

ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GOALS IN NEPAL (AISN Project)

UNDP/NPC

Final Evaluation Report

August 2023

Evaluation timeframe: July-August 2023

Evaluators

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Development Programme.

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Evaluators:

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Project and evaluation information details

Project Information		
Project/outcome title	Accelerating Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal (AISN)	
Atlas ID (project Number)	00114483	
Corporate outcome and output	<p>UNDAF/CPD Outcome Areas (2018-2022): Outcome 1: By 2022, impoverished, especially economically vulnerable, unemployed, and under-employed and vulnerable people have increased access to sustainable livelihoods, safe and decent employment, and income opportunities.</p> <p>Outcome 3: By 2022, environmental management, sustainable recovery and reconstruction, and resilience to climate change and natural disasters are strengthened at all levels.</p> <p>PEA Global Outcome "Strengthened integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the SDGs"</p>	
Country	Nepal	
Region	Asia Pacific	
Date project document signed	8 January 2020	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	1 January 2020	31 December 2023
Total committed budget	USD 2.7 million	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 2.04 million as of July 2023	
Funding source	UNDP and the European Union	
Implementing party¹	National Planning Commission/Government of Nepal	

¹ This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	January 2020	December 2023
Evaluators	Dr Ram Chandra Khanal and Ms Indu Tuladhar	
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Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	July 2023	August 2023

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ADCCN	The Association of District Development committees
AISN	Accelerating the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal
APR	Annual Progress Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBS	Centre Bureau of Statistics
CC	Climate Change
CCFF	Climate Change Financing Framework
COVID	CoronaVirus Disease
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSV	Climate Smart Village
EU	European Union
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDC	Least Developing Countries
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFE	Ministry of Forest and Environment
MPI	Multi-dimensional Poverty Index
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTEFMIS	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework Management Information Systems
MUAN	Municipality Association of Nepal
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NARMIN	National Association of Rural Municipality in Nepal
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDP	National Data Profile
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NHDR	Nepal Human Development Report
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NNFC	National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission
NOLB	No One Leave Behind
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPD	National Programme Director
NSO	National Statistic Office
OECD DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PD	Project Document
PEA	Poverty-Environment Action
PEB	Project Executive Board
PEC	Poverty-Environment Climate change
PEI	Poverty-Environment Initiative
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RRF	Result and Resource Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TA	Technical Assistance
<i>TOR</i>	Term of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VNR	Volunteer National Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Context

UNDP Nepal conducted the final independent evaluation of the four-year SDG localization support project "Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of Nepal (AISN), 2020-2023". The project's final evaluation was conducted between July and August 2023, encompassing the procedures and accomplishments spanning nearly four years, from 2020 to 2023, of the AISN project implementation.

Nepal has designed and executed the 15th Plan that embraces the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with Nepal's Constitution (2015). The government has also introduced the national SDGs Roadmap 2016-2030 with the SDG targets & indicators, Volunteer National Review, SDGs Costing and Financing Strategy, etc. However, multiple challenges and issues prevented achieving the SDG's national targets. The key challenges and issues include poverty, inequality, reconciling economic development with environmental management, climate-induced disasters, low productivity and engagement in informal sectors, gender and social disparity, limited private sector growth, unemployment and migration. Likewise, there were insufficient linkages and coordination among the three tiers of governments, inadequate institutional and financial capacity of the governments, constraints on data, monitoring and reporting for SDGs, etc. Hence, improving the capacity of all three tiers of the government and private sectors, cooperatives, and civil society was needed to accelerate the SDGs.

In response to these challenges, UNDP and the European Union (EU), with a fund of 2.6 million USD, worked together with NPC to design the Accelerating the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal (AISN) project. The initiative began execution in January 2020 and is set to conclude in December 2023 using the National Implementation Modality (NIM), overseen by the NPC. The project was overseen by establishing a Project Executive Board (PEB). This board is headed by a Joint Secretary from the NPC, who also serves as the National Project Director.

The project design identified two interrelated outcomes that best support Nepal in achieving the SDGs and target of the 15th Plan: a) planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting systems at all levels of government are SDG responsive; b) resilient and innovative financing is available for SDG implementation. To contribute to the two outcomes, the project initially identified five outputs, with a sixth output added as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Planning, budgeting, and M&E systems at the federal level are fully aligned with the SDGs.
2. Support to province & local level to align SDGs in their plans/programs.
3. Integrating SDGs in public finance (Intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanism)
4. Cooperatives and public enterprises increased investment for SDG implementation focused on Poverty, Environment, and Climate (PEC)
5. Private sector resources and innovative financing, including global and vertical funds, are mobilized for SDG financing gaps.
6. COVID-19 financing and economic recovery plan/strategy developed.

Evaluation purpose and criteria

The overall purpose of this final evaluation was to assess the project objective, results against output targets, contribution to higher-level outcome results, issues/challenges encountered and sustainability of the project results. In addition, the evaluation was also assigned to generate learning and recommendations for future use. The evaluation also examined whether the approach appears to be advancing gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and environmental issues as cross-cutting themes. The primary audience of this evaluation was NPC, UNDP, funders, sectoral ministries at the federal level, sub-national government (Provinces and Local governments), development partners, private sectors, CSO, cooperatives and other relevant stakeholders.

The final evaluation was conducted based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria for the review of development projects along with two crosscutting issues, i.e., GESI and climate change, as follows: Relevancy, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, lesson learnt and recommendation.

Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach and used both qualitative information and quantitative data. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The evaluation employed a participatory and consultative approach to ensure a close engagement with interviewees from various levels and sectors. The evaluation used *Desk Review, KIIs with GON officials and other stakeholders, Group Meetings with ASIN Staff, and a Field Visit* during the evaluation period to collect the data and interact with sub-national governments. The evaluation team carried out 27 Key Informant Surveys, one Focus Group discussion and one online interview. Altogether 8 women were interviewed.

Findings

Relevancy: AISN is relevant and timely support to Nepal as the government has been emphasizing SDGs implementation at all tiers of the government. The project interventions were fully aligned with the Constitution of Nepal, national development priority - the 15th five-year government plan, including national commitment and priority on GESI that have expressed in stated documents. The project was also aligned with the UNDP CDP (2018-2022), particularly with outcome 1 (output 1.3) and UNDP Nepal GESI Strategies. AISN intervention was generally on track to contribute towards achieving expected outputs, particularly at the level of Output related to planning, government budgeting, and the M&E system of federal government fully aligned with SDGs that also include SDG-5 gender equality; and support to provinces & local level to align SDGs in their plans/programs. The project logic framework followed a simple cause-and-effect hierarchical relationship between the different levels of results. This could however have been strengthened by having more context analysis and identifying the right scope of outputs among others. The management structure and implementation approaches were responsive which could have been further finetuned with an additional oversight role in selecting project interventions and engaging stakeholders as per the ProDoc.

Coherence: The project maintained both external coherence and internal coherence. Externally, the project was largely coherent with Nepal's national priorities that are expressed in the constitution of Nepal, the 15th plan, SDGs commitments and so forth. The project was largely coherent with the

government's needs and development priorities. Likewise, the project support was aligned with the work and priorities of the development partners, private sector, cooperatives, and civil society organizations. The project was also aligned with the UNDAF 2018-2022 and UNDP Country Program Document (CPD) 2018 – 2022. Project adopted GESI mainstreaming as one of the key strategies in all project intervention, which was coherent with UNDP Nepal CPD 2018-2022, UNDP GESI strategies, and above stated Nepal government's legislative and policy framework.

Effectiveness: The evaluation team found that AISN has made substantial efforts to achieve outputs 1.1 and 1.2 (mostly achieved). The project supported generating knowledge products on various issues related to SDGs. Some key knowledge products were prominent to present Nepal's SDGs status (progress and challenges) on various international platforms; the VNR report, SDGs mid-term progress reports, and Human Development reports are some examples. AISN adopted two approaches in terms of knowledge production from GESI perspective: support for GESI exclusive studies/policy review and integration and mainstreaming approach of GESI in various other thematic researches/studies/policy review. Likewise, based on the documents, AISN developed the training plan for national and sub-national actors on various issues related to SDGs localization and enhancing capacities in planning, monitoring, and reporting on the 2030 ADGs agenda. The capacity-building interventions through various trainings helped the localization of SDGs at national and sub-national levels as all provinces have aligned their development plans with SDGs. With regards to the capacity building AISN attempted ensure women and disadvantages communities' participation, but there were challenges due to the external factors. The AISN intervention through policy dialogues was also found effective in building knowledge and developing shared ownership of policymakers along with various stakeholders on SDGs.

AISN activities generally have been well received by counterparts and target groups. The evaluation team viewed the activity as on track, but reservations were noted: The project can enhance the quality assurance of the studies/ research mechanisms; prioritizing the research/study issues, the training could be followed by refresher or mentoring activities and missed the opportunity to use that knowledge to better influence and shape the SDG policy framework. Precisely, AISN performance vis-a-vis formal scope has been mixed; the existing group of output appeared to be more outcome-level intervention and the existing output indicators represent activity completion targets. Within this context, ASIN has also faced notable obstacles in achieving planned results, particularly in support of private sectors, CSOs, and cooperatives partly due to the general election of three tiers of government, frequent changes in NPC leadership, COVID-19 health emergency, and so forth, and most of these have been externally based in the country context.

Efficiency: The project managed the funds well and completed the task on time. No major issues were noted in financial audits. The COVID-19 situation was handled properly and followed the cost-effectiveness aspects to the extent possible. However, the project exhibited shortcomings in terms of documenting lessons, carrying out comprehensive M&E and reporting, engaging stakeholders for enhanced outcomes, and appropriately allocating finances for its outputs.

Impact: It was early to assess the impact of the project intervention. The project has however some initial policy and institutional impacts at the tiers of the government, enhanced sensitization of SDGs and created a shared value on SDGs by considering the interconnectedness and inclusivity of the SDGs at different levels of the government. Some initial impacts were also noted through capacity-building

support in terms of enhancing institutional ability and greater integration of SDGs in planning and budgeting. There has been a lot of inquisitiveness at the provincial level on different tools and data collection mechanisms to integrate the SDGs in future. Beneficiaries at the sub-national level have started using the tools and approaches supported by the project. Likewise, from GESI perspective, AISN contribution on knowledge generation was significant, as it provided the clear picture of the GESI status in Nepal, which eventually support to develop evidence-based policy making and advocacy work at both national and sub-national level.

Sustainability: Ensuring the sustainability and expansion of SDG progress stands as a crucial foundation for achieving the SDGs. Amidst various challenges, notably the economic downturn ensuing from the COVID-19 pandemic and the relatively new practices of federal government structures, multiple issues remain unresolved. These include defining power distribution among the three tiers of government in practice, addressing legal uncertainties, and enhancing limited understanding among the actors and stakeholders about federalism and the exercise of shared power. Given these complexities, maintaining the momentum of project results presents a challenge. Some output results, for instance, localization of SDGs in the province and local level planning, budgeting, and monitoring could sustain or continue. Still, it requires adequate institutional capacity building and financing support along with smooth federalization to address the lack of coordination and collaboration among the three tiers of the government.

Crosscutting

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: The project document clearly stated and committed to promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) through better integration within policies, processes, and systems as well as within public and private finance as its strategy for achieving SDGs. The project carried out some GESI dedicated research/studies- a study on the status of sex workers in Nepal, a Study on Increasing Effectiveness and efficiency in Delivering Public Service in Nepal, a Study on the Status of Women Bureaucrats and White-Collar Workers in Nepal, No One Leave Behind report, Status of LGBTI++ populations/communities etc are some of the key examples. Likewise, GESI issues and information are integrated in other research/studies/policy reviews (AISN conducted 50-60 study/research/policy analysis). These GESI responsive studies/research/policy analysis findings are instrumental in creating evidence for better GESI inclusive planning, programming, and budgeting and instrumental in guiding to developing the 16th plan. The project attempted to increase women and disadvantage communities' participation in capacity building trainings and policy dialogues. A dedicated policy dialogue/workshops on women's rights and SDGs was conducted. Interventions related to policy dialogue and advocacy focusing on women's participation in SDGs localization activities were commendable. Even with these exemplary efforts in place, project specific GESI plan of action/detailed strategies could be helpful to integrate GESI systematically within policies, processes, and systems as well as within the public and private finance as its strategy to achieving SDGs as outlined in project documents.

Environment and climate change: Climate change and the environment have been an important component of the project design and management. The project has carried out useful studies and developed instruments (such as CCFF) that helped the government to align climate change with SDG actions. These could have been further improved by developing strategies of integration, document learning and more closely working with relevant ministries and other stakeholders to promote the theme in the SDGs localization.

In conclusion, based on the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, the project helped to enhance awareness, strengthen an enabling environment & institutionalize the planning, financing and implementation process within the government, build capacity across the country and start gathering data regarding SDG localization. In addition, the project also helped the government generate national reports that are useful for creating an environment at the national level and also share Nepal's commitments to SDGs internationally. The project also faced some challenges during its implementation. The project results were also affected by inadequate clarity on the scope (outputs) of the project, stakeholder engagement, selection of activities, documentation of lessons and knowledge dissemination, among others.

Overall, the evaluation noted that the project carried out most of the activities successfully and achieved some outputs but they could have done more and better. Hence, the project's overall performance is rated as moderately satisfactory.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the evaluation team proposed the following recommendation to further advance towards the goal set by the project.

Recommendation 1: UNDP should continue to support the government. (Responsibility - UNDP)

The project successfully contributed to creating SDG awareness at the three tiers of the government and developed shared values on SDG localization. These positive results are to be further streamlined. Despite continuous progress on the SDGs achievement; Nepal still needs a significant level of support in further strengthening the enabling environment and institutions. In addition, support is also needed to fill the SDG investment gap and capacity-building for promoting peace and prosperity. To ensure better results on SDGs, further support is required.

Recommendation 2: Future work on SDGs should be based on learning from this project, and consider more realistic and achievable project scope and support systems. (Responsibility - the government and UNDP)

The project learning showed the outputs and other commitments of the project should consider the political economy, duration of the project and resource availability. Similarly, future interventions should consider the collaborative engagement with major partners from the very beginning of the project design. To reach out widely and quickly across the country and enhance the ownership of the intervention, the management structure for future interventions may need representatives from different tiers of the government and other important actors outside the government.

Recommendation 3: Support is also required to integrate the prosperity theme of the SDGs. (Responsibility – the government and UNDP)

The SDGs are not going to be achieved with the conventional approach of development planning and management alone. Hence, future support should also emphasize social and economic development issues such as promoting human assets; and reducing economic vulnerability. There are so many Nepal-specific potential areas that would help Nepal's prosperity. Some of them include job creation, social protection, climate risks, migration and labour issues, remittance, skill-based education, GESI and many

more. New support may need to focus on these aspects as a pilot in some areas immediately, learn from it and scale up in other parts of the country.

Recommendation 4 (Responsibility – UNDP): SDGs are not achievable by 2030 if concerns and issues of women and people from disadvantaged groups, particularly multiple discrimination, inequalities, social exclusion and its impact based on class, caste, ethnicity, health status, disability, gender and sexual minorities and so forth, are not addressed with targeted intervention. Hence, UNDP should develop and redesign the project with the explicit objective of achieving gender equality and social inclusion with dedicated output and its indicators with a clear GESI responsive or transformative Result Framework, and plan of action /strategies at the project level. This should be within the broader latitude of UNDP’s CPD (2023-2027), UNDP CO GESI strategies, SDGs and Nepal government’s constitutional, legal and international commitments. Project design should ensure the addressing of gender inequality, social norms, intersecting impact and so forth based on the findings of the GESI assessment.

Recommendation 5: The project should work on documenting major lessons and prepare a sustainability plan. (Responsibility – the government and UNDP)

The project is going to be completed by the end of this year. It’s high time for the project to document good lessons based on the experience of the project in the last three and half years. Some potential areas may include, documenting the challenges and opportunities for enhancing coherent policies and institutions in three tiers of the government in the context of the present federalization process; potential role and collaboration of stakeholders/actors in SDG localization; opportunities for SDG financing; data generation and reporting mechanisms across the 3 tiers of the government, among others. The learning can also be linked with the LDC graduation strategy and LNOB study findings. Considering the project learning, the project should also develop a sustainability plan by engaging NPC with a strategy for the continuation of good results achieved by this project.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

UNDP Nepal commissioned an independent Final Evaluation of the four-year SDGs localization Support Project “Accelerating Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal (AISN) project (2020 – 2023’). The project aims to support Nepal in achieving the SDGs and the targets of the 15th five-year Plan by creating an enabling environment and capacity development through accelerated implementation.

The project interventions are primarily guided by national priorities reflected in the constitution, policies and plans. The project supported various interventions that helped the government to integrate SDGs in its development planning and financing at all three tiers of the government.

The evaluation covers the project period of 2020 to 2023. At the end of the project period, a project is mandated to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the UNDP’s implementation of the project and provide specific recommendations for similar initiatives in the future, the final evaluation was scheduled for June-August 2023, as planned in the UNDP 2023 Evaluation Plan. In addition, the implementing partners of this project are interested in getting some learning and recommendations for future investment.

The primary audience of this final evaluation report is the government of Nepal as a major partner of the projects which includes NPC, MOFE, sub-national governments, UNDP Nepal as the implementing party, funders, development partners working in SDGs, and other relevant stakeholders. The evaluation recommendations are expected to be useful in designing future interventions and projects in Nepal, both at the federal and provincial levels. The learning from this project may also be useful in the regional context.

The evaluation considered major interventions from the Result Framework mainly the six outputs and two outcomes. Some of the major intervention areas included support in policy and institutional building, capacity strengthening at the federal and sub-national level, intergovernmental fiscal mechanisms, collaborative work in SDG funding and other collaboration with other stakeholders such as the private sector, CSO and Cooperatives.

The final evaluation report also analyses the project achievements in line with the revised Theory of Change. The final evaluation report is structured according to the UNDP standard guidelines for project evaluations. The main sections include an Introduction, Description of the intervention, Evaluation scope and objectives, Evaluation approach and methods, Data analysis, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons learnt. The Findings section analyses in detail the main evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and Impact. The section also elaborates on the project results/contribution to promoting GESI, Human Rights and climate change.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Under the National Implementation Modality (NIM), with National Planning Commission (NPC), UNDP/EU/UNEP supported the implementation of the AISN project. The total funding of the project was USD 2.6 million, with a four-year project implementation period from January 2020 to December 2023. The project was jointly funded by UNDP (TRAC funding) and the EU and was implemented under the leadership of NPC.

Exhibit 1: Objectives of the Project

To support Nepal in achieving the SDGs and the targets of the 15th Development Plan by creating enabling environment and capacity development through accelerated implementation of SDGs.

AISN project interventions took place at the federal level, provincial level and local levels. Nonetheless, the majority of the intervention took place at the federal level. The project aimed to support Nepal in achieving the SDGs and the targets of the 15th plan by creating an enabling environment and capacity development through accelerated implementation. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion were an integral part of this initiative as is the integration of poverty, environmental management and climate change. Overall, the project was expected to contribute to UNDAF/CPD 2018-2022 outcomes 1 and 3. The specific objectives of the project are presented in Exhibit 1.

The AISN project was conceived, designed and commenced after three years of the first general election of the federal, Province and local levels in 2017, the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal and four years of SDGs adaptation; which was a very early stage of the state restructuring (Unitary to Federal) in Nepal. So, there was not much clarity on the role and responsibilities of the three tiers of government regarding the implementation of the SDGs. The AISN project was designed keeping that in mind.

The project aimed to collaborate with various stakeholders including the Province and Local Government, sectoral ministries of the federal government, private sectors, cooperatives and civil society organizations. The project was primarily guided by national priorities reflected in the Constitution of Nepal and the 15th five-year periodic plan (2019/20-2023/2424) along with the SDG Status and Roadmap (2017). The project logic framework² (not in the form of a comprehensive theory of change) showed that the project aimed to help Nepal achieve its Sustainable Development Goals through accelerated implementation by creating an enabling environment and capacity building through accelerated implementations along with supporting the targets of the 15th plan.

The project identified some risks, root challenges, UNDP solutions, non-UNDP solutions and immediate results to contribute to the overall aim of the project in its ProDoc. The project logic model follows the problem statement that ‘Nepal faces substantial challenges in achieving the SDGs. Uneven levels of human development, weak institutional capacity, poor inter-agency cooperation and coordination to deal with cross-cutting issues, and inadequate means and resources are key immediate challenges that constrain the effective implementation and enforcement of policies and programmes³’.

As outlined in Exhibit 2 below, UNDP and NPC identified the Root Challenges of Accelerating SDGs at the inception of this project.

