing major repair, rehabilitation or complete reconstruction.

10.6 Overview of Finnish Development Policy Programmes

Table 7: Goals and priority areas in Finland's development policy since 2007[1]

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
					RWSSP-WN Phase 1					RWSSP-WN Phase 2									
			RVWRMP Phase 1					RVWRMP Phase 2					RVWRMP Phase 3						

Finland's Development Policies in 2004-2020

	Development Policy Programme (DPP) 2004	DPP 2007	DPP 2012	DPP 2016	2020 (*)
Overarching goal	Eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals	Eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals	Eradication of extreme poverty and securing a life of human dignity for all people in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals	The core goal of Finland's development policy is to eradicate extreme poverty and to reduce poverty and inequality	SDG Agenda 2030: No poverty (SDG1) Reduction of inequalities (SDG 10) Addis Ababa Action Agenda Climate action (SDG 13 and Paris Agreement)
Priorities and priority areas	Focus area key words: Basic education Health care systems HIV/AIDS Social security & employment and labour market regulations Access to clean drinking water and sanitation services Sustainable natural resources management & protection Food security Forestry Information society	(No priority areas as in later DPPs)		The rights and status of women and girls have strengthened	Rights of women and girls
			An inclusive green economy that promotes employment	Developing countries' own economies have generated jobs, livelihood opportunities and well-being	Sustainable economies and decent work
			A democratic and accountable society that promotes human rights	Societies have become more democratic and better-functioning	Education and peaceful democratic societies
			Sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection	Food security and access to water and energy have improved, and natural resources are used sustainably	Climate and natural resources
		Humanitarian Assistance	Humanitarian Assistance	Humanitarian Assistance	Humanitarian Assistance
	Source: MFA, 2004. Development Policy – Government Resolution 2004. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.	Source: Palenberg, M., Norheim, T., Kontro, M., Mascarenhas, L.C., Dorji, C, Menezes, D., Murched, N. & Thapa, M. (2021). Evaluation of ICI Projects in Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, and Nepal. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA).			
	(*) Publication name: Theories of Change and Aggregate Indicators for Finland's Development Policy				

10.7 Finnish Cross Cutting Objectives

Table 8: Cross-cutting themes/objectives in Finland's development policy during 2004-2022

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
					RWSSP-WN Phase 1						RWSSP-WN Phase 2								
			RVWRMP Phase 1					RVWRMP Phase 2						RVWRMP Phase 3					
	Cross-cutting objectives in Finland's development policy in 2004-2022																		
	DPP 2004			DPP 2007 (referred to as "cross-cutting themes")					DPP 2012				DPP 2016				2020 (*)		
GENDER	Promotion of the rights and the status of women and girls, and promotion of gender and social equality			Promotion of the rights and the status of women and girls, and promotion of gender and social equality					Gender equality				(no cross-cutting themes or objectives described)				Gender equality		
NON-DISCRIMINATION	Promotion of the rights of groups that are easily marginalised, particularly those of children, the disabled, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, and promotion of equal participation opportunities for them			Promotion of the rights of groups that are easily excluded, particularly children, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, and the promotion of equal opportunities for participation					Reduction of inequality								Non-discrimination (with special focus on people with disabilities)		
CLIMATE	Consideration of environmental issues			(not included)					Climate sustainability								Climate resilience Low emission development		
HIV/AIDS	(not included)			Combating HIV/AIDS; HIV/AIDS as a health problem and as a social problem					(not included)								(not included)		
	Source: MFA, 2004. Development Policy – Government Resolution 2004. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.			Source: Palenberg, M., Norheim, T., Kontro, M., Mascarenhas, L.C., Dorji, C, Menezes, D., Murched, N. & Thapa, M. (2021). Evaluation of ICI Projects in Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, and Nepal. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA).																
	(*) Publication: Theories of Change and Aggregate Indicators for Finland's Development Policy. (2020.) Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.																		

10.8 Finland's country programmes for development cooperation in Nepal

Table 9: Finland's country programmes for development cooperation in Nepal

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
				RWSSP-WN Phase 1						RWSSP-WN Phase 2										
		RVWRMP Phase 1					RVWRMP Phase 2						RVWRMP Phase 3							

Finland's Country Programme for Development Cooperation in Nepal				
Finland's development cooperation with Nepal from the late 1990s until 2008 was guided by the Finnish priorities in the 1998 development policy, its 2001 operationalisation plan that was ratified in the 2000 and 2003 country consultations and translated into interventions in the WASH and education sectors, as well as environment and mapping activities.	**Country Assistance Plan 2008–2012 Priority sectors listed in the plan:**	**Country Strategy for Development Cooperation 2013-2016: Objectives**	**Country Strategy for Development Cooperation 2016-2019: Impact**	**Country programme for development cooperation 2021-2024: Expected impact**
	Mapping national resources Environment Forestry WASH Climate change mitigation Climate change adaptation Land administration Trade and investment The peace process and good governance Education	1) Capacitated, strengthened and transparent public institutions, public administration, CSOs and inclusive policy-making processes 2) Equal and universal access to relevant quality education 3) Equal and sustainable access to safe and potable water in rural areas 4) Economic empowerment, especially for women and easily marginalised groups 5) Inclusive management of forest resources and environmental administration 6) Strengthened WASH policy, planning and management 6)	Improved health and living standard of people through safe and sustainable water and sanitation services and livelihood development	Communities' improved climate resilience and health through sustainable water supply, sanitation and hygiene and livelihood development
			The education system provides students with the necessary skills to contribute to Nepal's economic and democratic	An inclusive Education system that provides students with the necessary skills contributing to nepal's economic and democratic development
			Improved economic and political participation for women and people in vulnerable situations	Equality and prosperity of ALL women and girls including those with disability and those in vulnerable positions is enhanced
Source: Caldecott et al., (2012.) Evaluation - The Country Programme between Finland and Nepal. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.		Source: Ministry for Foregin Affairs of Finland. (2014.) Country Strategy for Development Cooperation with Nepal 2013–2016.	Source: Ministry for Foregin Affairs of Finland. (2016.) Country Strategy for Development Cooperation - Nepal 2016–2019	Source: Ministry for Foregin Affairs of Finland. (2021.) Finland's country strategy for Nepal 2021–2024.

10.9 CCO categories and analysis

Table 10: CCO analysis plan

CCO	Assessment
Non-discrimination, reduction of inequalities, promotion of rights of those groups that are easily marginalised, and promotion of equal rights for participation	Non-discrimination will be assessed, reflecting the project implementation on the human rights-based approach (HRBA). Finland applies HRBA in development cooperation, entailing a "systematic integration of human rights as means and objective in development cooperation". Finland is committed to strengthening: 1) the realisation of human rights as a development result, 2) inclusive, participatory and non-discriminatory development processes, which are transparent and enhance accountability; and 3) enhanced capacities of rights-holders, duty bearers and other actors. [97] The MFA has published two guidance notes on HRBA in 2013 and 2015.[98] HRBA has four levels: 1) Human rights blind (not eligible for funding) 2) Human rights sensitive 3) Human rights progressive 4) Human rights transformative
Gender equality	Within the HRBA, gender is one aspect of equality and entails that specific attention needs to be paid to gendered impacts in all actions. The aim of gender equality as a CCO is to ensure that everyone, regardless of gender, can equally contribute to and benefit from development.[99] The level of gender mainstreaming of each project phase will be assessed using the gender rating of Global Environment Facility (GEF): 1) Not gender relevant 2) Gender blind 3) Gender aware 4) Gender sensitive 5) Gender mainstreamed 6) Gender transformative
Climate (resilience and low emission development)	The aim of climate resilience as a CCO is to enhance climate change adaptation, reduce vulnerability and strengthen the resilience of people, ecosystems and societies to climate risks and the impacts of climate change.

[97] Source: Human-rights based approach in Finland's development cooperation. Guidance note. (2015). Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

[98] 2013: Guidelines for Implementing the HRBA in Finnish Development Cooperation.
2015: Guidance Note on Implementing the HRBA in Finnish Development Cooperation

[99] Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation. 2021. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/Guideline+for+the+Cross-Cutting+Objectives+in+the+Finnish+Development+Policy+and+Cooperation.pdf/e9e8a940-a382-c3d5-3c5f-dc8e7455576b?t=1618230452564

	Low emission development as a CCO aims to mitigate climate change and to facilitate the transition to low emission development and climate neutrality while taking into account wider development impacts. [100] Climate as a CCO will be assessed using selected parts of *the Guidance and Checklist for Climate Sustainability and Disaster Risk Reduction Analysis* in the MFA Manual for Bilateral Programmes 2018[101] as guidance. These selected questions will not be answered in the evaluation report, but they will guide the analysis and narrative description of climate as a CCO in the two projects.

