

Nepal

Samriddhi - Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project

Partial Supervision Report

Mission Dates: 16 - 20 March 2020

Document Date: 12/06/2020

Project No. 1100001724

Report No. 5420-NP

Asia and the Pacific Division
Programme Management Department

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	Agro-Enterprise Centre
AEPC	Alternative Energy Production Centre
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BDS	Business Development Services
BP	Business Plan
B2B	Business to Business
B2S	Business to Service
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industries
CMF	Centre for Microfinance
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CPMA	Corridor Potential Mapping and Assessment
CSIDB	Cottage and Small Industries Development Board
DCCI	District Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<u>DCSI</u>	Department of Cottage and Small Industries
DFID	Department for International Development
DIPC	District Industry Promotion Committees
DMEGA	District Micro Enterprise Groups Associations
DoFE	Department of Foreign Employment
DSF	Debt Sustainability Framework
DTCO	District Treasury Control Office
ESC	Enterprise Service Centre
ESP	Enterprise Service Provider
FCGO	Financial Comptroller General Office
FEEK	Financial Education and Entrepreneur Knowledge
FEPB	Foreign Employment Promotion Board
FI	Financial Institution
FIRM	Financial Instrument for Risk Management
FMA	Financial Management Assessment
FNCCI	Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FNCSI	Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries
FSP	Financial Service Provider
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GDP	Gross Development Product
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoN	Government of Nepal
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards

HELVETAS	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal - a Swiss NGO
HVAP	High Value Agriculture Project
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KM	Knowledge Management
LRP	Local Resource Person
LTR	Letter to the Recipient
MEDEP	Micro-Enterprises Development Programme
MEDPA	Micro-Enterprises Development for Poverty Alleviation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Micro-Finance Institution
MMC	Market Management Committee
MOICS	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies
MOLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises
MSP	Multi Stakeholders' Platform
NAS	Nepal Accounting Standards
NBFI	Non-Banking Financial Institution
NCB	National Competitive Bidding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRNA	Non-Resident Nepalese Association
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ORMS	Operational result management system
OSS	One Stop Shop
PAR	Portfolio at Risk
PD	Project Director
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PMD	Platform on Migration and Development
PM&E	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PM	Project Manager
PMO	Project Management Office
PMT	Project Management Team
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RCCI	Regional Chambers for Commerce and Industry
RE	Rural Enterprise
RER	Rural Enterprises and Remittances
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
RMSEs	Rural Micro and Small Enterprises

SC	Sub-Component
SCC	Savings and Credit Cooperatives
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SFACL	Small Farmers Agricultural Cooperative Limited
SMT	Senior Management Team
SP	Service Provider
TA	Technical Assistance
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and raining
TSA	Treasury Single Account
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WA	Withdrawal Application

A. Project Overview

Region:	Asia and the Pacific Division	Project at Risk Status:	Actual problem
Country:	Nepal	Environmental and Social Category:	B
Project Name:	Samriddhi - Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project	Climate Risk Classification:	not available yet
Project ID:	1100001724	Executing Institution:	Ministry of Industry
Project Type:	Credit and Financial Services	Implementing Institutions:	not available yet
CPM:	Tarek Kotb		
Project Director:	not available yet		
Project Area:	States 1 and 2 plus 5 palikas in State 3		

Approval Date:	22/04/2015	Last audit receipt:	23/03/2020
Signing Date:	10/12/2015	Date of Last SIS Mission:	20/03/2020
Entry into Force Date:	10/12/2015	Number of SIS Missions:	10
Available for Disbursement Date:	02/12/2016	Number of extensions:	0
First Disbursement Date:	15/12/2016	Effectiveness lag:	8 months
MTR Date:	03/12/2018		
Original Completion Date:	31/12/2022		
Current Completion Date:	31/12/2022		
Financial Closure:	not available yet		