Exhibit 2: Objectives of the Project	
Root Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing poverty, and inequality, and reconciling economic development with environmental management are critical development challenges for rapid, inclusive and sustainable development in Nepal

² The figure in the ProDoc – page 5 (the prodoc did not mention the figure as a Theory of Change) provided a simple cause and effect without providing why part (bringing assumptions, enabling factors, barriers etc by bringing a bigger stride providing other information which are required for ToC. For detail see (page 4) at <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf>

³ ProDoc Page 3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural and climate-induced disasters, low productivity and engagement in informal sectors, gender and social disparity coupled with limited private sector growth and job creation lead to unemployment and migration. • Government revenues are insufficient to provide all essential services or tackle Nepal's key issues. • inadequate institutional and financial capacity of the governments (financing gap) identified by SDGs Needs Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy prepared by the National Planning Commission. The reports indicate that Nepal on average requires USD 20 billion per year to achieve 2030 targets, out of which 34% is a financing gap. • Insufficient linkages and coordination among the government: the federal, provincial and local governments. Constraints on data, monitoring and reporting for SDGs, poor mainstreaming of poverty, environment, climate and GESI in sectoral policies, plans and strategies. • Poor integration of SDGs and PEC in SMEs, coops and private sector finance. • Constraints on data, monitoring and reporting for SDGs, poor mainstreaming of poverty, environment, climate and GESI in sectoral policies, plans and strategies, • The COVID-19 pandemic immensely affected the capacity, resource mobilization and partnerships for the SDGs, special and comprehensive global cooperation programs should be established to support vulnerable countries like Nepal (this was identified during the project implementation in 2020/2021).
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Exhibit 3: COVID related Output and Major Intervention

Output: COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/strategy developed.

- government through preparation of various study reports.
- Capacity development of the three levels of government staff in formulating SDG aligned plan, budget and M&E through training and workshops programs.
- Strengthening SDG reporting system through software development and training programs.
- Increase awareness and participative policy making on SDG through policy dialogue with the private sector, cooperatives and other relevant stakeholders

In this context, UNDP and National Planning Commission (NPC) under the NIM modality introduced the AISN project to ensure technical assistance and financial support to the government of Nepal that included NPC, sectoral ministries at the federal level, Provinces and Local Government, private sectors, civil society and cooperative to address stated challenges and risk to achieve objectives and outputs of the projects.

Initially, it developed five outputs. In the early stages of the project implementation, the COVID–19 health pandemic emerged as a global crisis in 2020 and 2021. The pandemic brought a challenge to the

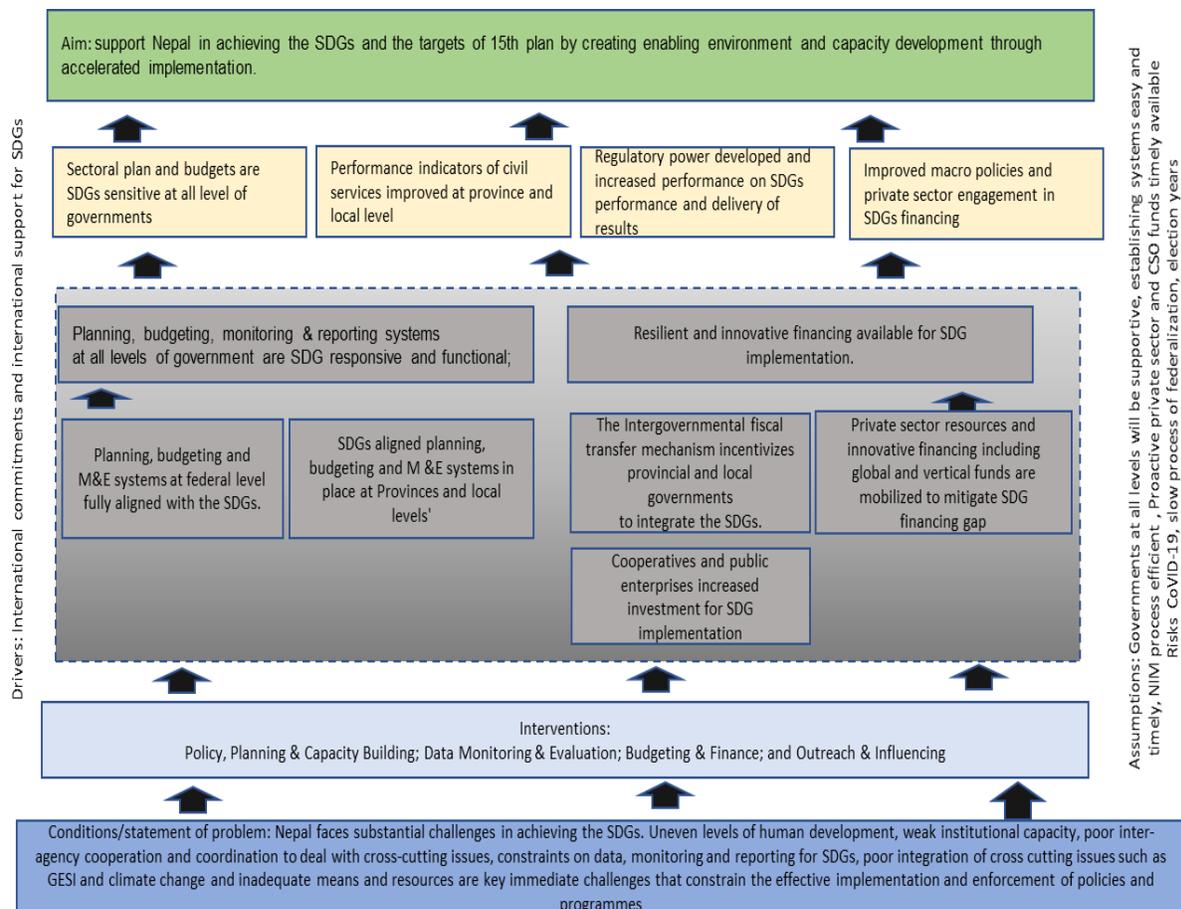
implementation of the project activities. Therefore, the project was revised by adding one additional output under outcome 2 and implementation modalities were also adjusted/adapted to address the COVID challenges. The COVID-19-related output is delineated in Exhibit 3.

Overall, the project had two major outcomes: 1) Planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting systems at all levels of government are SDG-responsive, and 2) Resilient and innovative financing is available for SDG implementation. To achieve set outcomes, projects envisioned six outputs as follows:

1. Planning, budgeting and M&E systems at the federal level are fully aligned with the SOGs.
2. SDGs aligned planning, budgeting and M&E systems in place at Provinces and local levels
3. The Intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanism incentivizes provincial and local governments to integrate the SDGs.
4. Cooperatives and public enterprises increased investment in SDG implementation
5. Private sector resources and innovative financing including global and vertical funds are mobilized to mitigate the SDG financing gap
6. COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/strategy developed.

Based on the project logic framework and discussions with the project team, the following simplified ToC (Image 1) was constructed to facilitate the evaluation process.

Image 1: Theory of Change of the Project



3.0 EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE

Objective and purpose: The final project evaluation was carried out from July to August 2023 and covered the processes and achievements made by the project during the past three and half years (Jan 2020 to June 2023).

The overall objective (Exhibit 4) of this final evaluation was to assess results achieved and lesson learnt by the project in accelerating SDGs implementation in Nepal. The evaluation assessed the implementation approaches of the project objective, results against output targets, contribution to higher-level outcome results including GESI results, and issues/challenges encountered. The primary audience of this evaluation was NPC, UNDP, funders, sectoral ministries at the federal level, sub-national government (Provinces and Local governments), development partners, private sectors, CSO, cooperatives and other relevant stakeholders. They can use the findings of the evaluation for future courses of action particularly in the context of accelerating SDGs in Nepal.

Scope: The final evaluation covered the full scope of the AISN project covering the interventions at all three level of governments. As specified in the ToRs, the final evaluation included the following areas:

- **Relevance of the project:** a review of progress against its purpose, objectives, and outputs along with project documents, such as revised Theory of Change, Results and Resources Framework, and M&E framework;
- **Coherence of the project:** alignment of the project with strategic documents (e.g., UNDAF, CPD) and national priorities (e.g., Nepal's Fourteenth and Fifteenth Plan);
- **Effectiveness of project implementation:** a review of the project's technical as well as operational approaches and deliverables in general, and approaches to gender equality and social inclusion, and marginalized groups in particular. Examination of external factors beyond the project's control that have affected it negatively or positively and how the project dealt with it.
- **Efficiency in project implementation:** Appraisal of the planning, management, and quality assurance mechanism to deliver the project interventions. Review of the project's coordination and communication process and mechanisms with stakeholders.
- **Impact of the project:** a review of the quality of results, such as knowledge products developed and utilized, expertise transferred to the target groups, partnerships and engagements, and whether the functional efficiency of the target institutions was increased.
- **Sustainability of the project interventions:** review whether the positive impact of the project interventions can be sustained beyond the project life. Review of the incorporation of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) recommendations by the project.
- **Management and implementation arrangement** of the project and distribution of responsibilities within the given structure and national implementation modality, including financial and human resource management, monitoring and oversight as well as the risks and risk management strategies in terms of their contribution to the delivery of project results in accordance with the project's Results and Resources Framework (RRF);
- **Impact of the project on gender equality and social inclusion**, and include recommendations on gender equality and women's empowerment cutting across effectiveness, effectively, sustainability and lessons learnt on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Evaluation criteria and questions: The assessment process used the OECD DAC evaluation criteria⁴: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the AISN project intervention. Various evaluation questions and sub-questions emerged from these criteria to assess the performance of the project, document learning and provide recommendations.

The evaluation also assessed how the intervention sought to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion issues and the application of the human rights-based approaches while accelerating SDGs implementation at all levels. In addition, the evaluation reviewed the management and implementation arrangements of the project and also identified and examined key external factors beyond the project's control that contributed to and hindered the achievement of project objectives and goals.

The evaluation team framed the evaluation design (the evaluation matrix is provided in annex 2) to better understand the impact of the interventions amid the COVID-19 context on AISN outputs and outcomes. The evaluation report is aligned with the evaluation questions and sub-questions with OECD DAC criteria. The evaluation criteria and assessment were slightly adjusted to respond to the availability of project data and information. With these in mind and also the criteria given in the final evaluation ToRs, the major evaluation questions (EQs) are included below:

Relevancy:

- EQ: To what extent did the project meet the needs of the government and other stakeholders/ UNDP strategic objectives and programmes and adapt to the changing Context?
- EQ. To what extent was the design of the AISN theory of change and management structures, and approaches relevant to addressing SDGs?

Coherence

- EQ: To what extent the project is coherent/ compatible with other interventions in Nepal and within UNDP?

Effectiveness

- EQ: To what extent was the AISN effective in the integration of SDGs in national and sectoral policies and strategies and in contributing to meeting the needs of the federal, provincial, and local governments in localizing the SDGs in Nepal?
- EQ: To what extent has the AISN project achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended outcomes? What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and sustainability of the result?

Efficiency

- EQ: To what extent did the interventions deliver results cost-effectively?

Impact

Exhibit 4: Evaluation Objectives

- Assess the intervention, processes, and approaches of the project intervention, result against output targets, contribution to higher level outcome results and issues /challenges encountered.
- Document the lessons learnt good practices and make recommendations for future course of action

⁴ See at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

- EQ: To what extent did the project contribute to long-term intended results (expected impact)? Did the project outputs generate any significant higher-level effects?

Sustainability

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

Cross-cutting issues

- EQ: To what extent has the project contributed to mainstreaming the gender equality and social inclusion dimension in overall SDG implementation and localization efforts? (design and implementation/ dedicated gender plan of action/strategies etc.)
- EQ: To what extent did the project integrate the climate change theme and environmental issues?

In addition, the evaluation also used the following questions for documenting learning and recommendations.

- EQ: What are the major lessons learned from this project that can be used in future?
- EQ: What could be a recommendation for similar kinds of interventions in future?

4.0 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach. The evaluation is an independent, objective, evidence-based and participatory process for review and, where necessary, adjustment of the project strategy and operations. The assessment will also consider the major socio-economic, political and other unexpected changes such as COVID-19 and the federalization process of state structures.

Qualitative information was collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), one Focus Group Discussion (FDG), carrying out case studies and observations whereas quantitative data was collected based on secondary sources (mainly from the project). The evaluation tools were context-sensitive and adequately addressed the issues of gender equality and social inclusion and marginalized/vulnerable groups. In addition, the evaluation also assessed the interventions related to GESI and climate change.

Methodology

Data Collection Methods

The assessment used evaluation questions as a central point for the data collection. These evaluation questions correspond to the OECD DAC evaluation criteria and the UNDP evaluation policy.

The evaluation employed a mixed method approach relying on qualitative and quantitative data to answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation team collected data through a review of program documents, annual reports, rounds of group meetings with the project team, and semi-structured KIIs with NPC, formal NPC officials, as well as private, CSO and cooperative sector representatives.

This methodology was built on existing data and information and used different tools and techniques for collecting qualitative evidence. Perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders ensured that biases were mitigated, with quantitative data allowing the annual reports of the projects to triangulate evidence. The evaluation team collaborated closely among project team members through occasional de-briefs and frequent analysis sessions.

The evaluability assessment of the project showed limited monitoring data at the output and outcome levels. To compensate for this, the evaluation used a reflective practice process where the project team and major stakeholders reflected on ‘how the project intervention helped in influencing the expected results’ and ‘what changes have been noted that are contributed by the project interventions’. For this, the evaluation also assessed the process of the project interventions and analysed the changes that are likely to be made by the project intervention through using participatory tools such as group meetings. It applied the following data collection methods to each of the identified respondent groups:

Desk Review: The evaluation team reviewed project documents, annual reports, and M & E plan/Result Framework including various study/research reports supported by AISN. Some quantitative data and descriptive information were collected from the desk review (see annex 3).

KIIs with GON officials: 27 Interviews were held with appropriate government officials including 6 women government officials at the federal level who were directly and indirectly involved with project activities. This included the National Program Director, National Program Coordinator, NPC staff, formal secretary of NPC, secretary of National Assembly and a representative from MoFE.

KIIs or Group Meeting with AISN staff and UNDP: The evaluation team met the Resident Representative, GESI Advisor, Policy Advisor and portfolio manager of Inclusive Economic Growth portfolio from UNDP whereas the National Project Manager and other project thematic experts were also consulted. In addition, the evaluation team also met a senior officer from the EU Delegation who was responsible for this project in Nepal.

Field Visit: The evaluation team conducted a field visit in Gandaki Province and Annapurna Rural Municipalities. During the field visit, the team conducted KIIs with the Vice-chair of the Province Planning Commission, a Statistician - district Statistic office and the secretary of the Vice-Chair office, Gandaki Province whereas the Vice-Chair and ICT officer of Annapurna rural municipality in this office. Also, the evaluation team observed the status of SDGs data collection and level of use at the local level.

The list of people met in this evaluation is provided in annex 4.

The evaluation team developed a checklist for each stakeholder as an instrument for the interview guide for key informant interviews (annex 2).

Sampling strategy adopted

The evaluation team carried out 27 KIIs, 1 FDG and 1 online interview. A total of 34 respondents, including 26 men and women, provided feedback in this evaluation (Exhibit 5 and annex 4).

Field Visit and Selection Criteria: Given the available resources and limited time to complete the evaluation, the evaluation team limited its data collection site to only Gandaki Province, and Annapurna Rural Municipality of the same Province. The Province and Rural Municipality were selected based on representative actions of mainstream SDG indicators in Gandaki Province reflected in their

Exhibit 5: Overview of Data collection effort

Tools used for information collection	Number			
	Male	Female	Non-binary	Total
KIIs	21	6	0	27
Group meeting	4	2	0	6
Telephone/online interview	1	0	0	1

periodic action plan. The field visit and KIIs were conducted through in-person meetings at respective offices which are delineated in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6: Field Visit Sample			
Sites visited	Reasons for selection	Type of stakeholders	Methods and no of people to meet
Gandaki Province	Representative actions of SDG policy and SDG-related data collection	Provincial Commission and Provincial Data Collection Office	Key Informant Interview (KII)
Annapurna Rural Municipality	Capacity building of Local Government and use of NDP	Local Government leadership and officials	Key Informant Interview (KII)

Performance rating: No performance rating scale and their criteria are provided in the final evaluation ToRs so, the evaluation used a simple rating scale 1 - ‘not satisfactory’ (if the project carried out very little and the performance/result is too low), scale 2 - ‘moderately satisfactory’ (the project carry out some activities and have limited results/performance), scale 3 - ‘satisfactory’ (where the project do reasonably good and performance/results are reasonably visible, followed the agreed project logic framework and highly adaptive).

The impact and Sustainability criteria are assessed based on the rating scale 1 - ‘not like’ (if there is no or very little possibility of happening), scale 2 - ‘moderately satisfactory’ (there are enabling environment and ownership from stakeholders but they are not very strong) and scale 3 - ‘satisfactory’ (where the enabling environment and ownership are strong and no or little risks noted).

5.0 DATA ANALYSIS

The main source of data was from key informant surveys, review of reports, reflective focus group discussion with the project staff and observation. Very limited quantitative data were received (such as the number of training participants in different years) and these data were analysed by using Microsoft Excel. The qualitative information was used to reflect and assess how the project intervention helped to deliver outputs and contributed to achieving the project outcomes. Key Informant Interviews (KII) were carried out separately to maximise the number of interviews undertaken during the evaluation period and to get candid information.

For analysing the qualitative information, the evaluation team first identified the change process, the result achieved and the most significant change contributed along with the challenges faced and opportunities realized by the project. This information was categorized based on the themes (planning, capacity building, data generation, evidence generation etc.), level of governance and type of stakeholders. In the second step, these results were verified through various stakeholders in Kathmandu. To collect specific data related to the sub-national level, the evaluation team also visited one Province and one Rural Municipality. This provided triangulation opportunities for the project’s results and other findings. While doing this the evaluation team considered the potential causal inferences based on the thematic areas. This was further shared and verified with other stakeholders before finalization. Apart from that, the data analysis approach adopted GESI approach while analysis and triangulate the data received from various sources both primary and secondary.

Limitations of the study

There are a few limitations to the methods used and data collection during this evaluation. Below are details on limitations related to potential biases, and the evaluation team's mitigation strategies to address each limitation.

- **Recall bias** occurs when respondents provide inaccurate or incomplete recollections about past experiences. This can happen for a variety of reasons, including when informants participate in more than one activity intervention. This was the case for AISN. Some representatives from the private sector, cooperatives and CSOs participated in NPC's multiple interventions related to SDGs and found it difficult to attribute some of the contributions to AISN. To remind and refocus the respondents back on the AISN project, the evaluation team probed and asked the same question differently as a means of validating their responses.
- **Response bias** is the risk that key informants may have been motivated to provide the evaluation team with responses that would be considered socially desirable or influential in obtaining donor support. The team expected that some respondents may have behaved this way knowing that this evaluation would shape future activity opportunities and funding. The evaluation team strictly adhered to "do no harm" principles and made sure not to raise the expectations of the respondents.
- **Limited data and interaction with Provinces and local level:** There was limited data availability on the project interventions – especially how the intervention influenced results and achieved outputs. In addition, the evaluation team could not visit more than one Province for the interactions at the sub-national level. This was due to the monsoon and the short time frame for evaluation. The evaluation team visited one Province and one rural municipality where major support from the project sites was provided. The evaluation team used this visit as an opportunity to have detailed discussions with the stakeholders and get broader reflections (issues and status) of other Provinces.

The evaluation team addressed the threat of bias through several measures i) using multiple sources of data to triangulate data for each evaluation question; ii) combining information found in documents and interviews with multiple sources; and iii) ensuring, to the extent possible, that project staff were not present for any KIIs during data collection. Consequently, the evaluation team is confident in the quality of the data. The responses were consistent across all respondent groups; no response constituted outliers from the other information collected.

6.0 FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

6.1 Relevance

EQ: To what extent did the project meet the needs of the government and other stakeholders/UNDP strategic objectives and programmes and adapt to the changing Context?

EQ. To what extent was the design of the AISN theory of change and management structures, and approaches relevant to addressing SDGs?

The project was highly relevant to address the needs of the government and the local communities. The objectives, results and activities of the project were well aligned with the priorities of the government and the NPC mandate⁵. The project was in line with the Constitution of Nepal (2015) and other key policy documents, such as the 15th Development Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24⁶) and the 25-Year Long-Term Vision (2043) which internalised the SDGs in their priorities. The GESI mainstreaming approaches adopted by the project was also highly relevant and significant to address gender inequality and exclusion, which is one of the key challenges to achieve SDGs target (detail provided in below GESI section).

NPC and other national stakeholders appreciated the technical assistance, knowledge generation, capacity building and institutional development support provided by the project in all three tiers of the governments. One of the key stakeholders mentioned that ‘the project interventions enabled them to understand the challenges and opportunities of SDGs integration in the national policies and programmes’ while the other stakeholders mentioned that ‘the project displayed relevance of fulfilling the international commitment made by the government in SDGs’.