[100] Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation. 2021. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/Guideline+for+the+Cross-Cutting+Objectives+in+the+Finnish+Development+Policy+and+Cooperation.pdf/e9e8a940-a382-c3d5-3c5f-dc8e7455576b?t=1618230452564

[101] Manual for Bilateral Programmes 2018. 2018. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. https://um.fi/publications/-/asset_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/manual-for-bilateral-programmes

10.10 Overview of the two projects

Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP):

The RVWRMP is funded by the Government of Nepal (GoN), the European Union (EU) and the Government of Finland (GoF) and builds on financial and technical water sector support that GoF has provided to Nepal since 1989. The Phase I was implemented from 2006 to 2010; phase II from 2010 to 2016; and the final phase, phase III, will be completed later this year. The EU financing began in November 2017 through an arrangement of delegated management to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. A brief overview of the project is included in the table below, with additional information included after the table.

Table 11: Overview of RVWRMP

Project Title	**Rural Village Water Resources Management Project, Far and Mid-Western regions, Phase I-III**		
Project duration	Phase I: Sept 2006 – July 2010	Phase II: Sept 2010 – July 2015	Phase III: March 2016 – Aug 2022
Main focus	Sector: Natural Resources Sub-sector: Water resources management, health and sanitation, rural development		
Objective/ purpose	Phase 1: Improved quality of life, environmental conditions and increased opportunities to improve rural livelihoods through rational, equitable and sustainable use of water; Phase II: Focus on Institutionalized capacity at local and regional levels and Improved health conditions and reduced poverty in Project VDCs Phase III: Improved health and reduced multidimensional poverty within the project working area		
Project sites and political unit[102]	Phase I: Nine districts in Far Western Region: Darchula, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti and Achham Districts; Mid-Western Region: Dailekh and Humla Phase II: Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Darchula, Doti and Kailali Districts in the Far Western Development Region and Dailekh and Humla Districts in the Mid-Western Development Region, Nepal (Phase II Completion report) Phase III: 27 core and 36 Non-Core RMs from Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Dailekh, Darchula, Doti, Humla and Kailali districts of Karnali and Sudurpaschim Provinces.		
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:	Facilitated at the central level by the MLD/DoLIDAR/DOLI and executed by the District Development Committees of the participating nine districts. Implementing agencies: District Development Committees of participating districts, the Village Development Committees and the communities. Rural municipalities and municipalities after federalisation.		
Expected No of beneficiaries and types	Phase I: 80 Water Use Master Plans, 120,000 people - access to safe drinking water supply facilities; 60,000 people – hygienic sanitation; 15,000 people – small irrigation; 6,000 people – micro-hydro,		

[102] RVWRMP first phase started in 53 Village Development Committees (VDCs). In the second phase, the first phase VDCs were continued and 61 more VDCs were added. After the federal restructuring of Nepal, VDCs and municipalities were merged, and became Rural Municipalities and Municipalities. At that time 27 Core RMs were selected [Core RMs have the project's institutional support unit(RMSU),RM-based project funded staff and the fully fledged project package including water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), irrigation, multiple use systems (MUS), livelihoods, improved water mills, improved cooking stoves, institutional toilets and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) capacity building and also added 36 Non-Core RMs [Non-core RMs have proposal-based water supply schemes and activities such as home garden support as part of the scheme. In total with Core and Non-Core RMs there are 63 RMs where the project was active in FY06 (RVWRMP III annual report page V).

	Phase II: Example: 80% of communities in Project VDCs are ODF, Time to collect water is reduced by 75%, 100 % of schools with separate sanitation facilities. At least 50% of women and percentage of minorities at par with their proportion/representation within the community holding key positions Phase III: Some of the major interventions and associated number of beneficiaries include: Beneficiaries of water supply – 531000; Institutional toilets in schools/health posts/public places (200 toilets) – 40,000; Beneficiaries of household sanitation – 110,000; Beneficiaries of home gardens – 275,000; Beneficiaries trained in income generating activities – 60,000. The Project working area remained in the same districts of province no 6 and 7 and the stakeholders will come from all levels: (i) community and the Local Level Governments (LLG); (ii) district and provincial; and (iii) national.
Cross-cutting themes	Gender and social inclusion, environment, appropriate technologies
Midterm Review date and findings	First MTR findings (phase II): July 2013: By the time of the mid-term review, RVWRMP II has achieved initial progress on indicators of the overall objective of the Project. Some of the (overall) indicators are very difficult to measure yet, needing a longer time span to be visible in the national statistics like the living standard surveys, or they needed specific field studies in order to verify changes and status of affairs. Second MTR (Phase III: 2019: main findings: time and budget limitations may affect result and sustainability, additional efforts required to make result sustainable, value chain to be further emphasised, cancel the micro-hydro interventions, working with municipalities are encouraging but province should also be involved in the exit strategy while the existing project coherence is weak and result framework to be improved.
Project Financing	
End of project outputs	The project reports suggested that the expected project outputs are delivered. For example, in phase II – facilitate basic services to 113 remote VDCs with a total population of 555,000. The original beneficiary target of the project was surpassed by 77% and the revised target (set after Mid Term Review and an increase of investment funds) by 36%. Phase III - Among 13,198 HHs targeted in the phase, 9,953 HHs (75%) achieved all indicators of total sanitation (TS). Water Use Master Plans prepared for all Core-RMs.

The first phase of RVWRMP was implemented in 53 Village Development Committees (VDCs). In the second phase, the first phase VDCs were continued, and 61 more VDCs were added. District Development Committees (DDCs) were the local authorities through which both phases were implemented. In total, the ten districts covered by Phases I and II include: Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Dailekh, Darchula, Doti, Humla and Kailali. By the end of Phase II, a total of 114 Village Development Committees (VDC). This included 46 hill and 6 Tarai VDCs. After the federal restructuring of Nepal in 2015, VDCs and municipalities were merged and became Rural Municipalities (RM) and Municipalities.

Phase III covers the same ten districts as in the past, and 27 core municipalities and 36 non-core municipalities in Sudurpashchim province and Karnali province are included. Core RMs benefit from institutional support units (RMSUs), RM-based project funded staff and a project package including water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), irrigation, multiple-use systems (MUS), livelihoods, improved water mills, improved cooking stoves, institutional toilets, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) capacity building, and governance. Non-core RMs only have the Project's limited interventions like WASH with basic nutrition and Improved Cooking Stoves. Water supply schemes and home gardens are also receiving support.

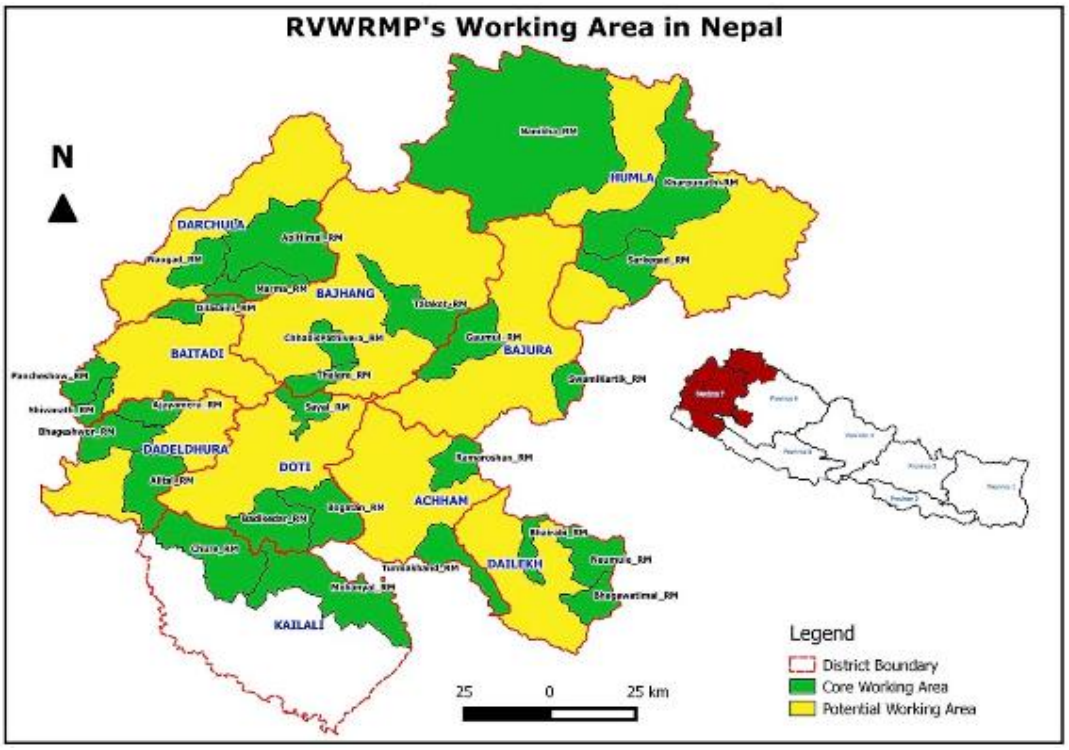
The scope of RVWRMP includes, in addition to water supply and sanitation, support to water-based livelihood activities. Both projects were designed not as 'stand-alone' WASH projects but as an integrated concept that