Project total financing

IFAD Financing breakdown	IFAD	\$2,979,501
	Debt Sustainability Framework	\$16,809,219
Domestic Financing breakdown	Beneficiaries	\$6,636,853
	Private sector local	\$13,749,180
	National Government	\$9,148,719
Co-financing breakdown,		
Project total financing:		\$49,323,472

Current Mission

Mission Dates: 16 - 20 March 2020

Days in the field: 5days - the mission has been conducted remotely due to the global pandemic

Mission composition: Nigel Smith, team leader; (remote) ; Bashu Aryal, Country Programme Officer, (in-field); Sanjeev Shresta, management and supply chain specialist; (in-field)

Field sites visited: Itahari

B. Overall Assessment

Key SIS Indicator #1	Ø	Rating	Key SIS Indicator #2	Ø	Rating
Likelihood of Achieving the Development Objective		3	Assessment of the Overall Implementation Performance		3

Effectiveness and Developmental Focus	3	Project Management	4
Effectiveness	3	Quality of Project Management	4
Targeting and Outreach	3	Knowledge Management	4
Gender equality & women's participation	4	Value for Money	3
Agricultural Productivity	3	Coherence between AWPB and Implementation	3
Nutrition		Performance of M&E System	4
Adaptation to Climate Change	3	Requirements of Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP)	

Sustainability and Scaling-up	4	Financial Management and Execution	3
Institutions and Policy Engagement	3	Acceptable Disbursement Rate	1
Partnership-building	4	Quality of Financial Management	4
Human and Social Capital and Empowerment	3	Quality and Timeliness of Audit	4
Quality of Beneficiary Participation	4	Counterparts Funds	5
Responsiveness of Service Providers	4	Compliance with Loan Covenants	3
Environment and Natural Resource Management	4	Procurement	3
Exit Strategy	3		
Potential for Scaling-up	3		

Relevance	4
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C. Mission Objectives and Key Conclusions

Background and Main Objective of the Mission

The partial supervision mission follows the Supervision Mission of September 2019. RERP has been classified as a problem project since its first Supervision Mission in December 2017 which concluded that problems in the project were the results of significant issues in the original design as well as in operational aspects. With continued low performance of the project, the September 2019 mission rated overall performance as highly unsatisfactory and recommended that the project be immediately restructured in-line with the IFAD Policy on Project Restructuring (December 2018) with cancellation of an amount of SDR13,669,450 (around USD 18,822,000 million) from IFAD Loan 2000000701 and associated category-wise reallocation of remaining funds of IFAD Loan 2000000701 and DSF grant 2000000702. The partial cancellation only affects the IFAD loan. The cancellation amount is equivalent to 49.8% of the original IFAD financing. Government contributions would be reduced to US\$4.2 million.

Following this recommendation, IFAD received a letter from the Ministry of Finance, dated 02 December 2019, requesting the restructuring RERP as per the countersigned mission Aide Memoire, with cancellation of around US\$19 million of funds from IFAD Loan No. 2000000701. This request was on the understanding that the cancelled funds could be reallocated to other investment projects in Nepal. The decision to restructure the project was approved by the IFAD President on 10 March 2020. The corresponding amendment to the financing agreement is being processed by IFAD and will soon be sent to the Ministry of Finance.

The restructuring should reduce the overall budget of the RERP and simplify its targets, by maintaining the activities which proved to be achievable by the project and by excluding those which have achieved insignificant or zero progress, while the agreed roadmap and associated actions are expected to lift the project out of chronic problem status over a period of twelve months, assuming that relevant measures are implemented in a timely manner. The key objectives of the current mission were to follow-up on the agreed actions and roadmap agreed during the September 2019 mission to improve project performance.

It is noted that there has been a change in the leadership of the project within Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS) itself - the posts of Secretary, Joint Secretary and Project Manager supervising the project have all been replaced since the previous mission.

Further, it is noted that the mission was conducted as a hybrid mission due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation – with part of the mission team working in-person with the project team while the team leader joined the mission remotely via video link for a total of 16 hours of meetings over the five days the mission was in the field.