The project was also aligned with UNDP strategic documents in Nepal. The project contributed to outcomes 1 and 3 of UNDP Nepal CPD⁷ (2018-2022) output 1.3⁸ and the priority areas of UNDAF (2018-2022⁹) for Nepal. The project was also found adaptive to emerging challenges and country situations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the project analysed the pandemic risk and adjusted the project planning and management by using different approaches (i.e., the use of online tools). Due to the risk, the project added one separate output (output 2.4) and repurposed 5.5 % of the total budget of the project for COVID response output.

⁵ NPC’s role is to advise the government of Nepal (including ministries and departments) on the amendments to be made in periodic plans and programmes https://npc.gov.np/en/page/npc_functions

⁶ The Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20 – 2023/24) page 2, www.npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_plan_English_Version.pdf

⁷ Country Programme Document for Nepal (2018-2022) (<https://www.undp.org/nepal/publications/country-programme-document-nepal-2018-2022>)

⁸ Output 1.3: improved national capacities in planning, monitoring, financing, and reporting on the 2030 agenda, output 1.3.1 Extent to which updated and disaggregated data is being used to monitor progress on national development goals aligned with the SDGs (SDG 17, 18), and output 1.3.2: National integrated financing framework for 2030 Agenda is in place.

⁹ Four priority areas of cooperation- Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth, Social Development, Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation, Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022 for Nepal (https://nepal.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/UNDAF%202018-2022_Final.pdf)

Theory of Change and Program Design

The project identified core challenges¹⁰ and risks of the SDG localization/implementation in Nepal during the project design and also assessed the ambition of the government to implement the SDG targets within 2030 (Exhibit 7).

The project design identified activities, outputs, outcomes and objectives and developed a project logic framework. The framework (ProDoC page 2) was constructed by adopting simple cause-and-effect relations between the different levels of project result hierarchy. To support this logic, the project used four strategic actions i.e., policy, planning & and capacity building; data monitoring & and evaluation; budgeting and financing, and outreach and influencing and these were found to be relevant. There was no revision of the Result Framework of this project during the project implementation except for adding output 2.4 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nonetheless, a comprehensive Theory of Change (ToC¹¹) could have been further elaborated during the project design phase by carrying out additional country context analysis along with the identification of underlying risks and assumptions, verifying the logic (hierarchy of objectives¹²) and undertaking a more systematic stakeholder analysis and their potential roles for the project. Making extensive ToC was challenging partly during the project design stage due to the ongoing federalization process and the unclarity of roles and responsibilities of the different tiers of the government.

Exhibit 7: Objective of the project

“Support Nepal achieving the SDGs and the targets of 15th plan by creating enabling environment and capacity development through accelerated implementation.”

The project design included important and relevant areas of interventions that are relevant to SDG implementation. They included working with the three tiers of the government and other non-public sectors such as the private sector and CSOs along with some cross-cutting issues. It was however noted that the project outputs spread thinly covering a wider range of issues considering the duration and size

¹⁰ The core challenges included insufficient linkages and coordination among the government, inadequate institutional and financial capacity of the governments, constraints on data, monitoring and reporting for SDGs, poor mainstreaming of poverty, environment, climate and GESI in sectoral policies, plans and strategies, low level of SDG awareness at local level, inadequate measures in place to address GESI and poor integration of SDGs and PEC in SMEs, coops and private sector finance

¹¹ According to a UNDP document, a theory of change is a method that explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, is expected to lead to specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. A theory of change must be driven by sound analyses, consultation with key stakeholders and learning on what works and what does not in diverse contexts drawn from the experiences of the UN and its partners. A theory of change also helps to identify the underlying assumptions and risks that will be vital to understand and revisit throughout the process to ensure the approach will contribute to the desired change. For detail see (page 4) at <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf>

¹² For example at output level: the output 1.1 (planning, budgeting and M&E systems at federal level fully aligned with the SDGs) and output 1.2 (SDGs aligned planning, budgeting and M &E systems in place at Provinces and Local levels) are ambitious to deliver by the project given its limited time, resources. In this outputs were in fact the responsibility of the government and could have been outcomes of the project. For clarity on the output and outcome – pls see at <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/RBMConceptsMethodgvjuly2002.pdf>.

of the project. The cross-cutting issues like GESI, climate change are found appropriate, they could have however been more explicit¹³ with more tangible output or results.

The project document provided some output level indicators. It is noted that these indicators were in the form of activity completion targets which are inadequate to know whether the outputs were achieved¹⁴ or the level of achievement. GESI indicators were not explicitly provisioned on the project Result Framework (detail proved in below GESI section). The evaluation team viewed that these indicators, even if they are achieved, do not provide sufficient information on, for example, ‘to what extent the planning, budgeting and M&E systems at the federal level were fully aligned with the SDGs’.

Project Structure

During the project implementation period, the Project Executive Board (PEB) sat 14 times (5 times in 2020, 3 times in 2021, 5 times in 2022 and 1 time in 2023) whereas the Steering Committee (SC) convened once. The evaluation team found the PEB meeting minutes were sufficiently detailed and showed a good level of engagement with the project. The coordination between the project and NPC was found strong. The Board took a lead role in approving AWP and project budgets and also made an important decision on emerging issues such as responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews with the project team and relevant stakeholders showed no major concerns about the project implementation.

There was good ownership from NPC to manage the project. However multiple perspectives appeared on the effectiveness of the NIM modality. Some stakeholders viewed that there was no adequate incentive provisioned within the NIM guidelines for government officials to consider the level of work required and the risk to be taken. This has affected their dedicated time and attention as the project work was considered an additional task. The evaluators also felt that the issues raised by the stakeholders need to be further explored and addressed as the NIM performance assessment was not possible in this evaluation time frame.

There were however some suggestions received for improvement. The PEB meetings could have been organized with the provision of adequate time for the PEB members to participate and prepare based on the agenda. It was also noted that, in a few cases, the NPC leadership asked to include additional activities even after the approval of the AWP. Often these ad-hoc-based activities were difficult to align with the project outputs. This could have been minimized if there were well-informed guidelines for the selection and prioritization of the project activities. As a result, in some cases, the high number of project activities led to a small budget, inadequate supervision and difficulties in ensuring the quality of the studies. The frequent change in NPC leadership also had some challenges in planning and managing the project activities. Likewise, project board and steering committee’s composition were GESI neutral. Nonetheless, project team appointed dedicated GESI focal persons. But, in order to ensure the GESI responsive project

¹³ For example, the project adopted GESI and climate change as priority cross-cutting themes based on the national priorities reflected in the Constitution of Nepal, legislative frameworks, policies and plans along with the European Union’s Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 and UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2018- 2021). There were however no specific outputs related to GESI and it was integrated within the activities (see output 1.1 1.1.2, 1.1.4 and 1.1.5 of the ProDoc).

¹⁴ For example, for output 1.1. (planning, budgeting and M&E systems at the federal level fully aligned with the SDGs), the proposed indicators were: i) number of SDG progress reports with disaggregated analysis; ii) SDG budget code guidelines in place; iii) number of studies and policy papers produced; iv) number of existing SDG committees at the federal level fully operationalized; and v) number of Monitoring and Evaluation activities conducted. Even achieving these targets, it is hard to know – to what extent the alignment was in place.

management team, project can further enhance its intervention to ensure GESI responsive recruitment process adopting the affirmative measures (detail provided in GESI section below).

Project implementation Approaches

The project adopted a flexible and forward-looking approach by building on the incremental steps in the existing systems. The project planned to support the SDG localization process by creating a policy environment and capacity building in three tiers of the government and engaging actors from the non-public sector to strengthen their role in the implementation of SDGs.

The major focus was on knowledge-generating on various aspects of SDGs through studies and reviews. It has conducted about 60 studies and policy reviews. Study reports and their findings¹⁵ appeared to be instrumental in shaping the policies, development planning and institutional framework related to SDG implementation. The project also supported some flagship publications (such as NHDR and MPI, VNR) which were widely used as reference documents for policy influence within the country and for sharing the international commitments of the country. There were however many studies waiting for the final approval from NPC and dissemination of the knowledge to the relevant stakeholders.

The capacity-building approach assisted in strengthening the capacity of federal, province and local level government along with various other stakeholders. The training helped to enhance the knowledge and skills of the participants and they also used the skills in their day-to-day work that supported the institutionalization of SDGs implementation (see training-related details in annex 5). The collaborative engagement with other non-public stakeholders could have improved to generate more sustained results.

The project embraced a *GESI mainstreaming approach* at all levels of project interventions to address the social and political gaps in gender equality and social inclusion of different gender, caste and religion and so forth. AINS was committed to supporting to reduce of such disparities among marginalized populations by improving their access to and participation in capacity-building training, policy dialogues and so forth. The project had a dedicated GESI focal person within the project team to ensure a concerted effort to integrate GESI issues into their program activities and to provide technical support to the project on GESI-related issues (see the GESI chapter).

Overall, the project was highly relevant as the project fully aligned with National, and UNDP's priority areas. Hence, the project relevance was rated satisfactory.

6.2 Coherence:

EQ: To what extent the project is coherent/ compatible with other interventions in Nepal and within UNDP?

External coherence: The project was coherent and well aligned with the SDGs-related commitments of the government and national priorities such as the 15th five-year plan of the government. For example, the government of Nepal expressed its commitment to advance the global 2030 agenda; these overall policy frameworks embraces GESI for sustainable development through the formulation of various plans,

¹⁵ VNR, National Human Development Report, SDGs Mid-term report, SDGs Localization Guideline Resource Book and publication of revised Local Level Plan Formulation Guideline, Framework of Leave no one Behind, research on various marginalized issues

policies and strategies (NPC, 2017¹⁶) and the project was fully coherent with these commitments. The project supports were also aligned with the work and priorities of the development partners, private sector, cooperatives and civil society organizations.

Internal coherence: UNDP has strategic documents to which the project was also aligned. The UNDAF (2018-2022) and UNDP Nepal CPD area (2018 – 2018) outcomes 1 and 3 demonstrated the UNDP priorities with regard to SDGs along with inclusive development and environmental/climate change management. The contribution of the project has also been well recognized in the UNDP progress report. For example, the UN annual results report (2022) Nepal mentioned that UNDP priorities were supported by the AISN project interventions through the ‘continued working with the Government on the formulation of national policies and plans’. In addition, the project also collaborated with other UN/UNDP projects (such as the Parliament Support Project and UNICEF) in generating knowledge at the federal level and creating awareness of SDGs at the sub-national level.

The evaluation team confirmed that the project maintained its internal and external coherence. Hence the project coherence is rated ‘satisfactory’.

6.3 Effectiveness

Achievement at the output level

EQ. To what extent was the AISN effective in the integration of SDGs in national and sectoral policies and strategies and in contributing to meeting the needs of the federal, provincial, and local governments in localizing the SDGs in Nepal?

Based on the project progress reports (see annex 7) and KIIs with the stakeholders, the evaluation found the following status of the achievement of the project outputs (Table 1).

Table 1: Progress status of the project outputs

Outputs	Indicators	Level of achievement	Major progress ¹⁷
Output 1.1: Planning, budgeting and M&E systems at federal level fully aligned with the SDGs.	Number of SDG progress reports with disaggregated analysis.	Mostly achieved	Mostly achieved. Some examples include: A large no. of studies (55) were carried out and SDGs committee meetings supported and trained (206) staff. SDG budget code guideline is approved by NPC and waiting for government approval. Provided support in the 15 th development plan implementation, development of MTEF prioritization criteria, support in
	SDG budget code guideline is in place.		
	Number of studies and policy papers produced.		
	Number of existing SDGs Committees at the federal level fully operationalized.		

¹⁶ NPC (2017), Nepal Sustainable Development Goal, Status and Road Map (2016 – 2030). Nepal comments in achieving the SDGs: Government of Nepal has confirmed its commitment to advance the global 2030 agenda for sustainable development through formulation of various plans, polices and strategies.

¹⁷ The project progress report against the Result Framework is available in annex 7.

Outputs	Indicators	Level of achievement	Major progress ¹⁷
	Number of Monitoring and Evaluation activities conducted.		<p>preparation of the 16th five-year plan, and LDC graduation strategy.</p> <p>Although most of the activities are completed, no adequate evidence is available to assess the level of alignment of SDGs in planning, budgeting and M & E systems at the federal level. The KIIs and overall assessment from the evaluation team showed that the project mostly achieved the output.</p>
Output 1.2: SDGs aligned planning, budgeting and M & E systems in place at Provinces and local levels	Number of Provinces and Local levels integrate SDGs including /PEC/GESI into their policies, plans, and budget	Mostly achieved	<p>All 7 provinces have aligned SDG into their periodic plans. Similarly, the selected local governments started to align their plans with SDGs. However, the exact number of local governments that have aligned SDG with their plans is unknown. SDG orientation was provided for all 753 local government officials and 7 provincial officials. Also supported to prepare SDG aligned local level planning guidelines. CCFFs were also prepared in 3 provinces but no progress was noted on creating multi-stakeholder SDG committees, monitoring and evaluation and formation of SDG committees.</p> <p>Although most of the activities are completed, there was no clear evidence available to assess the level of alignment of SDGs in planning, budgeting and M & E systems. The KIIs and overall assessment from the evaluation team showed that the project mostly achieved the output.</p>
	Number of multi-stakeholder SDGs committees at provincial and local level created and operationalized		
	Number of Provinces and Local levels introducing CCFF reform road map		
	Number of SDG reports at Provinces and Local levels		
	Number of monitoring/evaluation activities and reports		
	Number of SDGs committees formed		
Output 2.1: The Intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanism incentivizes provincial and local governments to integrate the SDGs	Policy paper in place on fiscal transfer instruments aligned with SDGs	Limited achievement	<p>NNRFC did not entertain working with NPC. So, the project was not able to produce policy papers and develop guidelines as planned but the project assisted in carrying out two studies and developing some relevant knowledge. So, there was little progress on it as per the ProDoc.</p>
	Intergovernmental fiscal transfer guidelines include provision on SDG including PEC/GESI prioritization.		
	Number of government officials (federal, provincial and Local level) trained on provisions of SDG including PEC/GESI friendly fiscal transfers system		

Outputs	Indicators	Level of achievement	Major progress ¹⁷
Output 2.2. Cooperatives/CSOs and public enterprises increased investment for SDG implementation	Number of analysis on investment in cooperatives/CSOs and public enterprises from SDGs perspectives.	Limited achievement	Some studies/assessments were conducted to analyse the investment from SDGs perspectives of 15 cooperatives and 14 CSOs that included the assessment of their readiness for SDG implementation. However, no adequate analysis of investment from SDG perspectives and no follow up carried out after the studies. So, there was little progress on it as per the ProDoc.
	Number of SDG reports produced by Cooperatives/CSOs and public enterprises to track the contributions on SDGs		
	Number of cooperative members trained on SDG.		
Output 2.3: Private sector resources and innovative financing including global and vertical funds mobilized for SDG acceleration focused on PEC/GESI	Number of guidelines, strategies, tools to manage private sector investment decisions that facilitate or prioritize quality investments.	Limited achievement	Carried out a study on the assessment of private sector contribution to SDGs. There was no special interest of NPC in it to continue. No work/progress was made on the development of guidelines, strategies and tools to increase investment in SDG, and no availability of green and innovative financing mechanisms as mentioned in the ProDoc. So, there was little progress on it as per the ProDoc.
	Percentage increase in private sector investment to support to attain SDGs goals including poverty, environmental sustainability and climate objectives for the SDGs.		
	Number of green and innovative financing mechanism operationalized on SDGs		
Output 2.4 COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/strategy developed.	Additional amount of global and vertical funds available to accelerate SDGs.	Limited achievement	Two studies (a social-economic study of COVID-19 impact and LDC graduation strategy) were carried out. No other specific progress was made beyond the studies. No indicators were available to assess the progress but it was noted a little progress on this output.
	No indicator available		

The above analysis showed that the project has mostly achieved outputs 1.1 and 1.2 whereas other outputs had limited achievement. Some of the major findings at the output level are presented below.

Planning, budgeting and M&E systems at the federal level: The majority of stakeholders reported that the project, directly or indirectly, influenced organizations and individuals to improve planning, budgeting and reporting systems and support in creating awareness and sensitization in intergovernmental fiscal transfer and the rationale for increasing investment in SDGs.

In this case, various publications, capacity-building initiatives and institutional mechanisms (such as new tools and frameworks) helped to sensitize the need for SDGs and promote policy coherence at multiple

levels of governance. The project assisted in enhancing the commitment of the government to effectively support the SDG localization process. Some of the government officials mentioned that the project interventions fully supported the implementation of the 15th five-year plan through technical assistance, capacity building and knowledge generation support. It appears that the SDG planning and programming would be further reinforced in the upcoming 16th five-year plan with major financial support from this project.

Knowledge Building on SDGs: AISN supported carrying out about 60 studies and preparing reports (study report, tools and mechanisms) on different themes (see some examples in image 2 and a list of studies/research is provided in annex 6). AISN adopted two approaches while invest on conducting studies/policies review: i) conducted GESI exclusive studies, and ii) mainstream GESI through addressing GESI issues in respective researches/studies/policies review (details provided in GESI section below). Some of them are converted to useful knowledge products¹⁸. These knowledge products and guidelines (such as planning guidelines) were found instrumental to the Government of Nepal in developing plans, frameworks, institutions, policies and strategies to accelerate the SDGs at federal, provincial and local levels. These supports were also well appreciated by the stakeholders and, they believed, these documents provided a foundation for planning and programme the SDG-related interventions in future. **Support to strengthen Parliamentary Oversight on SDGs Progress:** AISN in collaboration with the ‘Support to Parliamentary Project (SPP¹⁹)’ assisted parliamentarians from the ‘SDG and Good Governance Committee’ of the National Assembly in accelerating SDGs through parliamentary oversight. The project helped to develop a resource book on SDGs and ensure their effective role in enhancing SDGs oversight. A senior official from the National Assembly secretariat confirmed that the support was useful in raising SDG implementation issues at the National Assembly. It was however also mentioned that regular support to a large number of Parliamentarians would have generated sustained results.



¹⁸ such as SDG Aligned Local Level Planning Guidelines, and Preparation of LDC graduation transition strategy, the National Human Resource Plan, LNOB national framework, National Human Development Report (2020), VNR and SDGs mid-term review. Likewise, AISN provided its support in conducting other various studies (such as insurance, fertilizer, river training, and CSV guideline)

¹⁹ This was another project being implemented by UNDP Nepal. Detail at <https://www.undp.org/nepal/projects/psp>

Aligning SDGs at the sub-national level: The project provided support for the implementation of SDGs at the sub-national level. It assisted in the creation of public awareness and improved their planning, budgeting and reporting systems related to SDGs at the Province level. For example, Gandaki Province already integrated the SDGs in its planning process (the first development plan) with budget allocation for each SDG and developed the SDG Localization Roadmap with support from the project. In addition, support on financial management through the adoption of MTEF and CCFF was also provided. These instruments helped to understand the process of assessment and planning of the financial resources including SDGs.

National Data Profile support: The project also helped to generate data and integrate SDGs at the Local government level. In partnership with the National Statistics Office (NSO) in Kathmandu, the project assisted in capacitating and institutionalising the National Data Profile (NDP²⁰) in all municipalities in Nepal. The evaluation field visit in one of the rural municipalities revealed that the local government has been using the NDP software partially due to weak technical understanding and unavailability of capable human resources (see detail in Box 1).

Capacity Building: AISN has made noteworthy investments in capacity-building support to federal, provincial and local level government stakeholders. AISN data revealed that there were over 30 capacity-building training/workshops conducted during the project period, where the total number of participants was 332 and 2175 in the years 2021 and 2022 respectively (a total of 2507 out of which 287 were female). The training themes covered a wide range of issues as requested by stakeholders and NPC, such as national accounting, monitoring and evaluation, formulating medium-term expenditure, MTEF, complementary and special grant software operation practice and SDG localization, macroeconomic sectors and national accounts, and NDP & SDG localization (details of the training are provided in annex 5). AISN encouraged women and disadvantage communities’

participation in various trainings. However, there were low women’s participation. Stakeholders stated that the training was mostly focused on government ex-officio members who hold specific positions/responsibilities, hence ASIN could not able to ensure their participation as it was beyond the project control (detail explain in GESI section). During the evaluation process, respondents stated that they found the training was useful in terms of increasing awareness about SDGs and received good knowledge and skills but they also expressed that continuous support and regular follow-up are required along with the longer-term capacity development plan of the government agencies.

The Intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanism: According to the ProDoc, the project planned to work with NNRFC (National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission (NNRFC)). NNRFC was a constitutional

Box 1: NDP status at Annapurna Rural Municipality

Two officials from the Municipality attended the orientation cum training programme related to NDP/SDG from the Municipality. The technical officer mentioned that there was no follow up after the training was provided and they were also busy with their own priorities. They suggested that the indicators included in the software were too many (with no understanding of some terms) and they do not have no baseline and no targets for the same at the local level. They lack technical capacity to fully internalize the targets mentioned in the software which was also affected due to the capable human resources. Due to this, they did not work on the NDP/SDG.