recognises that water, energy, food, finance, human and other resources are interlinked and have complex interactions, leading to synergies and trade-offs. The implementing partners are the newly elected local level governments, Municipalities (M) and RMs, as well as the residents through users' committees, cooperatives and other community-level groups.

The Overall Objective is improved health and reduced multidimensional poverty within the project working areas. The Purpose of the Project is to achieve universal access to basic WASH services and improved livelihoods with the establishment of functional planning and implementation frameworks for all water users and livelihoods promotion in the project area. The interventions are grouped under four result areas: 1. Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, 2. Livelihoods development, 3. Renewable energy and climate change, and 4. Governance.

The figure below shows the location of the RVWRMP activities.

Figure 3: Map of RVWRMP project area



Source: RVWRMP website https://www.rvwrmp.org.np/where-we-work

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN):

The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN) 2008-2019 was a bilateral project of the Government of Nepal and the Government of Finland. Phase I lasted from August 2008 to August 2013, and phase II from September 2013 to November 2019. RWSSP-WN was implemented through the decentralised governance system reflecting the rules and regulations of the Government of Nepal. The responsible agencies at the national level were initially the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and its Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR), now MoFAGA and Department of Local Infrastructure (DOLI). The TA consultant for RWSSP-WN I was Ramboll, and for II was FCG International, Finland. The table below contains a brief overview of the project.

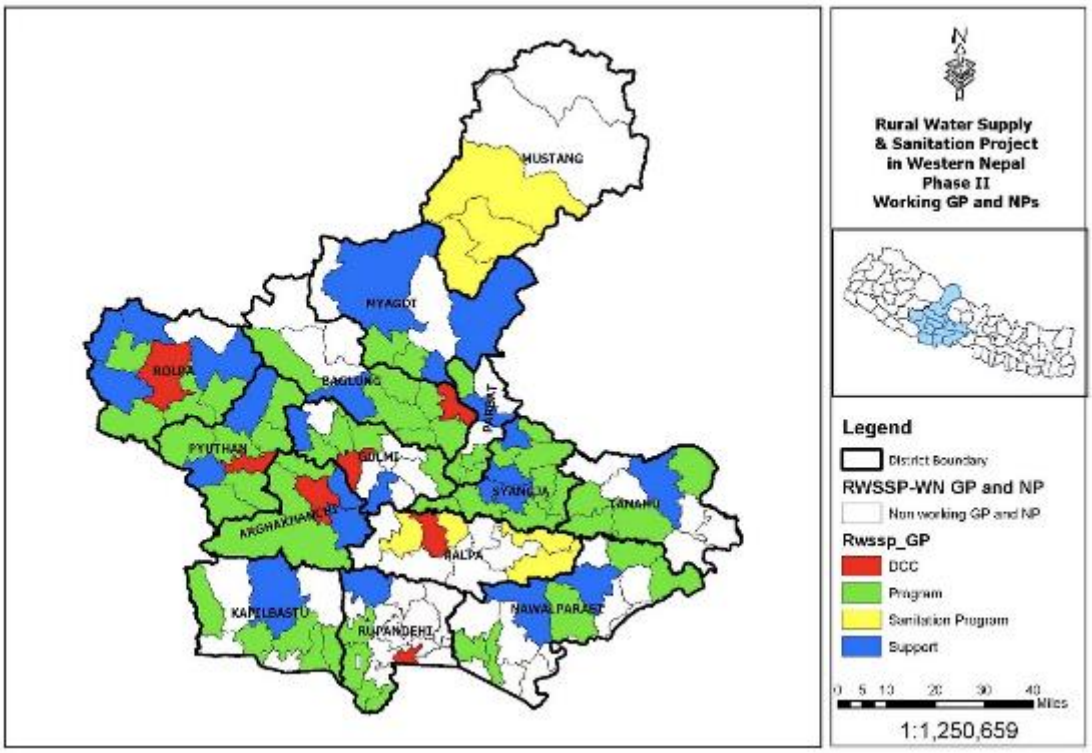
Table 12: Overview of RWSSP-WN

Project Title	**Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal (RWSSP-WN) Phase – I and II**	
Project duration	Phase I: Aug, 2008 - July 2013	Phase II: July 2013 to July 2019
Main focus	Sanitation & hygiene and water supply, Capacity building: inclusive local WASH governance and Local WASH Policy and guidelines	
Objective/ purpose	Phase I: increased well-being of the poorest and excluded by fulfilling the basic needs and ensuring rights of access of the poorest and excluded households to safe domestic water, good health and hygiene through a decentralized governance system Phase II: continue phase one with an additional focus on 'fulfilment of the equal rights to water and sanitation' through decentralized governance systems	
Project sites and political unit	I phase: Nine districts of Nepal II phase: 14 districts (nine Phase I and additional 5 districts in Phase II - 2 core and 3 sanitation- focused districts) Region: Western and Mid-Western region, both Hill and Terai districts	
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:	Facilitated at the central level by the MLD/DoLIDAR and executed by the District Development Committees of the participating fourteen districts. Implementing agencies: District Development Committees of participating districts, the Village Development Committees and the communities through the Water and Sanitation Users' Committees. Rural municipalities and municipalities after federalisation.	
Expected No of beneficiaries and types	I phase: water supply 70,000 new people, 250,000 people through sanitation and hygiene along with capacity building of government officials at different levels Phase II - About 975,000 people – on ODF; 100,000 – new or improved water supply; 220,000 people (from both Phase I & II) through capacity building	
Cross-cutting themes	Supports gender-responsive WASH implementation	
Midterm Review date and findings	Phase II - April 2016: Finding: The project is well in line with the goals and aims. Recommendations: focus more on ensuring the true ODF status, monitoring; intensive and diversified promotion methods for ODF, post-ODF and total sanitation as well as source protection	
Project Financing		
End of project outputs	The set targets were exceeded in both sanitation and water: all districts except Kapilvastu were declared as Open Defecation Free with the number of households complying with all Total Sanitation indicators exceeding the expectations in many ways. Overall, RWSSP-WN Phase I and II together have supported 872 water supply schemes and their 348,589 beneficiaries of which 442 schemes and 217,850 beneficiaries in Phase II. The original arget was 100,000, increased to 150,000, and then again to 200,000. A total of 493 water supply schemes with a total of 207,604 people received post-construction support in Phase II. Total 532 water schemes and their 224,392 users benefited from Water Safety Plan. + RWSSP-WN did several studies and surveys, encouraging continued learning both within the project and its staff and within the WASH community both at the national and global levels.	

The first phase was implemented in Baglung, Myagdi, Parbat, Syangja, Tanahun, Kapilvastu, Rupandehi, Nawalparasi and Pyuthan districts. The total number of programme VDCs were 54. During Phase II, the project worked in 14 districts. The districts are further categorised as core, sanitation only and district-driven mode depending on the scope and type of support received from the project.