A pre-wrap up meeting was held on 20 March in Itahari with the Project Manager, Project Management Office (PMO) and implementing partners (Helvetas and the Agro Enterprise Centre (AEC)) at the end of the field work of the mission. However, the final face-to-face wrap-up meeting scheduled for 24 March in Kathmandu, to be chaired by Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Secretary MoICS, was not able to be completed due to the government imposed mobility restrictions from 22 March and extensive countrywide lockdown from 24 March. In lieu, a virtual wrap-up was completed electronically through a combination of telephone communications and correspondence via email to conduct the final joint review and agreement of this Aide Memoire and the agreed actions.

Given the current uncertainty as to when mobility restrictions will be lifted, it has been agreed by all implementing partners that the proposed deadline dates for the agreed actions in Annex 1, which were agreed prior to any restrictions being in force, will temporarily remain as agreed at the time. It is further recognized that revised deadlines will need to be determined once mobility restrictions are lifted and project activities resumed. To this end, IFAD will mobilize a short implementation support missions to the project immediately once mobility restrictions are lifted to agree the revised milestones and any other adjustments that become necessary as a result of the current situation.

Key Mission Agreements and Conclusions

Overall project performance has improved since the previous Supervision Mission and is now considered *moderately unsatisfactory* against the restructured project targets and financing (compared to a rating of highly unsatisfactory in the September 2019 Supervision Mission). Critical actions agreed in the previous mission have been completed, including completion of recruitment of the full field team and key posts of Procurement Officer and Financial Officer (See Annex 2 – Status of Agreed Actions from Previous Supervision Mission). The full project Management Information system (MIS) is nearing completion and due to be fully operational within the next month. Data is already being collected and analysed through the previous temporary systems. There is a growing library of knowledge products being produced and disseminated by the project.

Expenditure to date has reached around US\$6.90 million equivalent to 36% of the revised IFAD financing of US\$18.98 million, comprised of US\$5.06 million disbursed to date from IFAD (including initial advance) plus expenditure incurred but not yet claimed of around US\$1.87 million (NPR212.8 million). Cumulative expenditure by the end of this financial year (July 2020) is expected to reach a total of US\$9.33 million equivalent to 49% of revised IFAD financing.

Performance in all aspects of the project has improved from its very low level during the previous Supervision Mission and the restructuring has reduced budgets and targets to more realistic levels.

However, there is continued need for close management attention to ensure the full project team maintains the quality of its performance as activities are further scaled-up. With just two full financial years of concentrated implementation remaining, two aspects are critical across all activities:

1. firstly, a clear focus on delivering tangible results and impacts – not only on outreach and outputs, and;
2. secondly, an explicit focus on the sustainability (financial, institutional, technical) and exit strategy for all activities critical to project impacts.

This latter priority is closely related to the need and opportunities for the project to increase its harmonization with, and support to, the municipal authorities as they become more established in fulfilling their mandate.

IFAD and the Government should continue to provide close implementation support and supervision to the project. Further specific actions required to strengthen project performance are set-out in Annex 1 below.

IFAD and the Government of Nepal endorse the findings of the Mission.

D. Overview and Project Progress

Implementation of the previously good performing sub-components has continued well, notably Decent Jobs (1.3) and Migration services (2.2). Implementation of other major components has accelerated, including for Supply Chain development (1.1) and Rural Finance (2.1) as the full field teams have come on-board. All sub-components are currently on track to meet their outreach targets no later than December 2021 – well before project completion in December 2022. The only exception to this is the clients of the Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) / Migrant Information Desks (MID), which are permanent services and where new clients will continue to be served through to the end of the project and beyond. The table below summarises the outreach as of March 2020, and substantial further outreach is already in the pipeline as shown by the projected outreach by the end of the current Financial Year (FY) in July 2020. (Note: These projections shown were made in mid-March, prior to the introduction of mobility restrictions due to the COVID pandemic.)