(<http://nationaldata.gov.np/SDG/ViewSDG?SDGNo=13> for SDG 13 of Gandaki province).

²⁰ detail can be found at <http://nationaldata.gov.np/SDG>

body and It was mentioned that NNRFC did not entertain working with the NPC-led project. The project, however, carried out a gap analysis of complementary and special grants and commissioned a study on the evaluation of the implementation of intergovernmental fiscal transfers. There was however inadequate progress noted under this output based on the indicator proposed in the ProDoc²¹.

Involvement of Cooperative, CSO and private sector in SDG Process: The project carried out some studies to identify the readiness of these organizations towards alignment. For example, the project assessed 15 cooperatives and 14 CSOs to support SDGs tracking and assessment of the contribution of the private sector in Nepal. The stakeholders involved in this process mentioned they were involved mainly in the study process as participants²². They received the opportunity to provide feedback on the studies ('consulting engagement') but no engagement for the identification of issues and selection of methods and other decision-making processes. They also mentioned that they were still waiting to see the findings from these studies (see Table 1).

COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/strategy: The COVID-19 pandemic has brought an unprecedented situation in the country's socio-economic front challenging the achievements of SDGs. Nepal has been exploring ways to minimize its multifaceted impacts by implementing the recovery strategy with the help of SDGs. In this context, AISN helped to conduct studies on the 'Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 in Nepal' and the LDC graduation strategy. It is learnt that the socio-economic impact study was not finalized due to its quality of the report and no other specific interventions other than studies were carried out under this output.

Achievement at the outcome level

EQ. To what extent has the AISN project achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended outcomes? What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and sustainability of the result?

From the KII and FDGs and field observation, the evaluation team noted the following contribution from the project interventions and results generated by the project:

- a) *Sensitized Policy environment and enhanced plan formulation:* The project helped the Government of Nepal to internalize the SDGs through its regular programs and policies such as the current 15th Plan (2019/20-2023/24). The knowledge and experience generated from the project were planned to mainstream SDG localization in the 16th five-year plan. The flagship reports and other project results helped to create an enabling environment for improved policy frameworks, programmes, implementation instruments and guiding documents at different levels of the government.
- b) *Strengthened institutional Mechanisms:* The project assisted in organizing meetings of the high-level SDGs Steering Committees and Thematic Committees for strengthening the implementation of SDGs²³. These committees were represented by the private sector, cooperative sector and civil societies. The committees have taken many proactive decisions and provided directions to the various

²¹ Output (2.1) indicators included: i) Policy paper in place on fiscal transfer instruments aligned with SDGs; ii) Intergovernmental fiscal transfer guidelines include provision on SDG including PEC/GESI prioritization; iii) Number of government officials (federal, provincial and Local level) trained on provisions of SDG including PEC/GESI friendly fiscal transfers system

²² WHAT IS A 'GOOD PRACTICE'? A framework to analyse the Quality of S stakeholder Engagement in implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda (available at <https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/UNDP-UNDESA-Stakeholder-Engagement-en.pdf>)

²³ About the SDGS in Nepal: <http://sdg.npc.gov.np>

government agencies in line with SDG localization. In addition, the project supported the parliamentarians to provide more oversight roles on SDGs within the National Assembly and worked on SDG-related data collection from the local government through NDP.

- c) *Enhanced institutional Capacity*: The project helped to strengthen the capacity of the government agencies for localization of SDG through various training and orientation programmes. The support helped to enhance the capacity of the staff as well as create a foundation to align SDGs in planning, programming and budgeting processes.
- d) *Mainstream GESI*: AISN contributed to establish GESI mainstreaming approach in all stage of project interventions, which created foundation for developing transformative or GESI responsive intervention. The AISN investment on knowledge generation is a foundation for advocacy work to ensure GESI responsive policy advocacy and informed & evidence based decision making.

Based on the description above (achievement of outputs and contribution to outcomes), it was noted that the project has some tangible progress in contributing to enhancing policy, institution and capacity building part whereas there was less progress on the development of inter-governmental fiscal policy and engagement of non-public sector for SDG financing and localization. Overall, the evaluation team confirmed that the project has demonstrated a good contribution under outcome 1 (moderately satisfactory) whereas there was little progress made on outcome 2 (not satisfactory).

6.4 Efficiency

EQ: To what extent did the intervention deliver results cost-effectively?

The total project expenditure is shown in Table 2 below. The analysis showed that the project has about 72% expenditure rate so far (June 2023) in which about 10% is dedicated to GESI-related activities. The lowest expenditure was about 55% in 2021 which was mainly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project reached a total expenditure of 94% of its budget in 2022.

Table 2: Budget approved and expenditure rate over the years

Year	Approved budget in USD	Expenditure in USD	Expenditure as % of approved revised budget
2020	450,000.00	312,725.19	69.49 %
2021	970,414.79	537,081.37	55.34 %
2022	1,064,753.89	998,192.97	93.75%
2023	290,000.00	161,580.63	44.42 %
Total	2,775,168.68	2,009,580.16	72.41%

Source: AISN project, 2023

The budget allocation for the activities was found generally reasonable. The project activities were implemented according to the Annual Work Plan (AWP) which was agreed by the PEB annually. Funds and activities have been delivered in a mostly timely manner although there were cases of delayed activities. Some issues emerged around whether the project activities were selected and used strategically in accordance with the project outputs and outcomes mentioned in the ProDoc.

Regarding the output-wise expenses, it appeared that the project invested about 28% for output 1.1 and 32% for output 2.3 whereas output 1.2 and output 2.2 received only 4% and 2 % respectively (Table 3). This skewness showed the differential emphasis within the outputs. The budget allocated in the product

document was changed during the project implementation. This significant change in the budget line has been raised by one of the donors of this project. They mentioned that UNDP should have informed the donor to change the budget for more than the 20% difference that was agreed in the funding contract.

In addition, it was reported that the project carried out a limited number of activities under output 2.3 (private sector engagement) and most of the stakeholders agreed that the progress under this output was less. The financial report however showed that the total amount used for this output was about 33% (Table 3).

Table 3: Project financial delivery rate based on the outputs

Outputs	Total budget planned (2020 – June 2023)	Total expenditure (2020- June 2023)	Delivery %	% allocation
Output 1.1:	788,852.42	517,977.14	65.66%	28.4
Output 1.2:	110,242.00	69,849.27	63.36%	4.0
Output 2.1:	318,147.41	296,528.91	93.20%	11.5
Output 2.2.	54,413.59	36,957.68	67.92%	2.0
Output 2.3:	909,487.10	660,438.01	72.62%	32.8
Output 2.4:	153,749.06	60,835.70	39.57%	5.5
Output 3 Prog Support	440,277.10	366,992.96	83.35%	15.9
Total Amount	2,775,168.68	2,009,579.67	72.41%	

Source: AISN project, 2023

The audit carried out in 2022 by the Office of the Auditor General of Nepal showed no critical issues. The project followed the NIM approach and the cost-effectiveness in project management followed UNDP’s Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) and the National Implementation guidelines. There were a lot of studies carried out in this project and there was however lack of proper assessment of the merit of the activities vis-à-vis outputs, and their utility as per the ProDoc. Due to this, there was additional pressure on the project team to complete the activities on time, manage the large number of consultants and ensure the quality of the study reports.

The COVID-19 pandemic was the major barrier to the implementation of the project activities. The travel restriction and lockdown affected the smooth travel of the project staff and implementation of the project activities. The prolonged pandemic added further operational challenges, leading to the modifications of the initial project plan. Due to the pandemic, 30% and 45% of the budget was unspent in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

The project had developed a monitoring and evaluation plan with their purpose, frequency, expected action and relevant responsible partners. The project produced quarterly and annual reports regularly. The project also developed an annual M & E plan. It was however noted that the progress reporting against the outputs was inadequate²⁴. The evaluation noted that the output indicators proposed in the Result Framework were hard to correspond with the expected result of the outputs and their level of

²⁴ For example, for output 1 – ‘Output 1.1: Planning, budgeting and M&E systems at federal level fully aligned with the SDGs.’ The evaluation did not get any text or narration to know the status (such as to how and to what level the alignment was made – through planning, budgeting and M & E systems). The project however reported the no of studies or reports produced under this output which are not adequate to know the status of the output.

achievements. Rather they were presented as activity completion targets. There were no indicators for outcomes and tracking progress on GESI and its impact in the ProDoc as well as in the monitoring plan.

Monitoring and evaluation tasks, in this case, seemed to serve more for reporting purposes than collecting feedback, documenting learning for improvement and informed decision-making. No substantive M&E-related knowledge, good practices or lessons were captured and documented in APR as well as other documents. The project reporting could have been improved by providing more detail on the progress status of the outputs and outcomes in the APRs with in-depth learning studies from the project interventions.

One of the donors of this project emphasized improving the working modality and management practices of the project. Although the donor was working through different levels of decision-making within itself, the Nepal counterpart suggested it would have been better to follow the contract between the EU and UNDP – especially on the issues related to the donor visibility in the project publications and other project-related events and taking prior approval when there was significant budget shift (more than 20% in each heading).

The evaluation team viewed that the project was managed reasonably well to complete the tasks and followed the administrative and financial procedure of NIM guidelines. However, the distribution of budget to the outputs, knowledge use efficiency and reporting mechanisms could have been improved. So, the efficiency of this project is considered moderately satisfactory.

6.5 Impact

EQ: To what extent did the project contribute to long-term intended results (expected impact)? Did the project outputs generate any significant higher-level effects?

The SDGs present a comprehensive way of thinking about diverse facets of development; the goals are interconnected and interdependent. In this line, the project aimed to support Nepal in achieving the SDGs by creating an enabling environment and capacity development to mitigate the SDGs financing gap as well as through accelerated implementation. The impact of this kind of project generally takes some time to emerge, demonstrate and realize in the practical term. Based on the views of various stakeholders, some of the early impacts, on which the project also contributed, are presented below.

- ***Sensitized the premise of the SDGs in Nepal and developed a sense of shared responsibility among the stakeholders:*** There has been increasing realization that the SDGs present a comprehensive way of thinking about the various dimensions of the development such as interconnectedness and interdependence of the SDGs. Stakeholders also realized a shared vision of SDGs and the need for localization of the SDGs in Nepal through an inclusive approach.
- ***Created an environment for developing a longer-term strategy to address SDGs implementation:*** Through various flagship publications, such as NHDR, VNR, SDG assessment, MPI and LDC graduation studies, it was likely that the interventions contributed to more inclusive policy, plan and programme and also develop future strategies including the 16th five-year plan and LDC graduation strategy for achieving the SDGs.
- ***Strengthened the basis of institutional capacity for SDGs:*** With various capacity-building-related interventions, there has been an improvement in the functions and capability (knowledge, skill and ability) of NPC and Provinces. There has been a lot of additional inquisitiveness on different

tools and data collection mechanisms at the provincial level to integrate the SDGs adopting GESI in future.

Overall, some positive impacts started to emerge in the localization of SDGs. It is also noted that output results are still to be further strengthened and there are significant challenges (see sustainability part) ahead to get the expected impact of the project. The project impact, therefore, is considered 'moderately likely'.

6.6 Sustainability

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

The project has generated some good results, although they are at a nascent stage. Hence, to ensure the sustainability of the project results, the following factors are critical.

Institutional capacity: The project provisioned capacity-building support to the stakeholders in various areas. The project trained about 2,500 people at three tiers of the government across the country on various issues relevant to SDGs. There has been some good feedback noted on how they were being used in shaping the policy and institutional frameworks at all levels of the government. Institutional capacity building on SDGs is however a long-term, multi-layer and complex process. It also has moving targets. The project supported relatively a small part of the whole system which can be considered as a piloting intervention. It is realized that until there is continuous capacity building based on a longer-term capacity building plan with regular follow-up, it is difficult to expect to continue the work being carried out by the stakeholders.

Financial resources: One of the major challenges for sustainability is the financial resources in SDG localization. The SDG- Progress Assessment Report 2016–2019, has estimated that Nepal has an annual funding requirement of NRs 2,025 billion to reach the SDGs by 2030, whereas the estimated annual investment gap is approximated at NRs 585 billion. Due to the increasing economic crisis after the COVID-19 pandemic and inadequate financial resources available from the government for SDGs, there is a risk of SDG financing in Nepal. Hence, unless there are adequate financial resources for SDG implementation, the sustainability of the project results would be questionable.

Federal governance: Nepal's Constitution marks its transition from a unitary state to a federal republic and brought a fundamental paradigm shift in the systems, structures and functioning of sub-national governance. It devolves substantive development and service delivery responsibilities to provinces and local governments. However, Nepal is experiencing a very slow process of federalization, particularly in defining power distribution among the three tiers of government in practice, addressing legal uncertainties, and enhancing limited understanding among the actors and stakeholders about federalism and the exercise of shared power. The government has been working to develop structures and mechanisms for smooth collaboration among the different tiers of the government. Unless there is good progress on smooth federalization and collaborative actions among the major stakeholders of SDGs, this can be another risk for the localization of SDGs in coming years. Hence, the continuation of the project results is also dependent on how effectively federalization would be translated into action.

The government has shown a strong ownership, interest and commitment to SDG implementation, the evaluation team however noted that there is a moderate degree of dependency on these factors.

6.7 Cross-cutting themes (GESI and climate/environment)

GESI CONTRIBUTION

EQ: To what extent has the project contributed to mainstreaming the gender equality and social inclusion dimension in overall SDG implementation and localization efforts? (design and implementation/ dedicated gender plan of action/strategies etc.)

Relevancy of the Project Design and Implementation from the GESI Perspective

Promoting gender equality is not the main objective of the Project, but the outputs aim to promote gender equality in a substantial and consistent manner. In this context, the project document reads “*Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) through better integration within policies, processes and systems as well as within the public and private finance as its strategy to achieving SDGs*”.

To respond to this, the project adopted GESI mainstreaming as one of the key approaches/strategies in all levels of project interventions to address gender inequality and social exclusion that are rooted in Nepal at the individual, community and institutional levels.

The project team found that AISN supported generating evidence based knowledge on several issues that directly link with GESI, for instance, the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Framework, the status of LGBTIQ, the status of sex workers, etc. Likewise, AISN made visible efforts to address disparities against women and marginalized populations by improving their access to and participation in capacity-building training, policy dialogues and so forth. Hence, there is a relevancy of the GESI mainstreaming approach in the entire project and it is still valid to continue.

Going forward, there is an opportunity for AISN to revisit the theory of change to build the GESI-specific objective, outcome and output level indicators, as GESI is a corporate responsibility of UNDP’s work. Hence, in the next phase of the project development, there is ample opportunity for UNDP & NPC collaboratively to develop a GESI transformative or responsive theory of change including the Result Framework in line with the socio-economic rights ensured by the Constitution of Nepal, upcoming 16th plan, national gender equality policy, and other plans and programmes introduced by the government as well as UNDP Nepal GESI strategy and CPD 2023-2027.

Project Management and Institutional Arrangement from GESI Perspective

The project document clearly outlined the governance and management arrangements of the AISN under section VIII. The governance and management arrangements include the project steering committee (PSC), project board and project management unit. The project management unit comprised a core team lead by a National Project Manager supported by a team of professional and support staff-1, Policy Specialist (infrastructure-1, Policy Analyst (climate finance-1), Policy Specialist (social sector and M &E), and policy specialist (governance and Coordination, administrative and finance associate-1 and driver-2.

The project document had not envisioned the provision of a GESI focal person. However, the project unit appointed a dedicated GESI focal person in the project team to ensure a concentrated effort to integrate GESI issues into their program activities. A specialized GESI focal person was responsible for providing technical support to the project on GESI-related issues. Since the composition of the project board and steering committee were dominant of ex-officio members as proposed in the project document, AISN had no control to ensure the GESI inclusive project governance and management particularly, the steering

committee and project board. The evaluation team found that during the evaluation period, both, the project board and project team were led by a dominant group of men along with its members.

Indeed, AISN and NPC have an opportunity to ensure GESI inclusive project management team using the affirmative measures and principle of proportional participation based on Nepal’s legal framework, UNDP GESI strategy and Human Resource policies.

M & E from GESI Perspective

The evaluation team observed that section V of the AISN project document delineated Result Framework of the respective outputs of the projects. Nonetheless, the Result Framework did not embrace the GESI responsive output indicators of the respective outputs of the project to track the achievement of GESI mainstreaming achievement. Hence, the result framework and output indicators defined in the result framework were GESI neutral. Nonetheless, in practice, the evaluation team found that the project had kept the GESI disaggregated data (limited to male and female) of participants of project activities i.e., training, policy dialogues and other consultations & sharing meetings.

The team also found that even though there were no specific GESI analyses in the AISN project design, a number of interventions were carried out during the implementation to promote/mainstream GESI. Hence, in the next phase of the project design based on the learning of this phase, there is a scope to further strengthen GESI responsive M & E that could monitor and track the multiple layers of discrimination, barriers, and inequalities, policy documents, researches, to achieve GESI. All UNDP policies and CPD (2023-2027) along with Nepal’s commitment towards GESI are the opportunity and guiding documents which positively facilitate so.

Effectiveness of the Capacity Building Intervention from the GESI Perspective

The evaluation team found that AISN has put significant emphasis on training components to strengthen the capacity of government stakeholders of all three tiers of government: Local, Province and Federal. The training plan covered a wide range of issues as requested by stakeholders and NPC i.e., national accounting, monitoring and evaluation, formulating medium-term expenditure (MTEF), Project Bank, Complementary and Special Grant Software Operation Practice and SDG Localization, Macroeconomic Sectors and National Accounts, NDP & SDG localization and so forth.

Status of Women Participation in Civil Service
As of March 2023, overall women’s participation in civil service is 27.7 percentage.
<i>Economic Survey Report, 2079/080 (2022/023),</i>

AISN record shows that over 30 capacity-building training/workshops were conducted during the project period, where a total of 2507 participants (377 in the year 2021 and 2130 in 2022) were present. Out of the 377 participants in the year 2021, women were only 71. Likewise, in 2022, the total training participants were 2130, however, women were only 216 in number. Among the total participation of training combining both years (2021 and 2022), Women participants were 11.44% and men were 88.55%. Regarding the low number of women participants,

stakeholders stated that the training was mostly focused on government ex-officio members who hold specific positions/responsibilities. Despite AISN having given clear guidance for ensuring women's participation from diverse groups, it was not possible as most of the respective positions were held by the

men. It is noted that due to the nature of training and its target groups, ensuring participation of women in the respective trainings was not in the control of the project.

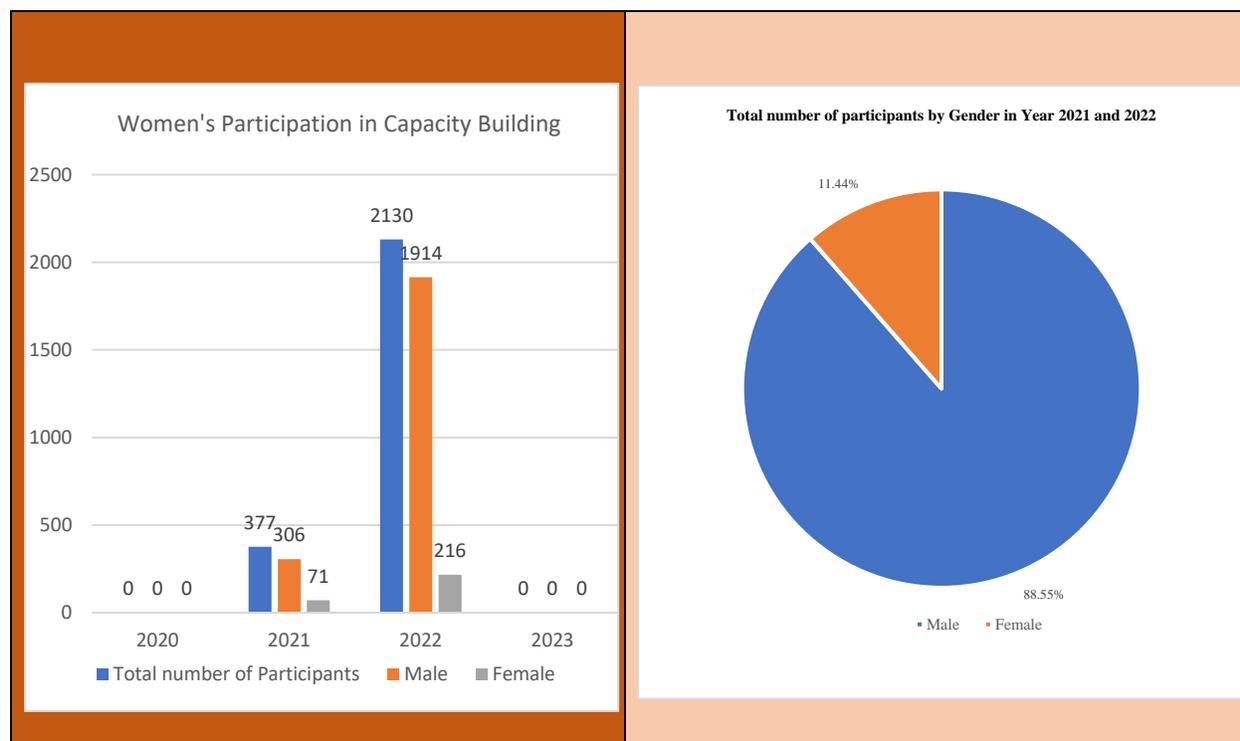


Chart-1: The status of male-female participation in the training

During interviews with the stakeholders, the evaluation team found that the content of the training was designed in consultation with NPC, which was the top-down approach, and not properly consulted with provincial and local level actors. With regards to the GESI in capacity building component, during the interview with stakeholders, they stated that most of the training content was gender neutral due to the nature of the issues. Nonetheless, the project has paid attention to building GESI related issues in training content where required and possible; i.e., training content of NDP and SDGs localization, etc.