The main objective of RWSSP-WN was to achieve "improved health and fulfilment of the equal right to water and sanitation for the inhabitants and to increase the wellbeing of the poorest and excluded of the Project area". The purpose of RWSSP-WN was to fulfil the basic needs and ensure rights of access of the poorest and excluded households to safe domestic water, good health and hygiene through decentralised governance. The program components were (a) hygiene and sanitation; (b) domestic water supply; (c) arsenic mitigation (in the three Terai districts); and (d) WASH governance. The map below shows the project area of the RWSSP-WN II.

Figure 4: Map of RWSSP-WN project area



Source: RWSSP-WN website https://www.rwsspwn.org.np/about-us

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10.12 Human Rights Based Approach – Checklist

The table is developed based on the HRBA checklist in the Manual for Bilateral Programmes 2018, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH					
		RWSSP-WN	Comments	RVWRMP	Comments
	Which human rights are relevant for the intervention?	Right to water and sanitation (& education).		Right to water and sanitation (& education).	
	Which are the main concerns relevant for the intervention brought forth in this analysis?	Access to water and sanitation for all with a focus on DAG.		Access to water and sanitation for all with a focus on DAG.	
Sensitive	Have human rights and gender equality been part of the situational analysis for the intervention?	Yes	A situation analysis, including Gender and Social Inclusion, was conducted prior to RWSSP-WN Phase I implementation. As a result, a totally new project document was prepared to ensure that GESI is integrated into the project design following good practices in the WASH sector and that it is not seen as a separate component.	Yes	Project documents included an analysis on identified root causes of inequality addressed in project interventions.
	Are the risks related human rights and gender equality mitigated?	Yes	The management of GESI related risks in project documents improved from phase 1 to phase 2. In both phases, the GESI related risks are related to the inclusion of the poor, excluded, and hard-to-reach, as their demand may not be recognised (phase 1), and they live scattered in isolated places with low levels of exposure and organisation (phase 2). In phase 1, no mitigation measures were presented, whereas the phase 2 project document includes concrete risk management measures, such as accepting higher unit costs and lower targets. Related to risks, the Phase II MTE found a human-right issue related to community-led total sanitation, as in some cases in Madheshi communities, the ODF had been initiated without preparation, and police were mobilised to reduce the open defecation practices.	Yes	The Project Documents of Phase I and II do not include GESI-related risks. The Phase III Project Document identifies some GESI-risks but does not include mitigation measures. However, in Phase I, Gender and Social Discrimination Study (2008) was conducted to identify risks. In Phase II and III, HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan aimed to minimise existing risks.
	Have the duty bearers, right holders and other responsible	Yes	Identified in the HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2015) (Phase II). Stakeholders and beneficiaries are identified in Phase I Project Document.	Yes	Identified in the HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2015) (Phase III). Stakeholders and

	actors and their roles been identified?				beneficiaries are identified in Phase I and II Project Documents.
	Are there marginalised groups which should be taken into account?	Yes	Phase I: Groups, individuals and households politically, economically, socially, culturally and self-discriminated on the basis of their gender, caste, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, language, disability, HIV status and where they live and have previously limited. Phase II: Those people that are discriminated based on gender, caste and ethnicity and are economically poor. Attention will also be given to widows, people living with disability, female-headed households, and household clusters in more geographically remote areas.	Yes	People living in remote areas discriminated based on caste, sex, ethnicity, religion, disability, HIV/AIDS, economic situation and and geographical region (Sudurpachim and Karnali).
	Have the basic needs and strategic interests of women and men taken into account?	Yes	Participatory planning process with GESI mainstreamed in all major planning steps of the model DWIG.	Yes	Participatory planning process through WUMP ensured that the basic needs and strategic interests of women and men and DAG were included. Training provided equally to men and women.
	Have women and men been targeted equally by the intervention?	Yes	Women and men targeted equally. Also, women and girls in particular benefit from improved WASH, because they are traditionally responsible for fetching water. Due to gender norms and taboos, open defecation is harder for women and girls.	Yes	Women and men targeted equally. In WUSC committees and training participation, gender target of 50% male/female participation.
	Do all rights holders including marginalised groups have equal access and benefit from the intervention?	Yes	The equal access was confirmed by the GESI Strategy and integration of GESI in the DWIG. However, the inclusion of the people with disabilities in decision-making was not systematic, as based on the Phase 2 Completion Report, it was considered too difficult.	Yes	The equal access was confirmed by the HRBA & GESI Strategy & Action Plan (Phase II and III). The Phase I used the DoLIDAR gender strategy.
	Are there special measures in place to ensure non-discrimination?	Yes	Both phases had a GESI strategy. However, the GESI Impact Study (2013) notes that gender, caste/ethnicity, and poverty dynamics are quite different in Terai and in the Hills, and the project could have adapted its GESI approach, strategies and priorities to best suit the local dynamics.	Yes	Special measures described in the HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan. Phase I strategy included special measures to ensure non-discrimination related to chaupadi system and Phase II and III addressed non-discrimination that violates women's rights through MHM.
	Is sex-disaggregated data collected?	Yes	Yes, but not reported in all cases.	Yes	Yes. For a few relevant indicators, sex-disaggregated data was not reported.
	Do right holders participate in the decision-making	Yes	The GESI concerns are included in almost every major step of WASH project delivery in DWIG, which recognises that GESI issues are at the heart of WASH. The GESI Impact	Yes	From the initial stage, the right-holders participate in the WUMP where the decisions regarding water schemes are planned and implemented. Further,

	processes relating the intervention?		Study found that WASH plans are the outcomes of a very participatory process. However, the people with disabilities were not properly consulted due to difficult access (RWSSP-WN Phase II completion report).		the right-holders participate in WUSC, which is the main authority for the management and implementation of the water schemes.
	Is there gender balance in decision-making?	Limited	While GESI was considered in decision-making, there is room for improvement in ensuring that women and the disadvantaged groups are not only members of committees but hold key positions, have equal decision-making power and that their interests are equally addressed. In Phase I, 42% of WUSC members were women (35% in key position). In Phase II, 45% of WUSC members were women, while only 7% of WUSC chairpersons were women. The phase II MTR found that in some cases, the female representation was on paper only without real decision-making authority. In Phase II, female WUSC members were trained in confidence-building and leadership.	Limited	The (proportionate) representation of women and disadvantaged groups are ensured in the decision making. However, the ET was told that the actual decision-making authority is not always gender-balanced. Due to socio-cultural practices, women have less opportunity to voice their opinion in the project district.
	Have marginalised groups been consulted in the planning process?	Yes	DWIG ensures a participatory planning process. The consultation of people with disabilities was limited.	Yes	WUMP ensures a participatory planning process where marginalised groups are consulted regarding the water schemes.
	Is information related to the objectives, decision-making processes and results of the intervention freely disseminated?	Yes	To maintain transparency, the WUSCs organise public hearings and audits, and maintain display boards with all scheme details, including sources of funding.	Yes	To maintain transparency, the WUSCs organise public hearings and audits, and maintain display boards with all scheme details, including sources of funding.
	Is information related to the intervention and produced in appropriate format and accessible for all rights holders, (language, geography, gender, marginalised groups)?	Limited	Information is shared in information boards and by the WUSC members. The ET was told that not all the information is always shared by the WUSC members with other beneficiaries due to time limitations. Many of them cannot read the holding board (due to illiteracy), and many of them, especially the poorest of the poor, do not attend the public hearing as they have to work as daily wage labour. Information is shared in the Nepali language, which some beneficiaries do not understand.	Limited	Information is shared in information boards and by the WUSC members. The ET was told that not all the information is always shared by the WUSC members with other beneficiaries due to time limitations. Many of them cannot read the holding board (due to illteracy), and many of them, especially the poorest of the poor, do not attend the public hearing as they have to work as daily wage labour. Information is shared in the Nepali language, which some beneficiaries do not understand.
	Are there mechanisms in place to ensure responses to problems and claims during	Yes	Public audits are the mechanism to put forward claims that are acted upon by the WUSC members. Complains are also taken into WUSC meetings. Complain boxes also exist.	Yes	Public audits are the mechanism to put forward claims that are acted upon by the WUSC members. Complains are also taken into WUSC meetings. Complain boxes also exist.

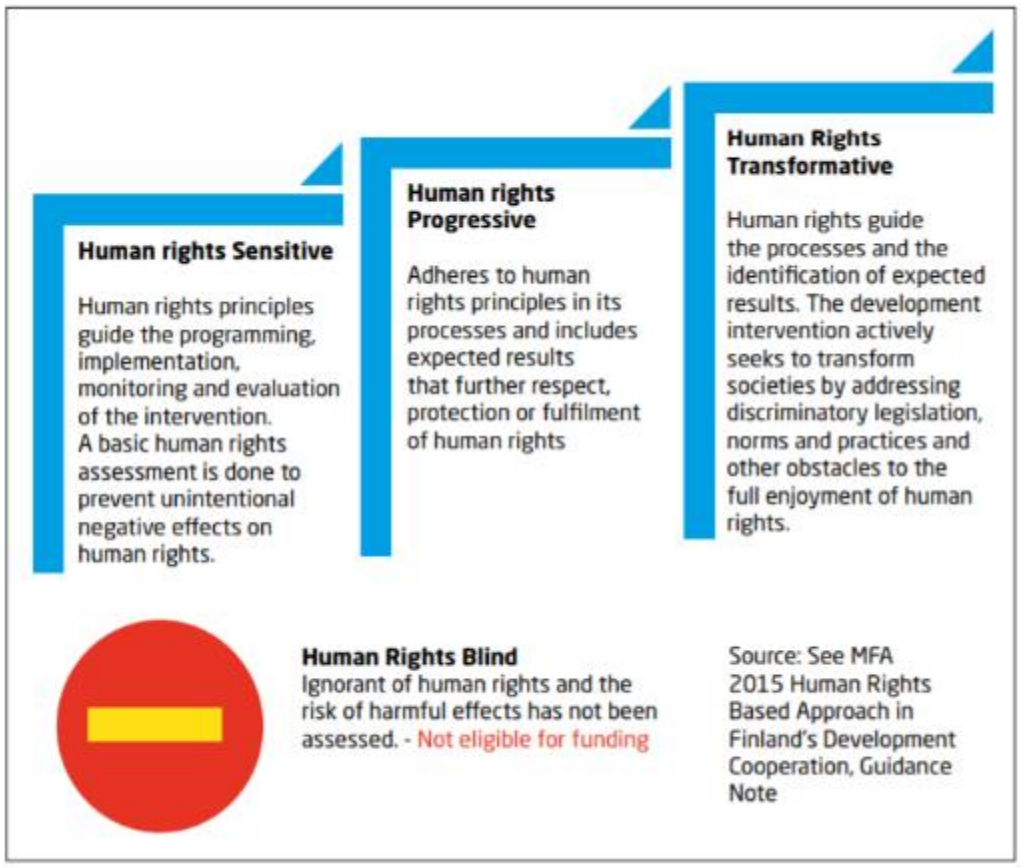
	the implementation of the intervention?				
	Is compliance with human rights principles and cross-cutting objectives monitored during the intervention?	Yes	GESI aspects were generally monitored.	Yes	Generally yes, but a few relevant indicators were not GESI-disaggregated in reporting (e.g. new employment opportunities generated (Phase II), number of agribusinesses supported (Phase III).
	Overall: Human rights principles guide the programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the intervention. A basic human rights assessment is done to prevent unintentional negative effects on human rights.	Yes	Despite some limitations (see above), the human rights principles guided the programming, implementation and monitoring. A situational analysis, including GESI aspects, was conducted prior to implementation.	Yes	Despite some limitations (see above), the human rights principles guided the programming, implementation and monitoring. A situational analysis, including GESI aspects, was conducted prior to implementation.
Progressive	Does the intervention have targets on human rights and gender?	No (P1) Limited (P2)	Phase I logframe lacks targets on human rights and gender. The phase II logframe does not include many GESI-related targets as such, but some indicators have a GESI dimension as they concern everyone in the project municipalities and thus cannot be achieved without attention to GESI.	No (P1) Limited (P2&P3)	The Phase I logframe does not include targets on gender. The Phase II and III include some targets on gender, but a few relevant indicators are not disaggregated.
	Have sector-specific quality criteria related to human rights been used?	Yes		Yes	
	Have human rights and gender capacity gaps (e.g. legislation, policy, resources, political will etc.) been identified and are they addressed by the intervention?	Yes	The situational analysis conducted prior to Phase I identified capacity gaps based on which GESI was better integrated into the project design.	Yes	Gender analysis and studies identified capacity gaps. Based on that, HRBA & GESI strategies were developed and implemented.

	Are key challenges and opportunities for gender equality identified and addressed as part of the expected results (including distribution and control of resources, gender roles, norms and values, participation and decision making power, discrimination and gender based violence)?	Yes	*Distribution and control of resources; participation and decision-making power*: The project aimed for equal participation of women and men in decision-making and a participatory planning process. *Gender roles, norms and values*: the project addressed equal participation in decision-making. *Gender-based violence*: phase II targeted menstruation-related discrimination to some extent.	Yes	*Distribution and control of resources; participation and decision-making power*: The project aimed for equal participation of women and men in decision-making and a participatory planning process. *Gender roles, norms and values*: the project addressed equal participation in decision-making. *Gender-based violence*: phase II targeted menstruation-related discrimination to some extent.
	Does the intervention include affirmative action to address identified inequalities?	Yes		Yes	
	Are there any specific objectives, activities and indicators designed to monitor the integration of the human rights principles:				
	A) Equality & non-discrimination	Yes	Phase I DoLIDAR gender strategy, Phase II HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan.	Yes	Phase I developed gender strategy to ensure participation and inclusion of women and DAG. Phase II and III HRBA & GESI strategy and action plan.
	B) Participation & Inclusion	Yes		Yes	
	C) Accountability & Transparency	Yes	Public hearings, formation of user committees, holding boards in public places with detailed scheme information.	Yes	Public hearings, formation of user committees, holding boards in public places with detailed scheme information.
	Does the intervention build capacity on human rights and gender among stakeholders?	Limited	RWSSP-WN built capacities in GESI, as this was included in the training packages, but was not given adequate attention in Phase I as per the GESI Impact Study (2013). The study also noted that the capacity building related to GESI (Phase I) should have been more emphasised as the field staff were not capacitated in GESI in a required level.	Yes	The project provided training on HRBA and GESI action plan to local government officials, project staff, local stakeholders and elected women representatives who are applying capacity in their work. The ET observed during the field visit that further training is needed to retain the knowledge gained and to apply it.
	Does the intervention support national or local gender equality policies, laws, or strategies?	Yes	Many aspects of DWIG were adopted in the National Hygiene and Sanitation Master Plan (2011), and the GESI Impact Study (2013) notes it should be recognised as the contribution of RWSSP-WN that the Master Plan recognises gender mainstreaming and promotion of social inclusion.	Yes	The project is in line with national and local gender policy, law and strategy. The project has developed its gender and human rights strategy used locally by the project. Contributed to developing the National Menstruation Hygiene Policy.

	Overall: Adheres to human rights principles in its processes and includes expected results that further respect, protection or fulfilment of human rights.	No (P1) Yes (P2)	Phase I: No. The project included expected results that further respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights, but did not have targets on HRBA or GESI in the logframe. Phase II: Yes.	No (P1) Yes (P2&3)	Phase I: No. The project included expected results that further respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights, but did not have targets on HRBA or GESI in the logframe. Phase II: Yes.
Transformative	Are there identified root causes of non-fulfilment of human rights or discrimination targeted by the intervention?	No (P1) Yes (P2)	The Phase II identified and targeted root causes of non-fulfilment of human rights and discrimination related to menstruation.	Yes	The project has identified root causes of discrimination against Dalits and menstruating women and girls. The project reduced caste-based discrimination by building common community taps for Dalits and non-Dalits, and addressed menstrual taboos.
	Does the intervention address the root causes at different levels (legislation, policy, customs, traditional practices, attitudes, knowledge)?	No (P1) Limited (P2)	The Phase II addressed the menstruation-related root causes to some extent at the local government and community level (but not at the national level for improved policy or legislation).	Yes	Phase I and II provided input in the national policy regarding Chhaupadi, Phase III has provided inputs to the formulation of the national policy and action plan on Dignified Menstruation Management. No contribution to legislation.
	Are there clearly defined objectives and strategy for policy dialogue or advocacy supporting the objectives of the intervention?	Yes	Mostly limited to the local / district level.	Yes	Advocacy on human rights, such as right to water and sanitation and MHM.
	Are the human rights principles and gender equality systematically included in expected results, indicators and targets?	No (P1) Yes (P2)	HRBA & GESI systematically included in the expected results. In Phase I, no GESI-releated targets in the logframe. In Phase II, some specific GESI indicators & targets and some indicators concern all, including the disadvantaged.	No (P1) Limited (P2&3)	The Phase I logframe does not include targets on gender. The Phase II and III include some indicators and targets on gender, but a few relevant indicators are not disaggregated. GESI is not systematically mentioned in the expected results.
	Do the M&E systems monitor and evaluate the impacts of the intervention on the fulfilment of human rights quality criteria?	Yes		Yes	
	Are gender equality indicators aligned with national targets on gender?	Yes	Phase II exceeds national targets related to women's participation in committees.	Yes	Exceeds national targets related to women's participation in committees.

	Overall: Human rights guide the processes and the identification of expected results. The development interventions actively seeks to transform societies by addressing discriminatory legislation, norms and practices **and** other obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights.	No (P1) Limited (P2)	Human rights guide the processes and identification of expected results. The Phase II addressed discriminatory practices to some extent at the local level, but not at the national level or related to legislation (discriminatory legislation does not exist in the project context, i.e. not applicable).	No (P1) Limited (P2&3)	Human rights guided the processes. In the results presented in the logframe, GESI is not systematically included. The project actively sought to transform the society by addressing discriminatory practices and norms (chhaupadi) and contributed to MHM at national level. The project did not seek to address discriminatory legislation (discriminatory legislation does not exist in the project context, i.e. not applicable).

10.13 Annex - HRBA classification



Source: Manual for bilateral programmes (2018) Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

10.14 Gender rating by Global Environment Facility (GEF)

The table below is developed based on the GEF gender rating (Evaluation on Gender Mainstreaming in GEF (2018), Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office). [103]

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY: LEVEL OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING		
Category	**Category description**	**Projects' alignment with the description**
Not gender relevant	Gender plays no role in the planned intervention.	**Not applicable** Gender plays a significant role in the projects. In Nepal, women and girls are primarily responsible for fetching water, meaning that improved water supply primarily saves their time. In addition, improved sanitation has a large impact on the lives of women and girls, for whom open defecation is a security risk and who suffer from menstrual taboos.
Gender blind	Project does not demonstrate awareness of the roles, rights, responsibilities, and power relations associated with being male or female.	**Not applicable** The projects demonstrate the awareness of the roles, rights, responsibilities, and power relations associated with being male of female.
	Gender is not mentioned in project documents beyond an isolated mention in the context description.	**Not applicable** Gender is systematically mentioned in project documents rather than as an isolated mention in the context description.
	Gender is not tracked by the tracking tools and monitoring and evaluation instruments.	**Not applicable** Gender is generally tracked by monitoring instruments.
	No gender analysis took place, and no gender action plan or gender strategy was developed for the project.	**Not applicable** Gender analysis took place, gender action plan and strategy was developed.
Gender aware	Project recognizes the economic/social/political roles, rights, entitlements, responsibilities, obligations, and power relations socially assigned to men and women, but might work around existing gender differences and inequalities, or does not sufficiently show how it addresses gender differences and promotes gender equality.	**Not applicable** The project addresses gender differences and promotes gender equality.
	Gender is mentioned in the project document, but how gender equality is being promoted is unclear.	**Not applicable** Gender action plan and strategies were developed.

[103] Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF. 2018. Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office https://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/gender-study-2017.pdf

	One or two gender-disaggregated indicators might be present, but whether and how that data informs project management is unclear.	
	Gender might be mentioned in a social assessment, but what is done with that information is unclear. No gender action plan or gender strategy was developed for the project.	**Not applicable** Gender analysis took place, gender action plan and strategy was developed.
Gender sensitive	Project adopts gender-sensitive methodologies to address gender differences and promote gender equality.	**Applicable** Gender-sensitive methodologies adopted as described in the gender strategy and action plan.
	A gender analysis or social analysis with gender aspects is undertaken, gender-disaggregated data are collected, gender-sensitive indicators are integrated in monitoring and evaluation, and the data collected inform project management.	**Applicable** Analysis undertaken, gender-disaggregated data collected, gender-sensitive indicators integrated into monitoring (with some room for improvement).
	But the gender focus is only apparent in a limited number of project activities.	**Not applicable** Gender focus is apparent in most activities.
Gender mainstreamed	Project ensures that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to most, if not all, activities.	**Applicable** Gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to most activities.
	It assesses the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in any area and at all levels.	**Applicable** The implications for women and men are assessed.
Gender transformative	Project goes beyond gender mainstreaming and facilitates a "critical examination" of gender norms, roles, and relationships; strengthens or creates systems that support gender equity; and/or questions and changes gender norms and dynamics. Like the gender-mainstreamed category, but the way gender is addressed might result in behavioural changes toward gender norms and dynamics in the systems targeted by and systems beyond the project	**Applicable** The ET found that the projects have contributed to creating systems that support gender equity by addressing, e.g. equal participation in decision-making and reducing menstrual taboos affecting negatively the lives of women and girls.

10.15 Climate change checklist

1. Describe the climate change profile of the programme or project proposal. Are the expected results vulnerable to the impacts of climate change?
2. Does the programme or project contribute to diminishing climate vulnerability and enhancing adaptation capacity? How?

3. Does the programme promote sustainability and climate change resilience? Does it enhance the sustainable use of natural resources? How?

4. Have climate risks been taken into account in the design of infrastructure and its maintenance in the programme or project? How?

5. How could the programme or project incorporate further efforts for mitigation and adaptation to climate change; what potential opportunities might have been ignored in this regard?

6. What kind of climate-related risks are there currently in the local area? Has the project/programme analysed them adequately?

7. Which natural resources are important for local livelihood? How do the climate-related risks affect the sustainable use of these resources? What kind of principal social and economic needs does the local community have, and how will climate change affect possibilities to satisfy these needs?

8. Does the programme or project incorporate further efforts for climate change mitigation (e.g. self-sufficient energy and heat production, transportation, sound forest/land use)?

10.16 Results frameworks

RVWRMP (2006 – 2022)

Phase I (log frame)	Phase II (log frame)	Phase III (result framework)
Overall Objective (Impact)	Overall Objective (Impact)	Overall Objective (Impact)
Improved quality of life, environmental conditions and increased opportunities to improve rural livelihoods and in the Mid and Far West region through rational, equitable and sustainable use of water atthe village levels.	*Institutionalised capacity* at local and regional levels to **sustain and continuously improve enhanced quality of life**, better environmental conditions and increased opportunities in rural livelihoods in the Project area	improved health and reduced multidimensional poverty within the project working area.
Indicators	Indicators	Indicators
Quality of Life indicators: Improved health conditions, improvedhousing conditions.	Living conditions in the Project area are at the national average level, measured by **health, equality and income** indicatorsused in Nepal at that time	1. Improvement **in the Human Development Index** (HDI) in the project RMs;
Environmental Improvement indicators: Quality (and volume of water) in existing natural water bodies are maintained (or improved). Solidwastes are properly collected and disposed of (i.e., not dumped nearriver banks).	Communities are **able to maintain** the service level in water related infrastructure, sanitation and energy supply	2.Proportion of population living **below national poverty line** at RM/district or region/province level
Economic Growth and Opportunity indicators: Improvements in agricultural productivity and variety of crops (including kitchen gardens) inproject villages. Presence of new income generating activities in projectarea.	Communities are **able to implement and manage** water-related infrastructure and sanitation facilities and finance re-investment	3. **Prevalence of stunting** in children under 5 years old has **reduced** in the Project RM/districts
	Communities are **able to prepare** participatory, gender and poverty sensitive project proposals in the Project area	
	Communities are eligible to borrow from banks or other financing institutions	
	Relevant local and regional bodies are **able to support** communities in technical, administrative and livelihood matters	
	School enrolment of boys and girls at the same level, definedas the ratio for each particular school group (primary,lower secondary and upper secondary)	

Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Outcome	Outcome	Outcome
Increased availability of water resources with improved capacity for planning, management and use of resources in the nine (9) districts.	Improved well-being and reduced **poverty** in Project VDCs	Universal **access to basic WASH services, and improved livelihoods** with establishment of functional planning and implementation

		frameworks for all water users and livelihoods promotion in the project area.
Improved access to safe drinking water supplies and sanitation services.		
Increased availability of irrigation services.		
Increased use of micro-hydro (MH)power potentials.		
Indicators	Indicators	Indicators
Sustainable Water Use indicators: Availability and quality of water atsources not declining; water production increasing. Communities areable to manage water resources effectively.	Relevant MDGs of Nepal achieved: proportion of population below the national poverty line 21% and proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption 25%	Percentage of population using safely managed drinking water services (SDG 6.1)
Planning Capacity indicators: Utilisation of all water resources is basedon comprehensive VDC level Water Use Master Plans which reflectpriorities from the users' point of view and appropriate technical considerationof options.	All Project VDCs cholera free and at least 80% are open defecation free areas	Project area declared Open defecation free (ODF)and follow the post-ODF strategy as per total sanitation guidelines
Implementation Capacity indicators: Districts have increased capacity to implement decentralised water and sanitation sector facilities, including support to the users in operation and maintenance, and to facilitate the full use of available financial and other resources	Diarrhoea incidences of children under-five years reduced by 75%	Increased household income measured by the proxy indicator of vegetable production in project areas (district)
Resource Use indicators: District Water Resources Development Funds (DWRDF) are efficiently and effectively mobilised and utilised	All facilities implemented under the Project are functional	Water Use Master Plans (WUMPS) prepared
Social Participation Indicators: Users take responsibility for planning, implementing and maintaining local water resources activities and facilities. New methods, technologies and systems have been developed to ensure better sustainability and easier access to service also for the poorand deprived consumer groups.	About 1,000,000 beneficiaries ("beneficiary equivalents") of new facilities implemented under the Project	Amount of renewable energy produced from Project interventions
120,000 people served by water supply facilities (i.e. 8% of the population residing in the area). (related to outcome 2)		Percentage of developed cooperatives, which achieve an operational self-sufficiency of 110% or more.

60,000 people served by sanitation facilities (i.e. 4% of the populationresiding in the area). (related to outcome 2)		
15,000 people served with small-farm irrigation facilities, i.e. some 600 ha of irrigated land (i.e. 1% of the population residing in the area). (related to outcome 3)		
6,000 people served by micro-hydro facilities, i.e. 5 MH plants with average capacity of 20 kW each (i.e. 0.4% of the population residing in the area). (related to outcome 4)		

Phase I	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
Output	Output /	Output
Integrated water resources management (IWRM) concepts and management systems implemented at the districtand village levels.	Result 1: **Institutionalised community capacity** to construct and maintain community managed water supply and adopt appropriate technologies and behaviour related to water and sanitationinfrastructure	Outputs result area #1: institutionalized community capacity to construct and maintain community managed water supply and adopt appropriate technologies and sanitation and hygiene behaviour
Improved institutionalcapacity and coordination among central agencies, DDC, VDC andUG's on water resourcesissues.	Result 2: **Improved and sustainable nutrition, food security and sustainable income** at community level through natural resources based livelihoods development	Outputs result area # 2: improved and sustainable nutrition, food security and sustainable income at community level through water resource-based livelihoods development.
Service Improvement –Water Supply 120,000 people to be served by water supply facilities (i.e. 8% of the population residing in the project area).	Result 3: **Institutionalised capacity** at district level to continue integrated water resources planning and to support communities in implementing and maintaining WASH and livelihood activities	Outputs result area #3: increased resilience to disasters and climate change as well as promotion of climate change mitigation and adaptation
Service Improvement –Sanitation 60,000 people to beserved by sanitation facilities (i.e. 4% of the population residing in the project area).		Output: result area #4: GoN institutional capacity to continue integrated water resources planning and support communities in implementing and maintaining and wash and livelihood activities
Service Improvement –Irrigation 15,000 to be served withsmall-farm irrigationfacilities, i.e. some 600ha of irrigated land (i.e.1% of the populationresiding in the project area).		
Service Improvement –Energy 6,000 people to be servedby micro-hydro facilities, i.e. 5 MH plants with anaverage capacity of 20kW each (i.e.		

0,4% of thepopulation residing in the project area).		

RWSSP-WN (2008 – 2019)

Phase I	Phase II
Overall Objective (Impact)	Overall Objective (Impact)
increased wellbeing of the poorest and excluded	improved health and fulfilment of the equal right to water and sanitation for the inhabitants of the Project area.
Indicators	Indicators
the Human Development Index (HDI), Poverty Index, Household/Per capita income, Life Expectancy, Empowerment Index and the Governance Index	Incidence of diarrhoea in under-5 children reduced Under 5 child mortality reduced* Incidence of water and sanitation related diseases reduced Improved local governance capacity to provide effective WASH service delivery Decreasing disparity between the worst- and best-served VDCs with regards to sanitation and water supply coverage

Phase I	Phase II
Outcome	Outcome
Fulfil the basic needs and ensure rights of access of the poorest and excluded to safe domestic water, good health and hygiene through decentralized governance system	the poorest and excluded households' right to access safe and sustainable domestic water, good health and hygiene ensured through a decentralised governance system
1. Increased women's productive role (time and energy) 2. Decreased hardship, gender and social discrimination linked with water, sanitation and hygiene 3. Improved health, nutrition and hygiene of community people in program districts, particularly among the poorest and excluded 4. Decreased infant and maternal mortality. 5. Enhanced institutional capacity of local bodies (DDCs and VDCs) to facilitate the execution of WASH sector/projects 6. Sustainable operation and maintenance of domestic water schemes managed by inclusive WUSC 7. GESI responsive WASH sector policies, strategies and guidelines at the central and local levels adopted	
Indicators	Indicators
Health and Sanitation Incidence of top ten diseases (i.e. diarrhoea, skin, ARI, intestine worms, pyrexia, gastritis, ear	100,000 previously unserved people benefit from access to improved water supply

infection, eye complication, chronic bronchitis, abdominal pain) reduced by ……% (from baseline) Infant mortality rate under five decreased by ….% (from baseline) Maternal mortality rate decreased by ….% (from baseline)	All water supply schemes supported by the project provide functional, improved and safe water supply services No one practices open defecation (all districts declared ODF) All ODF districts have developed post-ODF strategy and ensured access to post-ODF support to their VDCs More than 220,000 people benefit from the capacity building activities Districts' WASH programmes capable to provide support to VDCs, WUSCs and other community groups on a responsive basis in scheme planning, implementation and O&M, showing consistently improving the annual performance
Domestic water supply Quantity of water used per capita per day at the end of dry season increased by …..ltr./ % (from baseline) Domestic water schemes running successfully during the last 5 years or over increased by……% (from baseline) …..% improved in water quality (Arsenic by ….%, E-coli by…..%,) (from baseline and NDWQS) Population covered by domestic water supply increased by …..% (from baseline)	
Governance GESI responsive DDC WASH sector policy developed and in use WASH District Development Funds increased by ……% (from baseline) Per capita WASH fund increased by ….% (water and sanitation disaggregated) (from baseline) WASH sector coordination mechanism is functional	

Phase I	**Phase II**
Output	Output /
Well-functioning domestic water schemes managed by inclusive WUSCs providing safe domestic water to all users.	Result 1 (Component 1 Sanitation and Hygiene): Access to sanitation and hygiene for all achieved and sustained in the project working districts;
Total behaviour changed in hygiene and sanitation of individuals, households, communities and institutions	Result 2 (Component 2 Rural Water Supply): Access to safe, functional and inclusive water supply services for all achieved and sustained in the project working VDCs; and
Strengthened institutional capacity of local bodies to facilitate the WUSCs for the implementation, operation and maintenance management of domestic water, sanitation and	Result 3 (Component 3 Capacity Development): strengthened institutional capacity of government bodies to plan, coordinate, support and monitor the WUSCs and other community groups in the implementation, operation and maintenance of

hygiene (WASH) programs in a self-sustainable manner	domestic water, sanitation and hygiene programmes in a self-sustainable manner.
WASH sector policies, strategies and guidelines at the central and local level prepared.	
Indicators	Indicators
Domestic water coverage Increased by…..% population (target 70,000 additional people) have access to safe domestic water supply (from baseline) (served vs. un-served) (socially and geographically disaggregated) Increased by…..% of institutions have access to safe drinking water Reduced time to 15 minutes to fetch water (from the baseline)	1.1 # of VDCs declared ODF. Note: ultimate target district ODF 1.2 # of institutions/schools/public places supported by the project fund in Phase II with disabled and gender-friendly toilets and access to handwashing 1.3 # of Wards declared for having achieved total sanitation (wards within which each household complies with at least four out of five main TBC criteria as listed in the National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan) 1.4 # of VDCs implementing post-ODF strategy with institutionalised post-ODF support mechanisms accessible to all within a VDCs
Hygiene and Sanitation coverage Increased by…% population (target 250,000.additional people) have access to safe sanitation (from baseline) (served vs. un-served) (socially and geographically disaggregated) Increased by…..% of institutions have access to safe sanitation Increased by…..% (…… nos. VDCs and Wards/Communities declared ODF) of VDCs and Wards declared ODF	2.1 Safe water: # of water supply schemes supported by the Project fund in the Phase I and Phase II apply a Water Safety Plan with CCA/DRR component. 2.2 Institutional capacity: # of WUSCs supported by the Project fund in the Phase I and Phase II inclusive and capacitated to provide sustainable services. WUSC defined as functional fulfils the following criteria: a) WUSC is registered and has statute b) O&M plan made and applied c) Adequate water tariff defined and collected d) VMW trained and regularly working as needed e) WUSC has proportional representation of caste/ethnic/social groups and 50% women 2.3 Improved services: # of water supply schemes supported by the Project fund in Phase II provide improved water supply services for previously unserved households in the programme VDCs (previously unserved means no access to improved water supply). Scheme defined as improved and functional when it has the Service Level 1 for quantity, access, reliability and water quality. 2.4 Reaching the unreached: # of water supply schemes supported by the Project fund in the Phase II reaching the unreached (previously unserved by improved water supply supported by interventions external to VDC) 2.5 Institutional water supply: # of schools and institutional/public locations supported by the project fund in Phase II that have safe and functional water supply with accessible water points to all users

Arsenic mitigation Increased by ….% of population (10,000 people) have access to arsenic mitigated domestic water supply (from baseline) (define the level of arsenic) (served vs. unserved)	3.1 All 14 districts have D-WASH Plan that is used and periodically updated 3.2 # of VDCs have V-WASH Plan that is used and periodically updated 3.3 # of DDCs practicing coordinated and inclusive planning through D-WASH-CC as per the D-WASH-CC Terms of Reference. 3.4 # of VDCs practicing coordinated and inclusive planning through V-WASH-CC as per the V-WASH-CC Terms of Reference. 3.5 Annual performance evaluation done in each district and its D-WASH Unit as per the performance indicators signed in the MOUs in between DDCs and DoLIDAR 3.6 Studies relating to service delivery, sustainability and related mechanisms made and together with studies made in Phase I processed towards practical guidelines and operational tools
Governance Increased by…..% of WUSCs led by Women and poor and excluded (from baseline) Increased by…% of DDF budget allocated for WASH activities by DDCs Participatory planning and monitoring system in use. Participatory Public Auditing in use.	

10.17 Field mission itinerary

Sub-team 1: Dinesh Bajracharya						Sub-team 2: Ram Khanal and Kanta Singh				
Date	**Province**	**District**	**Municipality**	**Site**	**Site**	**Province**	**District**	**Municipality**	**Site**	**Scheme**
RWSSP-WN										
05/03/22	Lumbini	Rupandehi	Samarimai	Ward no. 3	Piparhawa Over Head Tank DWS	-	-	-	-	
06/03/22	Lumbini	Rupandehi	Samarimai	Ward no. 3	Piparhawa Over Head Tank DWS	Gandaki	Magdi	Beni Municipality	Kesar tole and Katus pani tole, ward no. 5	Daduwa DWS (solar lift system)
07/03/22	Gandaki	Gulmi	Musikot	Ward no. 6	Bhuwachidi and Beltaari DWS	Gandaki	Magdi	Mangala Rural Municipality	i.Babiya chor, ward no. 2 ii.Puka, ward no. 5	i.Public toilet ii.Mulpani DWS
08/03/22	Gandaki	Syangja	Chapakot	Bhurungthung, Shekham, ward no. 7	Sandhi/Randhi	Gandiki	Baglung	Galkot Municipality	i.Pachuwa tole, ward no. 8 ii.Chalise tole, ward no 8	i. Lasuni DWS; ii.Mauri Veer Sanitation and Drinking Water Scheme
09/03/22	Gandaki	Syangja	Chapakot	Bhurungthung, Shekham	Sandhi/Randhi DWS	Gandiki	Baglung	Jaimimin Municipality	Jukaypani, ward no. 5	i.Jamimin Mulabari Solar Lifting and Drinking Water and Sanitation; ii.Gaba Lifting Drinking Water and Sanitation Scheme
10/03/22	Gandaki	Kaski	Pokhara	NA	NA	Gandaki	Parbat	Phelaybas Municipality	Phelaybas ward no. 5	i.Lukuwa Archale DWS (focus group discussion) ii.Bruma DWS
11/03/22	Return to Kathmandu					Gandaki	Pokhara	Pokhara Municipality	Pokhara	Meeting with Infrastructure Directorate Office Back to Kathmandu
12/03/22										

13/03/22	Sudurpaschhim	Dadeldhura	Amargadhi	Dadeldhura	Project office	Sudurpachim	Doti district	Chure Rural Municipality	Ward no. 3	Travel and meeting with project staff in Bodar, on the way to Dareldhura
14/03/22	Sudurpaschhim	Doti	Dipaayal	Overnight stay to travel to Bhatakataiya		Sudurpachim	Dareldhura	Amargari Municipality	Ward no. 5	Meeting with Project team and travel to Baitadi
15/03/22	Sudurpaschhim	Accham	Ramaroshan	Bhatakataiya	Patbanne DWS	Sudurpachim	Baitadi	i.Shivanath Rural Municipality	i. Shivanath ward no. 5 and Sharmali ward no. 2	Shivanath RM: Srijana Agriculture Group (ward no. 5); Meeting with Shivanath Rural Municipality chair and Vice Chair (ward no. 5); Sharmali DWS (ward no. 2); Sharmali Saving and cooperative (ward no. 2).
								ii.Pancheswor Rural Municipality	Pancheswor RM, ward no. 2	Pancheswor RM: Dwari MUS agri group; Shree Kulau Higher Secondary School; Patali Bamani Jhal DWS; meeting with vice chair of Pancheswor Rural Municipality; Katol Lekh DWS
16/03/22	Sudurpachhim	Achham	Ramaroshan	Mujjabazar	Ward no. 4	Sudurpachim	Baitadi	Purchauli Rural Municipality	Kuwakot, ward no. 6	i.Kuwakot DWS ii. Travel to Bajhang
17/03/22	Sudurpachhim	Baajura	Gaumul	Ghatmuna	Mulfutne DWS	Sudurpachim	Bajhang	i.Chhabis Pathibara Rural Municipality; ii. Tharala Rural Municipality	i.Chabis Pathibara ward no. 7 (meeting was held in Thalara Rural municipality);	Chhabis Pathibara RM: Chhadu Khola Drinking water and sanitation users committee Thalara RM:

									ii.Thalara RM, ward no. 3, 5, 6 and 7.	Thaado Khola DWS (ward no. 7) IWM; (ward no 3) Sanitation; (Ward no 7) Khanadi Khola Water supply scheme; (Ward No 7) Livelihood (home Garden and poly house tunnel farming) (Ward no 6)
18/03/22	Sudurpachhim	Achham	Sanfebagar	Overnight stay to travel to Bharatpur		Sudurpachim	i.Baghang; ii,Dareldhura	Aagrgardi Municipality	Dareldhura Project Office, ward no. 5	i. Travel to Dareldhura; ii.Project office
19/03/22	Sudurpachhim	Dadeldhura	Ajayemeru	Bhardrapur, ward no. 5	Jayapuri DWS Pakina DWS	Sudurpachim	Kailali	Chure Rural Municipality	Sahajpur, Ward no. 3	i.Sahajpur DWS; ii.Self Reliant Small Farmers Cooperative; iii.Fly back to KTM
20/03/22	Sudurpachhim	Dadeldhura	Ajayemeru	Ward no. 1	Satpaani DWS	-	-	-	-	-
21/03/22	Sudurpachhim	Dhangadhi	Kailali	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22/03/22	Return to Kathmandu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-