Outcome and impact data are not yet available. However, in the specific case of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the 3 months post-training verification showed that 87% of trainees were in paid employment – against a 6 months target of 80%. While this is an overall positive performance, there are wide variations in the incomes being achieved between occupations, as expected, with many of the trades traditionally taken by women earning relative low incomes. Consequently, it remains important that the project promptly implements the planned measures to pilot approaches to achieve greater women's participation in higher earning non-traditional trades and pilot arrangements for Level 2 TVET training in these traditional women's trades in order to raise the income earning potential of graduates.

Targeting performance is satisfactory, based on current data. Women account for 56% and youth for 71% of direct beneficiaries for the major interventions with more substantive impacts at household level, including all those under Component 1 plus the Financial Education and Enterprise Knowledge (FEEK) training under Component 2 (i.e. excluding beneficiaries who are only service users of MRC/MID services). In terms of targeting of poorer households, the project has so far completed sample analysis using the Poverty Propensity Index (PPI) for the participants of the supply chain activities under Component 1.1. These data indicate that the supply chains activities are targeting the poor well, with 72% of beneficiaries being from poor households. Within this, the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPS) supply chain is exceptionally well targeted with 95% poor beneficiaries – though with small total outreach due to the scale of market demand. More extensive data and analysis of targeting and outreach is expected to be available in the coming months as the main project MIS becomes operational and populated. Further details of outreach and targeting by component are shown in Annex 3.

While the overall targeting performance is strong, one area for improvement is that women appear to be under-represented in the supply chain activities at only 35% of beneficiaries – in contrast to all other parts of the project. This is an area that will require close attention as the project mobilizes additional smallholder producers and conduct FEEK 2 for women in the coming months.

Partnerships in the project between the three key implementing partners (MoICS, Helvetas, AEC) remain strong. In addition, new opportunities are emerging for increased alignment and coordination across multiple aspects of RERP with the municipal authorities as their programmes, focus areas and working processes become clearer. Putting in place clear and effective arrangements to maximize the results from such harmonization should be a key focus for the RERP management. This is likely to provide important lessons for future investment programmes between the government and IFAD.

Agreed Action	Responsibility	Agreed Date
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Coordination with palikas Review engagement approach with palikas to see if can be further enhanced, including opportunities to harmonize/support function of new Employment Coordinators as well as other functions. Note: RERP has several activities of potential relevance: supply chain development; co-operative supervisions capacity, FEEK, enhanced pre-departure orientation, MRC/MID, TVET opportunities	PMO	03/2020
CCIs / Supply chains - MSP and B2B processes Involve CCI in conducting MSPs and B2B/ B2S interaction meetings closely with SC team among CCI member and also with their suppliers/POs in particular in Agriculture commodities	PMO/AEC	03/2020
CCI Capacity building Regularly follow up of Capacity Building Plan of CCI and coach and Mentor CCI in building the capacity of CCI staff and member	AEC	03/2020
Supply chains Targeted activities for new technology demonstration, action research, exposure visits and similar activities to be included in AWPB as needed, with clear justification.	PMO	04/2020
SC Support market development Work in strengthening support service market in ALL VCs - either embedded through Traders or Cooperatives and/or fee-based service and liaise with Municipalities to align accordingly. Need clear targets and milestones for this by trimester in AWPB2020/21 – e.g. number of new service provider staff in the market for each supply chain	PMO	04/2020
TVET Service Provider procurement Coordinated actions to be taken between PMO, HELVETAS, MOICS and IFAD to ensure timely completion of process for current and final rounds, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly management meetings in KTM to push the process – between Helvetas, PMO, MoICS and IFAD • Start procurement earlier for final round • Review status in September 2020 SM 	PMO	04/2020
TVET SP links to Municipalities Ensure TVET SPs liaise and coordinate with Employment Coordinator and Concerned Municipalities in promoting and selecting the TVET participants for Comp 1.3. For round 2 onwards	HELVETAS/PMO	04/2020
Apprenticeships Unexpected request for pre-financing from PCCI State 2. PMO to request the PCCI to sign by 15 April. If no agreement, suspended the activity pending review in full SM in September 2020	PMO	04/2020