Overall, there are ample opportunities for AISN to enhance the GESI responsive capacity-building component by mainstreaming the GESI component in its training planning, content development, and conducting training. For that, AISN should further enhance the participatory and inclusive approach while developing a training plan (define content, tools and skills) along with the selection of training participants.

Generate Knowledge for Evidence-Based Policy Making Intervention from GESI Perspective

AISN contributed to knowledge generation on SDG-related evidence-based policy-making intervention. For that, it invested in conducting research/ studies/policy reviews. In investing in knowledge generation, AISN had adopted two approaches to ensure GESI related knowledge production: invest in GESI exclusive research/ studies/policy reviews; and Incorporation /mainstream of GESI in AISN supported reports.

In total, about 60 researches/studies were conducted over the project period (the list is provided in annex 6). Among them, 6 reports were focused exclusively on GESI related issues. The list is exhibited in table-4.

AISN project annual reports revealed that GESI dimensions on researches/studies were considered and it was evident while reviewing some AISN supported reports that were published during the project periods.

For instance, SDGs Progress Assessment Report, 2020 published with the support of the project provided an exclusive section on the progress assessment of SDG- 5: gender equality targets. LNOB National Framework addressed various aspects of women’s empowerment related issues i.e. Women’s ownership of household property, Women’s role in household decision making, Violence against women etc. Likewise, the Nepal Human Development Report, 2020 published by NPC with support of the AISN also provided a gender development index, gender inequality index. These documents supposedly contribute not only to the government and parliamentary decision makers to enhance evidence based decision making

Table 4: List of GESI exclusive studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation on 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB) national framework • Study on the Status of LGBTQI Communities in Nepal • Study on Status of Women Bureaucrats and White Collar Workers in Nepal • Study on the status of older people in Nepal • Study on the Status of Sex Workers in Nepal • Study of the Effectiveness of Youth Self Employment Program

to ensure GESI responsive policies/plans/strategies/ budget, but also to civil society organizations, and women’s rights activists to the advocacy for shaping GESI inclusive policies/plans/strategies/ budget. Likewise, these knowledge productions help development partners to prioritize the evidence based development support in Nepal. In addition, AISN assisted in the production of some essential reports i.e., VNR that help to amplify Nepal’s voices in international platforms.

Nevertheless, AISN & NPC should increase investment in GESI-related/exclusive knowledge production, with proper need assessment and adequate budget. Along with that, there is a scope for AISN to develop GESI-responsive study/research guidelines and the disaggregated data system of experts.

Strengthening the SDGs reporting system from the GESI Perspective

Different programs were conducted to strengthen the SDGs reporting system. Key intervention activities were:

- Establish evidence-based data system reporting for SDGs implementation at all levels.
- Development of National Data Profile (NDP) for localization of SDGs implementation
- Software on Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) rolled out across all 7 Provinces
- Developed the different guiding frameworks, coding documents, and fiscal transfer policies
- SDGs Budget Code, Climate change
- Financing framework, thematic action plan frameworks, and Midterm-term Expenditure

While interviewing the project team and stakeholders at the federal, provincial and local levels, it was stated that the SDG reporting system incorporated GESI indicators in respective systems, software and guiding documents.

Policy Dialogue & Advocacy from GESI Perspective

One of the major outputs of the project was to increase awareness and participative policy-making on SDGs through policy dialogue with the private sector, cooperatives and other relevant stakeholders. The list of such interventions is provided in annex 6. In this regard, AISN supported the conduction of policy dialogue/workshop marking International Women’s Day, including a presentation on ‘Gender Equality for Sustainability with Climate Change perspective’ (the same title as that of International Women’s Day)

Interventions related to policy dialogue and advocacy focusing on women’s participation in SDGs localization activities were commendable. But the evaluation team noted that the policy dialogue/workshop on GESI in relation to accelerating SDGs is pertinent, hence, needs to be further enhanced and continued.

Budget from a GESI Perspective

The total approved budget was -USD 2,775,168.68. Out of that, the expenditure up to the evaluation period was USD **2,009,580.16** (around 72.41%of the total budget.) The major source of donors is the European Union (EU), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), PEA Pooled Funds (UNEP/UNDP) and UNDP TRAC.

As information provided by the project team, it can be concluded that only 10% out of the total budget was spent on GESI specific intervention.

To accelerate SDGs target, UNDP & NPC shall have a GESI action plan/strategy along with budget allocation so that goals and objectives can be achieved.

Precisely, AISN successfully mainstreamed GESI in their project intervention activities. It has contributed to create evidence to accelerate SDGs adopting the GESI transformative approach to achieve its set targets by 2030.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation showed that the two outputs (output 1.1 and 1.2) are in the ‘mostly achieved’ category whereas the remaining outputs are rated as ‘limited achievement’. In the case of outcomes, the project demonstrated a good contribution under Outcome 1 whereas there was little progress made on Outcome 2.

Major achievements of the projects were noted in creating awareness and capacity building regarding SDGs – especially at the sub-national level and helping to institutionalize SDGs in development planning (such as through the 16th five-year plan), budgeting and implementation at different levels of the government. The project carried out various studies including some flagship study reports. These reports provided the status of SDGs in the country, developed strategies for SDG localization and shared Nepal’s promises on SDGs to the international communities. The other achievements included support for generating SDG-related data from the sub-national level and provision of institutional and individual capacity-building at three tiers of the governments. While working on the localization of SDGs, the project also assisted in increasing shared value toward SDG implementation among the stakeholders and, based on the learning of this project, created a foundation for further work in SDG localization.

The project also faced some challenges that led to limited progress during project implementation. Some of the areas where the project could have done more include a clear scope of the project considering the more realistic outputs with clear indicators, knowledge dissemination and stakeholder engagement strategies, activities identification and prioritization mechanisms, documentation of lessons from the and adequate result reporting among others. The project could have provided more emphasis on cross-cutting issues through proper assessment during design and integrating them in different stages of the project cycles.

The project also faced some major external challenges during project implementation which were outside the control of the project. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the smooth planning and implementation of the project. In addition, the slow process of federalization and the rapid change of NPC leadership also affected the smooth implementation and attaining of the project results as expected.

The evaluation noted that the project carried out most of the activities successfully and achieved some outputs but they could have done more and better. Hence, the project's overall performance is rated as moderately satisfactory.

8.0 LESSONS LEARNED

EQ: What are the major lessons learned from this project that can be used in future?

Based on the assessment, the following lessons are documented.

Learning 1: The project has created a strong foundation for SDG localization and further work should consider the learning and achievements from this intervention.

The project has been well-owned by government agencies. UNDP, being a neutral organization with a strong legacy of working on SDG globally, has added value to engaging the government and other stakeholders on SDG localization in Nepal. The project has provided instrumental support to the government of Nepal in raising awareness of SDGs at the national level, helped in improving policy & institutional framework and built the capacity of stakeholders along with a huge set of knowledge required for SDG localization. The intervention has also helped to comprehend various challenges and opportunities related to SDG implementation while working with a diverse range of stakeholders. The project has generated some good learning which is inevitable for SDGs-related planning and programming in the future.

Learning 2: Comprehensive analysis and preparedness for SDGs considering the dynamic context is inevitable for better understanding, planning and programming.

This is particularly important for a diverse and developing country like Nepal which is undergoing rapid political and social changes. Nepal is still experiencing a complex yet dynamic socio-political context and SDGs are a part of it. It is noted from this project that effective implementation and achieving SDG results require a systematic review during project design, strategy and good planning suitable for the different levels of government while considering policy coherence, resource mobilization and establishing comprehensive data systems for SDG localization.

The analysis showed that the project could have emphasized a more systematic analysis and preparedness plan for SDG implementation by responding to the current socio-economic and political dynamics. Consideration of the preparedness of SDGs²⁵ by adopting inclusive multi-stakeholder governance, systems perspective in planning and implementation; and evidence-based learning and improvement are critical for SDG implementation.

Learning 3: Clear knowledge dissemination strategies and their use, and participatory engagement of multi-stakeholders at different tiers of governance in the planning and implementation of SDGs.

Based on the experience of this project, it is important to have a clear analysis of context (including barriers and opportunities to SDGs implementation), strategy for knowledge dissemination and their use to achieve the expected results. This would help to identify the relevant audience and develop a plan to work with them from the early stage of project implementation.

SDGs localization is also dependent on the quality of stakeholder engagement. The active collaboration of stakeholders improves ownership and creates engagement. Based on the experience from this project, there is a need for a result-oriented engagement and collaborative actions with the private sector, CSO and cooperatives along with society and citizens²⁶. This is all about who decides for whom and why. This concept is important to further strengthen the ‘Leave No One Behind (LNOB)’ approach. The involvement of local stakeholders through an inclusive approach is therefore instrumental for SDG achievement.

Learning 4: Evidence-based planning and statistical systems management related to SDGs help to mitigate complexities and better development management.

The project started creating SDG-related data from the local level which is a fundamental part of the SDG monitoring and evaluation. The decision-makers need coherence, comparable and credible data/evidence that is adequately disaggregated, accessible and easy to use for proper monitoring and accelerated implementation of the SDGs.

One of the challenges in Nepal has been a serious data gap – including the disaggregated data at all levels. This is more severe at the sub-national level. After the federalization, the data gap and reporting were further affected. The VNR and SDG assessment reports, for example, still faced challenges of lack of disaggregated data and evaluative perspectives. Municipalities started collecting data through NDP supported by this project but it was still to be fully used and institutionalized. Stakeholders acknowledged the data gap and highlighted that unless there was a good statistical system²⁷ in place, it would be difficult for them to report on SDG progress. The evaluation team also noted that the statistical capacity was weak

²⁵ raising awareness to nationalizing the indicators and setting up implementation mechanisms, revising and aligning the policies to create an enabling environment, integrating SDG targets into national plans and programmes for financial allocation and establishing a partnership for implementation, monitoring and assurance of accountability

²⁶ The Gorkha earthquake and COVID -19 pandemic have shown how citizens and different actors in society can come together in efforts to address crises. Citizen involvement—either top-down or bottom-up—has been an undeniable characteristic of this global crisis.

²⁷ main attributes: Adopt an approach centred on user needs; Develop statistical capacity and a facilitative frame; Ensure statistical coordination; Provide effective governance in the public interest based on strong leadership and dense management structures and practices, and Encourage government-wide engagement and enlistment.

at all levels and needs strengthening at all levels of decision-making. There is also a need to use new & and innovative approaches and explore the opportunity for making synergies across the data systems.

Learning 5: GESI responsive planning and programme is required for SDG implementation: GESI is a corporate responsibility of UNDP along with the EU and all three tiers of government of Nepal. UNDP CPD 2018-2022 and GESI strategy strongly identified the need to mainstream GESI into its program/project cycle. UNDP GESI strategy encourages addressing the root causes of inequality and discrimination against women and marginalized communities/populations. In this context, UNDP policy frameworks advise/advocate for conducting the GESI assessment/analysis, developing the GESI plan of action, and monitoring mechanisms including the mainstream GESI in all project cycles. In response to this, if AISN could adopt policy guidance for amplifying GESI in their project cycle including design, program/project intervention and monitoring framework through conducting GESI assessment/analysis, developing GESI action plan/strategies and Result Framework with GESI indicators could contribute to achieving gender equality and social inclusion as envisioned by SDGs more coherently.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following are some key recommendations for future actions to the government of Nepal and UNDP.

Recommendation 1: UNDP should continue to support the government. (Responsibility - UNDP)

Achieving SDGs is a long-term goal that requires time, finance and multi-level engagements, among others. The project support was just a small but important contribution to the national-level SDG planning and management. The project time was also short and the project faced a lot of external challenges during implementation. Despite these challenges, the project successfully contributed to creating SDG awareness at the three tiers of the government and developed shared values on SDG localization. It also helped to set up some policy frameworks and institutions and documented future opportunities and challenges regarding the localization of SDGs. These findings would be huge resources for better planning and implementation of SDGs in Nepal.

Nepal has made continuous progress on the SDGs achievement and it still needs significant support in further strengthening the enabling environment and institutions for the localization of SDGs. In addition, support is needed to fill the SDG investment gap and capacity-building for promoting prosperity. Unless such a type of assistance is available, better results on SDGs cannot be expected. Hence, further support is required for the smooth implementation and achievement of the SDGs in Nepal.

Recommendation 2: Future work on SDGs should be based on learning from this project, and consider more realistic and achievable project scope and support systems. (Responsibility - the government and UNDP)

The project provided various types of support such as creating an enabling environment and institutions both at the federal and sub-national levels. The project learning showed the outputs and other commitments of the project should consider the political economy, duration of the project and resource availability. Similarly, future intervention should consider the collaborative engagement with major partners such as the private sector, cooperatives, CSOs and other stakeholders (such as Parliamentarians) from the very beginning of the project design. To reach out widely and quickly across the country and

enhance the ownership of the intervention, the management structure for the future intervention may need representatives from different tiers of the government and other important stakeholders outside the government.

Recommendation 3: Support is also required to integrate the prosperity theme of the SDGs. (Responsibility – the government and UNDP)

The SDGs are not going to be achieved with the conventional approach of development planning and management alone. Future support should also consider the prosperity pillar of SDGs to ensure ‘access to prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature’. Nepal is going to graduate from LDC in 2026 which may impact trade and other financial support that Nepal is, so far, entitled to receive. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing economic slowdown, Nepal has had to put extra effort into managing its development ambitions.

Hence, future support should also emphasize social and economic development issues such as promoting human assets (indicators of nutrition, health, school enrolment and literacy); and reducing economic vulnerability (indicators of natural and trade-related shocks, physical and economic exposure to shocks, and smallness and remoteness). There are so many Nepal-specific potential areas that would help Nepal’s prosperity. Some of them include job creation, social protection, climate risks, migration and labour issues, remittance, skill-based education, GESI and many more. New support may need to focus on these aspects as a pilot in some areas immediately, learn from it and scale up in other parts of the country.

Recommendation 4 (Responsibility – UNDP): SDGs are not achievable by 2030 if concerns and issues of women and people from disadvantaged groups, particularly multiple discrimination, inequalities, social exclusion and its impact based on class, caste, ethnicity, health status, disability, gender and sexual minorities and so forth, are not addressed with targeted intervention. Hence, UNDP should develop and redesign the project with the explicit objective of achieving gender equality and social inclusion with dedicated output and its indicators with a clear GESI responsive or transformative Result Framework, and plan of action /strategies at the project level. This should be within the broader latitude of UNDP’s CPD (2023-2027), UNDP CO GESI strategies, SDGs and Nepal government’s constitutional, legal and international commitments. Project design should ensure the addressing of gender inequality, social norms, intersecting impact and so forth based on the findings of the GESI assessment.

Recommendation 5: The project should work on documenting major lessons and prepare a sustainability plan. (Responsibility – the government and UNDP)

The project is going to be completed by the end of this year. It’s high time for the project to document good lessons based on the experience of the project in the last three and half years. Some potential areas may include, documenting the challenges and opportunities for enhancing coherent policies and institutions in three tiers of the government in the context of the present federalization process; potential role and collaboration of stakeholders/actors in SDG localization; opportunities for SDG financing; data generation and reporting mechanisms across the 3 tiers of the government, among others. The learning can also be linked with the LDC graduation strategy and LNOB study findings. Considering the project learning, the project should also develop a sustainability plan by engaging NPC with a strategy for the continuation of good results achieved by this project.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference:

Final Evaluation of Accelerating Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal (AISN) Project

Duty station: Kathmandu, Nepal

Duration: 30 days spread over 15 June- 15 August 2023

1. Background and context

Nepal adopted federal structure with three levels of government i.e., federal, provincial, and local level with the promulgation of the new constitution in 2015. The new political governance structure and economic development aspirations of the Nepalese people coincides with Nepal's commitment to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has incorporated many of the SDGs, and the current 15th Plan (2019/20- 2023/24) has incorporated the targets of the SDGs to achieve it by 2030. All major sectoral strategies are aligned to the SDGs.

The long-term vision of the Government of Nepal has envisioned Nepal as an enterprise friendly, middle-income country by 2030 and peopled by a vibrant and youthful middle class living in a healthy environment with absolute poverty in the low single digits. Nepal is one of the countries that took an early lead in launching the national SDG roadmap. The SDG Status and Roadmap 2016-30 sets out goals, targets and indicators, and the Needs Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy sets out the policy and financing strategies to achieve the SDGs by 2030. According to the report, the government requires to invest USD 20 billion per year on an average to achieve 2030 targets. There is more than 35% gap of financing in this requirement. This figure may change with availability of new data and after considering the impact of COVID-19 that has reversed many progresses achieved on SDGs.

At present, addressing poverty, inequality, and reconciling economic development with environmental management are critical development challenges. Aligning with global commitment of ending poverty, protecting environment, and sustaining the prosperity worldwide, Nepal is passionately internalizing the SDGs through its regular programs and policies. Nepal has identified 479 SDG indicators to track the progress in the SDGs adding to 232 global SDG indicators. However, Nepal has recently updated and revised the indicators bringing down to 304 considering the availability of data for their reporting and the use of indicators. Nepal has made a good progress in some of the SDGs in between 2016 and 2022. For example, 3.1 million people left multidimensional poverty resulting into reduced poverty incidence from 30.1% to 17.4% (Nepal MPI Report 2020). Electricity expansion has reached 88% of the total population by 2019.

However, there are many issues that need to be addressed to achieve SDGs. The key issues include natural and climate-induced disasters, low productivity and engagement in informal sectors, gender and social disparity coupled with limited private sector growth and job creation leading to unemployment and migration. Government revenues are insufficient to provide all essential services or tackle Nepal's key issues (SDG Need Assessment Costing and financing Strategy, 2018). Moreover, there are also issues of coordination and effective linkages between the federal, provincial, and local governments which would have implications for progress to achieving the SDGs, if not addressed on time. To address its development issues and accelerate sustainable economic development, Nepal needs to mobilize more public and private finance; focus to localize finance and development; improve the enabling policy environment further; build or enhance capacity; improve systems and processes and strengthen partnerships with non-state actors and development partners.

Project background (Implementation approach and key achievements):

"Accelerating Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal" is a joint initiative of National Planning Commission (NPC) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) implemented under the National Implementation Modality (NIM). The project period covers 4 years from January 2020 to December 2023.

AISN aims to support Nepal in achieving the SDGs and the targets of the 15th Plan by creating enabling environment and capacity development through accelerated implementation. Inclusion is an integral part of this initiative as is the integration of poverty, environmental management, and climate change: the new sustainable development agenda reflects a greater recognition of challenges arising from depleted natural capital, climate vulnerability, gender inequality, rural-urban migration, and rising resource demands, all of which disproportionately affect the livelihoods and well-being of the poor and vulnerable. The project has intended to mainstream gender and social inclusion throughout the project interventions. The project also put efforts to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on SDGs.

The project has two outcomes:

- 1) Planning, budgeting, monitoring & reporting systems at all levels of government are SDG responsive and functional; and
- 2) Resilient and innovative financing available for SDG implementation.

The expected outputs of the project are:

Planning, budgeting, and M&E systems at federal level fully aligned with the SDGs

Support to provinces & local level to align SDGs in their plans/programs

Integrating SDGs in public finance (*Intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanism*)

Cooperatives and public enterprises increased investment for SDG implementation

Private sector resources and innovative financing including global and vertical funds are mobilized to mitigate SDG financing gap

COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/ strategy developed

In summary, the interventions are grouped into four broad categories: 1) Policy, Planning & Capacity Building; 2) Data Monitoring & Evaluation; 3) Budgeting & Financing; 4) Outreach & Influencing.

The project interventions are primarily guided by national priorities reflected in constitution, policies and plans. In addition, European Union's Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk reduction 2015-2030, Sustainable Development Goals the Agenda 2030 etc. are taken into consideration while implementing project activities. Through this project, UNDP applies its global knowledge and support to guide legal frameworks, policies, strategies, norms, and institutional mechanisms to achieve Sustainable Development Goals including climate and disaster-risk integration into sector planning and budgeting at national/subnational levels.

The total budget of this project was 2.6 million USD (1.4 million USD from UNDP TRAC fund and 1.2 million USD from European Union/Austrian Development Agency/United Nations Environment Program). This final evaluation assignment is for the project duration from Jan 2020 to Dec 2023.

The results were expected to be achieved through technical and financial support to relevant partners via policy dialogue, advocacy, capacity buildings, creating SDGs platforms, developing innovative finance mechanisms, and bringing new ideas and technology. The partners of the Project are various stakeholders including all levels of government, UN agencies, Civil Society organizations (CSOs) (in particular women's, disadvantaged and climate vulnerable groups), public enterprises, the financial sector and private enterprise for achieving the expected results. The project works with all levels of governments including Federal, Provinces and Local.

The project uses an adaptive management approach with the goal of ensuring flexibility for provinces and local levels, so they are given room to develop individual approaches to how best to localize their SDGs. Wherever possible, project management strives for a balance between engagement, coherence with the project goals and the ability to maneuver and adapt to individual circumstances of the different provinces and local levels.

Key achievements of the project

Project provided technical assistance to the National Planning Commission in implementing SDGs in Nepal. Project provided support in different areas that include policy analysis studies and dialogues, publications, development of planning, budgeting frameworks and guidelines documents. Moreover, project also capacitated government officials at federal, national and local levels on SDGs implementation. Broadly, these activities are grouped into following four categories:

1) Policy, Planning & Capacity Building

Project has supported National Planning Commission for development/drafting of more than 50 SDGs related publications through policy analysis, studies and capacity building to the government officials representing from federal, provincial and local levels. The key policy documents included National Human Development Report, National Human Resource Plan, Multi-dimensional Poverty Index, Climate Change Financing framework, LDC graduation strategy, revision of SDG indicators, LNOB national framework among others. SDG aligned national frameworks for sectoral plans and programmes, national guidelines on climate smart villages, waste management account under SEEA (System of Environmental Economic Account), review of SDG targets and indicators (national level) are among them. These key policy documents helped government of Nepal during the formulation of policies and programmes in the respective sectors.

Project conducted more than 30 capacity building training/workshops to federal, provincial, and local government officials on different aspect of SDGs localization and implementation. Altogether, 2418 government officials including 250 women were benefited at national and sub national levels. The capacity building activities were more focused on SDG reporting and localization, National Data Profile, M&E for SDG reporting, and SDG Aligned National Accounts and Macroeconomic Issues, SDG aligned planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. Further, project also hosted the number of the online capacity building and awareness events during COVID-19 lockdown period.

2) Data Monitoring & Evaluation

Project established different evidence-based data reporting systems for SDGs implementation at all levels. The project supported in developing National Data Profile for localization of SDGs implementation progress tracking, publication and build capacity to the officials of federal, provincial, and local level governments. Additionally, Software on Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) were rolled out across all 7 provinces through technical assistance. This has helped the sub-national governments to generate digital MTEF plan (budget forecasting systematically) in coherent manner of SDGs progress reporting.

3) Budgeting & Financing

Under the budgeting and financing categories, project contributed to developing the different guiding frameworks, coding document, fiscal transfer policies during the project period. The key frameworks/guidelines are SDGs Budget Code, Climate change financing framework, Thematic action plan frameworks, Midterm-term Expenditure framework (MTEF) etc.

4) Outreach & Influencing:

Project conducted policy dialogues and launching of the policy documents and publications on different thematic issues as part of the outreach and influencing activities.

All these supports facilitated the government in tracking SDG progress in the priority area which guide the sectoral policies formulation on achieving SGDs. Similarly, the LDC graduation strategy help the country better prepared and government to devise further sectoral policies to minimize and cater the possible negative impacts of the withdrawal of concessions and subsidies government has been receiving as a LDC once it's graduated by 2026. Importantly, these activities have covered different sectors and walks of the society keeping Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) and help in formulation of new policies and programmes to address their immediate and long-term needs.

COVID-19 situation and its impact in project implementation

The implementation of this project coincided with the time of COVID-19 pandemic spread. This situation was not anticipated when the project was formulated. Therefore, the annual work plan was revised adding one additional output under outcome two namely COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/ strategy developed. The COVID-19 pandemic brought a challenge for implementation of the project activities. Therefore, the working modality of the activities were adjusted accordingly during high spread of the pandemic. During this time, physical meetings were replaced with virtual meetings as appropriate including cancellation of the few of the planned meetings and events. After the easing of travel restrictions, project activities were held by following the government protocol of health safety measures.

The project information is also summarized in the below table.

PROJECT INFORMATION		
Project title	Accelerating Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal (AISN)	
Project Number	00114483	
Contributing outcome	<p>UNDAF/CPD Outcome Areas (2018-2022): Outcome 1: By 2022, impoverished, especially economically vulnerable, unemployed, and under-employed and vulnerable people have increased access to sustainable livelihoods, safe and decent employment, and income opportunities.</p> <p>Outcome 3: By 2022, environmental management, sustainable recovery and reconstruction, and resilience to climate change and natural disaster are strengthened at all levels.</p> <p>PEA Global Outcome "Strengthened integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies. plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the SDGs"</p>	
Country	Nepal	
Region	Asia Pacific	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	1 January 2020	31 December 2023
Project budget	US \$ 2.6 million	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 1.848 million (up to Dec 2022)	
Funding source	UNDP and European Union	
Implementing Partner	National Planning Commission/Government of Nepal	

2. Evaluation Purpose, Scope, and Objectives

In line with the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines 2019, a final evaluation of the AISN was planned in the project design to be commissioned through independent evaluators. To evaluate the relevancy and effectiveness of the UNDP's implementation of the project and provide specific recommendations for the similar initiatives in the future, the final evaluation is scheduled for June-August 2023, as planned in the UNDP 2023 Evaluation Plan.

The overall purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the results achieved and lesson learnt by the project in accelerating SDGs implementation in Nepal. The final evaluation should assess the implementation approaches of the project, results against output targets, contribution to higher level outcome results, and issues/challenges encountered, as well as identify and document the lessons learnt and good practices and make specific recommendations for future course of actions.

The final evaluation findings will be useful in designing the similar initiatives in the future for accelerating the SDGs. The project final evaluation will also serve as an accountability and learning opportunity to provide guidance and recommendations for UNDP's continued support to implementation of SDGs in Nepal.

The final evaluation will specifically give emphasis on: accounting for results (i.e., to what extent have the intended results been achieved); impact and sustainability; review results towards the project's objectives and outcomes; assess the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of how the project has moved towards its objectives and outcomes; identify strengths and weaknesses in project design and implementation; and provide recommendations on design modifications that could have increased the likelihood of success, and on specific actions that might be taken into consideration in designing future projects of a similar nature. The evaluation would also assess the project's sustainability and project's contribution in expanding the gender equality and social inclusion dimension in SDG integration and localization.

Scope of evaluation:

The final evaluation will cover the full scope of the AISN project and covers the interventions at all three level of governments.

The evaluation will focus on relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the intervention. In addition, the evaluation will assess how the intervention sought to mainstream gender and social inclusion issues and application of the human rights -based approaches while accelerating SDGs implementation at all levels.

Mainly, the evaluation should cover at least the following areas:

Relevance of the project: Assess the appropriateness of the project *design* particularly project's objectives, Theory of Change, Results and Resource Frameworks as it relates to the achievement of project objectives, its linkages with the government's national strategic plans, and problems it intends to address.

Effectiveness and efficiency in project implementation: Assess the project's direct and indirect accomplishments (results) and its contributions towards the achievement of the anticipated outcomes, including any constraints on its *effectiveness*, and any unintended outcomes.

Impact of the project: Assess the quality of direct and indirect results such as SDG localization, integration of SDGs in sectoral policies and strategies, capacity enhancement of the target group, partnership and engagement enhanced, the functional efficiency of the target institutions increased etc.

Coherence of the project: alignment with UNDP's core documents (e.g., UNDP CPD), national priorities (e.g 15th development plan and SDG Road map 2016-2030), and other related UNDP, UN, and Development Partner projects.

Sustainability of the project interventions: sustaining the positive impacts of the project interventions beyond the project life.

Assess the management and implementation arrangement of the project and distribution of responsibilities within the given structure and national implementation modality, including financial and human resource management, monitoring and oversight as well as the *risks* and risk management strategies in terms of their contribution to the delivery of project results in accordance with the project's Results and Resources Framework (RRF);

Identify and examine key external factors beyond the project's control that have contributed to the program's successes and failures.

Document the lessons learned in the design, delivery, management and monitoring of the project that will add value to similar projects in the future.

Assesses the impact of the project on gender equality and social inclusion, and include recommendations on gender equality and women's empowerment cutting across effectiveness, effectively, sustainability and lessons learnt on gender equality and women's empowerment

3. Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

The final evaluation will adopt the revised evaluation criteria developed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)²⁸ - *Relevance, Effectiveness, Coherence, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability*. Moreover, additional cross-cutting criteria such as Gender equality and social inclusion and environment will also be included. The review team should further refine the guiding questions outlined below and agree with UNDP/AISN.

The project should be evaluated with the following key guiding questions.

1. To what extent has the AISN project achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives? What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and sustainability of the results?
2. To what extent was the AISN relevant and effective in integration of SDGs in national and sectoral policies and strategies and contributing in meeting the needs of the federal, provincial, and local government in localizing the SDGs in Nepal?
3. To what extent the project contributed in mainstreaming the gender equality and social inclusion dimension in overall SDG implementation and localization efforts?

The guiding questions outlined below should be further refined by the evaluation team and agreed with UNDP and stakeholders prior to commencing the evaluation.

Relevance/Coherence

- To what extent did the project work have synergy with other related projects and or agency and how did the collaboration influence the efficiency, value for money, or scale up/expansion of the project?
- To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
- Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address need of women, men, and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project design and implementation?
- To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?

²⁸ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

- To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects including lessons learnt on gender equality considered in the design?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?

Effectiveness

- To what extent the project achieved its objectives and outcomes, and engaged the federal, provincial and local authorities towards addressing their needs to localize SDG initiatives in their planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting process?
- How the delivery of country programme outputs led to outcome-level progress and beyond the planned outcome? What has been the UNDP contribution to the observed change?
- Level of building capacities of national implementing partners including civil society and local communities to advocate/promote on environmental issues, including climate change issues and disaster risk reduction?
- To what extent have the results at the outcome and output levels generated results for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and marginalized groups?
- To what extent have triangular and South-South cooperation and knowledge management contributed to the results attained?

Efficiency

- Was the resource used in the project efficiently allocated and achieved the results as intended from economic use of resources? Was the project implemented activities towards achieving value for money in terms of project resource investment?
- How project been able to help the government to bring private sector financing into the SDGs implementation?
- To what extent were resources used strategically to address inequalities and gender issues, timeliness delivery and partnership modalities?
- To what extent have the project's practices, policies, processes, monitoring systems and decision-making capabilities affected the achievement of the national priority and UNDP's country programme outcomes?
- To what extent was the project implementation strategy and management structure appropriate and efficient and cost-effective in generating the expected results?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Impact

- To what extent the results achieved indicate that the intended impact of the project will be achieved or not achieved in the future?
- To what extent did the ongoing implementation of federalism – including legal, fiscal, political, and administrative aspects – affect the project's overall implementation and achievement of objectives?
- If any, what could have been alternative courses to adopt to improve the impact of the project?

Sustainability

- To what extent do national partners have the institutional capacities, including sustainability strategies, policy and regulatory frameworks in place to sustain the outcome-level results?
- To what extent did the project interventions contribute towards sustaining the knowledge, practices and approaches in the SDG localization process and strategic input of SDG implementation process?

- To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, female and male staff, etc.) to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, environment by primary stakeholders.
- To what extent do partnerships exist with other national institutions, NGOs, United Nations agencies, the private sector and development partners to sustain the attained results and committed to continuation?
- What could be potential new areas of work and innovative measures, lessons learned documentation sufficiently addressed the necessary changes for sustaining the results?
- Did the project work on its exit strategies and sustainability to smoothly phase out after its term? Is there a need for any further intervention or support to ensure the sustainable impact of the project?
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs and project contributions to the SDGs implementation?
- To what extent are lessons documented by the project team on a continual basis shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

Sample evaluation questions on cross-cutting issues

Gender equality and social inclusion

- To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes including lesson learnt in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures, and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development by primary stakeholders?
- To what extent do partnerships exist with other national institutions, NGOs, United Nations agencies, the private sector, and development partners to sustain the attained results?

Disability

- Were persons with disability consulted and meaningfully involved in the project formulation and implementation?
- What proportions of the beneficiary of the project were persons with disabilities?

Climate Change Action

- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way
- Were there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?

4. Methodology

The evaluation methods provided here are indicative only. The evaluation team should review the methodology and propose the final methods and data collection tools in its inception report. The method and tools should be context-sensitive and adequately address the issues of gender equality and social inclusion, and marginalized/vulnerable groups. The evaluation should adopt a mixed approach by integrating qualitative and quantitative tools and techniques for the data collection and analysis. The focus, however, should be on qualitative assessment to enrich the raw data collection and develop more insight into the project's accomplishments and lessons learned. The evaluation stages include (i) desk review (ii) prepare inception report (iii) field visits to project's provinces (iv) data

analysis and interpretation and (v) evaluation report writing and finalization. The final evaluation should build upon the available project documents, stakeholder consultation, Key Informant Interview (KII), field visits (provincial and local government), interviews and discussions, which would provide an opportunity for more in-depth analysis and understanding of the AISN project. The evaluation team is expected to frame the evaluation using OECD evaluation criteria such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

The evaluation team must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful. The evaluation team should follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the implementing partner i.e., National Planning Commission, project team, UNDP Country Office, and critical stakeholders. Thus, the evaluation team is expected to work closely with NPC and UNDP during evaluation adopting the following approaches.

Document review

The final evaluation team should review the project-related documents such as the project document, theory of change and result framework, annual and quarterly progress reports, annual work plans, project board meeting minutes, monitoring reports, publications, strategic documents, policies, and other documents that the team considers useful for the evaluation, and the study reports that have been produced from this project. The review will also include GoN's SDG related documents as appropriate.

Semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussion

The evaluation team should develop a semi-structured interview questionnaire and conduct in-depth interviews with selected NPC officials, NPC member representative, National Statistics Office (NSO), provincial and local government, civil society, and private sector association. Besides, the evaluators should also carry out Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the representatives of stakeholders.

Field visit

The evaluation team should visit selected provincial and local governments as appropriate. The team should conduct at least one separate discussion with women stakeholder from implementing partner, civil society, private sector association and line ministries to ascertain the gender equality and social inclusion-related results and approaches, along with referring to the GESI related studies conducted from this project and its policy impact.

Others

The evaluation team should organize briefing and debriefing sessions with implementing partner – National Planning Commission, UNDP, the project team, and other partners. The evaluation team should ensure triangulation of the various data sources to maximize the validity and reliability of data.

The final methodological approach, including interview schedule, consultations, evaluation matrix and data to be used in the evaluation, should be clearly outlined in the inception report and thoroughly discussed and agreed with NPC and UNDP. The evaluation team should select the respondents using an appropriate sampling technique. While selecting the respondents, the review team should ensure gender balance and inclusivity.

5. Evaluation products (deliverables)

The evaluation team is expected to prepare, discuss, and finalize the following deliverables:

- Inception report, outlining the evaluator's understanding of what is being evaluated, why it is being evaluated, and how (methodology) it will be evaluated. The inception report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, evaluation tools, activities, and deliverables.
- Evaluation matrix, including key criteria, indicators, and questions to capture and assess based on evaluation criteria.

- Evaluation debriefing. Immediately after completion of data collection, the evaluation team should provide preliminary debriefing and findings.
- Draft evaluation report
- Evaluation report audit trail, including comments provided on the draft report and changes made by the evaluators in response should be retained by the evaluation team to show how they have addressed comments.
- Final evaluation report within stipulated timeline with sufficient detail and quality incorporating feedback from the concerned parties.
- An exit presentation on findings and recommendations of the evaluation

Final payment is dependent on the approval of the report by the UNDP. It is understood that if needed multiple drafts may be required until the final approval.

6. Evaluation team composition and required competencies.

The evaluation team will consist of two consultants, including a team leader and a team member (GESI expert). The team composition will be gender-balanced (at least one female consultant). In any way, the team members involved in the design, management or implementation or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation will not be qualified. The evaluation team will be selected after the technical and financial proposal evaluation. The team member (GESI expert) is expected to work under the leadership of the team leader. In case of difference of opinion, the team leader will make the final decision.

6.1 The team leader national consultant

Working days: 30

Roles and responsibilities:

S/he will be responsible for taking charge of the whole evaluation of the project and taking care of the overall quality and timely submission of the report. Specifically, the team leader consultant will have the following roles and responsibilities but not limited to:

- lead and manage the overall evaluation mission- including assigning the tasks to the team member as appropriate
- Review of relevant documents and finalize the evaluation methods, scope and information/data collection and analysis instruments
- Guide the team members in designing the data collection tools and data gathering process
- Conduct evaluation adhering to the Code-of-Conduct of UNDP Evaluation
- Maintain the confidentiality of the information and data congregated during the evaluation process
- Consult with key persons of national partners and relevant international development partners, including project funding partners
- Conduct field visits (as appropriate) in selected provinces and conduct interviews with the selected target groups, partners, and stakeholders
- Contribute to and assure the overall quality of the outputs and final report ensuring the triangulation of the findings, obtaining strong evidence for the analysis of information from multiple sources
- Provide strategic guidance and inputs to the national consultants in drafting the report
- Share the key findings of the review with the concerned stakeholders
- Incorporate the comments and feedback of the stakeholders in the draft report to finalize it and submit the final report to UNDP within the stipulated timeline

Qualification and Competencies: At least master's degree in management, Economics, or any other relevant subjects with working experience of more than ten years in SDG related work. S/he should have demonstrated experiences

of leading similar kinds of evaluations of development projects and programs; experience of working with the CSOs, private sectors, local government; knowledge and experience of gender-sensitive evaluations; excellent analytical and report writing skills, knowledge of the political context in regional and national context and excellent English language writing skills.

6.2 Team Member (GESI Expert)

Working days: 30 days

Roles and responsibilities:

The team member (GESI Expert) will be responsible for reviewing documents, collecting data and information from different sources, analyzing them from the GESI perspective. The consultant will be responsible for analyzing the degree to which program design and interventions have addressed the needs of women and traditionally excluded groups; ensure that gender and social inclusion dimensions are incorporated into all steps of the inquiry, analysis, and evaluation reporting. Specifically, the GESI Expert will have the following roles and responsibilities but not limited to:

- Reviewing documents, analyzing the progress, issues and challenges, draft selected chapters of the evaluation report as assigned by the Team Leader with GESI analysis
- Follow and ensure the detailed scope and methodology for the report
- Analyze an impact of the program design and interventions regarding the needs of women and traditionally excluded groups
- Ensure that gender and social inclusion dimensions are incorporated into all steps of the inquiry, analysis, and evaluation reporting
- Conduct evaluation adhering to the Code-of-Conduct of UNDP Evaluation
- Maintain the confidentiality of the information and data congregated during the evaluation process
- Provide inputs to the team leader in designing the evaluation, including methodologies and data collection instruments
- Conduct interviews with the selected target group, partners and stakeholders
- Facilitate stakeholders' discussion and focus groups on collecting, collating and synthesizing information (both in Kathmandu and provinces)
- Analyze the data and support the team leader in preparing a draft report as per division of work among the team
- Assist the team leader in writing the relevant GESI sections and finalizing the report and sharing it with stakeholders

Qualification and Competencies: At least Master's degrees in social sciences, gender and social inclusion or any other relevant subjects with working experience of more than five years in a SDG related work; demonstrated experience of conducting and/or engaging similar evaluations of development projects and programs; Adequate knowledge on gender and human rights issues; strong analytical and report writing skills; knowledge of the political context of Nepal and having strong knowledge and skills in different data collection and analysis methods; as well as strong oral and written English skills.

7. Evaluation Ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected.

The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

Consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and must sign a Code of Conduct upon acceptance of the assignment.

8. Implementation arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this final evaluation resides with the UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) in Nepal. The UNDP CO will contract the consultants and ensure the logistic arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The RBM Analyst for UNDP will assure smooth, quality and independent implementation of the final evaluation with needful guidance from UNDP's Senior Management.

The Project Team will be responsible for providing the required information, furnishing documents for review to the evaluation team under the leadership of the Portfolio Manager. They will also be responsible for the final evaluation's logistic arrangements, setting up stakeholder interviews, arranging consultations, coordinating with the Government for its input and others.