GALS dreaming fund Prepare outline proposal to be included in AWPB 2020/21, including eligibility, size and share of grants plus key aspects of process – with possibility of being implemented in respective supply chains in the clusters as new special window under Samriddhi Fund.	PMO	04/2020
GALS dreaming fund budget line to be included in AWPB20/21 but implementation to begin only after approval of detailed procedures/arrangements by IFAD and PSC.	PMO	04/2020
Rural finance / Supply Chains strengthen actions to improve linkages between smallholder producers and financial institutions – including co-operatives, MFIs and also commercial banks. This should include: establishing links with ADBL; accessing NRB subsidized loans via commercial banks; and collateral free loans using the livestock and crop guarantees (provided by Deposit & Credit Guarantee Fund).	PMO	04/2020
Rural finance Sign collaboration agreements with CIT, in line with government norms, for technical assistance for migrant friendly product development and promotion.	PMO	04/2020
MRC/MID Develop clear strategy and action plan to gradually build (by end of RERP) financial and institutional sustainability covering 4 parts of service below. This should be reflected in AWPB2020/21, including reducing % financing from RERP vs Palikas: 1) Core MRC service 2) Outreach activities 3) Case referrals 4) Enhanced Pre Departure Orientation (including FEEK1)	PMO	04/2020
Goat VC Conduct exposure visits for VC team and small number of PO leaders to learn best practices, including: 1) community breed improvement model (Diverna, Arghakhanchi District, ISFP-KUBK project) 2) Heifer producer group and market linkage activities – including for slaughterhouse investment (Morang)	PMO	05/2020
Goat VC Clarify the strategy for a) service provider development, and b) affordable investment pathways to be promoted i.e. sequencing of recommended upgrading investments for household with different levels of resource to maximize cashflow and/or minimize size of investment needed	PMO	05/2020

Rural finance Co-op capacity development and linkage banking: sign agreement with Sana Kisan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Limited on cooperatives' capacity development. Split capacity building into two batches of co-ops, with first contract signed to cover 1st batch only with clear interim milestones with option to extend subject to performance	PMO	05/2020
31. MRC/MID Duplication with SAMI Conduct meeting with Municipalities currently with duplication between SAMI and RERP MRCs to select preferred one and other to withdraw. Highlight consideration of sustainability of service for municipalities.	PMO	05/2020
MRC/MID Duplication with SAMI Conduct meeting with concerned Ministries and SAMI management to ensure transparency and coordination in process to reduce duplication above.	PMO	05/2020
30. MRC/MID Enhanced pre-departure orientation to be piloted linked to several MRC/MIDs– including migrant oriented FEEK, ideally on a cost-sharing basis with municipality.	PMO	06/2020
Rural finance: Co-operative supervision capacity for municipalities. Project to generate working model options to pilot with municipalities. Options to be presented to full SM in September 2020.	PMO	08/2020
TVET Level 2 Piloting Develop concept note on potential Level 2 TVET training modality on cost sharing basis with participants and/or municipalities (or other support schemes) and also list potential areas of training.	HELVETAS/PMO	09/2020
TVET: Women's participation in higher income trades: Pilot series of interventions to increase women's participation in non-traditional trades	HELVETAS/PMO	

E. Agreed Actions

Agreed Action	Responsibility	Agreed Date
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TVET: Women's participation in higher income trades: Pilot series of interventions to increase women's participation in non-traditional trades	HELVETAS/PMO	
Project Management		
AWPB Prepare 24 months AWPB – covering AWPB 2020/21 for approval and draft AWPB 2021/22	PMO	04/2020
11. Project MIS development and implementation: Complete MIS development, testing, training, and fully rollout including Android app and migration of existing data into new MIS	PMO	04/2020
13. IT support Procure local service provider for rolling annual IT maintenance support contract.	PMO	04/2020
12. M&E staff Fulltime M & E staff for Province 2 to be put in place	PMO	05/2020