After signing the contract, key project related documents will be sent to the evaluation team. The team should review the relevant documents and share the draft inception report before the consultations and data collection. The team should revise the methodology, data collection tools and review questions following the consultation at NPC and UNDP CO. The final methodology and instruments should be proposed in the inception report, including the evaluation schedule and evaluation matrix that guides the final evaluation's overall implementation.

UNDP will brief the evaluation team upon arrival on the final evaluation's objectives, purpose, and output. The inception report must be finalized and cleared by the Evaluation Manager prior to the commencement of the evaluation.

The final evaluation will remain fully independent. A mission wrap-up meeting will be delivered by the evaluators during which comments from participants will be noted for incorporation in the final report. The team leader will maintain all the communication through Evaluation Manager. The Evaluation Manager should clear each step of the evaluation.

9. Timeframe

The total duration of the evaluation will be 30 working days in between Mid-June-Mid August 2023. This includes desk reviews, primary data collection, field work, and report writing. The evaluation team should provide division of works among the team members in the inception report.

The below table provides a tentative timeframe for the assignment with deliverables and associated payments.

<i>S.N.</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Estimated number of days</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Payment</i>
1.	Submission of an Inception Report with a detailed methodology and a time bound work plan with key deliverables in consultation with UNDP	5 days	Within 10 days of signing the contract	20 percent of the contract amount upon approval of inception report
2.	Interviews, meetings, discussions, field visits for data collection	15 days	Right after approval of the inception report	None

3.	Evaluation de-briefing meeting to UNDP after completion of the field mission	1 days	Within 2530 days of signing the contract (right after the field missions)	None
4.	Submission of Draft Evaluation Report to UNDP for its review	5 days	Within 3540 days of signing the contract	40 percent of the contract amount upon approval of the draft report
5.	Presentation of Evaluation Findings to UNDP incorporating initial UNDP comments	1 day	Within 50 days of signing the contract	None
6.	Submission of Final Evaluation Report incorporating comments/feedbacks from the presentation and approval of the report by UNDP	3 days	Within 60 days of signing the contract	40 percent of the contract amount upon approval of the final report

10. Use of final evaluation results

The findings of this final evaluation will be used to analyze the lessons learned and the way forward for the future design of the next phase of this project (if need be) and similar projects. Therefore, the final evaluation report should provide critical findings and recommendations for future interventions.

11. Application submission process and criteria for selection

It will be mentioned in the Individual Consultant selection criteria.

12. TOR Annexes²⁹

Relevant Documents: Project Document, multi-year work plan, Annual Work Plans 2020 to 2023, Project Progress Reports of 2020 to 2022, Financial Reports, Organizational Structure, Knowledge products of AISN etc.

List of key agencies, stakeholders, and partners for review

UNDP and Project team

- UNDP Senior Management, Advisors and Portfolio Managers
- AISN National Project director, national Project Coordinator, National Project Manager

Stakeholders:

- International development partners
- Project donor and other donors
- Private sector association, cooperatives, and civil society
- National Statistical Office

²⁹ These documents will be provided after signing of the contract.

- Federal line ministries especially Ministry of Forests and Environment and Ministry of Finance, Provincial Planning Commissions and relevant ministries, local government officials
- Civil society organizations and media
- Local Governments (could be selected from Palika's readiness assessment study)

Implementing Partners

- National Planning Commission, Evaluation Matrix

Inception Report content/outline template

Evaluation report template

Evaluation audit trail form

Code of Conduct

Annex 2: Evaluation matrix and guidelines for interviews/data collection

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub-questions	Data source	Data collection methods/tools	Indicators/success standard	Methods for data analysis
<p>Relevance</p> <p>IS THE INTERVENTION DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?</p>	<p>To what extent did the project meet (through project design – RRF and implementation) the needs of the government (at different levels) and other stakeholders</p> <p>To what extent the project supports UNDP strategic objectives and programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Were the objectives and expected results of the project aligned with the priorities of the national development priorities (Federal / provincial and local governments) considering the recent developments (such as SDGs) ● Were the objectives and expected results of the project aligned with the priorities of UNDP and donors? ● Was the project in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs? / To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome? ● To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country? ● Was the project responsive to COVID -19? ● Does the project explicitly address gender issues or issues? If so please describe how and if not please provide explanation 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD).</p> <p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p> <p>Key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Document analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Based on the RRF and M&E framework</p>	<p>Perception Assessment of the stakeholder's Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change</p>

	To what extent the project able to adapt to the changing Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the background /context analysis of the project examine the different situations of women and men and the impact of the projects will have on different groups? 				
Coherence HOW WELL DOES THE INTERVENTION FIT?	To what extent the project is coherent/ compatible with other interventions in Nepal and within UNDP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project ensure coherence and complementarity/synergies with other UNDP projects and the work of other UN agencies? (internal coherence) Did the project ensure coherence and complementarity with other donor interventions (including XXX) and the work of other organizations? (external coherence) Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address the needs of women, men, and vulnerable groups? To what extent have different stakeholders that include women, women from marginalized and indigenous communities been involved in project design and implementation? Are outputs, objectives and activities designed to meet the different needs and priorities of women and men? Has the gender marker assigned at the output level? please indicate gender marker (refer UNDP's Gender marker guide) To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects including lessons 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of project and CPD).</p> <p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p> <p>Key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Document analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	Based on the RRF and M&E framework	<p>Perception Assessment of the stakeholders Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change</p>

		learnt on gender equality considered in the design?				
Effectiveness IS THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES?	To what extent were expected outcomes achieved, and were there any unexpected changes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent the project achieved its outputs and outcomes (direct and indirect accomplishments) including capacity building of national implementing partners, (financial/legal) federalization To what extent have the results at the outcome and output levels generated results for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and marginalized groups? Does the implementation plan appropriately address the dimensions of gender inequality and social exclusion as described in the GESI analysis? If not, does it recommend how gaps can be filled Does the project have a dedicated gender plan of action/strategies? Do the proposed activities include specific action on gender and exclusion? Are they appropriate and sufficient to make sure inequality does not increase? What are the determining factor and major constraints on the achievement of its effectiveness (outcomes) Are there any unintended results? how they emerged and their role in overall effectiveness? 	Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of project and CPD). Qualitative metrics. Mid-Term Review Report. Key project beneficiaries.	Document analysis. Interviews with project experts. Interviews with key project beneficiaries.	Based on the RRF and M&E framework	Perception Assessment of the stakeholders Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change
Efficiency	To what extent the intervention delivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the financial and non-financial inputs of the project contributed to 	Project documentation	Document analysis.	Based on the RRF	Perception Assessment

<p>HOW WELL ARE RESOURCES BEING USED?</p>	<p>results in an economic/cost-effective way?</p>	<p>generating the outputs? Were the project activities considering the value for many approaches?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have adequate financial resources been allocated for the proposed gender activities (% total budget) ● Is there adequate funding for staff members to participate in GESI related capacity building, and to refresh the skills and capacities of staff who have had previous training? ● How was the project able to help the government to bring private sector financing into the SDGs implementation? ● How have the M&E systems strengthened in delivering the results? ● How did the M & E system of the project build the gender issues and gender responsiveness? ● Does the monitoring framework include measurable gender and social inclusion indicators appropriate to the program and its activities? ● Does the project collect the gender disaggregated data and qualitative information to analyze the and track gender issues? Describe and other sub criteria considered such as PWD and so forth. ● Does the monitoring framework include measurable gender and social inclusion indicators appropriate to the program and its activities? Are success and impact parameters 	<p>on, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD). Qualitative metrics. Mid-Term Review Report. Key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Interviews with project experts. Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>and M&E framework</p>	<p>of the stakeholders Contribution Analysis and Sense-making through stories of change</p>
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		<p>and indicators appropriately gendered and inclusive?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent was the management structure of the project efficient to generate the expected results? • Were the project activities implemented according to the work plan and budget breakdown? • Were project resources allocated strategically and in the most efficient way compared to alternatives (sub-contract, consultant, etc.)? • To what extent did the project adopt cost efficiency measures like cost sharing by the main beneficiaries or partners? • To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? • To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project design and implementation 				
<p>IMPACT</p> <p>WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE INTERVENTION MAKE?</p> <p>The extent to which the intervention has generated or</p>	<p>To what extent the project contributes to long-term intended results (expected impact)?</p> <p>Did the project outputs generate any significant higher-level effects?</p> <p>What factors are hindering their achievement?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the project contributed to the project outcomes (SDG localization, integration of SDGs in sectoral policies and strategies, capacity enhancement of the target group, partnership and engagement enhanced, the functional efficiency of the target institutions increased etc) • Is sectoral policies GESI concerns on respective issues. • Do project reports identify gender gaps and gender-related project success? 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD).</p>	<p>Document analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Based on the RRF and M&E framework</p>	<p>Perception Assessment of the stakeholders Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change</p>

<p>is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are indicators of success clearly defined and applied? How can negative impacts be mitigated or • Will the project’s actions contribute to the expected impact in the coming years? • How did the collaboration influence the scale-up/expansion of the project? • How the delivery of country programme outputs led to outcome-level progress and beyond the planned outcome? What has been the UNDP contribution to the observed change? • what is the major enabling and challenges faced by the projects in terms of achieving the objective of the project (such as federalization 	<p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p> <p>Key project beneficiaries.</p>			
<p>SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>WILL THE BENEFITS LAST?</p>	<p>What is the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the project has ended?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the project interventions contributed towards sustaining the knowledge, practices, policies and systems in the government systems • To what extent will the GESI achievement of the project continue in the government system? • in the SDG localization and implementation process • To what extent financial and human resources are available or committed to sustain the results achieved by the project? • Level of the partnership forged and/ or exists within the governments and outside side (NGOs, UN, private sector and development 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD).</p> <p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p>	<p>Document analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Based on the RRF and M&E framework</p>	<p>Perception Assessment of the stakeholders Contribution Analysis and Sense-making Through Stories of Change</p>

		<p>partners) to sustain the results achieved by the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the project's results institutionalized by the XXX NPC or the adequate ability to continue? • Did the project work on its exit strategies and sustainability to smoothly phase out after its term? • What are other socio-political, institutional, financial and environmental risks • that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs and project contributions to the SDGs implementation? 	Key project beneficiaries.			
Cross-cutting						
GESI	To what extent has the project aligned the GESI issues and what results are achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the GESI analysis was carried out in project design, collaborated with the right stakeholders, use adequate resources to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in implementation • To what extent did the project promote positive changes among women and marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities? Were there any unintended effects? • To what extent have Dalit, ethnic, people with disabilities women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of the project and with what impact? • Is there a M & E and Reporting system in place to ensure that project outputs and outcomes 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD).</p> <p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p>	<p>Document analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	Based on the RRF and M&E framework	<p>Perception Assessment of the stakeholder's Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change</p>

		<p>promote equal benefits for men and women and that gender inequality is not reinforced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a regular monitoring mechanism in place to ensure the tool that can track a process of regular collection and analysis of key data (indicators) to identify shifts or progress achieved from a gender perspective. Does quarterly, annual reporting format /template ensure the GESI components? • 	Key project beneficiaries.			
Climate change	To what extent the project contributed to the climate change theme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How/to what extent the SDG 13 issues were integrated into the project design and implementation process? What are the major lessons learned from this process? • To what extent has the project contributed to achieving SDGs, particularly SDGs 13? • How these interventions ensure the impact of climate change on women and marginalized communities /groups? 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD). Qualitative metrics. Mid-Term Review Report. Key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Document analysis. Interviews with project experts. Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	Based on the RRF and M&E framework	<p>Perception Assessment of the stakeholders Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change</p>
Management structure	To what extent the management structure was effective in steering the project and adapting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and to what extent the project engaged the stakeholders in the decision-making process? 	Project documentation, including internal	Document analysis.	Based on the RRF	Perception Assessment of the stakeholders

	to the emerging context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the management structure (steering committee and PEB) was engaged in the decision-making process? • Are there women and representatives from marginalized groups in the management structure? • To what extent the management structure played (flexibility and proactively adapting) in the context of a changing environment? • How the inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination among the federal, provincial and local governments were instituted and strengthened? • What are the major lessons from the structure? 	<p>UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD).</p> <p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p> <p>Key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	and M&E framework	Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change
key external factors	What are the major external factors that affect the achievement of the project outputs and outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key external factors beyond the project's control that have contributed to the program's successes and failures? • How has the project addressed/integrated these into the overall project management? 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD).</p> <p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p>	<p>Document analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	Based on the RRF and M&E framework	Perception Assessment of the stakeholder Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change

			Key project beneficiaries.			
Lesson learned:	What are the major lessons learned from this project that can be used in future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are lessons documented by the project team continually shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project? • What is the main lesson learned from the project that could be used in future? • What is the major lesson learned to address the GESI issues in the project? 	<p>Project documentation, including internal UNDP monitoring and evaluation (of the project and CPD).</p> <p>Qualitative metrics.</p> <p>Mid-Term Review Report.</p> <p>Key project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Document analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with project experts.</p> <p>Interviews with key project beneficiaries.</p>	Based on the RRF and M&E framework	<p>Perception Assessment of the stakeholder's Contribution analysis and sense-making through stories of change</p>

Draft interview guide (example)

The detailed guide will be improvised based on the information provided by the project team (who were involved in what aspects and to what extent) fine tuned based on the nature of the stakeholders and shared with the commissioning agency before the start of the data/information collection. The following is a set of lead questions that may be used in a general manner to prompt and guide the evaluation discussions. It is a guide only and not a questionnaire. More specific questions may be added depending on the interviews with project staff, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

NPC and project team (general)

Project Design

- Are you satisfied with the overall design and approach of the project? Are there any aspects of the Project Document, including assumptions, which need to be corrected or clarified?
- Does the situational analysis consider the different social, economic, cultural and political situations of men, women, boys, girls and other marginalized groups as identified through GESI analysis?
- Does the situational analysis incorporate findings from the GESI analysis and reflect an awareness of the identified gender disparities and social discrimination?
- Does the problem statement define the gender gaps and social exclusion issues that the program intends to address?
- Is the Results Framework/ToC relevant and adequate? Have there been any difficulties in applying the Results Indicators and Measuring Progress? How is capacity development being measured?
- What are the major Project Risks that could affect the achievement of expected results? How can they be reduced or managed?

Project Implementation Modalities

- Have the Project Organization and committees been effective and efficient? Would you change anything in the current arrangement given the experience to date?
- Has the Project Implementation Process been effective and efficient in terms of how the activities have been delivered in the field by agencies and contractors?
- How well do the coordination mechanisms work between the implementing partners and between national and local government levels? Is there progress toward a coordinated approach in the project delivery approach?
- Have any planned activities been difficult to complete according to the AWP and schedule? How have delays affected progress toward expected results?
- Have the financial, disbursement and contracting processes operated as planned?
- Does the implementation plan appropriately address the dimensions of gender inequality and social exclusion as described in the GESI analysis?
- If not, does it recommend how gaps can be filled?
- 17. Do the proposed activities include specific action on gender and exclusion? Are they appropriate and sufficient to make sure inequality does not increase? Do they cover at least three of the five GESI domains?
- 18. Do the activities include interventions to advance the empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups (e.g., participation in capacity building intervention etc.

- 19 Do the activities include interventions to advance empowerment of marginalized people (e.g., targeting persons with different disabilities, support to these groups, capacity-building for these people, in respective areas ?
- 20. Is there a budget for capacity-building; working with men and women and other marginalized people and training project staff to reflect on, understand and champion GESI?
- 21. Is the development of GESI knowledge products and practices included as a specific output, for example, research etc.

Project Management

- 22. Has the Project Management / Technical Advisory Committee been useful in providing strategic direction? Is there a specific example of their direction, and adaptive management responses?
- 23. What role should these committees play at this stage?
- Do you have sufficient technical guidance and resources to complete the planned activities?
- Has a gender expert been recruited or does the project staff have gender knowledge and have gender related responsibilities assigned?
- Is all staff trained in GESI?
- Have you encountered any information gaps or communication issues within the project implementation?
- Has the project monitoring and reporting provided the necessary information to assess progress in meeting project objectives and targets?

Project Results

- What are the major outputs that contributed to the process of localization of SDGs at different levels of government?
- To what extent the following aspects of the project intervention helped in SDG implementation within our organization?
 - a. planning
 - b. Budgeting
 - c. M&E systems
 - d. fiscal transfer
 - e. evidence-based policy formulation
 - f. capacity building
 - g. Policy Advocacy
- To what extent the CSOs and private sector were reached out and involved in the process?
- To what extent are the CSOs and private sector involved in increasing investment in SDG implementation?
- To what extent the project contributed to making governments responsive and functional (through planning, budgeting and monitoring and reporting) toward better SDGs implementation (related to outcome 1)
- To what extent the project contributed toward providing resilient and innovative financing for SDG implementation?
- What are the major outcomes from the project (direct and indirect, expected and unexpected)

- How and to what extent the GESI issues are addressed during design and implementation and what achievements are noted due to the intervention?
- How and to what extent is the intervention supported in climate change aspects? What achievements are made?
- What are the major enabling factors and barriers in delivering outputs and outcomes of the project?
- How sustainable are the institutional capacities, human resources and equipment provided by the project? What long-term Operations & Maintenance arrangements/financing are possible?
- What policy, institutional, financial and human factors will influence the potential to sustain the project effects? How can these sustainability attributes be enhanced in the final phase of the project?
- What is the most important lesson that can be drawn from this project so far that would assist similar projects in the future? Is knowledge generated linked in any way to national learning for ?

Subnational level governments:

- What are the major outputs that contributed to the process of localization of SDGs at provincial and/or local level?
- To what extent the following aspects of the project intervention helped in SDG implementation within your organization?
 - h. planning
 - i. Budgeting
 - j. M&E systems
 - k. fiscal transfer
 - l. evidence-based policy formulation
 - m. capacity building
 - n. Policy Advocacy
- What are the major outcomes from the project (direct and indirect, expected and unexpected)
- How and to what extent the GESI issues are addressed during design and implementation and what achievements are noted due to the intervention?
- How and to what extent is the intervention supported in climate change aspects? What achievements are made?
- How the NDP are used and what are the challenges you faced?

CSO and private sector

- To what extent the CSOs and private sector were reached out and involved in the process? (from design to implementation)
- To what extent are the CSOs and private sector involved in increasing investment in SDG implementation?
- What are the major outcomes from the project (direct and indirect, expected and unexpected)
- What are the major enabling factors and barriers in delivering outputs and outcomes of the project?

Sectoral ministries

- What are the major outputs that contributed to the process of integration of SDGs at ministry level?

- To what extent the following aspects of the project intervention helped in SDG implementation within your organization?
 - o. planning
 - p. Budgeting
 - q. M&E systems
 - r. fiscal transfer
 - s. evidence-based policy formulation
 - t. capacity building
 - u. Policy Advocacy
- What are the major outcomes from the project (direct and indirect, expected and unexpected)
- How and to what extent the GESI issues are addressed during design and implementation and what achievements are noted due to the intervention?
- How and to what extent is the intervention supported in climate change aspects? What achievements are made?

Evaluation methods

The evaluation stages include (i) desk review; (ii) preparing inception report; (iii) field visits to the project's provinces as required (but online KII and group meetings also be considered); (iv) data analysis and interpretation, and (v) evaluation report writing and finalization. The evaluation will follow a step-wise approach for the implementation of the evaluation phases, along with the description of the key tasks and outputs (see below).

Phase 1: Document review

- Review documents from various sources and types
- review the programme logic and identify major evaluability status and issues

Phase 2: Preparation of inception

- Organize a meeting with the project team and other staff
- Review and refine the given ToRs and prepare a draft report
- Share the report and get consent

Phase 3: field visit and data collection

- Consult stakeholders in Kathmandu (semi- structure interview)
- A sampling of provinces and sites
- Preparation of visit plan
- visit the sites/stakeholders and beneficiaries (physical or online)
- document data through KII and other means such as case studies
- Carry out triangulation

Phase 4: data analysis and synthesis

- Carry out quantitative data through spreadsheets
- Carry out qualitative information analysis through content analysis and sense-making
- Carry out interpretation of data based on the evaluation questions

Phase 5: Reporting phase

- Debriefing of findings
- Draft reports sharing and feedback collection
- Final report

Introduction of data collection tools

Key Informant Survey:

Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people—including community leaders, professionals, or residents—who have first-hand knowledge about the community.

Standard for carrying out KIIs

- When formulating study questions, limit the no of questions relevant to the interviewees.
- The interview should allow for free discussion by informants however, interviewers should be aware of what questions to ask and topics that should be covered.
- When preparing a guide for interview topics, items are usually limited to themes to allow for in-depth discussion.
- When selecting key informants, mainly used the names suggested by the project. Due to time limitation, it was difficult to go beyond the suggested names and organizations.
- In selecting key informants, we make sure to include a wide range of perspectives and points of view, including selecting from different groups of key stakeholders.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A focus group discussion (or FGD) is a qualitative research method in the social sciences, with a particular emphasis and application in the developmental program evaluation sphere.

Focus groups aim to discover the key issues of concern for selected groups. Discovering these issues can help determine which of a number of options is the preferred way forward, or to determine what are the concerns that would prevent a proposal going ahead. The focus group may also be undertaken to discover preliminary issues that are of concern to a group or community, and on which to base further research or consultation. Focus groups should deliver detailed knowledge of the issues that concern a specific demographic or community.

Standards for carrying out FGD

- Develop a checklist of questions considering major questions from the evaluation matrix
- select appropriate and right no of questions (keeping the reasonable number)
- Keeping the questions simple and relevant
- Develop the various protocols: (examples)
- Selecting the right participants
- Conduct FDGs
 - The discussion should allow for free discussion by informants however, interviewers should be aware of what questions to ask and topics that should be covered.
 - Facilitate properly so that all can express their views independently

- take note and debrief

Desk Review

A desk review is a form of secondary research. Unlike primary research, in which the researcher is uncovering new information and creating new knowledge, secondary research focuses on information that has already been acquired and documented. Secondary research is used to present an overview of the current state of knowledge in a field. It can also be used to highlight areas or gaps in existing information where additional primary research is needed.

We carried out two types of desk research:

Internal Desk Research: Refers to the review of data, reports, tools, or other resources developed by the project. This also include the reports from UNDP

External Desk Research: Refers to the review of data, reports, tools, or other resources that exist outside of outside the project /UNDP.

Annex 3: List of documents reviewed for the evaluation

1. ToRs of the final evaluation
2. Project Document (signed)
3. Annual Work Plans / quarterly work plan
4. Annual Progress Report 2020
5. Annual Progress Report 2021
6. Annual Progress Report 2022
7. PEB meeting notes
8. Risk logs
9. PEB minutes
10. Audit reports
11. Budget revisions
12. M & E plans

Selected study reports (selected ones)

1. LDC Graduation Strategy
2. Nepal MPI report
3. Review Report of SDG 16+
4. Revised Local Level Plan Formulation Guideline,
5. Assessment of readiness of provinces and selected local levels for SDG localization,
6. SDG Budget Coding Guideline
7. Review of SDGs Targets and Indicators
8. Study on Doing Business in Nepal
9. SDG Progress report
10. SDG aligned national framework for SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 3 (good health and well-being)
11. 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB) national framework
12. A Diagnostic Study of the Human Development Status of Madhesh Province

Annex 4: List of people met during the evaluation mission and field visit itinerary of field visit

Stakeholder	Gender	Meeting date
1. National Assembly		
a. Dr. Rojnath Pandey, Secretary	Male	27 th July 2023
2. National Planning Commission		
a. NPD Mr. Prakash Dahal	Male	31 st July 2023
b. NCP Dr. Narayan Poudel	Male	20 th July 2023
c. Laxmi Ghimire, Programme Director	Female	24 th July 2023
3. National Statistics Office		
a. DDG Munni Chaudhary	Female	24 th July 2023
b. Subash Adhikari	Male	24 th July 2023
4. Ministry of Forest and Environment		
a. Shivaraj Wagle	Male	25 th July 2023
5. Consultant - UNDP		
a. Dr. Giridhari Sharma Poudel	Male	24 th July 2023
6. UNDP		
a. RR Ayshanie Labe	Female	31 st July 2023
b. Advisor Dharma Swarnakar	Male	31 st July 2023
c. Portfolio Manager Kalpana Sarkar	Female	3 rd August 2023
d. GESI advisor – Ms Binda Magar	Female	28 th August 2023
7. EU		
a. Ranjan Shrestha	Male	7 th August 2023
8. FNCCI		
a. Gokarna Awasthi	Male	25 th July 2023
9. National Cooperative Federation		
a. Ms. Chitra Kumari Thamsuhang Subba,	Female	25 th July 2023
b. Suresh Thapa - DGM	Male	25 th July 2023
c. Ram Sudan Timilsina	Male	25 th July 2023
d. Achutam Thapa Monitoring officer	Male	25 th July 2023

10. NGO Federation of Nepal		
a. Ram Pd Subedi – chair	Male	25 th July 2023
b. Mr Arjun Bhattarai, General Secretary	Male	25 th July 2023
c. Mr Hum Bhandari, ED,	Male	25 th July 2023
d. Bhava Raj Regmi	Male	25 th July 2023
11. Formal Secretary of NPC		
a. Kewal Bhandari	Male	7 th August 2023
12. Project Staff		
a. Puspha Lal Shakya	Male	20 July 2023
b. Padam Bhusal	Male	20 July 2023
c. Dr Menuka Karki	Female	20 July 2023
d. Keshab Dawadi	Male	20 July 2023
e. Ineej Manandhar	Male	7 th August 2023
13. Province (Gandaki Province)		
a. Dr Krishna Chandra Devkota – vice Chair of Niti Aayog	Male	30 th July 2023
b. Jagu Basyal – NSO officer	Male	30 th July 2023
c. Ram Pd Wagle	Male	30 th July 2023
d. Rishi Ram Tiwari	Male	30 th July 2023
14. Rural Municipality - Annapurna RM (Gandaki Province)		
a. Chandra Kala Adhikari – Vice chair of Annapurna RM	Female	30 th July 2023
b. Surya Timilsina – IT officer	Male	30 th July 2023
Total interviewees	33 (26 male / 7 female)	

Field visit itinerary (29th – 30th July 2023)

Date	Visited office	Persons met
29 July Saturday - Kathmandu to Pokhara (afternoon flight)		

30 th July (Sunday)		
Moring	Provincial planning Commission, Pokhara	Met the vice chair, Secretary, statistical officer and officer Dr Krishna Chandra Devkota – vice Chair of Niti Aayog Ram Pd Wagle Rishi Ram Tiwari
	National Statistics office	Statistical officer Jagu Basyal
Afternoon	Annapurna Rural Municipality	Chandra Kala Adhikari – Vice chair Surya Timilsina – IT officer
Evening (Back to Kathmandu)		

Annex 5: List of training provided by the project

Types and no of training participants at the federal level

SN	Name of training and workshop	Male	Female	Total Participants	Types/Level of Participants
1	National Account Training for NPC & Ministries	25	15	40	CBS, NPC and officers of federal ministries
2	Training Monitoring and Evaluation for the Officers of the National Planning Commission	27	10	37	Officers of National Planning Commission
3	Training Program on Formulating Medium Term Expenditure Framework	40	15	55	Officers of NPC and federal Ministries
4	Training on Macroeconomic Sectors and National Accounts	39	10	49	Officers of the Government of Nepal, Central Bank in involved in the areas of macroeconomic sectors
5	Executive level Interaction on M&E	26	10	36	Executive level
6	Monitoring and Evaluation Training Program	30	5	35	Officers involved in the areas of M & E of NPC and ministries
7	Workshop of Mid-Term Review and SDG Indicator Interaction Workshop	34	6	40	Officers of various ministries
8	Project Bank training	36	4	40	Officers of various ministries
	Total Participants	257	75	332	

Types and no of training participants at the sub-national level

SN	Name of training and workshop	Male	Female	Total participants	Types/Level of participants
1	Training of MTEF, Project Bank, Complementary and Special Grant Software Operation Practice and SDG Localization for Provincial level Capacity Development Programme	214	31	245	Officers of provincial ministries and local governments
2	Training of NDP Capacity Strengthening Program	34	4	38	Statistics officers of 33 districts offices of CBS

3	NDP & SDG Localization training	1426	96	1522	Local-level planning and IT officers
4	MTEF Software Training with the province	36	6	42	Provincial Ministries planning officers
5	SDG Localization and Training on NDP in 7 Provinces	187	25	212	Provincial Ministries officers
6	Climate Finance Training Workshop at the Provincial Level	66	50	116	Provincial Ministries officers
	Total Participants	1963	212	2175	

Annex 6: List of studies and publications and policy dialogues/interactions by the project

Year	Table- List of Studies/Research/Policy Analysis
2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDGs Progress Assessment Report 2020 2. SDGs Localization Guideline /Resource Book 3. SDGs Need Assessment and Financing Strategy Nepali Report 4. SDG VNR Report 5. Nepal Human Development Report 6. Study on Socio-economic Impact of COVID -19 in Nepal 7. Waste Management Survey Report
2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment of Infrastructure for Preparation of Input /Output Table and SDGs Aligned Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) 2. Gap analysis of complementary and Special Grant (through selected case study) 3. Nepal MPI report 4. Review Report of SDG 16+ 5. SDG aligned national framework for SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 3 (good health and well-being) 6. Capacity Building of M&E officials of Line Ministries and NPC/CBS (a total of 71 including 14 females) on SDG Responsive M&E System. 7. Published Revised Local Level Plan Formulation Guideline, 8. Integrated National Evaluation Action Plan, 9. Assessment of readiness of provinces and selected local levels for SDG localization, 10. Assessment of contribution of private sector to SDGs in Nepal, 11. Review of University Grant Mechanism, 12. Project audit framework of national pride and transformative projects. 13. SDG Budget Coding Guideline
2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study on LDC Graduation Strategy 2. Study on Implementation of the Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfer 3. Study on the Status of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Program 4. Review of SDGs Targets and Indicators 5. Study on Model Climate Smart Village 6. Prepare SDG Aligned Framework for Infrastructure Sector 7. Develop SDG Aligned Input/ Output Table Leading to Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) 8. Study of the Effectiveness of Youth Self Employment Program 9. Study on the Use of Internet Facility as a medium of instruction of Education during COVID-19 Lockdown and Lesson learned for the Future 10. Preparation on 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB) national framework 11. Study on Doing Business in Nepal 12. Prepare Standards for Efficient and Effective Distribution Management of Chemical Fertilizers 13. Progress Report on IPOA 14. Study on Status of Physical, Mental and Social Health in Nepal 15. Study on Access to Health Services in Nepal 16. Assessment of Selected Cooperatives, CSOs to Support SDGs Tracking 17. Study on the Status of Sex workers in Nepal 18. Study on Increasing Effectiveness and Efficiency in Delivering Public Services in Nepal 19. Prepare Action Plan to operationalize SDG-aligned Integrated Transport Management 20. Study on the Effective Rate of Protection in Major Industrial Production 21. National Action Plan against Suicide

Year	Table- List of Policy Dialogues/Consultation
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG reporting requirements interaction on Women’s Day Program • Thematic studies consultation and dissemination • Workshop/interaction on Alignment of National Data Profile (NDP)
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy dialogue workshop was held marking international women’s day including a presentation on ‘Gender Equality for sustainability with Climate Change perspective’ (the same title as that of international women’s day) • Interactions with the National Assembly Members on SDGs Implementation • Thematic studies consultation and dissemination • Consultation on Software Development of MTEF MIS
2023	<p>16th Plan Preparation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDC Graduation Strategy (Workshops/Printing) • LDC summit -documentary video • Thematic studies consultation and dissemination • Private Sector engagement for innovative development financing workshop
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Study on the Effectiveness of Crop and Livestock Insurance Services in Nepal 23. Study of Public Enterprises in Nepal 24. Study on the status of older people in Nepal 25. Prepare Provincial Level Climate Change Financing Framework (CCFF) 26. Study on Implementation of UNFCCC provisions in Nepalese Context 27. Study on the River Training Situation of Major Rivers of Nepal 28. Study on the Effectiveness of the National Pride Canal Irrigation System of Nepal 29. Assessment of Alternative Energy to Replace LPG in Nepal 30. A Diagnostic Study of the Human Development Status of Madhesh Province 31. Translation and printing of SDGs Progress Assessment Report in Nepali Language 32. Translation and printing of NHDR in Nepali Language 33. Study on Status of Women Bureaucrats and White Color Workers in Nepal 34. Study on Contribution of Major Informal Sectors in SDGs
2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study on Impact of Deprived/ Priority Sector Lending on Targeted Population 2. Study on Status of LGBTQI Communities in Nepal 3. Study on the Status of Small Energy Hydropower Projects in Nepal 4. Prepare National Human Resource Plan 5. Prepare National Strategy of Industry Sector to promote domestic production and consumption 6. Study on access to transportation quality status of Nepal and prepare Plan for a Close-knit Nepal (Two Third in Three hours (TTT)) 7. Update and Revision of Needs Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy document 8. Study on Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 and Recovery Strategy 9. SDG Progress report preparation 10. Revised SDGs Indicators (finalization and printing)

Annex 7: Results framework with progress updated

Accelerating Implementation of SDGs in Nepal (AISN) Monitoring status: 7 Dec 2022				
Expected outputs	Output indicators	Target	Achievement	Remarks
Output 1.1: Planning, budgeting and M&E systems at federal level fully aligned with the SDGs.	1.1.1. Number of SDG progress reports with disaggregated analysis.	4 - Additional two reports	1	Second – due by September 2023 (covering 2020-2022 period). Additionally, 1 SDG VNR report was also produced.
	1.1.2. SDG budget code guideline is in place	1 NPC SDG Code guideline	1	NPC has approved the document however it is in process of getting approval from the Government of Nepal for rollout of the SDG budget code guideline.
	1.1.3. Number of studies and policy papers produced	12	55	(35 studies and other 20 policy documents including LDC graduations strategy and so on) the big deviation in the policy study was due to change in the economic situation after COVID -19 pandemic and also change in the priorities of the implementing partner.
	1.1.4. Number of existing SDGs Committees at federal level fully operationalized	At least 2 meetings of thematic and coordination committee per year	10-12	8 meetings were convened in 2022 however, meeting could not be organized in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid 19 pandemic.
	1.1.5 number of M & E activities conducted	4 M & E activities conducted.	4 +3	4 M & E training events and 3 event of coordination meetings
		200 number of officials trained in SDGs M & E process	206 officers (19 females)	

			and 36 executives	
<p>Output achievement: to demonstrate to what extent and how the project achieved the fully alignment (Planning, budgeting and M&E systems at federal level fully aligned with the SDGs) – N/A</p> <p>Justification for the deviation (if any): N/A</p>				
<p>Output 1.2: SDGs aligned planning, budgeting and M & E systems are in place at Provinces and Local levels</p>	<p>1.2.1 Number of Provinces and Local levels integrates SDGs including PEC/GESI into their policies, plans, and budget.</p>	<p>3 provinces and 18 Local levels integrate SDGs in polices and plans</p>	<p>7 provinces</p>	<p>All the 7 provinces have aligned SDG into their periodic plans. Similarly, the local governments have also tried to align their plans with SDGs. However, the exact number of the local governments that has aligned SDG with their plans ais not known due to tracking system not in the jurisdiction of the project. AISN did massive SDG orientation for all 753 local government officials and 7 provincial officials in 2021 and 2022 that focused on SDG aligned planning process</p> <p>AISN has supported NPC to prepare SDG aligned local level planning guidelines that has definitely improved it. SDG localization resource book and local level planning guideline produced by NPC with support of the project were instrumental to do so</p>
	<p>1.2.2. Number of multi-stakeholder SDGs committees at provincial and local level created and operationalized</p>	<p>3 committee in Province and 18 local level committee.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Formation of committee is an option of the provincial governments, so project did not interfere on this.</p>

	1.2.3. Number of Provinces and Local levels introducing CCFF reform road map	3 Provinces and 18 Local levels	3	CCFF frameworks are prepared in 3 provinces Sudur Pachhim, Karnali and Madhesh are in process of implementation
	1.2.4. Number of SDG reports at Provinces and Local levels	3 Provinces and 18 Local levels	3	Bagmati, Gandaki and Lumbini provinces prepared SDGs reports It is learned the many local governments also prepared SDG reports however, there is not monitoring system from NPC and the project
	1.2.5. Number of monitoring/evaluation activities and report	3 Provinces and 18 Local levels	0	This is not monitored as piloting did not happen
	1.2.6 Number of SDGs committees formed at the local level	3 Provinces and 18 Local levels	0	Same as above- however, SDG orientation has also focused on it and its now well received by the local governments i.e. need realized
Output achievement: To what extent SDG aligned planning, budgeting and M & E systems are in place at Provinces and Local levels - N/A				
Justification for the deviation (if any): N/A				
Contribution to outcome 1 (Planning, budgeting, monitoring & reporting systems at all levels of government are SDG responsive and functional) - N/A				
Justification for the deviation (if any): - N/A				
Output 2.1: The Intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanism incentivizes provincial and local governments to integrate the SDGs	2.1.1. Policy paper in place on fiscal transfer instruments aligned with SDGs.	Yes	No	NNRFC did not entertain to work with NPC in this area as it wanted to work on its own on this area. However, AISN assisted NPC in two relevant studies about the fiscal transfers.
	2.1.2. Intergovernmental fiscal transfer guidelines include provision on SDG including PEC/GESI prioritization.	1	2	Study on Intergovernmental fiscal transfers and Study on Special and complementary grants were prepared.

	2.1.3. Number of government officials (federal, provincial and local level) trained on provisions of SDG including PEC/GESI friendly fiscal transfers system.	300	More than 1700	This is through massive SDG orientations in 2021 and 2022 The Workshops and training were conducted in the provinces and district covers SDG, fiscal transfer system, MTEF, M & E, project bank, Data tracking mechanism and GESI.
<p>Output achievement: To what extent the Intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanism incentivizes provincial and local governments to integrate the SDGs - N/A</p> <p>Justification for the deviation (if any): - N/A</p>				
Output 2.2: Cooperatives, CSOs and public enterprises increased investment for SDG implementation focused on Poverty, Environment and Climate (PEC)	2.2.1. Number of cooperatives/CSOs and public enterprises with analysis of investment from SDGs perspectives	24 Cooperatives and 2 Public enterprises	15 Cooperatives and 14 CSO	Two separate studies/assessments were conducted to analyse the investment from SDGs perspectives of 15 cooperatives and 14 CSOs that included the assessment checked their readiness for SDG implementation
	2.2.2 Number of SDG reports produced by Cooperatives/CSOs and public enterprises to track the contribution on SDGs	24 SDGs reports	Not Known	One Study on The Situation of Public Enterprises conducted The Cooperatives federation of nepal has produced the role of Cooperatives in SDG.
	2.2.3. Number of cooperative/CSOs members trained on integrating SDGs	1000 cooperative members	None	This was not felt required as federation of coops doing it regularly
<p>Output achievement: To what extent Cooperatives, CSOs and public enterprises increased investment for SDG implementation focused on Poverty, Environment and Climate (PEC) - N/A</p> <p>Justification for the deviation (if any): - N/A</p>				
Output 2.3: Private sector resources and innovative financing including global and vertical funds	2.3.1. Number of guidelines, strategies, tools to manage private sector investment decisions that facilitate or prioritize quality investments	5	1	This is study on the assessment of private sector contribution to SDGs. There was no specials interest of NPC in it for different reasons.

mobilized for SDG acceleration focused on PEC.	2.3.2. Percentage increase in private sector investments to support poverty, environmental sustainability and climate objectives for the SDGs	Additional 5 percent of the private sector project beneficiaries	None	Not monitored in specific
	2.3.3. Number to green and innovative financing mechanism operationalized	3	3	3 provincial Climate change finance frameworks
	2.3.4 Additional amount of global and vertical funds available in Nepal to accelerate SDGs	Additional 30 million	Not Known	NPC has advocated and persuaded MOF for mobilisation of additional resources to fulfil the financial gaps to achieve SDGs by 2023. Additional fund available for SDG is not known.
<p>Output achievement: To what extent the private sector resources and innovative financing including global and vertical funds mobilized for SDG acceleration focused on PEC. - N/A</p> <p>Justification for the deviation (if any): - N/A</p>				
Output 2.4: COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/strategy developed.	No indicators available	No targets available	NA	Social economic study of COVID impact and LDC graduation strategy is prepared on this output.
<p>Output achievement: To what extent the COVID-19 financing, and economic recovery plan/strategy developed. - N/A</p> <p>Justification for the deviation (if any): - N/A</p>				
<p>Contribution to outcome 2 (Resilient and innovative financing available for SDG implementation.) - N/A</p> <p>Justification for the deviation (if any): - N/A</p>				

Annex 8: UNEG Code of Conduct signed by the evaluators

Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

To be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

Agreement to abide by the Code of Condcut for Evaluation in the UN System, 2008

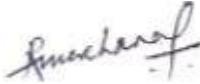
Name of Consultant: **Ram Chandra Khanal**

Name of Consultancy Organisation (where relevant): Independent Evaluator and Consultant

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the US System, 2008.

Signed at (Place) on (date): 30th August 2023, Kathmandu

Signature:



Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

To be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

Agreement to abide by the Code of Condcut for Evaluation in the UN System, 2008

Name of Consultant: **Indu Tuladhar**

Name of Consultancy Organisation (where relevant): Independent Evaluator and Consultant

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the US System, 2008.

Signed at Kathmandu on (date): 29th August 2023, Kathmandu

Signature:

