FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF) Project

Commissioned by: UNDP Nepal

August 2024

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Evaluation timeframe: April-August 2024

Project and Evaluation Information Details

Project Information		
Project title	European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF)	
Project ID	Atlas-00087656 & Quantum-00130156	
Corporate outcome and output	**UNDP Country Programme Document (2023-2027) Outcome:** **Outcome 2:** By 2027, more people, especially women, youth, and the most marginalized and poor increasingly participate in and benefit from coordinated, inclusive, participatory, transparent, and gender-responsive governance, access to justice and human rights at federal, provincial, and local levels. **UNDP Country Programme Document (2023-2027) Outputs:** **Output 2.1:** Inclusive and participatory policies, processes and systems strengthened for implementation of federalism at three levels of government. **Output 2.3:** Improved mechanisms for promoting transparency and public participation.	
Country	Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal	
Region	Asia and the Pacific	
Date project document signed	29.12.2021.	
Project dates	**Start**	**Planned end**
	1 January 2022	31 August 2024
Total committed budget	**US$ 2,333,333**	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	**US$ 1,896,336**	
Funding source	**European Union and UNDP**	
Implementing party[1]	**UNDP**	
Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project evaluation	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final	
Period under evaluation	**Start**	**End**
	1 January 2022	May 2024
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Evaluation dates	**Start**	**Completion**
	20 April 2024	15 August 2024

[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.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BSD: Basic Service Delivery

CDMIS: Capacity Development Management Information System

CBO: Community-Based Organization

CPD: Country Programme Document

DIM: Direct Implementation Modality

EUSIF: European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism

EU: European Union

FCDO: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

GESI: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

GRID: Green Resilient and Inclusive Development

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

KPTA: Karnali Province Training Academy

LG: Local Government

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MoFAGA: Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration

MTEF: Medium-term Expenditure Framework

MuAN: Municipal Association of Nepal

NARMIN: National l Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal

OSSD: One-Stop Service Delivery

PIMS: Project Information Management System

PLG: Provincial and Local Governments

PLGSP: Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme

PMU: Project Management Unit

PPIU: Provincial Program Implementation Unit

PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

PSHEA: Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, and Abuse

PWD: Persons with Disabilities

RRF: Results and Resources Framework

SDC: Swiss Development Cooperation

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

SoP: Standard Operating Procedure

SNGP: Sub-National Governance Program

ToC: Theory of Change

ToR: Terms of Reference

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNSDCF: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Executive Summary

Brief overview of the purpose and objective:

This Report relates to a Final Evaluation of the European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF) Project in Nepal. The European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF) project, implemented by UNDP Nepal, has achieved significant milestones in enhancing the functionality, inclusiveness, and responsiveness of provincial and local governments (PLGs) in Karnali Province. The project has not only laid a good basis for inclusive governance but also demonstrated impactful, scalable solutions that can serve as a model for similar initiatives across Nepal.

The project was designed within the broader framework of Nepal's federalism, focusing on historically excluded and marginalized groups, to ensure that governance structures are more inclusive and equitable. The primary objective of the project is to support the governments in institutionalization of federalism by strengthening governance structures and processes, ensuring they are more inclusive and equitable. The project focuses on historically excluded and marginalized groups, promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), and aligning local governance with Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) principles. Aligned with the broader framework of the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP), EUSIF seeks to foster transparent, accountable, and effective local governance through capacity building, policy support, and innovative service delivery mechanisms, ultimately meeting the needs of all citizens.

The primary purpose of this final evaluation was to assess the outcomes and lessons learned from the EUSIF project in enhancing the inclusiveness and responsiveness of provincial and local governments (PLGs) for delivering inclusive, high-quality, and sustainable basic services in Karnali Province, Nepal. The evaluation reviewed the project's implementation approaches, measured results against specified areas, evaluated contributions to higher-level outcomes including Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). It aimed to document lessons learned and best practices, providing specific recommendations for future similar interventions. Additionally, the evaluation sought to promote accountability and transparency by thoroughly assessing the project's accomplishments.

The key audiences for this final evaluation report are UNDP, the EU Delegation to Nepal, federal and provincial governments, local governments, development partners, and other stakeholders at the national, provincial, and local levels.

Summary of the evaluation scope and main areas of inquiry:

The evaluation of the EUSIF project covered its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and coherence, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), a human rights-based approach, and the approach to Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID). This executive summary highlights key findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the evaluation findings, along with a snapshot of the lessons learned.

The evaluation was multi-faceted, and the methodological approaches used were participatory, utilization-focused and most significant change for meeting the evaluation’s needs. The evaluation employed a mixed methods of data collection strategy, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to

ensure a comprehensive assessment of the EUSIF project. Key methodologies included document review, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with over 80 persons interviewed from UNDP, EU, other development partners, government institutions at different levels, academia and direct beneficiaries. About 40% of informants were women and 60% men. The evaluation team conducted extensive field visits to engage with project beneficiaries, local government officials, and other stakeholders, ensuring that a diverse range of perspectives was captured. Additionally, the evaluation utilized the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) to assess the project's impact on gender equality and social inclusion. Data triangulation was applied to validate findings and enhance the reliability of the conclusions drawn.

The evaluation team for the EUSIF project comprised three experts (1 international team leader and 2 national experts), ensuring a balanced mix of technical skills, gender diversity, and geographical representation.

Summary of key evaluation findings:

The EUSIF project has demonstrated substantial relevance and coherence, effectively aligning with national priorities, UNDP's strategic objectives, and EU policies. The project has made significant strides in enhancing inclusive governance, improving service delivery, and building local capacity despite some challenges in efficiency and sustainability. The project's strategic integration with the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP) and its innovative initiatives, such as the Policy Lab and One-Stop Service Delivery Centers, have laid a robust foundation for future governance improvements in Karnali Province. While there is room for further improvement in extending services to ward offices and ensuring the sustainability of capacity-building efforts, the project's achievements to date underscore its potential for long-term impact and scalability, making it a valuable model for similar initiatives in other regions. Given these accomplishments and the ongoing need to consolidate gains and address remaining challenges, it is recommended that project stakeholders consider a cost or non-cost extension of the project to further enhance its impact and sustainability.

Relevance

The EUSIF project has demonstrated strong alignment with the Government of Nepal's priorities and strategies, particularly in institutionalizing federalism and promoting inclusive governance. The project's design is intricately linked with the Fifteenth Development Plan of Nepal, underscoring the need to strengthen provincial and local governments (PLGs). The establishment of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University (with EUSIF having supported the establishment of its secretariat) and the integration of project activities into the provincial government's annual policy and program documents reflect a high degree of local government ownership. The project has ensured alignment with the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP), enhancing the capacity of local governments to deliver inclusive services. This strategic alignment and responsiveness to beneficiary needs highlight the project's relevance.

Efficiency

EUSIF has demonstrated a commitment to cost-efficiency through strategic allocation and utilization of resources, achieving significant progress with 75% of the budget utilized by March 2024, rising to approximately 87% by August 2024. The project has minimized costs via innovative measures like the Capacity Development Management Information System (CDMIS), which reduced training certificate printing costs by 93%. Despite some delays due to frequent turnover of key government staff, the project

maintained a high quality of resource use and service delivery, with robust monitoring and feedback mechanisms. The project's management and governance structures supported timely and efficient implementation, despite having to bridge temporarily the team leader post, contributing to overall efficiency despite some remaining unutilized resources.

Effectiveness

The EUSIF project has effectively enhanced participation and inclusiveness of citizens in local governance processes, as seen in the participatory annual planning and budgeting processes in three local governments. The project's focus on improved service delivery mechanisms, such as the One-Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) mechanisms development of action plans based on the BSD findings and the introduction of the Office Automation System, has streamlined processes, increasing citizen satisfaction. However, there are gaps in extending these services to ward offices and in knowledge dissemination. Capacity-building efforts have equipped local officials and stakeholders with essential skills, but the full impact of these initiatives will depend on continuous implementation and adaptation.

Impact

The EUSIF project has strategically established a robust foundation for knowledge dissemination and utilization, pivotal for advancing governance reforms in Karnali Province. Key initiatives such as the Policy Lab at Mid-West University and the Project Information Management System (PIMS) have been instrumental in enhancing data-driven decision-making and policy development. The project's initial capacity-building efforts, including the training of local master trainers and the establishment of One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) centers, demonstrate significant potential for replication and scaling up across other regions. The PLGSP is now planning to scale it to two more Palikas.

EUSIF has effectively promoted inclusive governance and service delivery innovations, setting new benchmarks for local government operations. The project's alignment with national priorities and integration with the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP) further underscores its strategic importance. Despite its relatively short duration, EUSIF has made notable strides in laying the groundwork for sustainable governance improvements. However, realizing the project's long-term impact will require continued commitment, sustained efforts, and broader application of its successful initiatives to ensure lasting benefits and scalability.

Sustainability

EUSIF's training programs and mechanisms, particularly those institutionalized within the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA), show strong potential for continuity and scalability. The establishment of OSSDs in model palikas marks a significant step towards sustainable service delivery improvements, with pilot local governments integrating OSSD, grievance handling, and social accountability mechanisms into their plans and policies for the coming fiscal year. While further efforts are needed to consistently address gender considerations, the project's adaptive management approach and capacity-building initiatives have laid a solid foundation for sustained governance improvements. GESI mainstreaming efforts using the "5P" approach such as implementation of Karnali declaration, support to inclusive planning at local level, GESI related regulatory frameworks such as GESI startegy, PSEA Policy for KPTA etc., review of GESI strategy in 4 LGs etc. are some examples. The ultimate aim of the project is to institutionalize these approaches, and EUSIF has made substantial progress in achieving this goal (e.g. the OSSD approach replication has been

envisaged in the PLGSP reprogramming documents, while the model LGs are committed to continue with this practice using their own resources). However, the sustainability of these efforts will depend on continued commitment from local governments and further institutionalization.

Coherence

EUSIF is well-aligned with UNDP's Strategic Plan, UNSDCF, and the UNDP Nepal CPD at design stage, as well as the EU's policies and projects. The project's strategic integration with the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP) has enhanced its impact and effectiveness. EUSIF's coordination with other donor-funded initiatives and its complementarity with PLGSP have strengthened its impact, avoided duplication of efforts and ensured consistency with broader development goals. The project's alignment with national priorities and strategic frameworks underscores its coherence and added value in the context of Nepal's federalism.

Other cross-cutting issues

The EUSIF project has shown a strong commitment to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) by integrating these principles into project implementation. This includes the development of GESI-sensitive indicators, policies, and guidelines, as well as capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing the understanding and application of GESI principles among local government officials and stakeholders. The project has also worked to ensure that women and marginalized groups are actively involved in decision-making processes, thereby promoting more inclusive and equitable governance structures. The adoption of the "5P" approach (Policy, Products, Participation, Proofs, and Practices) has been instrumental in mainstreaming GESI, ensuring that interventions are designed and implemented with a strong focus on inclusivity and equity. However, concerns have been raised regarding the depth of GESI integration in some aspects of the project. For instance, while the project has developed several GESI policies and tools, their dissemination and internalization among local government officials have been limited. While GESI-disaggregated data is maintained and utilized for decision-making, the project's impact on shifting gender norms and addressing the root causes of inequality remains to be fully realized. Continuous efforts to enhance the ownership and implementation of GESI strategies are essential for achieving more transformative and sustainable outcomes.

Furthermore, the EUSIF project has integrated a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) into its framework, ensuring that project activities are aligned with the principles of human rights, including participation, accountability, non-discrimination, and empowerment. This approach has been pivotal in addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, ensuring that their rights are upheld and that they have access to basic services and opportunities. The project has also contributed to Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) by incorporating environmental sustainability into its activities, promoting practices that are both environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. This holistic approach has ensured that the project not only addresses immediate governance challenges but also lays the foundation for long-term, sustainable development.

Summary of concluding statements:

The EUSIF project has demonstrated substantial relevance and coherence, effectively aligning with national priorities, UNDP's strategic objectives, and EU policies. The project has made notable strides in piloting enhanced inclusive governance, improved service delivery, and building local capacity, despite some

challenges in efficiency and sustainability. The integration with PLGSP and innovative initiatives like the Policy Lab and OSSDs are now proven pilots for future governance improvements in Karnali Province and can be treated as local, scalable solutions. However, the project's short duration limits its long-term impact, necessitating sustained efforts and possibly a cost or non-cost extension to consolidate gains and address remaining challenges. The EUSIF project has shown a strong commitment to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) by integrating these principles into project implementation. While GESI-disaggregated data is maintained and utilized for decision-making, the project's impact on shifting gender norms and addressing the root causes of inequality remains to be fully realized. Continuous efforts to enhance the ownership and implementation of GESI strategies are essential for achieving more transformative and sustainable outcomes. These conclusions are summarized in the five concluding headings drawn from the evaluation:

Conclusion 1: Strong Alignment and Relevance to National and International Frameworks
Conclusion 2: Effective Capacity Building and Service Delivery Improvements
Conclusion 3: Robust Governance and Management Arrangements but Room for Improved Communication
Conclusion 4: EUSIF's Short Duration Limits its Long-Term Impact, but Lays a Foundation for Future Engagement
Conclusion 5: Achieving a Paradigm Shift in Governance Requires Long-Term Commitment

Summary of recommendations:

SN	Recommendations	Agencies responsible	Timeframe
1	**Focus on Consolidation, Sharing, and Scaling Up:** To enhance the impact and sustainability of EUSIF's results, it is crucial to consolidate achievements, sharing best practices, and scaling up successful interventions to other regions.	UNDP	September 2024 or during a cost extension should it be granted
2	**Frame EUSIF as a Comprehensive Repository of Products and Partnerships:** Establish EUSIF as a central repository for all knowledge products, training materials, and partnerships developed during the project, ensuring their accessibility for future initiatives.	UNDP	December 2025
3	**Position UNDP for Future Partnerships Through Strategic High-End Events:** Finalize the project with a high-profile event to strengthen visibility and outreach, positioning UNDP for further partnerships around support to PLGSP.	UNDP	August 2024 or during a cost extension should it be granted
4	**Shift the Narrative Towards Strategic Goals:** Emphasize strategic goals and long-term impacts in project communications to align with broader national and international development agendas.	UNDP	December 2025
5	**Further Institutionalization of Capacity Development:** Ensure that capacity development interventions are institutionalized within local governance structures to prevent knowledge and skills from being limited to individual participants.	UNDP	August 2024 or during a cost extension should it be granted

6	**Ensure Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI):** Continue to prioritize GESI in all future initiatives, ensuring that interventions are inclusive and equitable, addressing the needs of marginalized groups.	UNDP	December 2025

Summary of lessons learned:

The EUSIF project highlighted several key lessons for successful development initiatives. First, ensuring the leadership and active involvement of Provincial and Local Governments (PLGs) is essential for fostering ownership and sustainability of project outcomes. Second, engaging marginalized communities in the planning process is crucial for creating inclusive and informed policies, as their participation brings valuable insights and fosters trust. Third, transparent and competency-based selection processes for local trainers enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of capacity-building efforts. Fourth, continuous and contextualized training is necessary to reinforce learning and ensure the practical application of new skills over time. Fifth, adapting training content to local contexts increases its relevance and impact, particularly for marginalized groups. Sixth, collaborative approaches that involve diverse stakeholders can drive innovation and improve the quality of project solutions. Lastly, strategic communication and the documentation of success stories are vital for amplifying the impact of project interventions and promoting their replication in other regions.

1. Introduction

This Report relates to a Final Evaluation of the European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF) Project. The project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nepal, under Direct Implementation Modality. The evaluation was commissioned by UNDP at the final stages of project duration and covers the project's implementation from 1 January 2022[2] to the time of the evaluation (May 2024), based on available data and geographic coverage of the Karnali Province, and selected local governments benefitting from the services provided by the implementing partners.

As per the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria,[3] the Final Evaluation aims to provide UNDP, the project's donors, government counterparts, civil society partners and other stakeholders with an impartial assessment of the results generated to date. The evaluation assesses the Project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as cross-cutting issues[4]. The evaluation is both summative and formative and identifies and documents evidence-based findings, while provides stakeholders with forward-looking, actionable recommendations to inform future programming.

The intended users of the Final Evaluation include primary the evaluation users, namely UNDP Nepal who will use the evaluation to further strategize for support to inclusive federalism in Nepal. The secondary users, namely the project's stakeholders, including the national implementing partners, who will use the information to supplement their own records of achievement of results under the framework PLGSP program that EUSIF provided technical assistance to in a pilot region in Nepal. The European Union may use the Final Evaluation for accountability and as input for decision-making purposes. Overall, all users can use the Evaluation Report for accountability and transparency purposes, to hold UNDP accountable for its development contributions.

The Evaluation Report is structured as per the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines[5] as follows:

After an Executive Summary and Introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 presents the description of the intervention, including the context and background as well as the project itself. Chapter 3 provides the evaluations' objective, scope and evaluation criteria and questions, while Chapter 4 describes the evaluation approach, methods; Chapter 5 describes the methodological limitations, especially with regards to the attribution of results; Chapter 6 looks at data analysis approaches utilised as part of the evaluation process and the analytical framework while Chapter 7 presents the findings; Chapter 8 the conclusions; Chapter 9 the recommendations; and Chapter 10 the lessons learnt.

There are a number of annexes to the Evaluation Report, including the key evaluation questions, evaluation matrix, informed consent protocol and data collection tools and instruments, the Terms of Reference (ToR), the signed Pledge of Ethical Conduct, and the list of stakeholders met.

[2] Although the project started in January 2022, the process of onboarding the staff started from July, 2022.
[3] https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm
[4] Key cross-cutting issues include Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), human rights-based approaches, and Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID). It also examines the project's overall governance structure, management practices, risk management, and quality assurance mechanisms, as well as its contribution to transparency and accountability principles.
[5] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

2. Description of the Intervention

2.1. EUSIF Project

The European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF) project, operational from January 2022[6], aims to enhance the functionality, inclusiveness, and responsiveness of Provincial and Local Governments (PLGs) in Karnali Province, Nepal. With a specific focus on historically excluded and marginalized groups, EUSIF seeks to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of PLGs under Nepal's broader federalism framework.

EUSIF's primary objectives are to bolster the performance of provincial and local government systems, ensuring they are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of the population. It aims to enhance local governance through capacity building, promoting sustainable and resilient service delivery aligned with Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) objectives. These efforts include improving local data management, monitoring, and reporting systems to be more evidence-based and enhancing the advocacy capacity of local government associations.

The overall objective of **EUSIF** is to "*provide impetus to strengthening the inclusiveness and responsiveness of Provinces and Local Governments to the diverse needs of people, especially women, historically excluded and marginalized groups, and to augment PLG provision of inclusive, good quality and sustainable basic services*".

The project operates with a total budget of approximately USD 2.33 million, with financial support from the European Union. It is designed to complement the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP), which is the Government of Nepal's flagship initiative aimed at reinforcing federalism through developing necessary systems and relationships across government tiers.

PLGSP has been supporting the provincial and local government with policy support, institution and capacity building in new and strategic ways which respect the principles of federalism as mentioned by the Constitution of Nepal. The EUSIF complementarity support focuses on the following areas:

- *Inclusiveness, Community Benefit and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services enhanced in line with Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) Objectives.*
- *Provincial and local governments (PLG) data management, monitoring and reporting systems are evidence-based and enable achieving PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.*
- *Institutional capacity development of Provincial Centre for Good Governance (PCGG) particularly for KPTA: Provide complementary technical assistance to the PLGSP*
- *Capacity of Local Government Associations enhanced for evidence-based advocacy and representation of Local Government Voice.*

EUSIF also emphasizes addressing the needs of women and marginalized groups by implementing gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approaches. This includes piloting various social accountability tools and creating platforms for policy dialogue and peer-to-peer learning among provincial and local governments.

[6] Although the project started in January 2022, the actual implementation started from July 2022.

These efforts are geared towards making governance structures more equitable and allowing for more significant participation from all societal sectors.

Moreover, the project leverages innovative practices and lessons learned from international contexts to enhance local governance frameworks. It aims to scale these practices based on their success in the pilot phase in Karnali, potentially expanding them to other provinces. This approach is part of a broader strategy to embed sustainable development practices within local governance that align with Nepal's national strategic plans and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

2.2 Results Framework

The EUSIF project's results framework is structured around four key result areas, each designed to promote inclusive governance and strengthen local government capacity. The framework includes measurable indicators to track progress across various governance and inclusivity goals, with the overarching objective of improving the performance of Provincial and Local Government (PLG) systems to be more inclusive and responsive, particularly to marginalized groups such as women, Dalits, and people with disabilities.

Result Area 1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit, and Sustainability of Local Government Services
This result area focuses on making basic service delivery more inclusive and sustainable. Key indicators include the design and implementation of inclusive service delivery systems and the adoption of **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategies** by local governments. The aim is to ensure that local governments develop systems that address the needs of marginalized communities and foster sustainable development.

Result Area 2: Data Management and Evidence-Based Decision-Making
This area emphasizes the development of data management, monitoring, and reporting systems to support **Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID)**. Indicators include the establishment of functional, evidence-based data management systems and the publication of policy papers on inclusiveness. These are intended to guide decision-making processes and improve the responsiveness of local governments.

Result Area 3: Capacity Development for Provincial Centres for Good Governance (PCGGs)
The third area focuses on strengthening the capacity of PCGGs to support local governance. Indicators include the development of long-term organizational strategies and training programs that enhance inclusive decision-making at the local government level. This area aims to build the institutional capacity necessary for sustainable governance reforms.

Result Area 4: Strengthening Local Government Associations for Advocacy
This area aims to enhance the advocacy capacity of Local Government Associations, such as the **Nepal Association of Rural Municipalities (NARMIN)**, by supporting evidence-based decision-making. Key indicators focus on the publication of policy briefs and research on inclusive governance to ensure that local governments are well-represented and equipped to advocate for the needs of their communities.

2.3 Project coverage and stakeholder engagement

The EUSIF project document outlines a broad range of project partners and relevant stakeholders, primarily including federal, provincial, and local government entities in Karnali Province, development partners, I/NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Local Government Associations, research institutes,

educational and training institutions, academia, other UNDP projects, and UN agencies. However, on the grounds, there is a relatively lower level of balanced partnership with these stated partners and stakeholders. The project has established strong strategic partnerships with provincial and local government agencies, including the KPTA, certain ministries, and model local governments. However, its engagement with federal government entities has been quite limited.

In terms of Local Government Associations, while there has been an impressive engagement with NARMIN, there has been no engagement with MuAN, despite the majority of model LGs municipalities. Although EUSIF has partnered with organizations like Badi Sarokar Manch and Hriti Foundation, the evaluation team found no substantial engagement with other CSOs. The project has demonstrated a strategic partnership with educational institutions and academia by supporting a policy lab at Mid-West University (MU) and contributing to research, policy papers, and policy dialogues. There is good coordination, collaboration, and synergy-building among UNDP's projects, such as PLGSP, A2J and PSP, in Karnali Province. However, despite the aim to engage with I/NGOs, UN agencies, and development partners, no significant engagement was found with these groups, apart from coordination efforts. Please see a table overview of partners/stakeholders in **Annex VIII**.

2.4. Theory of Change:

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the EUSIF project is well elaborated to guide the strategic interventions aimed at enhancing the inclusivity and quality of governance and service delivery in Karnali Province, Nepal. It serves as the foundational framework for evaluating the project's impact on improving access to quality services for local people, particularly women and historically excluded and marginalized groups. The ToC outlines a dual approach targeting both the demand side—empowering local communities to assert their rights and needs—and the supply side—enhancing the capacities of governmental entities to respond effectively. This comprehensive blueprint not only details the necessary interventions and expected outcomes but also emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the community and government to foster a sustainable and inclusive governance environment. As such, the ToC will be used as a critical basis for assessing the project's results, ensuring that the initiatives are aligned with the overarching goals of strengthening inclusivity and accountability within local governance structures.

Theory of Change and Results Chain Analysis:

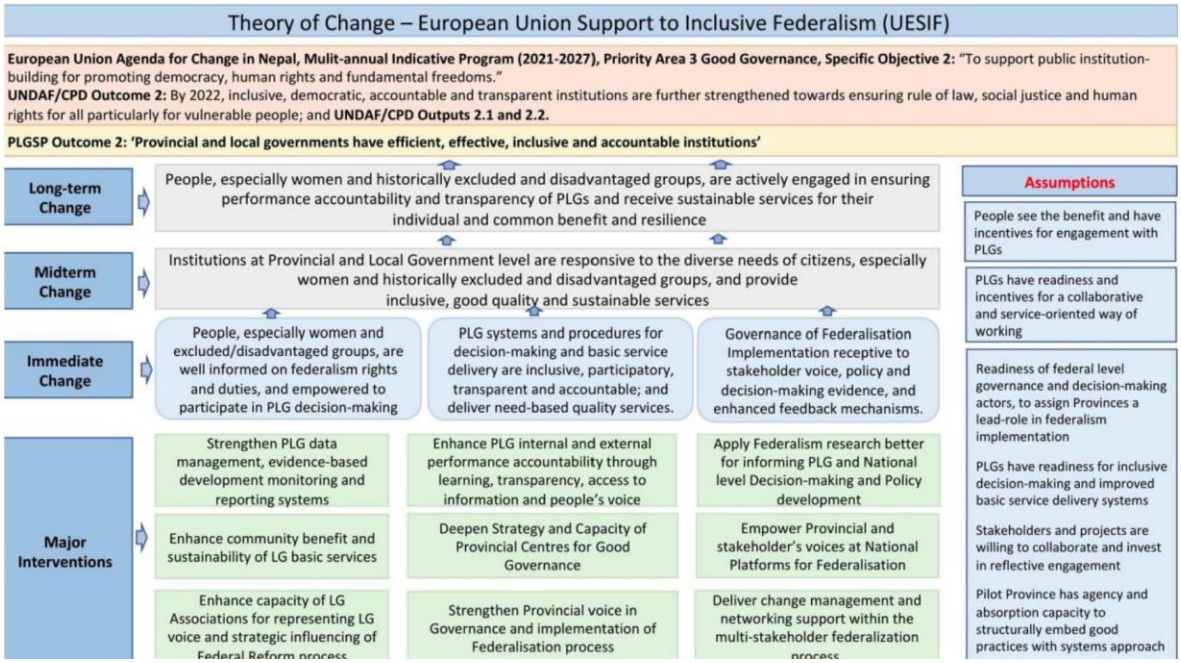
The Theory of Change (ToC) is framed around addressing these gaps by improving the **responsiveness and inclusiveness** of PLGs to better meet the needs of the people, especially marginalized groups. The long-term goal is to **build trust and increase community engagement**, thereby strengthening the resilience and performance of PLGs. However, the ToC appears to be largely process-oriented rather than results-focused in the following areas:

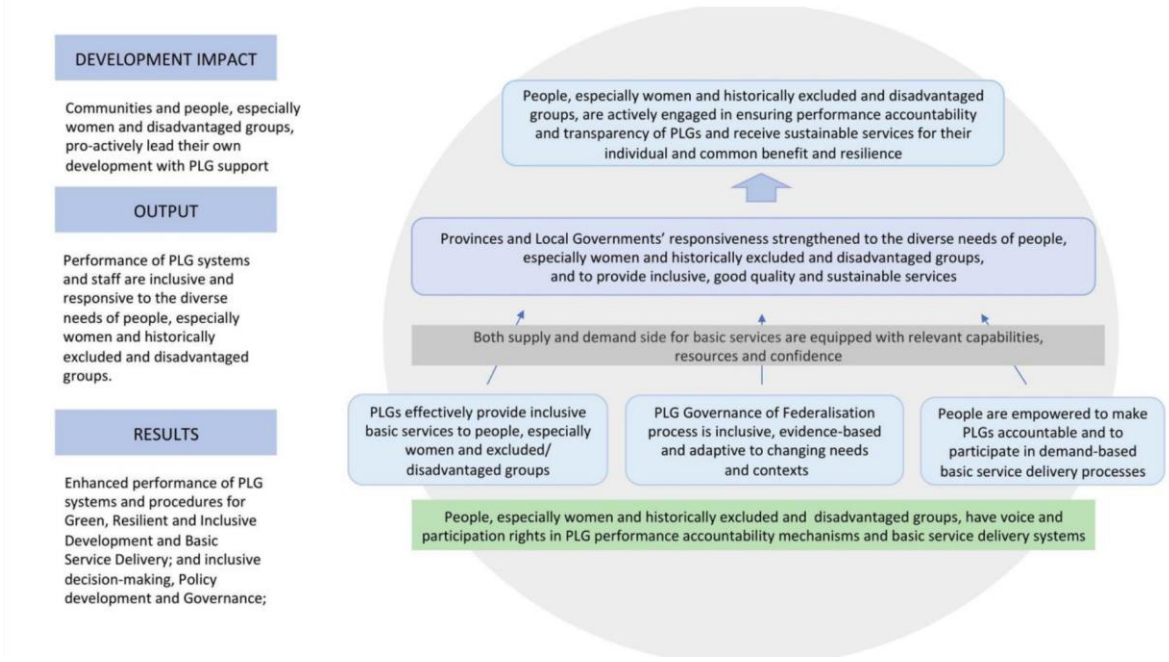
Capacity Development: The document describes activities aimed at strengthening the organizational capacity of PCGGs and embedding **Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID)** approaches. While this is crucial, the ToC could further clarify **how these changes will directly influence tangible outcomes** like improved service delivery or increased revenue generation for local governments.

Inclusiveness and Participation: The ToC emphasizes efforts to improve **inclusiveness** in decision-making, especially for marginalized communities, which is one of the core gaps. While the activities focus on capacity-building and awareness-raising, the direct link between these activities and **systemic change** in how PLGs operate in the long term is not fully fleshed out.

Sustainability: While the results chain includes capacity-building and collaboration across various levels of government and stakeholders, the **short project duration** (32 months) poses a challenge for achieving sustained outcomes. The document does acknowledge this and proposes that collaboration with existing structures will help, but the **exit strategy** and post-project sustainability rely heavily on scaling up practices through PLGSP, which remains somewhat vague.

Monitoring and Accountability: The project recognizes the need for better **M&E systems** at the PLG level but does not provide strong mechanisms for how these will be institutionalized to ensure **accountability** and feedback within the limited project timeframe. A more detailed approach to ensuring ongoing **performance management** after the project ends is needed.





2.5. Context:

Nepalese society is socio-culturally and spatially diversified, with significant variations in geography and population distribution. The main social groups are Bhrahmin Chhetri (Hill and Madhesi), Dalit (Hill and Madhesh), Adibasi Janajati (Hill and Madhesi), Muslim, Madhesi other castes. Gender inequalities and discrimination prevail in all social groups. The historical social, economic and political exclusion prevails against women, sexual and gender minorities and a significant part of social groups including Dalits, Adibasi Janajati, Madhesi, Muslim, Persons with Disability, etc. The dimensions of exclusion are social discrimination, spatial discrimination, socio-economic status, governance (exclusion due to ineffective, unjust, unaccountable, or unresponsive laws, policies, and institutions; lack of voice and participation in governing systems)[7].

Nepal transitioned to a federal system from a unitary system. Along with the federal system, the state has been restructured into three tiers of governance: federal, provincial and local level. One of the commitments of the new system is ending all forms of discriminations based on caste, class, region, religion, language, and gender and protecting the right of women, poor, vulnerable and excluded groups. The federal system has been in place for practically a decade now. However, there are several issues and challenges ahead with regards to gender equality and social inclusion. Bringing changes in social structures and mindsets, increasing the influential role of women leaders and leaders from marginalized groups, mainstreaming GESI into public policies, internalizing and institutionalizing the GESI issues at federal, provincial and local level, lacking GESI disaggregated data are key governance related challenges as pointed out by the National Gender Equality Policy 2021. The Draft National Social Inclusion Policy 2020 points out that lack of disaggregated data, lack of equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits of the state, lack of meaningful participation of women and excluded groups in governance systems, lack of common understanding on the social inclusion concept with different stakeholders, lack of effective coordination among policy implementing actors as the major challenges.

Of seven in total, Karnali Province, the largest in geographic area among the seven provinces of Nepal, covers 20.53% of the total land area. Despite its vast size, Karnali is the least populated province, housing only 4.41% of the population. The province is predominantly hilly and mountainous, which contributes to its geographical hardship and spatial exclusion, posing significant challenges for development and service delivery.

Karnali Province faces multiple socio-economic challenges. It has the second lowest Human Development Index (HDI) among Nepal's provinces, recorded at 0.426 compared to the national average of 0.59. The per capita income in Karnali is USD 784, significantly lower than the national average of USD 1160 (Governance Facility, 2018). Agriculture is the primary occupation for most residents, but due to limited economic opportunities within the province, there is a high rate of out-migration as people seek employment and other business opportunities elsewhere.

Socially, Karnali is relatively homogeneous in terms of social and ethnic diversity. It has the highest concentrations of Khas Aryas (61.5%) followed by Dalits (about 23%) and Janajatis (14%). However, women and marginalized groups, including Dalits and Janajatis, face various forms of discrimination and violence. Harmful practices such as chhaupadi, child marriage, caste-based discrimination, and untouchability remain prevalent. Access to basic services like health, education, drinking water, and sanitation is limited due to both geographical challenges and socio-cultural barriers. There are several supply side and demand

[7] Nepal National Framework for LNOB, GoN/NPC, 2023

side hurdles against women and historically excluded groups.in accessing to public services, resources and opportunities.[8]

Inclusive representation in elected institutions remains a significant political issue. In the 2022 election, 37.5% of the members elected to the Karnali Provincial Assembly were women, but none were elected through the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system; all were elected through the proportionate representation (PR) system. The representation of Khas-Arya was disproportionately high at 80%, compared to 10% each for Dalits and Janajatis, which does not reflect their actual population proportions (Khas-Arya 60.96%, Dalits 22.92%, and Janajatis 14.38%) (Nepali et al., 2018). Additionally, there is negligible representation of Madheshi, Muslim, and Tharu populations in the province.

These social, political, economic, and institutional dynamics, along with the challenging geographical landscape, underscore the relevance of implementing the EUSIF project in Karnali Province. The project aims to address these multifaceted issues by enhancing the inclusiveness, functionality, and responsiveness of provincial and local governments, with a particular focus on historically excluded and marginalized groups.

The project document outlines the gaps and issues to be addressed, particularly in relation to Nepal's Provincial and Local Government (PLG) systems under the federalization process. Below is a summary of these gaps, issues, and how they are treated within the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and results chain:

Identified Gaps and Issues:

Institutional and Organizational Capacity of PLGs:

- The project document identifies the need to enhance the capacity of Provincial Centres for Good Governance (PCGGs) in terms of inclusive service delivery and adaptive capacity.
- PLGs struggle with absorption capacity, coordination, and weak performance management systems, especially regarding basic service delivery and inclusiveness.
- There is a notable gap in **monitoring and evaluation systems**, preventing effective feedback loops to improve governance and decision-making.

Weakness in Deliberative Processes:

- PLGs need to improve internal deliberative mechanisms, especially to include marginalized groups such as women and disadvantaged populations.
- The challenge is for PLGs to balance technical and functional improvements with **social inclusion and participatory governance**, requiring shifts in values and mindsets that are currently limited by the bureaucratic legacy of a unitary system.

Federalization Transition:

- The transition from a unitary state to federalism is incomplete and faces delays, particularly in areas like **fiscal federalism**, intergovernmental coordination, and the establishment of clear legal frameworks and roles at different levels of government.
- Limited **capacity for revenue generation** is hindering local governments' ability to finance development and service delivery effectively.

[8] Federal Nepal: The provinces Socio-cultural Profiles of the Seven Provinces, Governance Facility (GF), 2018.

Trust and Engagement:

- There is a noted lack of trust between citizens, especially marginalized communities, and the newly established local governments. This limits the effectiveness of PLG institutions, as people are not fully engaged in governance processes.
- **Empowerment of marginalized groups** and increasing their voice in decision-making is another major gap.

2.6. Related Legal Framework

The main framework relevant for the EUSIF initiative includes the following:

- Constitution of Nepal, 2015
- Local government operation Act, 2017
- Inter-governmental Fiscal Management Act, 2017
- Sustainable Development Goals Nepal (context specific goals and indicators developed for Nepal)
- Local Government Planning Guideline, 2022
- 15th Periodic Plan of Nepal (2019 -2024)
- 16th Periodic Plan of Nepal (2024-2029)
- Sectoral Act prepared by respective Local government as per need

As a special note, the constitutions of Nepal under the Article 57 mentions that "the exclusive powers of the Local level shall be vested in the matters enumerated in Schedule-8, and such powers shall be exercised pursuant to this Constitution and the law made by the Village Assembly or Municipal Assembly". Under the exclusive power mentioned in schedule-8, the federal and provincial level governments have been implementing similar activities up to local level which resulted in duplication and misuse of resources.

On the other hand, the federal government claims that Article 235 (Coordination between Federation, State and Local Level) of the Constitution of Nepal is the fundamental source of law that establishes functional relations between federal and the local government. Similarly, article 285 (3) (Constitution of government service: The State Council of Ministers, Village Executives and Municipal Executives may by law constitute and operate various government services as required for the operation of their administration), of the constitution and the Local Government Operation Act (2017), on the other hand, seem to offer an unprecedented scale of autonomy to local governments. This contradictory statutory provision has a negative implication on the performance of tasks and duties of local government.

Nepal has made several national and international commitments to **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)**. Internationally it has demonstrated commitments by signing several international human rights instruments including CEDAW, ICERD, ILO Conventions 169, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD). UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Agenda 2030 on SDGs, with a pledge to “leave No One Behind”. At national level, the Constitution of Nepal (2015) is the main document that envisions to ensure equity, equality, prosperity, and social justice. The Constitution has committed to ending all forms of discrimination based on caste, class, region, religion, language, and gender and protecting the rights of women, poor, vulnerable and excluded groups through the provisions of Right to Equality, Right of Women, Right of Dalit, Rights against Untouchability and Discrimination, and Right to Social Justice and also the representation of women and marginalized groups in the three tiers’ of the governance systems. The Local Governance Operation Act (LGOA) 2074 is another important legal document that arranges provisions to deliver quality, efficient and inclusive services to citizens by ensuring their participation, accountability, and transparency. It has guaranteed gender equality and social inclusion in LGs

functions, duties, and rights. LGOA has a special provision for ensuring participation of women and marginalized groups in planning processes, emphasizing formulation of plans and programmes directly benefitting women, children and marginalised groups, region, and community. It also emphasizes the role of Ward to maintain GESI disaggregated data management system for formulation of informed policies and programmes.[9] The National Gender Equality Policy 2021, Karnali Province Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy, 2078, 29 points of the Karnali Declaration (supported by EUSIF and other organizations) and several other policies and guidelines and institutional mechanisms are also creating an enabling environment for advancing gender equality and social inclusion.

[9] EUSIF GESI Strategy, 2022

3. Evaluation Scope and Objectives

3.1. Evaluation Scope

The evaluation assessed the EUSIF project's progress against the Project Document, targets stipulated in the Result and Resources Framework and the achieved results from 1 January 2022 to May 2024, as well as proposed forward looking and actionable programmatic recommendations. The evaluation was based on a desk review of project related documents and in-depth interviews as outlined in the methodology section. The evaluation also documented achievements, good practices, success stories, lessons learned or transferable examples. Based on the achievements to date, the evaluation assessed the project using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria on (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; (d) sustainability (e) impact; (f) coherence and cross-cutting issues including gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) its human rights-based approach and approach to Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID). It is important to note that the criteria were not applied mechanically, but rather deeply contextualized – in order to support a high quality and useful evaluation. Such an approach also follows the OECD guidelines for evaluation criteria.

It covers activities and outcomes at multiple governance levels - federal, provincial, and local - with a particular focus on Karnali Province and selected local governments that have directly benefited from the project.

3.2. Evaluation Objectives

The overall objectives of the present independent evaluation are twofold: 1) to provide a comprehensive independent assessment of EUSIF project performance, implementation strategies and to document the success and draw out lessons for deepening impact and; 2) to provide (forward-looking and actionable) recommendations to inform the realignments in scope and approach in line with the project's desired outcome as well as future designing of UNDP's work on inclusive federalism in Nepal.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are as to:

- To assess the rationale and appropriateness of the additional technical assistance by using OECD-DAC evaluation criteria in terms of its modality, approaches, structure, complementarity to the flagship programme PLGSP, implementation arrangement and adequacy in contributing to achieve the key results in line with the Theory of Change.
- To analyze EUSIF's contribution on promoting human rights, mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion, anti-corruption/accountability, and environmental sustainability/GRID approach in provincial and local government's planning.
- To measure the project's contribution and synergies with other programmes/projects on capacity building, citizen engagement and promoting inter-governmental relations for implementation of federalism, to review and assess the risks and opportunities, document key results, learnings, good practices and innovations; and recommend potential areas for future interventions in Karnali as well as other provinces considering the current federalism contexts.
- To assess the project through the Gender result effectiveness scale (GRES) methodology.

3.3. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The final evaluation adopted the six revised evaluation criteria by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. Human Rights, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Transparency and Accountability, and environmental sustainability and resilience including GRID approach are also included as additional cross-cutting criteria. The evaluation addresses the following main questions:

- To what extent has EUSIF achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives? What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and sustainability of the results?
- To what extent was the EUSIF relevant and effective in strengthening the inclusiveness and responsiveness of PLGs to deliver inclusive, good quality and sustainable basic services in the federal context?
- To what extent has the project mainstreamed GESI and human rights aspects in PLGs' system and service delivery mechanisms?
- What are the key considerations to be taken into account while developing new or scaling up similar interventions?

The guiding evaluation questions have further been refined during the preparation of the Inception Report and have been broken down per criteria as given in **Annex V**.

4. Evaluation Approach and Methods

4.1 Methodological approaches and steps

The evaluation was guided by the basic methodology as set out in the ToR, in line with the UNEG and OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Evaluation and keeping in mind the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The evaluation was multi-faceted, and the methodological approaches used were participatory, utilization-focused and most significant change for meeting the evaluation's needs. The mixed (qualitative and quantitative) methods were used as the best vehicle for data collection. The consultant ensured that the evaluation was conducted through a participatory and consultative process, which included all relevant national and regional stakeholders and the project beneficiaries, using predominantly the participatory evaluation methodological approach[10].

To this end, a total of 83 stakeholders and beneficiaries were consulted during the course of the evaluation in interview meetings and 4 focus group discussions. Participants included the project and programme team, UNDP senior management, representatives of the donor and other development partners (EU, Kingdom of Norway, UK FCDO), national counterparts, civil society organizations, academia and beneficiaries. Apart from interviews with the project team members themselves, all other interviews were conducted independently from the project team, i.e. without the presence of project team members. A total of 33 women and 50 men were consulted. A full list of stakeholders and community members who were

[10] As noted by the IEO, this is an evaluation practice with a new level of sensitivity, where concepts such as participation and stakeholder perspective and involvement are increasingly present and their importance is recognized when effects and results are assessed in, or attributed to, specific social change efforts. In addition, the evaluators used elements of the attribution/contribution method which includes comparing a situation with intervention against another without intervention (also called control).

consulted is provided in **Annex II**, including the organization, institution or community that they represented. The evaluator followed an informed consent protocol in data collection, further presented under **Annex VI**.

The methodological approach was synthesized into an Evaluation Matrix (see **Annex III**), which guided the Evaluation and provided an analytical framework for conducting the evaluation. The evaluation matrix sets out the relevant evaluation criteria, key questions and sub-questions, data sources, data collection methods/tools, indicators and methods for data analysis. The evaluation matrix was divided into each of the evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Within the effectiveness criteria, each of the project's results are individually scrutinized and analysed.

The evaluation's principal guide was the project document for the EUSIF project. While it is usual to rely heavily on the Results and Resources Framework (RRF) containing the project's log frame and M&E framework, which should contain indicators, targets and "means of verification" (i.e. data and documents) for the project's outputs, due to the fact that the latest updated RRF was from 31.12.2023., the Evaluation looked beyond the RRF when possible in order to assess and measure results.

The consultants identified a cross-section of data sources in order to optimize data collection and ensure triangulation. A large focus of the evaluation was on obtaining qualitative data through interviews and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries, as per the consultation list at **Annex II**.

The consultants conducted as many interviews as possible, in order to ensure the integrity and the comprehensiveness of the evaluation. Wherever possible data gathered, both qualitatively and quantitatively was triangulated, through cross verification from two or more sources. For interviews, this was done through posing a similar set of questions to multiple interviewees. For the document review it was accomplished through crosschecking data and information from multiple sources to increase the credibility and validity of the material. Draft Informant Guides are provided in **Annex VI**, which provide an indication and outline as to the set of questions that were asked of each group of stakeholders. Additional questions are provided in the Evaluation Matrix (**Annex III**).

The evaluation was conducted in a non-linear, sequential methodology consisting of three main phases – desk research, document review and Inception Report; virtual data collection, analysis and validation; and drafting, revision and finalization of the report.

4.2 Data collection methods:

The final evaluation of the EUSIF project employed a comprehensive approach to data collection, combining both primary and secondary sources to ensure a robust evaluation process. Various methods and instruments were used to gather qualitative and quantitative data, allowing for a well-rounded assessment of the project's achievements and challenges.

(a) Desk Research and Document Review:

The evaluation team conducted a thorough review of project-related documents, including the **project document**, **results framework**, **annual progress reports**, and **other relevant knowledge products**. This ongoing document review provided key insights into the project's goals, progress, and contextual challenges. The review helped validate preliminary findings and ensured that data were cross-referenced and fact-checked, using a standardized analytical tool aligned with the evaluation matrix and criteria.

(b) Financial Analysis:

A financial analysis was conducted to evaluate the project's efficiency, assessing financial reports to measure the cost-effectiveness of the project implementation. This analysis helped determine how effectively the resources were allocated and utilized in achieving project objectives.

(c) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

The evaluation team conducted structured and semi-structured interviews with key project stakeholders, including government officials, representatives from partner organizations, and local communities. Focus group discussions were held to further assess inclusiveness in the project's implementation. These discussions provided first-hand qualitative data on the project's impact and performance, particularly from marginalized groups such as women and Dalits.

(d) Project Monitoring Data:

Project monitoring data, including results from the Progress Against Results Framework and other M&E reports, were thoroughly analyzed to gauge the project's progress. This data was triangulated with qualitative insights from KIIs and FGDs to verify and assess the validity of the project's achievements. Quantitative data from monitoring reports was crucial in assessing whether the project met its key targets, such as improving the inclusiveness of governance and service delivery.

These methods combined to ensure that the evaluation findings were grounded in reliable data and were reflective of both the operational context and the project's strategic goals.

(e) GRES methodology

The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) aspect was considered in terms of participation, decision making and project benefits distribution. Regarding empowerment of women, awareness raising, capacity development including women's leadership development etc. these were considered during the evaluation process. While doing so, it was assessed against the GESI related project indicators set during the project design. Under the cross-cutting themes, GESI related evaluation questions were included substantially which refer to GEEW. Fundamentally, the questions were focused on (i) GESI considerations at project design, implementation and monitoring connecting it with process (participation and decision making) and outcomes (distribution of project benefits) and (ii) four result areas of the project. In addition, diversified individuals and organizations were consulted during the evaluation considering the GESI perspectives as well. The GESI-specific outcomes and impacts generated by the project were assessed by utilizing the Gender Result Effectiveness Scale (GRES) and rated accordingly.

4.3. Data sources

4.3.1. Data sources for Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection

In the final evaluation of the EUSIF project, a combination of **qualitative and quantitative data collection methods** was used to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the project. The data collection methods and instruments aimed to capture a broad range of insights and evidence from both primary and secondary sources. The evaluation covered the full scope of the EUSIF, including the full implementation period i.e.

January 2022 to the time of evaluation, and targeted geographic coverage, including at federal government, Karnali province and selected local governments benefitting from the services provided by EUSIF.

Primary Data Sources:

1. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**: A total of 83 key informants were interviewed, including representatives from federal, provincial, and local governments, UNDP, the EU, civil society organizations, academia, and community members. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility to explore key themes and project-specific insights. Special attention was given to gender, with 33 women (40%) and 50 men (60%) being interviewed. This ensured a balanced perspective on the project's inclusiveness and responsiveness to gender-specific needs.

2. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**: In addition to KIIs, four FGDs were conducted, offering a platform for beneficiaries and stakeholders to discuss the project's outcomes and challenges. The FGDs helped in triangulating information gathered from interviews and provided a forum for in-depth discussion on the impact of the project at the community level. GESI related questions were intentionally asked to gather in-depth impact of the project to the most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

3. **Field Visits**: The evaluation team conducted field visits to **EUSIF working Palikas (Chaurjhari, Panchapuri, Dullu)** and comparative field visits to other Palikas (Bangad Kupinde, Simta, Bahairavi). These visits allowed the evaluators to observe the project's outcomes on the ground and gather first-hand feedback from the communities on inclusiveness and equal access of the public services delivered by the local governments.

Secondary Data Sources:

1. **Desk Review**: A detailed desk review of over 93 project documents, progress reports, board meeting minutes, and policy papers was conducted. The document review included a particular focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) related data, drawn from the project's reports and external sources. The documents were systematically analyzed using an evaluation matrix to ensure they aligned with the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria.

2. **Financial Analysis**: A financial analysis was conducted to evaluate the efficiency of the project. Financial reports and project documentation were reviewed to assess the cost-effectiveness of the interventions and the utilization of resources.

3. **Project Monitoring Data**: The evaluation analyzed project monitoring data, including data from the Progress Against Results Framework, which provided quantitative insights into key performance indicators. Monitoring data were cross-referenced with qualitative information gathered from KIIs and FGDs to ensure consistency and validation of findings.

4.3.2 Sampling Methods

A **purposive sampling approach** was used to ensure diversity and representation across geographical areas, gender, and stakeholder groups. Special attention was given to including participants from both project and non-project areas to provide a comparative perspective on the project's effectiveness. The evaluation sought to include voices from marginalized communities, such as women, Dalits, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), ensuring that the most vulnerable groups were represented in the sample.

4.3.3 Data Triangulation and Analysis

The evaluation employed **data triangulation** to validate findings, cross-referencing information from multiple data sources and methodologies. This included triangulating qualitative insights from interviews and FGDs with quantitative data from the project's monitoring systems and financial reports. This approach helped ensure the reliability and validity of the evaluation's conclusions.

The final evaluation leveraged both primary and secondary data sources to provide a holistic understanding of the project's impact, effectiveness, and sustainability, with a strong emphasis on gender inclusiveness and representation of marginalized groups.

The geographical scope (including at federal government, Karnali province, selected local governments benefitting from the services provided by EUSIF as well as comparators) of the evaluation was agreed upon with the Country Office in discussion of the Inception Report. With support from the Country Office, the Evaluation ensured that all relevant stakeholders were included in the data gathering process, as well as M&E officers

As noted, the Evaluation used a purposive sampling approach. The Evaluation consulted with the project team to develop and refine a list of potential key informants to participate in the interviews and FGDs. This included efforts to also ensure female participants, as well as efforts to ensure that all geographical locations where the project is implemented were represented. In addition, the Evaluation consulted locations where the project was not implemented as comparators- (i) Field visit to EUSIF working Paliks (Chaurjhari, Panchapuri, Dullu); and (ii) Field visit to other Palikas (Bangad Kupinde, Simta, Bahairavi).

The sampling approach was purposive due to the scale of the evaluation, but criteria considered the following contextual and operational factors as appropriate: (i) Geographically proportional; (ii) Gender of participants; (iii) Sensitivity to the inclusion of diversity of participants; (iv) A balance of different levels and types of engagement with the project; and (v) Socio-economic diversity.

In evaluating the EUSIF project, the assessment drew on a variety of **project monitoring data sources** provided by the project team, ensuring a detailed and rigorous review. The evaluators utilized information from progress reports, board meeting minutes, and surveys to verify the project's implementation and its alignment with the results framework. For instance, the "Progress against Result Framework" report tracks indicators such as the number of people from marginalized groups participating in decision-making processes, reflecting progress toward inclusivity goals. Similarly, minutes from the 2nd Project Executive Board (PEB) meeting documented strategic discussions and highlighted risk mitigation actions, ensuring that any deviations from the original plan were properly addressed. Furthermore, risk management tools, such as the risk logs discussed in the 3rd PEB meeting, identified key issues and laid out specific mitigation strategies.

Moreover, empirical evidence was drawn from survey data to support the evaluation of community engagement and inclusiveness. The Post-Annual Planning Survey Report offers granular insights into participation levels and perceptions of planning processes in several municipalities. The survey findings confirmed a high level of participation, especially among marginalized groups, and provided a clear indication of the local community's involvement in decision-making. For example, 75% of respondents reported being able to raise their needs during settlement-level planning events, directly correlating with the

project's aim to enhance inclusiveness. These detailed data sources not only supported the project's outcome claims but also validated that EUSIF's interventions were grounded in the realities of local governance, participation, and capacity building.

4.3. Methodological Limitations and Attribution of Results

4.3.1. Deviations from the proposed Methodology

There were no significant deviations from the evaluation methodology. The evaluation was conducted as planned, with a thorough assessment of the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and coherence. However, it is important to note that the project spanned across two Country Program Documents (CPDs). As a result, some of the outcome-level data from the original project design are no longer being tracked at that level, which posed challenges in evaluating these specific outcomes. Additionally, the project is yet to conduct a specific survey and comparative analysis, which are crucial for assessing the achievement of some indicators. Consequently, these indicators were not evaluated at this point due to the lack of data. Despite these minor challenges, the overall evaluation adhered closely to the planned methodology and provided a comprehensive assessment of the project's performance.

4.3.2. Challenges and Limitations of the Evaluation

There were several challenges and limitations confronting the evaluation. A challenge, which is frequently faced during evaluations relates to biases. Each bias and the corresponding mitigation efforts are described below.

***Recall bias*:** The EUSIF Project has conducted many activities to date, and it is quite possible that key informants may not accurately remember particular specific EUSIF project intervention activities. A similar problem is that participants in multiple UN or other donor/partner supported activities may have blended their experiences into a composite memory or response and, subsequently, did not distinguish between them as separate activities in their responses.

The consultants mitigated this bias primarily through a semi-structured interview protocol that called for questioning about specific activities; through gentle reminders and nudging about the activities of the EUSIF project. Triangulation of data also mitigated this bias.

***Response bias*:** Informants may have given the consultants positive remarks about the project because they would like to stay involved with the intervention in the future and they think that a negative evaluation could mean the end of project opportunities.

The Evaluation adopted two main strategies for mitigating this bias. First, it reiterated for each informant the maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity and then explained the evaluation's independence from both UNDP and the project. Second, as with recall bias, questions designed to elicit specific examples helped to identify response bias.

***Selection bias*:** Beneficiaries provided by UNDP and its partners could mean that the consultants hear only from people who had positive experiences. As with the other forms of bias, multiple sources of data and questions eliciting specific examples help to mitigate the risk of this bias.

Finally, are the limitations of available data and information. In order to track progress towards the outcomes and outputs, the Evaluation required data, information and statistics from the project. It is frequently

challenging to obtain data and what exists is often not disaggregated. To mitigate this, the Evaluation endeavored to collect as much data – both qualitative and quantitative - as possible during the data collection phase and from the documents made available by UNDP. However, challenges with the project's updated RRF limited the quantitative data that was available to the Evaluation.

4.3.3. Attribution of Results

In the complex development context in Nepal, it is difficult for the Evaluation to attribute the observed results solely to the project. This is partly because of the number of stakeholders involved, partly because of other exogenous factors, and partly because of the complex nature of the project itself, being a support structure for a greater government program. For this reason, the Evaluation adopted a contribution approach, which does not firmly establish causality but rather seeks to achieve a plausible association by analysing the project's ToC and results framework, documenting the project's successes and value added, applying the "before and after" criterion, i.e. what exists now that did not exist before and what has changed since the start of the project, and through considering the counterfactual – what would have happened without the EUSIF project.

4.4. Evaluation team

The evaluation team was comprised of three experts – a team leader, a GESI expert and a governance expert. The evaluation team was well-composed with a balanced mix of technical skills, gender diversity, and geographical representation. Dr. Olivera Puric, as the Team Leader, brought extensive international experience including past experience in working in UNDP, and methodological expertise. Mr. Tej Sunar contributed specialized knowledge in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Nepal, essential for evaluating the project's impact on marginalized groups. Dr. Pratap Chhatkuli provided deep insights into governance issues, particularly within the Nepali context.

This diverse team composition ensured that the evaluation could comprehensively address the project's multifaceted objectives and challenges. The inclusion of both male and female experts promoted gender balance, and the combination of international and local expertise enhanced the relevance and accuracy of the evaluation findings. The team's geographical representation, with members familiar with the local context and international best practices, further strengthened the evaluation's credibility.

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Analytical methods

In order to analysis the collected data, the following analytical methods were applied:

Political Economy Analysis

A political economy analysis helped the Evaluation to understand who seeks to gain and lose from the project's interventions, as well as to identify who has vested interests and the social and cultural norms that need to be taken into account.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

Most of the primary data collection methods (interviews and FGDs) collected qualitative data. These were analysed using a code structure, which was aligned to the key evaluation questions, sub-questions and indicators. The qualitative data from the primary data collection methods was cross-referenced with other sources such as documents.

Triangulation

Triangulation is the process of using multiple data sources, data collection methods, and/or theories to validate research findings. The Evaluation used more than one approach (data collection method) to address the evaluation questions in order to reduce the risk of bias and increase the chances of detecting errors or anomalies. The Evaluation applied three approaches to triangulation: methods triangulation (checking the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods); interrogating data where diverging results arise; and analyst triangulation (discussion and validation of findings, allowing for a consistent approach to interpretive analysis).

Data Synthesis

The process of bringing all the evidence together to synthesize the data and formulate findings and conclusions took place in two ways. The first was the process of articulating the key findings and cross-checking the strength of the evidence for each. Based on this, the conclusions were then developed and cross-checked for their relevance to the findings.

Verification and Validation

The above steps incorporate verification and validation of evidence during the data collection and data analysis processes. In addition, the Evaluation presented its preliminary findings and recommendations at an evaluation de-brief held with the project team and the draft report was shared widely amongst the project team and other key stakeholders, allowing for review and comments. These processes provided an opportunity to share key findings, offer mutual challenges, and discuss the feasibility of and receptiveness to draft recommendations. It also provided an important opportunity to foster buy-in to the evaluation process particularly for the stakeholders who will have responsibility for implementing recommendations.

6. Findings

This chapter presents the analysis, and findings of the Evaluation grouped around each of the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting issues and based on the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected. Each of the key evaluation questions is answered and the analysis and findings are also informed by the guiding questions provided in the ToR. The final guiding questions are provided at **Annex V**.

6.1. Relevance

The relevance of the European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF) project is evaluated based on its alignment with the stated objectives, its coherence with national and international strategies, and its responsiveness to the needs of its beneficiaries. This section provides a comprehensive review of the project design's appropriateness in relation to these factors. The evaluation considers how well the project aligns with the Government of Nepal's (GoN) strategies, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD). Additionally, it examines the project's responsiveness to the specific needs of provincial and local governments and marginalized communities. The findings highlight the project's strategic alignment, integration with broader frameworks, and its impact on beneficiary needs.

Finding 6.1.1: Alignment with Government Strategies and Policies

The EUSIF project has demonstrated a strong alignment with the Government of Nepal's priorities and strategies, particularly those focused on institutionalizing federalism and promoting inclusive governance. The project's design is intricately linked with the Fifteenth Development Plan of Nepal, Nepal's National Sustainable Development Goals and Priorities, PLGSP goal and objectives, EU Agenda for Change in Nepal, UNDP global Strategic Plan 2022-2025, which underscore the need for strengthening provincial and local governments (PLGs) to ensure effective service delivery and governance. EUSIF's initiatives, such as the establishment of secretariat of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University, are designed to foster collaborative research and evidence-based policymaking, directly supporting the objectives of the provincial government.

Furthermore, the PG has incorporated EUSIF activities in its priorities. The project's activities have been integrated into the provincial and local government's annual policy and program documents[11], reflecting a high degree of provincial and local government ownership and commitment. This alignment has been pivotal in ensuring that the project's outputs are not only relevant but also sustainable in the long term, as they are embedded within the provincial and local government's strategic frameworks. The endorsement of the Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) by three local governments for the first time is a testament to the project's impact on local governance structures.

A critical aspect of EUSIF's alignment is its complementarity to the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP). PLGSP is a national program aimed at supporting the implementation of federalism in Nepal by enhancing the capacity of provincial and local governments to deliver inclusive, accountable, and effective services. By providing complementary technical assistance, EUSIF supports the PLGSP's objectives, ensuring that provincial and local governments are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and systems to fulfill their mandates effectively. This alignment not only strengthens the

[11] Such as Badi Community Targeted Program (income generation, skills development, seed money etc.) and Badi Targeted Program Guideline by PG as reported by Badi Sarokar Manch's Chair.

institutional framework for federalism but also ensures that the project's interventions are relevant and supportive of broader national goals.

The project's alignment extends to sector-specific strategies, particularly those related to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). By prioritizing GESI in its planning and implementation processes, EUSIF has ensured that its activities are inclusive and equitable, addressing the needs of marginalized groups. This is evident from the increased participation in local governance processes and the enhanced budget allocations for GESI initiatives across multiple fiscal years.[12]

Moreover, EUSIF's alignment with national strategies is reinforced through its collaboration with various federal ministries, such as the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) and sectoral ministries in Karnali Province. This collaboration ensures that the project's objectives are consistent with national policies and contribute to the broader goals of federalism and decentralized governance. The alignment with these strategies has not only enhanced the project's relevance but also its effectiveness in achieving sustainable governance outcomes.

There is need for greater cooperation and collaboration – the one that goes beyond the exchange of information - we need a platform for dialogue of basic principles of federalism.

- *As testified by an interviewee*

Finding 6.1.2: Integration with UN/UNDP and EU Strategic Frameworks

Apart from being complementary with the PLGSP, the EUSIF project was designed to complement the UNDP's Global Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and the UNDAF and CPD (2018-2022)[13]. By aligning with these strategic frameworks, EUSIF contributes to the broader goals of sustainable development, particularly in the context of good governance and institutional strengthening. The project's focus on SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, underscores its commitment to integrating gender perspectives into governance processes[14].

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[12] Please refer to Finding 1.1 under the Effectiveness section of Result 1 (6.3.1) for further details and respective data.

[13] **UNDAF/UNDP Nepal CPD (2023-2027) Outcome and Outputs:**
Outcome 2: By 2027, more people, especially women, youth, and the most marginalized and poor increasingly participate in and benefit from coordinated, inclusive, participatory, transparent, and gender-responsive governance, access tojustice, and human rights at federal, provincial, and local levels.
CPD Output 2.1: Inclusive and participatory policies, processes, and systems strengthened for implementation of federalism at three levels of government.
CPD Output 2.3: Improved mechanisms for promoting transparency and publicparticipation.

[14] The EUSIF project aligns with several targets and indicators under **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Gender Equality**, specifically focusing on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The following SDG 5 targets are relevant:
SDG Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere.
EUSIF's focus on **inclusive governance** and ensuring that women, particularly from marginalized communities, actively participate in decision-making processes directly supports this target. For example, the project's capacity development workshops for Deputy Mayors, most of whom are women, emphasize gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and promote inclusive governance. The **Karnali Declaration**, drafted during these workshops, specifically addresses gender-based violence and inclusion.

In addition to aligning with UNDP strategies, EUSIF is well-integrated with the European Union's Agenda for Change in Nepal. The EU's focus on promoting inclusive and accountable governance resonates with EUSIF's objectives of strengthening provincial and local government systems to be more responsive to the needs of all citizens, particularly marginalized groups. This integration ensures that the project benefits from the synergies of both UNDP and EU frameworks, enhancing its overall impact and sustainability.

The project's Theory of Change (ToC) reflects this integration by outlining clear pathways through which EUSIF aims to achieve its objectives. The ToC emphasizes the importance of building inclusive governance systems that can adapt to changing needs and contexts. This approach is evident in the project's implementation strategies, which include demand-based activities, piloting, learning, scaling, and sustainability measures. By adopting these strategies, EUSIF ensures that its interventions are not only aligned with strategic frameworks but are also flexible and adaptive to local realities.

Finding 6.1.3: Responsiveness to Beneficiary Needs

One of the key strengths of the EUSIF project is its responsiveness to the needs of its beneficiaries, including provincial and local governments (PLGs) and marginalized communities. The project has adopted a demand-based and adaptive approach, ensuring that its activities are tailored to the specific needs and priorities of these groups. This approach is evident in the project's extensive consultations with local stakeholders, which have informed the design and implementation of its interventions.

EUSIF's focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a critical aspect of its responsiveness. The project has implemented various strategies to ensure that GESI considerations are integrated into all aspects of its work. This includes training and capacity-building activities for local government officials and members of community-based organizations, as well as inclusive planning and budgeting processes. The increased participation of women and marginalized groups in these processes is a clear indicator of the project's effectiveness in addressing their needs.

The project's innovative methodologies, such as the use of simulation and role play in training sessions, have been particularly effective in enhancing the capacity of local government officials and community members. These methodologies have not only improved participants' understanding of inclusive governance but have also fostered a sense of ownership and accountability. The BSD Mapping, cross learning visit, establishment of the One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) mechanisms in three local governments and Office Automation System (OAS) are notable achievements, ensuring efficient and accessible services for all citizens.

SDG Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.
EUSIF has actively promoted women's leadership in local governance. For example, the project supported transformative leadership training, where **58% of the participants were women**. The training aimed to strengthen women's leadership at local government levels, ensuring their active involvement in local governance and decision-making.
SDG Target 5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality.
EUSIF's efforts to mainstream **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)** across its activities, particularly through the development of **GESI strategies** in five Model Palikas, align with this target. The GESI-sensitive policies and guidelines, including those for gender-responsive budgeting and monitoring, demonstrate how the project fosters institutional changes that promote gender equality at the local government level.
These efforts, evidenced in project reports and achievements, demonstrate how the EUSIF project contributes to advancing gender equality in governance, decision-making, and policy implementation at the provincial and local levels.

Moreover, EUSIF has been responsive to the evolving needs of its beneficiaries by adapting its activities and approaches as required. For instance, the project has developed and implemented guidelines for various aspects of local governance, including the MTEF and GESI-sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems, O&M survey, induction training manuals, etc. These guidelines have been instrumental in standardizing practices and ensuring that governance processes are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all citizens, supporting informed decision making.

The project's responsiveness is also reflected in its ability to address the specific challenges faced by marginalized communities. The socio-economic status study of the Badi community, for example, has informed targeted interventions that have significantly improved their access to services and resources. By continuously engaging with local stakeholders and adapting its strategies, EUSIF has ensured that its interventions remain relevant and effective in meeting the needs of its beneficiaries.

6.2. Efficiency

The efficiency of the EUSIF project is evaluated based on the cost-efficiency of its interventions, the quality and timeliness of resource use, and the overall effectiveness of its management and governance structures. The following four findings provide a detailed assessment of these factors, highlighting key achievements and areas for improvement.

Finding 6.2.1: EUSIF Achieved Significant Progress with Cost-Efficient and Accelerated Processes

EUSIF has demonstrated a strong commitment to cost-efficiency in its interventions, as evidenced by the strategic allocation and utilization of resources. The project was designed with a budget of €2 million, and by March 2024, 75% of the total project budget had been utilized. By August 2024, the delivery figure rose to approximately 87%[15] (please see **Annex VII** for a more detailed breakdown of delivery data according to available information).

Variances Between Planned and Actual Expenditures:

The annual and quarterly progress reports provide detailed breakdowns of the planned versus actual expenditures for each result area, which help to illustrate variances across financial years. For example, in the **Q1 2023 report**, expenditures for Result Area 1 (Inclusiveness and Basic Service Delivery) were 43% of the planned budget, while Result Area 2 (Data Management) had a much lower delivery rate at 23%. Conversely, Result Areas 3 and 4, focused on capacity building and advocacy, had higher expenditure rates of 57% and 66%, respectively. This suggests that certain activities, particularly those related to infrastructure and system development, faced delays or were slower to implement, leading to under-expenditure in some areas.

In **2022**, similar trends were observed, where certain areas such as Result Area 2 (PLG data management systems) experienced slower progress, largely due to technical delays in system integration and policy alignment challenges. This is reflected in the lower actual expenditures compared to the planned budget for this area. By contrast, expenditures in capacity-building initiatives, particularly in supporting Provincial Centres for Good Governance (PCGG), were closer to target.

[15] According to data from UNDP's Transparency Portal, retrieved on August 10, 2024.

Financial Efficiency and Management Processes:

The financial management of the project demonstrated a clear alignment with UNDP's financial protocols, ensuring that expenditures were carefully tracked and aligned with project goals. However, some challenges in budget utilization were noted, particularly related to **operational delays** and **technical constraints** in rolling out certain systems, such as the Project Information Management System (PIMS). While the system's development is crucial for the project's data management objectives, delays in its operationalization led to variances in financial performance across years.

Furthermore, the efficiency of the financial management processes is reflected in the project's adherence to **monitoring and reporting protocols**. Quarterly financial reporting allowed the project to adjust allocations based on the progress of activities. However, despite these adjustments, under-expenditure in some areas signals a need for improved forecasting and contingency planning for a similar future project.

Also to note, there are slight discrepancies between financial data provided in progress reports compared to data reflected on the Transparency Portal. However, the progress reports clearly provide indicative data, subject to change once all financial books are closed annually and all expenditure duly processed.

Despite this, the project has managed to achieve significant progress in its key result areas, indicating a high level of cost-efficiency. For example, the Project Information Management System (PIMS), which has been a cornerstone of EUSIF's data management efforts, recorded 50,000 views on its website and was utilized by multiple organizations for coordination purposes, reflecting a significant return on investment. More importantly, PIMS contributed to enhanced data-driven decision-making processes. For example, PIMS contributed to organizing, storing and accessing planning and budgetary information at the provincial and local levels, it was continuously updated with socio-economic profiles and disaster-related information, contributing to improved governance and responsiveness of local governments, gender-responsive budget allocations and GESI disaggregated data was integrated into PIMS, showing its utility in tracking and reporting gender and social inclusion related information, etc.

Moreover, the project has minimized costs through innovative measures, such as the implementation of the Capacity Development Management Information System (CDMIS) for the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA) used to organize, conduct and complete training and orientation to provincial and local governments in different areas. The CDMIS is also being used in generating certificates in bulk and preparing training completion reports online, which has reduced the cost of printing training certificates by 93%, demonstrating EUSIF's ability to enhance efficiency through technology and process optimization, as well as resource sharing and collaboration with other government and non-government organizations. These cost-saving measures have allowed the project to allocate more resources to critical activities and outputs, ensuring that the financial resources are used effectively to achieve the project's objectives. More importantly, the system will be helpful for the PLGs while reviewing/developing capacity development plans and taking informed decisions while providing capacity development opportunities in an equitable manner.

Additionally, EUSIF has accelerated certain processes by leveraging UNDP rules and procedures, given its Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). This approach has been particularly effective for activities requiring rapid execution based on the needs of provincial and local counterparts. By using UNDP's established mechanisms, the project has been able to fast-track the implementation of specific tasks, thereby supporting the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP) in accelerating its

implementation. This has been crucial in areas where local capacities needed immediate enhancement, ensuring timely delivery of outputs and contributing to the overall efficiency of the project.

Finding 6.2.2: EUSIF Maintained High Quality in Resource Use and Service Delivery

EUSIF has maintained a high standard of quality in the execution of its activities. The project has employed rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that its interventions are delivered with precision and meet the expected standards. The establishment of the One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) mechanisms in three local governments, for instance, has been initiated with detailed planning and continuous assessment to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. This approach has not only been improving the quality of services provided to citizens but has also been enhancing the capacity of local governments to manage these services independently.

The project has also focused on building the capacity of local government officials and community-based organizations through various training and capacity-building activities. The training on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), transformative leadership building training to elected representatives focusing to women and marginalized groups and the seven-step planning process has equipped participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement inclusive governance practices. The high quality of these trainings is reflected in the increased participation of women and marginalized groups in the annual planning process and budget allocations for GESI initiatives in multiple fiscal years, demonstrating the project's commitment to delivering quality interventions.

Finding 6.2.3: EUSIF Generally Adhered to Timelines Despite Some Delays

In terms of timeliness, EUSIF has largely adhered to its planned schedules, although there have been some delays in certain activities. For example, the endorsement of the MTEF by local governments was a significant milestone that was achieved on time, reflecting effective project management and coordination. However, challenges such as the frequent turnover of key government staff in the pilot local governments have caused some delays in the adoption of certain deliverables, such as the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) survey report. The project has mitigated these delays by engaging a broader section of staff and maintaining continuous follow-up and lobbying efforts with provincial and local governments.

The project's ability to adapt its activities and timelines in response to these challenges is a testament to its flexible and responsive management approach. EUSIF has continuously monitored the progress of its activities and made necessary adjustments to ensure that critical milestones are achieved within the project period. This adaptive management approach has been crucial in maintaining the overall efficiency of the project despite the encountered challenges. Such changes have been documented through progress reports.

When assessed against achievement of its targets, the project has met or exceeded three out of five of its outcome indicators – with data lacking for two, for which a survey will be conducted at the end of the project. At output/result level, 4 out of 7 indicators have been fully met or exceeded, 1 is in progress, while data is lacking for two indicators (and will be available at the end of the project based on analysis and survey to be conducted at that milestone). It is also important to mention that the project spanned across two CPD periods, with original indicators set by the project, no longer being active. The selection of data sources also influences the overall picture of indicator attainment as data was not available for several indicators at the time of evaluation.

Assessment of SMART Quality of Indicators:

1. **Specific**: The indicators used in the results framework are **generally specific**, clearly defining the outcomes they aim to measure. For example, indicators such as the "Number of marginalized groups utilizing open forums for participation in decision-making processes" provide a clear, actionable target that aligns with the project's inclusivity goals. However, some indicators could benefit from further specificity. For instance, the **institutional reform** indicators (e.g., "Number of PLGs adopting inclusive service delivery systems") could include more precise definitions of what constitutes an "inclusive service delivery system."

2. **Measurable**: Most indicators are measurable through quantitative methods, like attendance sheets and reports on institutional changes. For instance, tracking the "Number of people (especially marginalized groups) utilizing open forums" is straightforward and data is collected via attendance sheets. Nevertheless, some outcome-level indicators, such as "Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive," rely on surveys and perception-based metrics, which can be more subjective and harder to quantify.

3. **Achievable**: The targets set for most indicators seem **achievable** within the project timeline, although certain targets related to institutional changes (such as improving data management systems or developing long-term organizational strategies for Provincial Centres for Good Governance) might be more challenging given the limited project duration.

4. **Relevant**: The indicators are highly **relevant** to the project's objectives, which aim to improve governance, inclusivity, and service delivery. Each indicator links directly to one of the core project goals, such as promoting gender equality or enhancing the capacities of local governments to provide services to marginalized communities.

5. **Time-bound**: Most indicators have clear time frames attached to them, such as specific **milestones for 2023** and cumulative targets for the project's overall duration. This ensures that progress can be tracked over time. However, in some cases, targets for institutional reforms or behavioral changes may need longer timeframes than those allocated within the project, making it difficult to fully measure these impacts before the project's end.

Disaggregation by Gender and Other Vulnerable Groups

The project does well in **disaggregating data by gender** and other vulnerable groups such as **Dalits and people with disabilities (PWDs)**. For example, indicators such as "Number of marginalized groups (women, Dalits, PWDs) utilizing open forums for enhanced participation in decision-making processes" are explicitly broken down by these groups. This ensures that the project is not only measuring overall participation but also focusing on how different vulnerable groups are engaging.

However, some institutional indicators, such as those measuring the adoption of inclusive governance mechanisms, could benefit from additional disaggregation. While it is essential to know how many local governments have adopted such mechanisms, it would be even more insightful to measure the **impact** of

these mechanisms on specific groups, such as women and Dalits, to ensure that they are being reached equitably.

Please see the **Annex IV** for a comprehensive overview of progress towards indicators.

Finding 6.2.4: EUSIF Demonstrated Effective and Adaptive Resource Management

The management and governance structures of EUSIF have been designed to support timely and efficient implementation of project activities. The project has established clear lines of communication and coordination among various stakeholders, including federal ministries, provincial governments, local governments, and development partners. This collaborative approach has facilitated the smooth execution of activities and has minimized overlaps and duplications, ensuring that resources are used efficiently.

The project has also adopted a participatory approach to management, involving stakeholders at all levels in decision-making processes. This has not only enhanced local ownership and accountability but has also ensured that the interventions are relevant and responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries. The establishment of task teams and technical committees has further strengthened the project's capacity to address challenges promptly and effectively, thereby maintaining the efficiency of its operations. Beneficiaries have even expressed needs at Project Board meetings, as recorded by the minutes.

By the end of this evaluation (August 2024), 13% of the total project budget remained unspent, according to data from the UNDP Transparency Portal, indicating a cautious approach to resource utilization. This unspent balance can be attributed to the project's emphasis on adaptive management and the need to respond to evolving contexts and needs. EUSIF's ability to adapt its activities and resource allocation based on ongoing assessments and feedback has been a key factor in maintaining its efficiency.

In conclusion, the EUSIF project has demonstrated a high level of efficiency in its interventions. Through strategic resource allocation, rigorous monitoring and evaluation, and effective management structures, the project has ensured that its activities are delivered cost-efficiently and with high quality. While some challenges have been encountered, the project's adaptive and collaborative approach has enabled it to mitigate these challenges and maintain its focus on achieving its objectives. The remaining unutilized resources provide an opportunity for EUSIF to continue its efforts in strengthening inclusive federalism and good governance in Nepal, possibly through a cost or non-cost extension.

6.3. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the EUSIF project is evaluated based on its direct and indirect outcomes, the effectiveness of the management arrangements, and the identification of factors beyond UNDP's control that affect results. This section provides an in-depth analysis of these aspects, with a detailed examination of the project's achievements under each result area.

Result 1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services enhanced in line with Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Source of data	Cumulative Target for 2022-2024	Cum Progress Till May 2024	Source of data	Status
Result 1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services enhanced in line with Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	**R 1.1:** Design of Karnali Province Basic Service Delivery systems and procedures is more inclusive than at the start of the project and compared to other Provinces	56%	PLGSP Baseline Report	100%	0	*Survey to be done at the end of the project.*	No data
	R 1.2: Local Governments have GESI strategy for inclusive new federal context	56%	BSD Mapping Report of EUSIF	100%	100%	PLGSP report. (Five Model Palikas)	Fully met

Finding 6.3.1: Stepped up Participation and Inclusiveness in Local Governance

The EUSIF project has effectively enhanced participation and inclusiveness in local governance processes. One of the key achievements in this area is the establishment of an inclusive and participatory annual planning and budgeting process in five local governments (Soru, Tila, Dullu, Panchapuri and Chaurjahari). The project trained 445 local government officials and community-based organization (CBO) members, 36% of whom were women and 21% were Dalits, on the seven-step planning process. This training has led to increased participation from community members, as per the data available from 5 LGs[16].

> *With the planning at the settlement level, we are just at the beginning of the process - building public trust is not an easy task and could not be performed in one year.*
>
> *As testified by an interviewee*

The project has also facilitated the development and endorsement of the Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) by three local governments (Soru, Tila and Mugum Karmarong) for the first time[17]. This framework has been instrumental in ensuring that local budgets are allocated based on actual community needs, leading to more effective and inclusive service delivery. These efforts have contributed to a significant

[16] Annual Planning survey report (Section 3.2)

[17] Three rural municipalities of Soru, Tila, and Mugum Karmarong faced challenge of developing MTEF, just following standard guidelines and without guidance from well-trained officials on this subject matter. Realizing the fact, EUSIF in collaboration with OCMCM, piloted a practical-based coaching and mentoring approach to capacitate authorities and engage them in formulating MTEF simultaneously. As a result, these three Palikas were able to draft their first MTEF, as noted in the 2023 Annual Progress Report.

increase in the GESI budget allocations over multiple fiscal years, demonstrating the project's impact on promoting gender equality and social inclusion in local governance[18].

Finding 6.3.2: Improved Service Delivery Mechanisms

EUSIF has made notable progress in improving service delivery mechanisms at the local level. The piloting of the One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) mechanism in three local governments has been a key initiative in this regard. The OSSD mechanism streamlines service delivery processes, making it easier for citizens to access various services from a single point. This initiative has enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, resulting in increased citizen satisfaction (As per the latest citizens satisfaction assessment from three LGs, more than 80% citizens found satisfied).

The project's continuous monitoring and feedback mechanisms have ensured that the OSSD system is adapted to meet local needs, further improving its effectiveness. Additionally, the development of action plans based on Basic Service Delivery (BSD) findings in five local governments has provided a strategic roadmap for enhancing service delivery. Grievance handling mechanism, planning simulation at Ward level, MTEF tutorial video, policy dialogue, M&E app are some examples that have been piloted at Ward level.

However, there is still a need for further improvement to make these services more equitable, considering the different conditions of service users. While some model palikas (such as Panchpuri and Chaurjahari) have integrated gender considerations, like separate breastfeeding spaces and toilets for men, women, and persons with disabilities (PWD), these features are not consistently implemented across all model palikas. Additionally, the OSSD Operation Guideline developed for Chaurjahari with EUSIF support does not explicitly address these considerations, while OSSD guidelines for Dullu and Panchapuri do.

> *About one year back, I had come to this office for some other work. At that time this system was not in place. It took a long time to finish my work. I am a rural woman; I cannot read and write well. I have no ideas where to go, who to meet and how to deal with staff for my work. This time I had come to get medicines for goats. I am surprised; I received it within half an hour. I did not need to go here and there. I got a token, and I was asked to wait in the waiting place. After a while I got service. A service seeker woman, West Rukum*

Despite the progress made with OSSD Centers, there are notable gaps in extending these services to ward offices, which are the closest service delivery units to the people. The result area has clearly outlined the importance of ward basic service delivery, but this has not been fully realized. The Ward Office Service Delivery Resource Book, has been prepared by the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA), supported by EUSIF, however it has not yet been disseminated or introduced to any local governments (LGs) and ward offices at the time of the evaluation, limiting its impact. Additionally, while EUSIF has significantly contributed to knowledge management for evidence-based decision-making through initiatives like BSD Mapping and the Badi Community Study, there is still room for wider dissemination of these resources to provincial and local stakeholders across the country and within the province. Ensuring broader access to these studies can enhance their impact, enabling more informed and inclusive policy and planning decisions at multiple levels of governance.

[18] For instance the Direct GRB increased to 13% in Tila from 6-7% percent in previous years.

Result 2: PLG data management, monitoring and reporting systems are evidence-based and enable achieving PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Source of data	Cumulative Target for 2022 2024	Cum Progress Till May 2024	Source of data	Status
Result 2: PLG data management, monitoring and reporting systems are evidence-based and enable achieving PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	**R 2.1** Karnali Province 'Data and M&E-Reporting' systems and procedures functional, and design is more inclusive than at the start of the project and compared to other provinces.	NA		50%	100%	Comparative analysis of one LG (Chaurjahari)	No data
	R 2.2 Karnali Province publishes specific Policy Papers on inclusiveness of PLG data management and M&E/ Reporting system and on GESI objectives, using disaggregated data evidence.	0	NA	3	7=Completed 2=In-progress	MU Policy Lab Report (Policy papers on data and GESI issues by Policy Lab	Exceeded

Finding 6.3.3: Establishment and Utilization of Data Management Systems

The EUSIF project has significantly improved data management and monitoring systems at the provincial and local levels. The establishment of the Project Information Management System (PIMS) has been a major milestone, providing a centralized platform for managing and accessing data related to local governance. By documenting 1609 household information in Chaurjahari Municipality and recording 6770 projects in the PIMS, the project has enhanced data accessibility and utilization for decision-making. In addition, the PIMS also established the mapping of DPs/INGOs working in each LGs of Karnali which provide support to provincial government to implement the program without any overlapping and duplication.

The replication of PIMS in Lumbini Province and the use of the system by organizations such as the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the Province Program Implementation Unit (PPIU) demonstrate its scalability and effectiveness. These systems have not only facilitated better coordination and planning but have also supported evidence-based policymaking, thereby potentially improving governance outcomes at the local level in the long run.

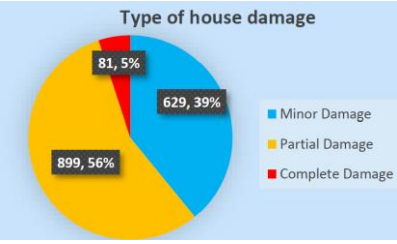
Finding 6.3.4: Capacity Building for Data Management

EUSIF has also focused on building the capacity of local government officials and stakeholders in data management and monitoring. The project oriented 69 out of 79 local ICT Officers on managing the PIMS and the digital profile of their respective local governments. Additionally, the capacity of over 22 provincial officials and 31 development partner representatives was enhanced in the PIMS system, its relevancy, use, and operation.

These capacity-building efforts have been crucial in ensuring the sustainability and effective utilization of the data management systems established by the project. By equipping local officials with the necessary skills and knowledge, EUSIF has ensured that these systems are effectively integrated into the governance processes, leading to potentially more informed and efficient decision-making.

Earthquake response through data collection tool support to Chaurjahari Municipality

As a response to the Jajarkot earthquake on 03 November 2023, EUSIF provided technical assistance to Chaurjahari Municipality to develop a questionnaire to assess damage & loss caused by the earthquake. There is an opportunity to use these data, by the Chaurjahari Municipality to start evidence-based disaster management planning and budgeting for earthquake victims.



Result 3: Capacity of Provincial Centers for Good Governance (Now called KPTA) attuned to PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Cumulative Target for 2022-2024	Cum Progress Till May 2024	Source of data	Status
Result 3: Capacity of Provincial Centres for Good Governance attuned to PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery.	**R 3.1** Pilot-Province PCGG has a long-term Organizational strategy for becoming a state-of-the-art resource/training centre, including training strategy and approach for strengthening	0	1	1-IP	Shifted from 2023 to 2024	In progress

Finding 6.3.5: EUSIF's Comprehensive Training Programs and Materials Represent a Solid Foundation for KPTA's Capacity Building Efforts

EUSIF has made progress in developing comprehensive training programs and materials for the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA). These resources, including training manuals (GESI Audit Training Module, Induction Training Course for Officers Level staff, Transformative Leadership Training etc.), operational guidelines, and standard operating procedures (SoPs), have provided a solid foundation for KPTA to deliver

high-quality training programs[19]. The materials are designed to enhance the capacity of local government officials in various areas, including governance, planning, budgeting, and service delivery. By integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategies, these training materials sensitized newly appointed staff on the needs of women and marginalized groups that will be supportive to promote inclusive governance practices.

The development of these training resources is a critical step in institutionalizing capacity-building efforts within the province. They ensure that local government officials have access to standardized and quality training, which is essential for improving governance and service delivery. The inclusion of GESI strategies in these materials also highlights EUSIF's commitment to promoting gender equality and social inclusion in all aspects of local governance. Further, intending to enhance the KPTA in the long term, EUSIF has supported the formulation of the strategic plan of KPTA with vision, goal and objectives as well as the organization of the O&M survey.

Finding 6.3.6: Training and Mobilization of Local Master Trainers are Basis for Strengthened Local Capacities

One of the notable achievements of EUSIF is the training and mobilization of a pool of 108 local master trainers[20] for addressing resource gaps at the local level. The training provided to these master trainers covers various areas, including local economic development, public procurement, periodic plan & MTEF and transformative leadership. The use of local trainers[21] ensures that the training programs are contextually relevant and sustainable, as they are delivered by individuals who understand the local context and challenges.

Result 4: Capacity of Local Government Associations enhanced for evidence-based advocacy and representation of Local Government Voice

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Cumulative Target for 2022 2024	Cum Progress Till May 2024	Source of data	Status
Result 4: Capacity of Local Government Associations enhanced for evidence-based advocacy and representation of Local Government Voice.	**R 4.1** Number of published policy papers of each (i) Municipality Association of Nepal (MuAN), and (ii) Nepal Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN) on LG decision-making and BSD, with specific focus on LG capacity for and responsiveness to inclusive ways of working, GESI objectives and GRID.	NA	5	22= Completed 4=In-progress	MU Policy Lab Report. (Policy briefs (11) and position papers (11) with Policy Lab (Mid-west University)	Exceeded
	R 4.2 Research organizations and networks are actively engaged in deliberations and discourse on inclusive federalism.	NA	2	3=Completed 3=In-Progress	MU Policy Lab Report and Reports from partners. [3 Policy dialogues in collaboration with Hriti Foundation, NARMIN and	Exceeded

[19] As for example, the KPTA organized 7 more trainings based on transformative leadership training manual prepared through the project support, in 2024.

[20] In total 111 participants (3 were repeated, so 108) 27 of them women, Janajati and Dalit, 11 and 9 percent respectively.

[21] As per the latest survey done by EUSIF in June, 47% of these have facilitated at least one training, according to the project team.

Finding 6.3.7: EUSIF Provided Basis for Enhancing Policy Advocacy Through Establishment of Policy Labs and Collaboration

EUSIF has set a foundation for greater policy advocacy efforts by establishing the secretarit of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University (MU) and fostering collaboration with key stakeholders, including the National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN). The Policy Lab has become a hub for research and dialogue on inter-governmental relations, federalism, and inclusive governance. Through the Policy Lab, EUSIF has facilitated the production of 22 policy briefs and position papers, which have begun to inform local governance practices and support evidence-based decision-making.

This collaborative approach has strengthened the capacity of local governments to engage in policy advocacy and has created a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned. The Policy Lab's efforts in sensitizing over 500 people on inclusive governance and fiscal federalism issues have also contributed to building a more informed and engaged community of stakeholders. By promoting evidence-based policy advocacy, EUSIF is helping to create a more transparent and accountable governance environment in Karnali Province.

Finding 6.3.8: Increased Awareness and Participation in Transparency and Accountability Initiatives

The project's focus on capacity building and knowledge dissemination has equipped local stakeholders with the tools and information needed to advocate for greater transparency and accountability in governance processes. For instance, 31 local government officials, including 25 Vice Chairs/Deputy Mayors, have been sensitized on their roles and responsibilities through peer-to-peer learning events and policy dialogues.[22]

These efforts contribute to a growing culture of transparency and accountability at the local level. The project's initiatives have also led to the development and implementation of various transparency tools, such as the GESI-sensitive Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) guidelines, which ensure that governance processes are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all community members.

Finding 6.3.9: Policy Advocacy Efforts Led to the Development and Dissemination of Key Knowledge Products

EUSIF's policy advocacy efforts have led to the development and dissemination of key knowledge products that support evidence-based decision-making and transparency in governance[23]. The project has produced a range of knowledge products, including the Ward Function Resource Book, the Badi Community Study report, and various policy briefs and position papers. These resources have been widely distributed to local governments and other stakeholders, providing valuable information and guidance on best practices in governance and service delivery.

However, there is still room for further dissemination and utilization of these knowledge products. Ensuring that these resources are accessible to all relevant stakeholders across the country and within the province is crucial for maximizing their impact. By continuing to promote the use of evidence-based knowledge

[22] As evidenced by the project team while finalizing the evaluation report - to ensure efficient and quality services to the citizens, EUSIF in collaboration with NARMIN conducting a citizen satisfaction surveys in five LGs aimed at institutionalizing accountability mechanisms in these LGs.

[23] Impact of Badi community study-allocated 50 Lakhs from PG for constructing building for Badi child care center, allocated 4 Corers ruppees for Badi Community Targeted Program (income generation, skills development, seed money. Developed Guidelines for Badi Targeted Program [as reported by the chair of Badi Sarokar Manch]

products, EUSIF can further strengthen the capacity of local governments to make informed decisions and implement effective and inclusive governance practices.

Finding 6.3.10: Governance, Management Practices, Risk Management, and Quality Assurance

EUSIF's overall governance structure, management practices, risk management, and quality assurance mechanisms have been robust. As testified during KIIs, the project has established lines of communication and coordination among various stakeholders, including federal ministries, provincial governments, local governments, and development partners. This collaborative approach has facilitated the smooth execution of activities and minimized overlaps and duplications, ensuring that resources are used efficiently.

While EUSIF has maintained good communication channels with national partners, there are opportunities to enhance overall outreach to the wider public and to refine communication with donors. Simplifying communication processes and ensuring more regular updates can further strengthen relationships with donors and ensure they are well-informed about the project's activities and achievements. Enhancing these aspects of communication will contribute to the project's transparency and foster greater support for its initiatives.

The project operates under the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), where project funds are directly released from the EU to UNDP. UNDP, as the implementing partner, works closely with the relevant authorities to conduct project-related activities in line with UNDP rules and procedures.

Project Management Unit (PMU)

The Project Management Unit (PMU) is based in the UNDP Field Office in Surkhet, in the Karnali Pilot-Province. The PMU coordinates closely with the Provincial Programme Implementation Unit (PPIU) of PLGSP to ensure coordinated and complementary activity implementation. The Project team, comprising both national and international experts, plays a crucial role in project implementation. The team includes positions such as Inclusive Governance Expert, Basic Services Delivery Expert, Data Management and M&E Expert, Strategic Planning and Organizational Development Expert, GESI Expert, and Communication and Publication Expert

Project Board and Decision-Making

The EUSIF Project Board, functioning as the steering committee, comprises representatives from the MoFAGA, PLGSP, Pilot-Province, LG Associations, CSOs, the European Union and UNDP. This board is responsible for making all management decisions, including the approval of work plans and budgets, progress reports, and providing strategic guidance to steer the project towards its goals. The Project Board ensures that the project remains aligned with its objectives and adapts to emerging needs and challenges. It met three times during the period under evaluation, being an average and justifiable rate for such a project. Based on the minutes provided, the Project Board critically assessed progress and gave recommendations for better steering, better alignment with the PLGSP, coordination with other development partners and further needs for support.

Quality Assurance and Reporting

The Portfolio Manager from UNDP is responsible for quality assurance and oversight of the project. The project prepares annual progress reports, financial reports, and M&E reports. Additionally, quarterly progress

updates are delivered, covering results, progress, and challenges related to capacity development, functionality of partnerships, lessons learned, and developments within the change facilitation process.

In conclusion, the governance and management arrangements of the EUSIF project are designed to ensure a high level of coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders. The use of the DIM allows for a streamlined and efficient flow of funds directly from the EU to UNDP, minimizing bureaucratic delays and facilitating timely project execution. The PMU's location in the Karnali Province enables close coordination with provincial and local governments, ensuring that the project's activities are well-integrated with local governance structures and responsive to local needs.

The project's large and diverse Project team, though relatively sizable compared to the funding available, enables the immediate deployment of necessary capacities without relying on external consultancies. This approach reduces time, maintains flexibility, and significantly contributes to knowledge management within the project. Despite a change in the team leader during the project duration and a vacuum of about six months, the robust and sizeable team ensured continuity. The team continued implementing activities according to the Annual Work Plan (AWP), effectively addressing complex challenges and implementing adaptive strategies efficiently by leveraging their collective expertise. Overall, by leveraging the expertise of the TA team, the project can address complex challenges and implement adaptive strategies efficiently.

Risk Management

In the project design phase, the Prodoc outlined several potential risks, with a focus on governance-related and operational challenges. Risks such as the complexity of institutional reform at the provincial and local government levels, the capacity limitations of PLGs, and the slow pace of federalization were correctly identified during the design stage. The risks around governance were particularly relevant, considering that EUSIF was designed to support the emerging federal structures in Nepal, where political instability and limited local governance capacity could hinder project progress.

One area where the risk identification was particularly well-executed was in recognizing the need for GESI mainstreaming and the inclusiveness of marginalized communities. The design recognized the importance of addressing the historical exclusion of women and vulnerable groups, and related risks—such as the inability to ensure effective participation of these groups—were incorporated into the project's framework. However, certain risks, such as those related to the environmental and strategic safety domains, received less emphasis during the design stage. Given the project's primary focus on governance and inclusivity, environmental risks may not have been as prominent.

Social and Environmental Safeguards

The EUSIF project followed UNDP's **Social and Environmental Standards**, ensuring that its interventions considered potential social and environmental impacts. Social risks related to the exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups were mitigated by implementing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) frameworks. GESI was integrated into project activities, ensuring equitable participation of historically excluded groups such as Dalits, women, and people with disabilities.

Environmental safeguards were less emphasized during the initial design phase but were addressed during implementation through the adoption of the GRID framework. This approach supported more sustainable development practices in local governance, particularly in infrastructure and disaster resilience.

In conclusion, the risk identification process during the design phase was appropriate in addressing governance and capacity challenges but could have better emphasized environmental risks. The project's Social and Environmental Safeguards were aligned with UNDP standards, and additional environmental risks were managed effectively through the integration of GRID principles during implementation.

The project has also adopted comprehensive risk management and quality assurance mechanisms. These include continuous monitoring and feedback processes, which have allowed EUSIF to adapt its activities and address challenges promptly. The risks were identified, monitored, and managed using a risk log, with specific actions taken to mitigate identified risks. For instance, risks related to the competence of technical assistance (TA) candidates, long lead times for hiring staff, and turnover were managed by providing induction training, leveraging existing recruitment practices, and focusing on team building and professional growth exercises. Operational risks, such as cultural norms hindering inclusive practices and confusion over project roles, were addressed by raising awareness, institutionalizing inclusiveness in service delivery, and ensuring clarity in the roles and responsibilities of the TA team. The project's emphasis on transparency and accountability has further enhanced its governance structure, contributing to local governments and other stakeholders being held accountable for their actions and decisions. The project implementation was aligned with the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. These standards guided the project's activities to ensure that the environmental and social impacts were considered and managed appropriately. The project also aimed to enhance the capacity of local governments (LGs) in evidence-based planning, data management, monitoring, and reporting systems, which are essential for achieving Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) objectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system of the EUSIF project was designed to track progress against the Results Framework (RF) and ensure alignment with the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP). The project employed a monitoring protocol that facilitated ongoing assessments, allowing activities to be implemented as planned and adjusted as necessary in response to changes in the local context. A Monitoring Officer was responsible for overseeing this process, ensuring communication with government officials and stakeholders to maintain alignment with the project's objectives.

The M&E design phase of the EUSIF project was well-conceived, particularly in its focus on inclusivity, local governance empowerment, and results-based monitoring. However, the design could have been strengthened with a more streamlined indicator set, adaptive capacity for mid-term adjustments, and closer integration of risk monitoring. Some key areas, like inclusive governance, had multiple overlapping indicators that could create complexity in data collection and analysis. For example, the numerous gender-related and governance indicators required data from multiple sources, which added a layer of complexity to the evaluation process. A more focused selection of critical indicators at the design phase might have helped simplify the monitoring efforts. These improvements would have helped ensure that the M&E system could not only track progress but also respond dynamically to challenges as they arose.

In the implementation phase, the M&E system was comprehensive, primarily focusing on tracking outputs and ensuring that project activities remained on schedule. The system enabled the project team to monitor deliverables and make adjustments when needed, but it also relied on regular communication and feedback from the field to inform any necessary changes. Overall, the M&E approach supported the project's ability to

stay on course and adapt to emerging needs, while keeping stakeholders informed and involved throughout the process.

6.4. Impact

The impact of the EUSIF project is evaluated based on the substantive quality of its results, including knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and the extent to which these outcomes are utilized or replicated. Given the short-term nature of the project and the fact that it has just started accumulating results, the following three findings provide an assessment of these factors, highlighting key achievements and potential areas for further development.

Finding 6.4.1: EUSIF Laid a Foundation for Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization

EUSIF has made initial strides in knowledge dissemination and its utilization among local governments and communities in Karnali Province. The establishment of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University (MU) for which the EUSIF provided support in establishment of a secretariat, is a promising initiative aimed at promoting collaborative research and evidence-based policymaking. Although still in its early stages, the Policy Lab has produced policy briefs and position papers on inter-governmental relations, federalism, inclusion, and service delivery, which are beginning to inform local governance practices.

Moreover, the project's efforts in creating and utilizing the Project Information Management System (PIMS) have shown potential in improving data management and accessibility. The PIMS website has been accessed frequently, and the system is being used by various organizations for coordination and decision-making. This tool is starting to enable local governments to make more informed decisions based on reliable data, thereby enhancing the quality of governance and service delivery. The initial replication of PIMS in Lumbini Province suggests its potential for broader application across Nepal.

The dissemination of knowledge has also been initiated through various communication channels, including video stories, interviews, documentaries, and articles published on the UNDP website and other media outlets[24]. These efforts are beginning to increase awareness and understanding of inclusive governance practices among a wider audience, contributing to the project's overall impact.

Finding 6.4.2: EUSIF Initiated Capacity Building Efforts at Multiple Levels

EUSIF has taken significant initial steps in building and enhancing the capacity of local government officials, community-based organizations (CBOs) members, and other stakeholders. The project has conducted training sessions for local government officials and CBO members in areas such as inclusive governance, planning, budgeting, and service delivery. These early training sessions have covered key topics like Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), transformative leadership and the seven-step planning process, equipping participants with foundational skills and knowledge.

One of the notable early achievements of EUSIF is the creation of a pool of local master trainers who are beginning to fill resource gaps at the local level. These trainers have been mobilized to support the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA) in delivering high-quality training programs. The project's use of simulation

[24] Also, the MTEF tutorial video prepared for KPTA under this project has been placed into the youtube channel by the KPTA and shared with all 79 LGs through a formal letter. (Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oa7pL1jr2Gk&t=701s)

and role-play methodologies in training sessions is starting to show effectiveness in enhancing knowledge retention and practical application.

The transformative leadership training provided to elected representatives, including officials from marginalized groups, is also showing early signs of success in strengthening the capacity of local leaders to promote inclusive decision-making and policy formulation. The initial adoption of GESI strategies by model palikas and the development of various guidelines and manuals are beginning to institutionalize these practices, laying the groundwork for future impact.

Finding 6.4.3: EUSIF's Early Outcomes Show Potential for Replication and Scaling Up

The early outcomes of the EUSIF project indicate significant potential for replication and scaling up, both within and beyond Karnali Province. The initial success of initiatives like the PIMS and the CDMIS suggests their scalability. The project's approach to capacity building, through the training of local master trainers and the development of comprehensive training modules, provides a replicable model for other regions to follow.

The establishment of the One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) mechanisms in three local governments is an impactful early outcome that is starting to be scaled up. These mechanisms have shown promise in improving service delivery efficiency and accessibility, benefiting citizens. The project's continuous monitoring and feedback processes have ensured that these mechanisms are refined and adapted to local needs, making them viable for replication in other municipalities.

Furthermore, EUSIF's emphasis on creating and disseminating learning products, such as the Ward Function Resource Book and the GESI Audit Training Manual, has facilitated the early transfer of knowledge and best practices. These resources have been distributed and are beginning to be used as reference materials by other local governments and training institutions, amplifying the project's potential impact. The ongoing efforts to document and share lessons learned ensure that the knowledge generated by EUSIF can continue to inform and improve governance practices across Nepal.

In conclusion, while the EUSIF project is in its early stages and has just started accumulating results, it has made promising strides in knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and the potential replication of successful outcomes. Through its strategic initiatives and adaptive approaches, the project is laying a strong foundation for enhancing the quality of governance and service delivery in Karnali Province, with the potential for broader application and sustainability in the future.

6.5. Sustainability

Sustainability examines the potential for the continuity and scalability of the systems, mechanisms, and capacities developed by the EUSIF project beyond its lifespan. This section evaluates the durability of the project's impacts and the likelihood of maintaining and expanding these results in the long term. The following findings provide a detailed assessment of the sustainability of EUSIF's interventions, highlighting key areas for future focus.

Finding 6.5.1: EUSIF's Training Programs and Mechanisms Show Strong Potential for Continuity

The EUSIF project has successfully institutionalized several training programs and mechanisms that have the potential to be sustained and scaled up beyond the project's lifespan. The comprehensive training programs and materials developed for the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA), including operational guidelines and standard operating procedures, are integral to this institutionalization. These resources

ensure that local government officials have ongoing access to high-quality training, which is essential for maintaining and improving governance and service delivery.

Furthermore, the training of 108 local master trainers ensures that there is a pool of skilled trainers available to continue delivering these programs. The contextual relevance and sustainability of these training programs are enhanced by the fact that they are delivered by local trainers who understand the specific needs and challenges of their communities. The establishment of these training programs within KPTA and the mobilization of local trainers create a sustainable model that can be replicated in other provinces, thereby extending the impact of EUSIF's capacity-building efforts.

Finding 6.5.2: OSSD Centers Are Positioned to Sustain Long-Term Service Delivery Improvements

The establishment of One-Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) Centers in model palikas is a significant step towards sustainable service delivery improvements. These centers simplify and streamline service delivery processes, making it easier for citizens to access various services from a single point. The positive behavioral changes observed among civil servants and elected representatives suggest that these centers can continue to operate effectively beyond the project's duration. The integration of gender considerations, such as separate breastfeeding spaces and toilets for men, women, and persons with disabilities (PWD), in some model palikas further enhances the sustainability of these centers by ensuring that they are inclusive and accessible.

However, to ensure the long-term sustainability of OSSD Centers, there is a need for further improvements to make these services more equitable. This includes addressing gaps in the existing guidelines and extending service delivery to ward offices, which are the closest service delivery units to the people. Disseminating and orienting local governments and ward offices on the Ward Office Service Delivery Resource Book will also be crucial for enhancing the sustainability of basic service delivery at the grassroots level.

Finding 6.5.3: EUSIF's Knowledge Management and Policy Advocacy Efforts Have Established a Foundation for Sustained Governance Improvements

EUSIF's efforts in knowledge management and policy advocacy have laid a strong foundation for sustainable governance improvements. The development and dissemination of key knowledge products, such as the BSD Mapping, the Badi Community Study report, and various policy briefs and position papers, have provided valuable resources for evidence-based decision-making. The establishment of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University (MU) and its collaboration with stakeholders like NARMIN have also created a sustainable platform for ongoing research and dialogue on inclusive governance.

For these knowledge management and policy advocacy efforts to be truly sustainable, there needs to be a continuous focus on disseminating these resources to a wider audience. Ensuring that all relevant stakeholders across the country and within the province when relevant, have access to these studies and reports will maximize their impact. Additionally, maintaining and expanding the activities of the Policy Lab will be crucial for sustaining the momentum generated by EUSIF's policy advocacy efforts. By continuing to promote evidence-based policy-making and inclusive governance practices, these initiatives can contribute to long-term governance improvements in Nepal.

In conclusion, the sustainability of the EUSIF project is anchored in the institutionalization of training programs, the establishment of inclusive and efficient service delivery mechanisms, and robust knowledge

management and policy advocacy efforts. While progress has been made, continuous efforts to address gaps, enhance equity, and expand dissemination will be essential for maintaining and scaling the project's impacts beyond its lifespan.

6.6. Coherence

The coherence of the EUSIF project examines the alignment of its design and implementation with UNDP's core documents, national priorities, and its coordination and collaboration with other relevant projects. This section assesses how well EUSIF has integrated with these frameworks and collaborated with other initiatives to enhance its impact. The following findings provide a detailed assessment of the project's coherence.

Finding 6.6.1: EUSIF is Well-Aligned with UNDP's Strategic Objectives, National Priorities, and EU Policies

The EUSIF project aligns well with UNDP's Strategic Plan, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and UNDP Nepal's Country Programme Document (CPD). EUSIF's focus on inclusive governance, capacity building, and evidence-based decision-making supports the overarching goals of promoting inclusive and effective governance structures as outlined in these core documents. Specifically, EUSIF's initiatives in developing comprehensive training programs and enhancing data management systems directly contribute to the strategic objectives of UNDP and the UNSDCF (for contribution to specific goals, outcomes and outputs, please refer to the project information sheet on the second page of this Report).

In alignment with Nepal's 15th Plan, EUSIF has focused on strengthening local governance and service delivery systems, which are key priorities for the government. By promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategies and supporting the development of the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA) for example, EUSIF addresses critical national priorities aimed at enhancing local capacity and promoting inclusive development. This alignment ensures that the project's activities are relevant and contribute to broader national development goals.

Additionally, EUSIF aligns with EU policies and strategies, particularly those focused on promoting good governance and inclusive development. The project's objectives are consistent with the European Union Agenda for Change in Nepal, which emphasizes the importance of governance and the rule of law. EUSIF's focus on improving local governance structures, enhancing service delivery, and promoting GESI strategies reflects the EU's commitment to supporting inclusive and effective governance. This alignment with EU policies enhances the coherence of EUSIF and strengthens its impact by ensuring that the project supports broader EU development objectives.

Finding 6.6.2: EUSIF's Complementarity with the PLGSP Enhances Its Impact and Effectiveness

EUSIF has been designed to provide complementary technical assistance to the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP). This synergy is strongly evident in several areas, such as the development of the Project Information Management System (PIMS), the Capacity Development Management Information System (CDMIS), and various training initiatives. EUSIF addresses current gaps and adds value to PLGSP by offering such replicative approaches (e.g. OSSD, PMIS, which is based on national and international best practices, and by addressing recommendations from the PLGSP Mid-term Review and Third-Party Monitoring.

One of the key complementary efforts of EUSIF is its support in developing and piloting GESI-sensitive Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines for Chaurjahari Municipality. This initiative aligns with PLGSP's objectives of promoting inclusive planning and budgeting processes. Additionally, EUSIF's efforts to create a pool of local master trainers complement PLGSP's capacity-building initiatives, ensuring that there is a sustainable model for training delivery in the future. By using UNDP's rules and procedures, which allow for quicker implementation of certain activities based on local counterparts' needs, EUSIF has accelerated processes that align with PLGSP's goals, thereby enhancing the overall impact and effectiveness of both programs. In addition, EUSIF piloted new approaches, coupling them with local solutions, thereby creating a replicable model that is contextualized for further scaling. Documentation of best practices, tutorial video on MTEF formulation, user guide on OSSD operation, transformative leadership manual among others are resources for future trainings and OSSD establishment.

In addition, the UNDP Access to Justice (A2J) project is providing free legal aid in EUSIF model palikas. Youth law graduates who are supported by A2J are being mobilized for research works of policy lab, A2J has established help desk in Judicial Committee; access to justice integrated in OSSD; regular meetings have taken place among the projects to avoid duplication and promote complementarity and synergy building.

Finding 6.6.3: EUSIF's Coordination with Other Donor-Funded Initiatives Strengthens Its Impact

EUSIF has demonstrated effective coordination and collaboration with other donor-funded initiatives, ensuring a comprehensive approach to enhancing local governance. The project aligns with and complements several initiatives funded by various donors, such as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) Provincial Support Programme (PSP), the Australian Aid and Asia Foundation's Sub-National Governance Program (SNGP), and the UK Aid-supported Evidence for Development (E4D) program. It has not worked directly with these organizations/projects, except for the PSP.

For example, EUSIF's collaboration with the PSP focuses on policy making, planning, and public financial management at the provincial level, while the SNGP supports sub-national governance improvements in specific municipalities, including Birendranagar in Karnali Province. Additionally, the E4D program's focus on data for development aligns with EUSIF's goals of improving data management and evidence-based decision-making. By coordinating with these and other initiatives, EUSIF has created synergies that amplify its efforts in promoting inclusive governance and effective service delivery.

EUSIF has also coordinated with International IDEA and GIZ for KPTA institutional strengthening, having adopted the coaching and mentoring approach in the project based on learnings from GIZ.

In conclusion, the EUSIF project has shown strong coherence with UNDP's strategic objectives, national priorities, EU policies, and other development partner projects, including layers of government. The project's alignment with key frameworks and its effective coordination and collaboration efforts have enhanced its impact and contributed to the overall goals of promoting inclusive and effective governance in Nepal. Continued efforts to maintain and strengthen these collaborations will be essential for sustaining and expanding the project's achievements.

6.7. Other Cross-Cutting Features

This section analyzes how the EUSIF project addressed key cross-cutting issues, including Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), human rights-based approaches, and Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID). It also examines the project's overall governance structure, management practices,

risk management, and quality assurance mechanisms, as well as its contribution to transparency and accountability principles.

Finding 6.7.1: EUSIF's Commitment to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

The EUSIF project has demonstrated a strong commitment to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) through a dual approach of mainstreaming and targeted interventions[25]. The project has developed a GESI Strategy that includes several strategic approaches for each result area, although the strategy lacks an action plan. EUSIF maintained GESI-disaggregated data of the project beneficiaries and participants, including categories such as men, women, gender and sexual minorities, Khas-Arya, Dalit, Janajati, and persons with disabilities[26]. This comprehensive data collection underscores the project's sensitivity towards GESI from the outset.

Key GESI-focused initiatives include the 29-point Karnali Declaration on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence and Social Inclusion, the development of a GESI Assessment format, and the GESI Audit Training Module for KPTA, as well as GESI strategy for KPTA, Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) policy for KPTA, Training Manual on Transformative Leadership of Elected Representatives etc. These interventions have supported the enhancement of provincial and local systems and procedures. Although it is too early to measure the full effectiveness and impact of these interventions, initial observations indicate that the project has successfully integrated GESI considerations into its core activities. For instance, the establishment of One-Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) Centers in some model palikas has included gender-sensitive features such as separate breastfeeding spaces and toilets for men, women, and persons with disabilities.

GESI Integration: Assessment by Result Area

The EUSIF project document has included some GESI approaches. It evidences that UNDP was sensitive towards GESI while designing the project. The EUSIF has developed a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy that includes several strategic approaches for each result area. Despite this, the strategy lacks an action plan.

R1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit, and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services Enhanced in Line with Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development Objectives

Under this result area, the establishment of One-Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) Centers in model palikas has laid a solid foundation for making local-level service delivery simpler, faster, and more accessible. These centers have brought about behavioral changes among civil servants and elected representatives, increasing access to basic services for ordinary people and promoting equal access[27]. However, further improvements

[25] The project has also employed the P5 approach in GESI mainstreaming within the EUSIF project focusing on five key areas: Policy, Products, Participation, Proofs, and Practices. This approach ensures comprehensive integration of gender equality and social inclusion by developing policy documents, including GESI in project deliverables, ensuring participation of women and marginalized groups, using disaggregated data for evidence-based decision-making, and promoting behavioral change through capacity development

[26] In total 1632 individuals were such participants in the key events. Of them female: 25%, LGBTIQ: 0.06% Dalit: 9% Janajati: 4% PWD: 0.4% [Source data provided by M&E staff]

[27] Example: a service seeker woman in Chaurjhari Municipalit, West Rukum was happy with the BSSD mechanism. She says: "About one year ago, I had come to this office for some other work. At that time this system was not in place. It took long time to finish my work. I am a rural woman; I cannot read and write well. I have no ideas where to go, who to meet and how to deal with staff for my work. This time I had come to get medicines for goats. I am surprised; I received it within half an hour. I did not need to go here and there. I got a token and

are needed to make services more equitable, considering the different conditions of service holders. For example, some model palikas, such as Panchpuri and Chaurjahari, have integrated gender considerations by providing separate breastfeeding spaces, toilets for men, women, and persons with disabilities (PWD), and drinking water facilities. Nevertheless, these considerations are not uniformly implemented across all model palikas. Additionally, the OSSD Operation Guideline developed for Dullu with EUSIF support does not explicitly address these considerations. The PWDs, pregnant women, women with babies and senior citizens etc. as service seekers should be given first priority under the system.

Moreover, the service delivery improvements have not yet reached ward offices, which are the closest service delivery units to the people. Although a Ward Office Service Delivery Resource Book has been developed by the KPTA with project support, it has not yet been disseminated or oriented to any local governments (LGs) and ward offices. EUSIF has significantly contributed to knowledge management for evidence-based decision-making through initiatives like BSD Mapping, the Badi Community Study report, and the Badi profile of Karnali province. However, there is still room for wider dissemination of these resources to provincial and local stakeholders across the country and within the province. The support for participatory local annual planning has increased participation from women and excluded groups in the planning process, leading to the inclusion of projects demanded by these groups in the annual plans to some extent. More importantly, the model Palikas had to be supported in formulation of GESI policy and formation and capacity development of GESI Implementation Committee for achieving better results and sustainably continuing GESI efforts, which is lacking.

> *A woman in Dullu-8, says, before there was no settlement level meeting while processing annual planning. This year we were informed to participate in the settlement level meeting. The participation of women and marginalized groups was meaningful. We women proposed an awareness program against child marriage. Through the "Tika" system, our program got first priority. It has gone to ward. I am hopeful; our program will be decided from ward and Palika.*

R2: PLG Data Management, Monitoring, and Reporting Systems Are Evidence-Based and Enable Achieving PLG Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development Objectives

EUSIF has supported the establishment of the Project Information Management System (PIMS). The PIMS Directive includes provisions for inviting members from women and marginalized groups to the Coordination and Facilitation Committee, which coordinates and facilitates the formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of necessary policies related to the establishment and operation of PIMS. The directive also includes a chart that lists children, women, marginalized, and senior citizens as beneficiaries. The PIMS User Manual features a "Gender Responsive Report" section aimed at serving as a platform for entering data related to gender-responsive initiatives and outcomes. However, the social inclusion aspect is missing.

EUSIF has also supported model palikas in developing a Result-Based Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting Guideline. While the guideline is generally useful, it lacks substantial provisions regarding GESI. For example, the formation of monitoring committees by users' committees requires only 20% female representation and

I was asked to wait in waiting place. After a while I got service." In addition, when talking with the staff working in OSSD Centre they were saying we are happy to serve in this way. We do not have any pressure of influential persons. We are here to serve people, people are satisfied, we are happy with that.

does not mandate inclusion from other perspectives. The tools annexed in the guidelines seem almost irresponsive to gender and inclusion. Although GESI has been recognized as a sector/subsector for monitoring, there is no substantial GESI consideration integrated into other sectors/subsectors. An important contribution of EUSIF is the upgrading of the Capacity Development Management Information System (CDMIS) of Karnali, which now includes well-covered GESI-disaggregated data by gender, caste/ethnicity, and other social groups and GESI disaggregated data is maintained accordingly.

R3: Capacity of Provincial Centers for Good Governance (Now Called KPTA) Attuned to PLG Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery

To develop the institutional GESI capacity of KPTA, EUSIF has supported the development of a GESI Strategy, a GESI Audit Training Module, a Transformative Leadership Training Manual, and a PSHEA Policy, which form the foundation for advancing GESI at provincial and local levels. However, these efforts need to be undertaken in a more consultative, participatory, and tailor-made approach to ensure better ownership and internalization by the KPTA personnel.

EUSIF has also supported the development of standard operating procedures (SoP) and training program execution standards for KPTA. Unfortunately, these documents lack sufficient GESI consideration. For instance, the SoP provisions for university student internships do not prioritize female students or those from excluded groups. Similarly, the standards do not include GESI-related content or GESI-sensitive pedagogy, including training materials, processes, and language. Support to KPTA in developing a pool of resource persons through ToTs on various topics included 27% women, 11% Janajati, and 9% Dalit among the 111 participants. This was achieved by including GESI considerations as one of the criteria for selecting ToT participants. However, the ToT participants have not been effectively mobilized to conduct training, and KPTA does not have clear strategies to utilize them effectively.

R4: Capacity of Local Government Associations Enhanced for Evidence-Based Advocacy and Representation of Local Government Voice

EUSIF has conducted Transformative Leadership Building Training for elected representatives of local governments, most of whom were women. The project supported the establishment of the secretariat for the Policy Lab at Mid-West University. While the policy lab includes GESI considerations in policy dialogues, none of the nine policy papers produced with EUSIF support specifically addressed GESI issues. EUSIF also facilitated intergovernmental dialogues between provincial and local governments and peer-to-peer learning workshops. One dialogue focused on provincial and local budget credibility in line with fiscal federalism implementation. It would have been better to include GESI-responsive public financing management in these sessions.

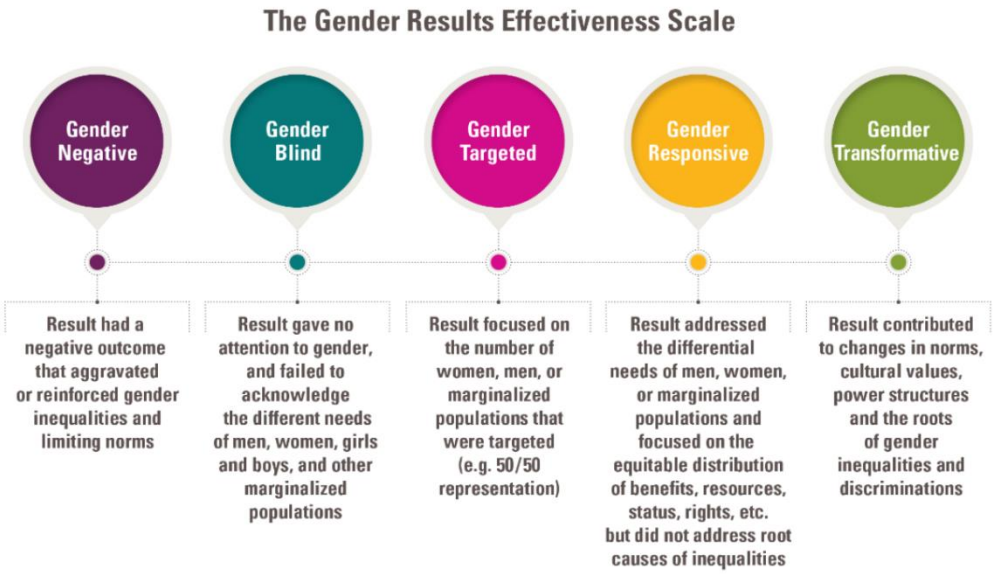
Additionally, EUSIF supported the organization of a provincial workshop on GBV and Social Inclusion with the participation of Deputy mayors and Vice-chairperson which concluded with a 29 points declaration. Later, discussions were conducted on the implementation status of the Karnali Declaration on Women's Rights with provincial/district-level Inter-Party Women Networks to integrate GESI into policy, program, and budget decisions of PLGs in Karnali Province. However, local government officials were not found to be familiar with the declaration. Overall, service holders, including women and disadvantaged groups, have benefited from faster and easier access to services in model palikas, and the PLGs are becoming more responsive to the needs of women and disadvantaged groups due to knowledge products, policy support,

and capacity development initiatives. In general, the project's GESI results are mostly gender responsive and, in some cases, transformative.

In conclusion, the EUSIF project has effectively addressed key cross-cutting issues, including GESI, human rights-based approaches, and GRID[28]. The project's robust governance structure, management practices, and risk management mechanisms have contributed to its success in promoting inclusive and effective governance in Karnali Province. Though, the GESI efforts were not found sufficient to substantially contribute to the motto of inclusive federalism. Hence, continued efforts to integrate these cross-cutting issues and strengthen governance practices will be essential for sustaining and expanding the project's achievements.

Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) Assessment for EUSIF

In conducting the evaluation, the evaluation team applied the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES). The aim of the GRES is to deepen the gender lens by providing operational definitions and marking distinctions between different types of results. The GRES enables a more granular assessment of results; for example, is the result primarily focused on counting the number of men or women (gender targeted), or is it truly moving to shifting power and gendered social norms in communities or institutions (gender transformative)? The GRES is provided below.



Source: Adapted from the Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, IEO, UNDP, 2015

Results Area	GRES Scale	Justification for rating	Remarks
Result 1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit, and	**Level 3: Gender Targeted.**	Results focused on the number of	The EUSIF project has made solid strides in enhancing inclusiveness,

[28] In summary, as noted in the 2022 progress report, all the interventions designed under each of these results embedded Green, Resilient, Inclusive Development principles (GRID), and a rights-based approach. EUSIF has developed a separate GESI project strategy, which elaborates its support areas and the target indicators under each of these results. GESI sensitive indicators, checklist for GESI and GRID, GESI sensitive M&E guidelines (proposed), and the Project Information Management System are some examples how EUSIF incorporated GESI and GRID principles in activities, tools or products.

Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services Enhanced in Line with Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development Objectives		women, men, or marginalized populations that were targeted.	community benefits, and sustainability of local government and ward basic services. The establishment of inclusive annual planning and budgeting processes and the piloting of One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) mechanisms have been pivotal in accessing services by women and marginalized groups with equal treatment. The OSSD was initiated aiming to make public service delivery accessible including to women and marginalized groups. While these initiatives demonstrate a gender-responsive approach, further efforts are needed to address gaps in ward-level service delivery and consistent implementation of gender-specific facilities.
Result 2: PLG Data Management, Monitoring, and Reporting Systems Are Evidence-Based and Enable Achieving PLG Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development Objectives	**Level 4: Gender Responsive**.	Results addressed the differential needs of men, women or marginalized populations and focused the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, etc. but did not address root causes of inequalities.	The project has effectively established and utilized data management systems, such as the Project Information Management System (PIMS), to enhance evidence-based decision-making and coordination in local governance. The capacity-building efforts for data management have promoted gender-responsive governance, ensuring that data collection and utilization address the needs of marginalized communities. However, further integration of social inclusion aspects is necessary to fully realize the potential of these systems.
Result 3: Capacity of Provincial Centers for Good Governance (Now Called KPTA) Attuned to PLG Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery	**Level 4: Gender Responsive**	Results addressed the differential needs of men, women or marginalized populations and focused the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, etc. but did not address root causes of inequalities.	The EUSIF project has developed comprehensive training programs and materials for the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA), promoting inclusive governance practices. The integration of GESI strategies in these training materials ensures that the needs of marginalized communities are addressed. Additionally, the training and mobilization of local master trainers have filled resource gaps at the local level, further advancing gender-responsive governance. Continuous efforts are needed to fully institutionalize these capacities.
Result 4: Capacity of Local Government Associations Enhanced	**Level 4: Gender Responsive**	Results addressed the differential needs of men, women or	The establishment of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University and the project's focus on capacity building have

for Evidence-Based Advocacy and Representation of Local Government Voice		marginalized populations and focused the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, etc. but did not address root causes of inequalities.	enhanced policy advocacy efforts, promoting evidence-based decision-making and inclusive governance. These initiatives have increased awareness and participation in transparency and accountability efforts, supporting gender-responsive governance. However, ensuring the production and broader access to GESI-related policy papers and knowledge products remains an area for improvement.

Result 1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit, and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services Enhanced in Line with Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development Objectives

The EUSIF project has made solid strides in enhancing inclusiveness, community benefits, and sustainability of local government and ward basic services. The establishment of inclusive annual planning and budgeting processes and the piloting of One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) mechanisms have been pivotal in accessing services by women and marginalized groups with equal treatment. The OSSD was initiated aiming to make public service delivery accessible including to women and marginalized groups. While these initiatives demonstrate a gender-responsive approach, further efforts are needed to address gaps in ward-level service delivery and consistent implementation of gender-specific facilities. The overall assessment for Result 1 is **Level 3: Gender Targeted**.

Result 2: PLG Data Management, Monitoring, and Reporting Systems Are Evidence-Based and Enable Achieving PLG Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development Objectives

The project has effectively established and utilized data management systems, such as the Project Information Management System (PIMS), to enhance evidence-based decision-making and coordination in local governance. The capacity-building efforts for data management have promoted gender-responsive governance, ensuring that data collection and utilization address the needs of marginalized communities. However, further integration of social inclusion aspects is necessary to fully realize the potential of these systems. The overall assessment for Result 2 is **Level 4: Gender Responsive**.

Result 3: Capacity of Provincial Centers for Good Governance (Now Called KPTA) Attuned to PLG Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery

The EUSIF project has developed comprehensive training programs and materials for the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA), promoting inclusive governance practices. The integration of GESI strategies in these training materials ensures that the needs of marginalized communities are addressed. Additionally, the training and mobilization of local master trainers have filled resource gaps at the local level, further advancing gender-responsive governance. Continuous efforts are needed to fully institutionalize these capacities. The overall assessment for Result 3 is **Level 4: Gender Responsive**.

Result 4: Capacity of Local Government Associations Enhanced for Evidence-Based Advocacy and Representation of Local Government Voice

The EUSIF has conducted Transformative Leadership Building Training for Elected Representatives of Local Governments, most of whom were women. EUSIF provided support in strengthening the secretariat of the Policy lab at Mid-West University. There was GESI in the MU Policy Lab while conducting policy dialogues, but no GESI related policy paper was produced. The project has provided support to conduct intergovernmental dialogue between province and local governments and peer to peer learning workshops. One of the dialogues was on provincial and local budget credibility in line with implementation of fiscal federalism and one GESI aspect was included in the dialogues. It would have been beneficial to include GESI responsive public financing management in the sessions. The EUSIF has also conducted discussions on the status of implementation of the Karnali Declaration on women rights with Provincial/district level Inter-Party Women Network to integrate GESI in Policy, Program and Budget of PLGs in Karnali Province. However, the evaluators found that the local government officials were not familiar with the declaration. The overall assessment for Result 4 is **Level 4: Gender Responsive**.

Overall, the EUSIF project has achieved a **Level 4: Gender Responsive** across its key result areas, demonstrating significant progress in integrating gender considerations into its interventions. While the project has laid a strong foundation for inclusive and gender-responsive governance, ongoing efforts are necessary to move towards a more transformative impact that fully addresses the structural causes of gender inequality.

Finding 6.7.2: Integration of a Human Rights-Based Approach in Project Implementation

EUSIF has integrated a human rights-based approach in its project implementation, ensuring that the needs and rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups are prioritized. The project's initiatives in inclusive governance, capacity building, and service delivery have been designed to promote equity and access to basic services for all community members. This approach is evident in the inclusive and participatory annual planning and budgeting process implemented in three local governments, which increased participation from community members, including women and Dalits (hence covering both rights-holders and duty-bearers). These efforts have helped ensure that local budgets are allocated based on actual community needs, leading to more effective and inclusive service delivery.

The project's focus on transparency and accountability further reinforces its human rights-based approach. By promoting evidence-based decision-making and policy advocacy through initiatives like the Policy Lab at Mid-West University, EUSIF has created platforms for stakeholders to engage in dialogue and hold local governments accountable. This emphasis on transparency and accountability has enhanced the project's ability to address human rights issues and promote inclusive governance practices.

Finding 6.7.3: EUSIF's Contribution to Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID)

EUSIF has contributed to Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) by incorporating GRID principles into its project design and implementation. The project's support for developing the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and the Capacity Development Management Information System (CDMIS) includes features that promote gender-responsive and inclusive data management. These systems facilitate the collection and analysis of data related to gender-responsive initiatives and outcomes, enabling local governments to make informed decisions that support sustainable and inclusive development.

The project's efforts in capacity building have also supported GRID objectives. For example, the training programs developed for the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA) for local resource persons, include

modules on transformative leadership and GESI, which promote sustainable and inclusive governance practices. Additionally, EUSIF's focus on participatory planning and budgeting processes has encouraged local governments to incorporate GRID principles into their development plans. By integrating these principles into its activities, EUSIF has laid the groundwork for promoting sustainable and resilient development in Karnali Province.

The EUSIF project has also contributed to promoting Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development within Karnali Province, aligning its interventions with broader objectives of sustainable and inclusive growth. The project integrated Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) principles into its initiatives, enhancing the capacity of local governments to adopt some environmentally sustainable practices and build resilience against socio-economic and environmental shocks. This was evident in the establishment of One Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) Centers, which streamlined service delivery and reduced environmental impact through efficient resource use. Additionally, the project emphasized participatory planning and budgeting processes, enabling communities to prioritize and implement local projects that support environmental sustainability and resilience.

A notable instance of the project's contribution to resilience was its response to the Jajarkot earthquake on November 3, 2023. EUSIF provided technical assistance to Chaurjahari Municipality to develop a questionnaire to assess the damage and losses caused by the earthquake. This data collection initiative facilitated evidence-based disaster management planning and budgeting for earthquake victims, demonstrating the project's adaptability and responsiveness to unforeseen environmental challenges. Furthermore, capacity-building programs for local officials included components on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, embedding green and resilient practices into local governance.

These efforts collectively enhance the resilience of communities, ensuring they are better equipped to manage and thrive amidst environmental and socio-economic challenges. The EUSIF project's strategic integration of GRID principles into local governance systems and its proactive disaster response illustrate an example of a comprehensive approach to fostering sustainable and resilient development in Karnali Province.

7. Conclusions

This section presents comprehensive conclusions based on the evaluation findings, highlighting the project's strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes. These conclusions provide insights into the key evaluation questions and offer solutions to important issues relevant to decision-makers, particularly regarding gender equality and social inclusion (GESI).

Conclusion 1: Strong Alignment and Relevance to National and International Frameworks

The EUSIF project has demonstrated a strong alignment with Nepal's national strategies and international frameworks, including UNDP's Strategic Plan, the UNSDCF, and the European Union's Agenda for Change. The project's focus on strengthening local governance and service delivery systems aligns well with Nepal's 15th Plan and provincial policies in Karnali. Most notably, EUSIF has shown excellent complementarity with the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP), as it has been designed to provide complementary technical assistance and address gaps identified in the PLGSP's Mid-term Review. By promoting GESI and supporting the development of the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA), EUSIF addresses critical national priorities aimed at enhancing local capacity and promoting inclusive development.

The project's design and implementation have been intricately linked with national and provincial priorities, ensuring that its activities are relevant and contribute to broader development goals. EUSIF's initiatives, such as support for strengthening the secretariat of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University and the development of the Project Information Management System (PIMS), have supported evidence-based policymaking and improved data management, respectively. This strategic alignment has enhanced the project's relevance and effectiveness, enabling it to address the needs of local governments and marginalized communities effectively. Furthermore, EUSIF's complementary efforts with the PLGSP, such as the development of GESI-sensitive Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines for Chaurjahari Municipality, have strengthened the overall impact and effectiveness of both programs.

Related Findings:

- Finding 6.1.1 and 6.1.2: EUSIF is Well-Aligned with UNDP's Strategic Objectives, National Priorities, and EU Policies
- Finding 6.6.2: EUSIF's Complementarity with the PLGSP Enhances Its Impact and Effectiveness

Conclusion 2: Effective Capacity Building and Service Delivery Improvements

EUSIF has made notable progress in building the capacity of local government officials and improving service delivery mechanisms. The project's comprehensive training programs and the establishment of One-Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) Centers have significantly enhanced the efficiency and accessibility of local services. These efforts have also contributed to increased participation of women and marginalized groups in governance processes.

The training programs developed for KPTA, including operational guidelines and standard operating procedures, have provided a solid foundation for ongoing capacity building. The training of local master trainers and the development of GESI strategies have ensured that these programs are inclusive and sustainable. The five years strategic plan of KPTA has identified the key areas of capacity development. The establishment of OSSD Centers in model palikas has streamlined service delivery processes, making it

easier for citizens to access various services from a single point. These initiatives have led to positive behavioral changes among civil servants and elected representatives, promoting equal access to services.

Related Findings:

- Finding 6.31: Stepped up Participation and Inclusiveness in Local Governance
- Finding 6.3.2: Improved Service Delivery Mechanisms
- Finding 6.3.5: EUSIF's Comprehensive Training Programs and Materials Represent a Solid Foundation for KPTA's Capacity Building Efforts

Conclusion 3: Robust Governance and Management Arrangements but Room for Improved Communication

The governance and management arrangements of the EUSIF project have been robust, with effective coordination and collaboration among stakeholders. However, there are opportunities to enhance overall outreach to the wider public and improve communication with donors by simplifying processes and ensuring more regular updates.

The project's governance structure, including the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the Project (TA) team, has facilitated the smooth execution of activities and minimized overlaps. The use of the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) has allowed for a streamlined and efficient flow of funds, minimizing bureaucratic delays. However, improving communication processes and maintaining regular updates can further strengthen relationships with donors and ensure that they are well-informed about the project's activities and achievements. This enhanced communication will contribute to the project's transparency and foster greater support for its initiatives.

Related Findings:

- Finding 6.2.4: EUSIF Demonstrated Effective and Adaptive Resource Management
- Finding 6.3.7: EUSIF Provided Basis for Enhancing Policy Advocacy Through Establishment of Policy Labs and Collaboration
- Finding 6.3.10: Governance, Management Practices, Risk Management, and Quality Assurance

Conclusion 4: EUSIF's Short Duration Limits its Long-Term Impact, but Lays a Foundation for Future Engagement

Although EUSIF is concluding, the duration of the project has been too short to fully achieve the deep and sustainable changes required for the introduction of inclusive federalism. Establishing inclusive federalism is a complex and long-term process that necessitates ongoing engagement and technical assistance. To build on the foundations laid by EUSIF, continued support and sustained efforts will be crucial.

Despite the project's completion, the early successes in knowledge dissemination and capacity building demonstrate the significant potential of EUSIF's initiatives. The establishment of the Policy Lab at Mid-West University and the development of the PIMS have shown promise in promoting evidence-based policymaking and improving data management. The project's capacity-building efforts, including the training of local master trainers and the development of comprehensive training modules, provide a replicable model for other regions. However, to realize the full impact of inclusive federalism, there must be a commitment to

long-term engagement and sustained technical assistance. This ongoing support will be essential in ensuring that the foundations laid by EUSIF can lead to lasting and transformative governance improvements across Nepal.

Related Findings:

- Finding 6.4.1: EUSIF Laid a Foundation for Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization
- Finding 6.4.2: EUSIF Initiated Capacity Building Efforts at Multiple Levels
- Finding 6.4.3: EUSIF's Early Outcomes Show Potential for Replication and Scaling Up

In conclusion, the EUSIF project has demonstrated significant strengths in aligning with national and international frameworks, building local capacities, improving service delivery, and establishing robust governance structures. While there are areas for improvement, particularly in communication and outreach, the project's achievements provide a strong foundation for future replication and scalability. However, given the project's short duration, it has not had sufficient time to fully realize the deep and sustainable changes needed for the introduction of inclusive federalism. Establishing inclusive federalism is a complex, long-term process that requires ongoing engagement and technical assistance. Continued efforts to integrate GESI, promote transparency, and enhance governance practices will be essential for sustaining and expanding the project's impacts, and ensuring the long-term success of inclusive federalism in Nepal.

Conclusion 5: Achieving a Paradigm Shift in Governance Requires Long-Term Commitment

The main objective of the EUSIF project is to facilitate a paradigm shift in governance by enhancing citizen participation and introducing a client-oriented approach. This ambitious goal cannot be achieved overnight or through a single intervention. It requires sustained, long-term efforts and continuous technical assistance to embed these changes deeply within governance structures and practices.

The EUSIF project aims to fundamentally change how governance is perceived and practiced in Karnali Province, as a pilot location, with a view to scaling best practices. By promoting citizen participation and a client-oriented approach, the project seeks to make local governance more responsive and inclusive. These changes are critical for improving the relationship between citizens and local governments and ensuring that governance structures effectively address the needs and priorities of all community members.

However, such a paradigm shift is inherently ambitious and complex. It involves altering entrenched behaviors, attitudes, and systems, which takes significant time and effort. The EUSIF project has made important strides in this direction by establishing mechanisms like the One-Stop Service Delivery (OSSD) Centers, enhancing data management systems, and building the capacity of local government officials. Despite these achievements, the project's short duration has limited its ability to fully embed these changes.

To achieve the desired paradigm shift, it is essential to maintain a long-term commitment to these goals. This includes ongoing technical assistance, continuous capacity building, and persistent efforts to engage and empower citizens. By ensuring sustained support and engagement, it is possible to achieve lasting changes that fundamentally improve governance and service delivery in Karnali Province and beyond.

Related Findings:

- Finding 6.3.1: Stepped up Participation and Inclusiveness in Local Governance

- Finding 6.3.2: Improved Service Delivery Mechanisms
- Finding 6.3.5: EUSIF's Comprehensive Training Programs and Materials Represent a Solid Foundation for KPTA's Capacity Building Efforts

8. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Focus on Consolidation, Sharing, and Scaling Up

Consolidate and share project successes to scale up initiatives. The EUSIF project has laid a solid foundation in promoting inclusive governance, improving service delivery, and enhancing data management systems. Building on these achievements, it is crucial to consolidate the project's successes and share them widely to facilitate scaling up. Local partners should be deeply engaged in this process to ensure that the lessons learned are effectively communicated and institutionalized. The value of these partnerships lies in their ability to ground initiatives at the local level, ensuring sustainability and broader impact, thus also representing the project's exit strategy.

Evidence and Findings:

- Finding 6.3.1: Stepped up Participation and Inclusiveness in Local Governance
- Finding 6.3.9: Policy Advocacy Efforts Led to the Development and Dissemination of Key Knowledge Products
- Conclusion 1: Strong Alignment and Relevance to National and International Frameworks

Next steps: UNDP to assess further opportunities to scale up initiatives and promote project successes in closing events of the EUSIF**.**

Timeline: during the project closure phase (September 2024 or during a cost-extension should it be granted)

Responsible for implementation: UNDP Country Office

Recommendation 2: Frame EUSIF as a Comprehensive Repository of Products and Partnerships

EUSIF as a repository of knowledge products and partnerships. Position EUSIF as a central repository that documents all training materials, policy briefs, research papers, and other knowledge products developed under the project. This repository should also detail key partnerships established during the project, highlighting successful collaborations and providing a blueprint for future initiatives. This approach will ensure that these valuable resources are accessible for future use and can inform and guide subsequent projects.

Evidence and Findings:

- Finding 6.3.5: EUSIF's Comprehensive Training Programs and Materials Represent a Solid Foundation for KPTA's Capacity Building Efforts
- Finding 6.3.7: EUSIF Provided Basis for Enhancing Policy Advocacy Through Establishment of Policy Labs and Collaboration
- Conclusion 5: Achieving a Paradigm Shift in Governance Requires Long-Term Commitment

Next steps: UNDP to consolidate all the knowledge products in order to secure institutional memory beyond the project's lifetime and maintain partnerships developed during project implementation, thereby maintaining its positioning and relevance for the project's focus area.

Timeline: during the project closure phase and further pipeline development in the same field of work (until December 2025)

Responsible for implementation: UNDP Country Office

Recommendation 3: Position UNDP for Future Partnerships Through Strategic High-End Events

Position UNDP for further partnerships by concluding the project with major events. To strategically position UNDP for continued support and partnerships around PLGSP, finalize the EUSIF project in a high-profile manner. Organize major events that showcase the project's achievements and highlight UNDP's role in promoting inclusive governance. These events should target key stakeholders, including government officials, international donors, and civil society organizations, to demonstrate the project's impact and value, and to foster future collaborations.

Evidence and Findings:

- Finding 6.3.8: Increased Awareness and Participation in Transparency and Accountability Initiatives
- Conclusion 3: Robust Governance and Management Arrangements but Room for Improved Communication

Next steps: EUSIF to organize a larger scale closing event for the project, rendering it visibility and portraying results achieved.

Timeline: at the very end of project implementation (August 2024 or during a cost-extension should it be granted).

Responsible for implementation: UNDP Country Office

Recommendation 4: Shift the Narrative Towards Strategic Goals

Transition to a more strategic narrative. As the project moves towards its conclusion, it is important to shift the narrative from operational achievements to strategic goals. Emphasizing the long-term vision of inclusive governance and the steps needed to achieve it will help maintain momentum and secure future support. This narrative should underscore the project's role in laying the groundwork for systemic changes in local governance.

Evidence and Findings:

- Finding 6.3.3: Establishment and Utilization of Data Management Systems
- Conclusion 2: Effective Capacity Building and Service Delivery Improvements

Next steps: UNDP should adopt a strategic communication approach that shifts the focus from short-term operational achievements to the long-term vision of inclusive governance. As the project concludes, UNDP should emphasize how the project has laid the foundation for systemic governance reforms and outline

future steps to sustain and scale these impacts, ensuring continued momentum and support for inclusive governance efforts.

Timeline: during the project closure phase and further pipeline development in the same field of work (until December 2025).

Responsible for implementation: UNDP Country Office

Recommendation 5: Further Institutionalization of Capacity Development

Institutionalize capacity development interventions. To ensure that the knowledge and skills imparted through the EUSIF project are not lost, there should be a greater emphasis on institutionalizing capacity development where possible. This means further embedding training programs within local institutions, such as the KPTA thus strengthening them and creating mechanisms to ensure that the benefits of these programs extend beyond the individual trainees. Developing strategies for the effective mobilization of trained personnel is crucial for sustaining these efforts. Additionally, institutions such as the Policy Lab could be supported to build a wider network of authorities they work with. Finally, it would be important to further consolidate the GRID approach in planning, implementation and M&E systems, whereas GRID can be an excellent tool and entry point for their capacity development.

Evidence and Findings:

- Finding 6.3.5: EUSIF's Comprehensive Training Programs and Materials Represent a Solid Foundation for KPTA's Capacity Building Efforts
- Conclusion 4: EUSIF's Short Duration Limits its Long-Term Impact but Lays a Foundation for Future Engagement

Next steps: UNDP should prioritize the institutionalization of capacity development efforts by embedding training programs within local institutions like the KPTA and ensuring long-term mechanisms for sustaining these efforts. This includes developing strategies to effectively mobilize trained personnel, expanding the network of authorities engaged by institutions such as the Policy Lab, and consolidating the GRID approach in planning, implementation, and M&E systems to enhance capacity development across local governance structures.

Timeline: at the project closure phase (e.g. during implementation of exit strategies in August 2025 or during a cost-extension should it be granted)

Responsible for implementation: UNDP Country Office

Recommendation 6: Prioritize GESI in all Future Initiatives

Prioritize GESI in all future initiatives. The EUSIF project has made strides in promoting GESI, but there is room for improvement. Future projects should continue to prioritize GESI, ensuring that all interventions are inclusive and equitable. This includes addressing gaps in ward-level service delivery and improving the dissemination and utilization of GESI-sensitive resources, as well as GESI budgeting, preparation of GESI strategy and implementation of all LG's program based on GESI strategy.

Evidence and Findings:

- Finding 6.3.2: Improved Service Delivery Mechansim

- Conclusion 2: Effective Capacity Building and Service Delivery Improvements

Next steps: UNDP should continue to prioritize GESI in all future initiatives by ensuring that interventions are inclusive and equitable at every level of governance. This includes closing gaps in ward-level service delivery, enhancing the dissemination and use of GESI-sensitive resources, and advancing GESI budgeting. Additionally, future projects should focus on the preparation and implementation of GESI strategies across local governments to ensure that all programs are grounded in GESI principles.

Timeline: during further pipeline development (until December 2025)

Responsible for implementation: UNDP Country Office

These recommendations provide a roadmap for sustaining and expanding the impact of the EUSIF project. By focusing on consolidation, institutionalization, and strategic communication, the project can build on its successes and continue to promote inclusive and effective governance in Nepal.

9. Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: Importance of Local Leadership and Ownership

The EUSIF project demonstrated that the leadership and active engagement of Provincial and Local Governments (PLGs) are critical for the ownership and sustainability of the support extended by development institutions. By aligning the project's technical assistance with the priorities of the PLGs and ensuring that these local bodies led the initiatives, the project increased their ownership and commitment to the support provided. This approach has proven to be a key factor in the successful implementation and potential sustainability of the project's interventions.

Lesson 2: Engaging Marginalized Communities for Inclusive Planning

Understanding the needs of excluded and marginalized communities and creating platforms for their meaningful participation are essential for informed planning and policy formulation. The study of the marginalized Badi community in Karnali Province, supported by the EUSIF project, highlighted the importance of involving community members in the research process. Including researchers from the Badi community helped build trust and gain genuine insights, which informed more realistic and concrete planning steps to meet their priorities. This lesson underscores the value of participatory approaches in enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of local governance.

Lesson 3: Structured and Transparent Selection Processes Enhance Capacity Building

A transparent, competency-based, and inclusive selection process for local trainers and facilitators can significantly enhance the quality and sustainability of capacity-building initiatives. EUSIF's collaboration with PCGG to develop a competency-based recruitment process for trainers ensured a diverse and qualified pool of trainers. This approach not only improved the quality of training provided but also fostered a sense of ownership and commitment among the trainers. The project's success in this area suggests that such structured approaches can be effectively scaled and institutionalized in other regions and projects.

Lesson 4: Continuous and Contextualized Capacity Building is Crucial

One-time training sessions are insufficient for sustainable capacity building. Continuous follow-up and refresher training is necessary to reinforce learning and ensure that participants can effectively recall and apply new skills and knowledge. EUSIF's monitoring visits revealed that participants often struggled to remember training content due to competing priorities in their daily lives. Providing ongoing support and refresher training sessions can help sustain the benefits of initial training efforts and ensure long-term improvements in local governance.

Lesson 5: Contextualization of Training Content Increases Relevance and Impact

Adapting training content to the local context and using real-life applications significantly enhances the relevance and impact of capacity-building activities. EUSIF's use of simulations and role-play in local languages during training sessions improved participants' understanding and retention of the material. This approach was particularly effective for women and marginalized communities, highlighting the importance of contextualized training methods in achieving inclusive and effective capacity building.

Lesson 6: Collaborative Approaches Foster Innovation and Quality

The formation of task teams or technical committees that include diverse perspectives from government and stakeholders can enhance creativity, innovation, and the quality of project solutions. EUSIF's experience showed that such collaborative approaches facilitated problem-solving, ensured compliance with government systems, and improved communication and coordination among team members. These mechanisms were particularly effective during the I-BSD mapping exercise and the development of the Project Information Management System.

Lesson 7: Strategic Communication and Documentation of Success Stories

Effectively documenting and sharing success stories and good practices can enhance the visibility and impact of project interventions. EUSIF's efforts to compile a compendium of good practices from its own project, as well as from various palikas in Karnali, aimed to help other stakeholders learn and replicate these practices. Strategic communication and dissemination of such success stories can further strengthen the project's impact and promote its scalability across different regions.

10. Annexes

Annex I. Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation of European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF)Project in Karnali province, Nepal

March 2024

Duty station: Kathmandu, Nepal

Duration: 80 person days (30 person days for Team Leader and 25 person days each for two Team members) spread over April-July 2024

1. Project context and background

PROJECT SUMMARY	
Project title	European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism (EUSIF)
Atlas ID/Quantum ID	00087656
Corporate outcome andoutput	**UNDP Nepal CPD (2023-2027) Outcome and Outputs:** Outcome 2: By 2027, more people, especially women, youth, and the most marginalized and poor increasingly participate in and benefit from coordinated, inclusive, participatory, transparent, and gender-responsive governance, access tojustice, and human rights at federal, provincial, and local levels. CPD Output 2.1: Inclusive and participatory policies, processes, and systems strengthened for implementation of federalism at three levels of government. CPD Output 2.3: Improved mechanisms for promoting transparency and public participation.
Country	Nepal
Region	Asia and the Pacific
Date project documentsigned	29.12.2021
Project period	1 January 2022 - 31 August 2024
Project budget	US$ 2,333,333
Project exp. till Dec 2023	US$ 1,498,151
Funding source	European Union (EU) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Implementing party[1]	UNDP Nepal

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

Background and context

The **Constitution of Nepal** (2015) envisages transforming the country from a centralized unitary State into a Federal one with the objective to ensure economic equality, prosperity, and social justice. Accordingly, the Constitution marked the start of a fundamental paradigm shift in the system, structure and functioning in thegovernance of Nepal.

Within this context the Constitution also frames the functional capacity of Provincial and Local Governance from the perspective of building "…an **egalitarian society founded on the proportional inclusive and participatory principles** in order to ensure economic equality, prosperity and social justice, by **eliminating discrimination** based on class, caste, region, language, religion and gender and all forms of caste-based untouchability, and …**civil liberties, fundamental rights, human rights**, adult franchise, periodic elections, full freedom of the press, and independent, impartial and competent judiciary and concept of the rule of law".

The Government of Nepal (GoN) initiated the **Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP)** in July 2019 as the national framework programme to build capacity of PLGs and to strengthen inter- governmental mechanisms (IG) for coordination and collaboration across all levels of Government. TheEuropean Union Mission to Nepal is the largest financial contributor to the GoN for the PLGSP. As per the PLGSP Financing Agreement between the EU and GoN of March 2020, in addition to the EU basket funding to PLGSP of $40 million, the EU has earmarked a separate budget of € 4.35m for complementary support, under which an EU technical assistance project of €2m is assigned to UNDP as the PLGSP 'Technical Assistance Service Provider' (TAP). The EUSIF Project Document reflects the design and describes the scope of the € 2m EU-UNDPTA-Project.

The PLGSP has **three outcomes**:

(i) **Government institutions and Inter-Governmental mechanisms** at all levels are fully functioning insupport of **federal governance** as per the Constitution.
(ii) Provincial and local governments have **efficient, effective, inclusive and accountable institutions**;and
(iii) **Elected representatives and civil servants** at provincial and local governments have the capacityand serve people to their satisfaction.

Based on PLGSP progress and e.g. the 2019 Federalism Capacity Needs Assessment, the requirement has been identified to strengthen especially the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the 'new' provincial and local governments, as well as of the overall governance of the federalism process. The overall objective of **EUSIF** is therefore to "*provide impetus to strengthening the inclusiveness and responsiveness of Provinces and Local Governments to the diverse needs of people, especially women, historically excluded and marginalized groups,and to augment PLG provision of inclusive, good quality and sustainable basic services*".

As this project is designed under the overall umbrella of the PLGSP programme framework and UNDP **Technical Assistance to the PLGSP (TAP)** agreement, it was decided to interconnect this project with the PLGSP Outcomesand Outputs framework. This project will provide under the overall framework of especially PLGSP Outcome 2,targeted support through one **Project Output**: *"Performance of Provincial and Local Government systems andstaff are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of people, especially women, historically excluded and marginalized groups."* This Project Output is therewith designed concomitant to the PLGSP results.

Under this Project, there are **four Results areas**:

Result 1	Inclusiveness, Community Benefit and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services enhanced in line with Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.

Result 2	PLG data management, monitoring and reporting systems are evidence-based and enable achieving PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.
Result 3	Capacity of Provincial Centers for Good Governance (Now called KPTA) attuned to PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery;
Result 4	Capacity of Local Government Associations enhanced for evidence-based advocacy and representation of Local Government Voice.

This Project has a Pilot-Province and scaling approach, where intense research, learning, good practice designand PLG capacity development is delivered in Karnali Province, on the basis of which other Provinces benefit through joint learning and scaling by this Project and PLGSP**.**

As mentioned above, EUSIF is a two-and-a-half-year project (January 2022 to August 2024) which aims tostrengthen inclusiveness and responsiveness of the PLGs in Karnali Province. It focuses on strengthening PLGs' role as "duty bearers" for the provision of inclusive, quality, and sustainable basic services that is responsive to the diverse needs of people—particularly women, historically excluded and marginalized groups. EUSIF will do this by strengthening the capacity of PLGs to improve access to basic services, and will also support citizens, as "rights holders", to actively engage in ensuring accountability and transparency of PLGs.

EUSIF's strategic counterpart at the Provincial level is the Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers (OCMCM) of Karnali Province.

EUSIF thus complements the PLGSP efforts in enhancing inclusiveness, accountability, and sustainability of the functioning of provincial and local government systems and procedures with a focus on a Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development approach. The project is engaged specifically in building provincial and local government systems and capacities for providing quality and sustainable services to all people as well as strengthening people's voice, especially of historically excluded and disadvantaged groups towards realizing their rights.

Further, the EUSIF project aims to strengthen PLG capacity for driving the PLG's M&E and reporting systems implementation process and to especially empower Provincial level to lead an inclusive PLG federalization process and to inform national level accordingly on enabling requirements.

Project coverage and working approach

EUSIF has been working with two levels of government. At province level, it works with Karnali province and its institutions specifically the Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers (OCMCM), relevantministries, Karnali Province Planning Commission (KPPC), and Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA). At the local level, EUSIF has been working with five Palikas out of ten Model Palikas proposed by the province government. These Palikas are: Soru Rural Municipality from Mugu district, Tila Rural Municipality from Jumla, Dullu Municipality from Dailekh, Chaurjahari Municipality from Rukum-West andPanchapuri Municipality from Surkhet district.

EUSIF has been applying the approach of institution building to deepen inclusive federalism and to initiatea multi-stakeholder learning process for accessing and scaling (largely) already available good practices. The project therefore i) works closely with the ongoing federal reform process at provincial and local government levels, to ensure pragmatic and relevant action in support of deepening inclusive federalism;

ii) captures and translates good practices into the present reality of provincial and local government

functioning: iii) creates an intense collaboration and cross-learning way of working with the PLGSP technical assistance teams to strengthen and embed overall PLG federalization support efforts; and iv) facilitates 'structural transformation', 'leaving no one behind', 'systems thinking' and 'new cultures and ways of working' with GESI at the core of every intervention.

In addition, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) are embedded into all EUSIF interventions.

Key achievements so far

In order to complement provincial and local governments' (PLGs) efforts to enhance the system and mechanism towards efficient, effective, and inclusive service delivery, EUSIF has carried out a number ofactivities and achieved significant progress. EUSIF has completed a mapping of basic service delivery in 21LGs of Karnali province. EUSIF jointly with LISP trained more than 300 local government officials in local level planning process, MTEF formulation and service.

Similarly, to support evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, and reporting system, EUSIF has supported Karnali provincial government in developing and operationalizing a GIS-based project information management system (PIMS) that has been supporting in the areas of donor coordination, resource planning, and needs based and targeted planning and budgeting. EUSIF has also supported Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA) in improving and operationalizing its Capacity Development Management Information System (CDMIS). At the local level, EUSIF has supported Chaurjahari municipality in developing a GESI-sensitive result-based monitoring evaluation and reporting guidelines.

Progress has also been made on the areas of evidence-based policy making and representing the voice oflocal governance. A Policy Lab as an independent policy think tank has been established at Mid-West University (MU).

A number of GESI policies, for example GESI strategy for KPTA, GESI audit training manual for KPTA and EUSIF's are in place. In addition, EUSIF has carried out a number of studies such as socio-economic statusof Badi community, Badi profile.

Evaluation purpose and objectives

The project is in its final year of implementation and has been piloted in Karnali province as a complementary project to the PLGSP. To assess the achievements of the project results, including genderresponsive results, against what was expected to be achieved, document lessons learnt and good practices, a final evaluation is scheduled to be commissioned through independent evaluators.

The overall purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the results achieved and lesson learnt by the project in strengthening the inclusiveness and responsiveness of PLGs for inclusive, good quality and sustainablebasic services in Karnali province of Nepal. The evaluation should assess the implementation approachesof the project, results against results areas, contribution to higher level outcome results including GESI responsive 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 for any similarfuture interventions. The final evaluation report should promote accountability and transparency and assess the extent of project accomplishments.

The key audiences of the final evaluation report are UNDP, the EU Delegation to Nepal, federal and provincial governments, local governments, development partners, and other national, provincial, and local level stakeholders. The results of the evaluation will be useful in making evidence-based decisions inrelation to the future of the project, i.e. its potential extension or expansion either vertically (extension of time period within Karnali) or horizontally (to other provinces) or both. Additionally, since PLGSP's re- programming is also in progress, the information will also be useful in making a substantial project revisionof EUSIF, in line with re-programmed PLGSP. The final evaluation will also serve as an accountability and learning opportunity to provide guidance and recommendations for UNDP's continued support to implementation of federalism and devolution of funds, functions, and functionaries in Nepal.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are the following:

- to assess the rationale and appropriateness of the additional technical assistance by using OECD- DAC evaluation criteria in terms of its modality, approaches, structure, complementarity to the flagship programme PLGSP, implementation arrangement and adequacy in contributing to achievethe key results in line with the Theory of Change.
- to analyze EUSIF's contribution on promoting human rights, mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion, anti-corruption/accountability, and environmental sustainability/GRID approach inprovincial and local government's planning.
- to measure the project's contribution and synergies with other programmes/projects on capacity building, citizen engagement and promoting inter-governmental relations for implementation of federalism,
- to review and assess the risks and opportunities, document key results, learnings, good practices and innovations; and recommend potential areas for future interventions in Karnali as well as otherprovinces considering the current federalism contexts.
- to assess the project through the Gender result effectiveness scale (GRES) methodology.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover the full scope of the EUSIF, including the full implementation period i.e. January2022 to time of evaluation, and targeted geographic coverage, including at federal government, Karnali province and selected local governments benefitting from the services provided by EUSIF.

The key stakeholders of the evaluation include UNDP, the EU Delegation to Nepal, federal government (PLGSP/MoFAGA), provincial government and its entities (i.e. OCMCM, Karnali Province Planning Commission, KPTA), local governments including five Model Palikas, PPIU and PCGG of PLGSP in Karnali province, Mid-West University (MU) Policy Lab, local government association, specifically the NARMIN and MuAN. In addition, UNDP's other related projects, selected development partners working in Karnali such as International IDEA, GIZ, and EUSIF partner organizations such as *Badi Sarokar Manch*, *Aawaj Nepal*, *Mugu GSS*, Karnali Foundation, Hriti Foundation, which have been associated with EUSIF for a longtime, are also the key stakeholders of the project.

In terms of evaluation criteria, the evaluation will follow the OECD-DAC's revised evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability) along with additional cross cutting criteria. The evaluation will also assess how the intervention sought to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion with intersectionality lens including disability issues, application of the human rights-based approach, and the GRID approach, and alignment with transparency and accountability principles.

In addition, the evaluation should also analyse the risks management and documentation of lessons, goodpractices and innovations.

The evaluation should cover at least following areas:

Relevance of the project - appropriateness of the project design, particularly project's objectives, Theoryof Change, Results and Resource Frameworks, project management arrangement, as it relates to the achievement of project objectives, its linkages with the government's national strategic plans, UNSDCF, UNDP Country Programme Document, and problems it intends to address, and relevance to beneficiariesneed, including by considering LNOB aspects.

Efficiency of the project - assess the cost efficiency of the project intervention, the quality and timelinessof the project resources and approaches towards their efficient use.

Effectiveness of the project - assess the project's direct and indirect results (both short term and long term) and its contributions towards the achievement of the anticipated results, including any constraintson its effectiveness, and any unintended results, the reporting and monitoring system, assess theeffectiveness of the project's management arrangements, analyse the underlying factors beyond UNDP control that affect the achievement of the project results.

Impact of the project- assess the quality of project results such as knowledge products, pool of local trainers, system, mechanisms and institutions, capacity development, skill transfer, coordination &collaboration with emphasis of their uses, replication using "so what" aspect.

Sustainability of the project intervention and results- examining the sustainability of the system, mechanisms and capacity developed under the project and their continuity beyond the project life and opportunities for scalability.

Coherence of the project- alignment with UNDP's core documents (e.g., UNDP's Strategic Plan, UNSCDF, UNDP Nepal's CPD), national priorities (e.g., Nepal's 15th Plan), and project's coordination and collaboration with PLGSP, UNDP's other projects, EU supported projects and other relevant developmentpartner projects.

Other areas:

- Reviewing project approaches and modality towards Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Human Rights-Based Approach, and Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID).
- Examining the external factors beyond the project's control that have affected it negatively or positively and how the project dealt with them.
- Critically examining the Prodoc on overall approach, modality and priority areas against the existing context and socio-economic conditions to inform future planning.
- Assess the planning, management, and quality assurance mechanism including monitoring and evaluation as well as risk mangement to deliver the project interventions, review the project's coordination and communication processes and mechanisms with the stakeholders; and
- Assess the management and governing structure of the project and distribution of responsibilities within the given structure.

Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

The final evaluation will adopt the six revised evaluation criteria by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): Relevance,

Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. Human Rights, Gender Equality and SocialInclusion, Transparency and Accountability, and environmental sustainability and resilience including GRID approach will also be included as additional cross-cutting criteria.

The evaluation will address the following main questions:

- To what extent has the EUSIF achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives? What factorscontributed to or hindered the project's performance and sustainability of the results?
- To what extent was the EUSIF relevant and effective in strengthening the inclusiveness and responsiveness of PLGs to deliver inclusive, good quality and sustainable basic services in the federalcontext?
- To what extent has the project mainstreamed GESI and human rights aspects in PLGs' system and service delivery mechanisms?
- What are the key considerations to be taken into account while developing new or scaling up similar interventions?

The evaluation team should further refine the guiding evaluation questions outlined in table 1 and agreeon a final set of evaluation questions with UNDP prior to commencing the evaluation.

Table 1: Guiding questions

Criteria	Guiding questions
Relevance	1. To what extent was the project in line with national and sub-national development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP Country Programme Document, and the SDGs?
	2. To what extent the project has been able to address the needs of the intended beneficiaries including Provincial and local governments (PLGs) and marginalized communities?
	3. To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in design?
	4. Was the project design responsive to GESI?
	5. To what extent were the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs anddeliverables) logical and coherent?
Coherence	1. To what extent was the intervention coherent and created synergies and interlinkageswith other interventions carried out by UNDP? (Internal coherence).
	2. How the project has responded to the changes in the environment including thepolitical, legal, socio-economic context, and other areas?
	3. To what extent the intervention was consistent with other actor's interventions (including other UN agencies, development partners, government agencies) in the samecontext or adding value to avoid duplication of the efforts in Karnali? (External coherence)

Efficiency	1. To what extent project management and governance structures including monitoring/quality assurance and results framework appropriate and efficient in supporting timely implementation and generating the expected results?
	2. Has the project implementation strategy been efficient and cost effective? What cost effectiveness measures did the project adopt? And what were the results?
	3. Have the project resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) beenstrategically allocated and delivered on time to achieve project objectives?
	4. To what extent the project interventions have been able to create value for money?
Effectiveness	1. To what extent the project's intended results (objectives, outcome and output) have been achieved or on the track to be achieved within the project period? What were thecontributing factors in achieving or not achieving the intended results?
	2. To what extent the project has been effective in enhancing the capacity of PLGs, NARMIN, MuAN and communities to create an enabling environment for evidence- based policy advocacy?
	3. To what extent the provincial and local government systems and mechanisms havebecome more inclusive and responsive to rights holders? 3.1. To what extent the people of Karnali believe that the decision making in the provinceis more inclusive and responsive? 3.2. To what extent the people of Karnali receive more efficient and effective services atthe local level (Model Palikas)? 3.3. To what extent the design of basic delivery systems and procedures is more inclusivethan at the start of the project and in comparison, to other provinces?
	4. To what extent the project results, including GESI results, have been able to contribute tothe PLGSP outcomes and outputs, as well as UNDP's CPD and UNSDCF results and EU's priorities?
Impact	1. To what extent the local people, especially women, persons with disabilites, and other disadvantaged people in Karnali benefitted from more inclusive, efficient, and effective service delivery?
	2. To what extent the project has been able to contribute to enhanced inter-governmentalrelations, implementation of federalism, and inclusive governance?
	3. To what extent the project has been able to generate lessons, practices and innovationsthat could be replicated in the future?
Sustainability	1. To what extent the project contributed to build capacities of provincial and local governments, and community empowerment which will contribute to sustainability of the results achieved ensuring ownership of the PLGs?
	2. What are the plans or action taken by the provincial and local governments, and what are the stakeholders' views to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project completion?

	3. To what extent communities participated and expressed their ownership andunderstanding in addition to the provincial and local governments?
Human Rights	1. To what extent have poor, persons with disabilities, women, and other excluded andmarginalized groups benefited from the project?
	2. To what extent has the project integrated the Human Rights Based Approach in thedesign, implementation and monitoring of the project?
GESI and Disability	1. To what extent was gender equality and social inclusion considered in project design, implementation, and monitoring?
	2. To what extent did the project promote positive changes (leadership, empowerment) for women and persons from excluded/marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities?
	3. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning and implementation? What barriers did persons with disabilities face in accessing the government services?
Environmental	1. To what extent was the project able to promote the principles of environmentalsustainability and resilience in design, implementation, and monitoring?
Transparency and Accountability	1. To what extent was the project able to promote the principles of transparency and accountability in design, implementation, and monitoring?

Methodology

The evaluation approach and methodologies provided below are indicative only. The evaluation team should review the methodology and propose the final methods and data collection tools in the inceptionreport, following review of the project related documents and reports. The method and tools should be context-sensitive and adequately address the issues of human rights, gender equality and social inclusion.

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 government counterparts at federal, provincial, and local levels, the project team, UNDP Country Office, including the evaluation manager, and other critical stakeholders. Thus, the evaluation team is expected to work closely with the UNDP Country Office during the evaluation adopting the following data collectionmethods.

The evaluation should build upon the data and information collected from both primary and secondary sources generated through review of literature related to the project, including project document, results and resources framework, field visits, consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries. The evaluators will follow mixed methods of data collection, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The data and information thus collected should be evidence-based, reliable, credible, and useful. The evaluation team should also ensure triangulation of the various data sources to maximize the validity andreliability of data.

Given below is the summary of some of the relevant data collection tools that might be used in this evaluation. However, the evaluators will revise and update evaluation methods and tools in line with theevaluation purpose and objectives based on reference documents.

GESI and human rights lens should be applied thoroughly during all stages of the evaluation to duly address gender, disability, and human right issues.

Indicative data collection methods:

5.1 Document review - review of project related documents such as project document, theory of change,results and resources framework, annual work plans (AWPs), Annual Progress Reports, knowledge products, EUSIF publications such as bulletins, stories, policies, and strategic documents, policies, and other documents that the team finds useful for the evaluation. While reviewing the documents, accomplishment of key results in general, and GESI responsive results in particular, will be documented and highlighted in the evaluation report.

5.2 Consultation with UNDP, donors and project team - consultative meetings with EU team in Kathmandu, project team residing at project office, Surkhet and other UNDP staff both at the Country Office and Field Office Surkhet will be carried out to get required data and information related to the project.

5.3 Key Informant Interview (KII) - The evaluators will conduct structured/semi-structured in-depth interviews (KIIs) with relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries as per the need of the evaluation. The possible stakeholders for the KII are the National Programme Director (NPD)-PLGSP/MoFAGA, National Programme Manager (NPM)-PLGSP/MoFAGA, Province Programme Director (PPD)-Karnali, Province Programme Manager (PPM)-Karnali, Executive Director-KPTA, Vice Chair/ Admin Chief from Karnali Planning Commission, selected Officers-OCMCM/KPTA, Team Leaders-PLGSP-Karnali, representativesfrom Model Palikas, MU Policy Lab and NARMIN, *Badi Sarokar Manch*.

5.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)- Focus group discussions can also be carried out among the local people from the Palikas especially on inclusiveness in annual planning process, validating results includingGESI responsive results and with other stakeholders at province level as per the needs identified in the methodology. A separate FGD should be conducted with Badi Communities to capture their voices in theevaluation.

5.5 Briefing and de-briefing- The evaluation team will organize briefing and debriefing sessions with UNDPCountry Office, the project team, and other partners, as required.

Expected Deliverables

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

1. Inception report - with clear articulation of evaluation approach, objectives and methodology. The inception report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, evaluation tools, activities, deliverables, and timelines for completion.

2. Evaluation matrix - including key criteria, indicators, and questions to capture and assess information based on evaluation criteria.

3. Summary of preliminary findings - immediately after completion of data collection, the evaluation team will share a summary of preliminary findings based on field data through de-briefing among UNDP and project team, and if needed with provincial government stakeholders.

4. Draft evaluation report - based on data information, the evaluators will prepare a draft report for sharing with UNDP and project team for review and feedback. Once the comments are received, the evaluators will address the feedback and finalize the report. As a part of evaluation report audit trail, theevaluators need to document the draft report with comments and responses to those comments.

5. Final evaluation report - within the stipulated timeline with sufficient detail and quality incorporating feedback from the concerned parties, the evaluators will submit the final report to the UNDP.

6. Exit presentation (If needed) - If needed, an exit presentation on the overall evaluation process, findingsand recommendations will be organized by the evaluators.

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

Evaluation team and required competencies

There will be at least three experts in the team, including one international consultant as the team leaderand two national consultants as team members with governance and GESI expertise respectively. The team composition will be gender-balanced to the extent possible (with at least one female). 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. UNDP Nepal CO will select the members of the evaluation team.

The evaluation team including the international consultant (Team Leader) must include a field mission toKarnali Province and selected local governments.

1) Team Leader, International Consultant: (30 working days)

Roles and responsibilities: Responsible for overall lead and management of the final evaluation. S/he should be responsible for the overall conceptualization, planning and conduct of the evaluation, submission of the quality and timely evaluation reports and briefing to UNDP Nepal COKey responsibilitiesinclude:

- Takes overall leadership of the team and execution of the evaluation adhering to the UNDP EvaluationGuidelines ensuring its independence,
- Reviews relevant documents and finalizes the inception report including evaluation matrix, questions,methods, data collection and analysis instruments,
- Coordinates field missions and key consultation meetings for in-depth interviews and discussions withall relevant stakeholders,

- Reviews methods and tools and supervises the work of other team members and assures high qualityof work,
- Leads the sharing and de-briefing meetings with UNDP and other stakeholders as appropriate,
- Takes overall responsibility of producing the report and its quality assurance process including contribution to the major sections of the report as agreed among the team members,
- Ensures that gender equality and social inclusion perspectives are incorporated throughout theevaluation process and the report,
- Acts as the main point of contact for UNDP (and stakeholders as appropriate)
- Prepares the report, addresses feedback and submits final draft to UNDP on behalf of evaluationteam.

Qualification and competencies:

- At least master's degree in governance, Management, Public Administration, Social Studies, or otherrelevant areas.
- Extensive knowledge and experience on inclusive governance, rule of law, federalism and M&Emethods and approaches.
- More than 7 years of experience leading similar kinds of evaluation in the development sector,
- Knowledge of Nepal's governance systems and processes will be considered an asset,
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills, thorough knowledge of different evaluation methodologies/instruments, both qualitative and quantitative.
- Excellent command in different data collection methods, including FGDs, KII and literature reviews
- Adequate knowledge on gender sensitive evaluations.
- Adequate knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion in development projects/evaluations.

2) Team Member (Governance expert) (25 working days)

Roles and responsibilities: Responsible for reviewing documents; analysing progress, issues and challenges of the project. S/he should support the team leader for overall implementation of theevaluation, including finalizing the methodology, drafting, editing, supplementing, correcting and/or revising selected chapters of the evaluation report as assigned by the Team Leader; assisting the Team Leader to ensure Nepal's specific governance and federalism related dimensions are well understood andinforms all stages of the evaluation including the final evaluation report. Key responsibilities include:

- Briefs the Team Leader on Nepal's governance system, processes, political dynamics among others,
- Under the guidance of Team Leader and in collaboration with GESI Expert, develops tools including questionnaires and checklist as needed and gathers data and information accordingly,
- Supports in organizing the evaluation mission as agreed among team members. This includesorganizing the consultation meetings, interviews, and field missions as appropriate,
- Contributes to writing the relevant sections of the report for team leader to compile,
- Contributes to any other tasks as advised by the team leader.

Qualifications and competencies:

- Master's degree in governance, Management, Public Administration, Social Studies, or other relevantareas,
- More than 5 years of experience of evaluating programmes/projects in the governance sector, or fortechnical assistance programmes/projects.

- Excellent analytical and report writing skills, thorough knowledge of different evaluation methodologies/instruments, both qualitative and quantitative.
- Excellent command in different data collection methods, including FGDs, KII and literature reviews.
- Adequate knowledge on gender responsive evaluations.
- Adequate knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion in development projects/evaluations.

3) Team Member (GESI expertise) (25 working days)

Roles and responsibilities: Responsible for reviewing documents; analysing the progress, issues and challenges of the project. S/he should support the team leader for overall implementation of theevaluation including finalizing the methodology, drafting, editing, supplementing, correcting and/orrevising selected chapters of the evaluation report as assigned by the Team Leader; assisting the Team Leader to ensure gender equality and social inclusion dimensions is mainstreamed in all stages of the evaluation including the final evaluation report. Key responsibilities include:

- Briefs the team leader on the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion status of the country,
- Under the guidance of Team Leader and in collaboration with the Governance Expert, develops toolsincluding questionnaires and checklist as needed and gathers data and information accordingly,
- Supports in organizing the evaluation mission as agreed among team members. This includesorganizing the consultation meetings, interviews, and field missions as appropriate,
- Facilitates GESI-related discussions during the consultations process,
- Contributes to writing the relevant sections of the report for team leader and provides GESIperspectives in the draft/final report,
- Contributes to any other area of work as advised by the team leader.

Qualifications and competencies:

- Master's Degree in Gender studies, Social Inclusion, Governance, Management, Public Administration, Social Studies, or other relevant areas.
- More than 5 years of experience of evaluating programmes/project in governance or GESI sector, orfor technical assistance programmes/projects.
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills, thorough knowledge of different evaluation methodologies/instruments, both qualitative and quantitative.
- Excellent command in different data collection methods including FGDs, KII and literature reviews.
- Strong knowledge of GESI-responsive evaluations and/or use of intersectionality approach inevaluation.
- Adequate knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion in development projects/evaluations.

Ethical considerations

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'[2]. 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 andconfidentiality 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

[2] https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866

the express authorization of UNDP and partners. Consultants will be held to the highest ethical standardsand must sign a Code of Conduct upon acceptance of the assignment.

Implementation arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this final evaluation resides with the UNDP Nepal CO. The UNDPNepal CO will contract the consultants and ensure the logistic arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Evaluation Manager (RBM Analyst) will ensure smooth, quality, and independent implementation of the final evaluation with needful guidance from UNDP Nepal CO'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. The CO, jointly with the project team based in Surkhet, Karnali will be responsible for the final evaluation's logistic arrangements,setting up stakeholder interviews, arranging consultations, coordinating with the Government, etc.

After signing the contract, UNDP will brief the evaluation team upon commencing the assignment on the final evaluation's objectives, purpose, and expected outputs. Key project documents will be shared with the evaluation team. The team should review the relevant documents and share the draft inception reportbefore the commencement of the field mission to Karnali Province for data collection. The team should revise the methodology, data collection tools and review questions. The final methodology and instruments should be proposed in the inception report, including the evaluation schedule and evaluationmatrix that guides the final evaluation's overall implementation. The inception report submitted by the evaluation team should be approved by the Evaluation Manager (RBM Analyst) prior to the commencement of the evaluation process.

The evaluation will remain fully independent. Individual consultants involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation will not be qualified. The consultant will maintain all the communication through the Evaluation Manager. The Evaluation Managershould clear each step of the evaluation. The final evaluation report will be signed by the UNDP CO Deputy Resident Representative. A mission wrap-up meeting should be conducted, during which comments from participants/stakeholders will be noted for incorporation in the final report. The draft report will be reviewed by the concerned stakeholders, including the evaluation reference group (ERG), who will provide their comments.

Representatives from the UNDP Nepal Country Office, the EUSIF Project Office, KPTA will serve as the evaluation reference groups. Stakeholders and the evaluation reference group will provide their feedbackto the draft evaluation report. The evaluators should address the comments received in the draft report.All comments and feedback should be documented through an Evaluation Audit Trail which needs to be submitted by the evaluators at the time of final submission of the evaluation report.

Timeframe and payment methods

The evaluation is expected to start in first week of April for an estimated duration of 80 persons days (30working days for international consultant (team leader) and 25 working days each for the two national consultants (team members) spread over April-July 2024. This includes desk reviews, primary data collection,field work, and report writing. The evaluation team should provide division of work among the team members in the inception report. Tentative deliverables, associated timelines and the payment scheduleis provided in the table below:

Table 2: Activities, timeline and associated payments

S.N.	Tentative activities/deliverables	Estimated No. of days	Timeframe	Payment
1.	Submission of an **Inception Report** with a detailed methodology and a timebound work plan with key deliverables in consultation with UNDP	9 persons days (each team member-3 days)	Within 10 days of signing the contract	**20 percent** of the contract amount upon approval of inception report
2.	**Field mission for data collection** (Field visit,KII, FGD)	39 persons days (each team member-13 days)	Immediately after the approval of the inception report.	**None**
4.	**Evaluation de-briefing** meeting with UNDP and evaluation reference group after completion of the field mission	3 persons days (each team member-1 day)	Within 35 days aftersigning the contract. *(Within 7 days of field mission.)*	**None**
5.	Submission of **Draft Evaluation Report toUNDP** for its review	16 persons days (TL-6 days, team members-10 days)		**40 percent** of the contract amount upon approval of the draft report
6.	Presentation of **Evaluation Findings** to UNDP incorporating initial UNDP comments	3 persons days (each team memer-1 day)		**None**
7.	Submission of **Final Evaluation Report, exit presentation** incorporating comments/feedback from the presentation and approval of the report by UNDP.	10 persons days (TL-6, team member-4 days)	Within 60 days of signing the contract *(including the approvaltime)*	**40 percent** of the contract amount upon approval of the final report

Application submission process and criteria for selection: As required by the programme unit.

Use of evaluation results

The findings and recommendations of this evaluation report will be used to analyze the lessons learned and the way forward for the future design of the next phase of the project (if need be) and/or similar projects. Therefore, the final evaluation report is expected to provide critical findings and specific recommendations for future interventions. The findings are also expected to inform the ongoing re- programming of the PLGSP. In addition, the findings and other information from the report might also beused by other stakeholders such as the provincial government and development partners as a reference to design their interventions.

13. Annexes

1. Relevant Documents:
   - EUSIF Project Document (including theory of change and results and resources framework)
   - Annual Work Plans (AWP) 2022, 2023
   - Project Progress Reports 2022, 2023
   - Knowledge products etc.
   - PLGSP Project Document
   - PLGSP Mid-Term Review Report
   - Final evaluation of TA-PLGSP

2. Tentative list of key stakeholders and partners to be engaged during evaluation process:
   - European Union (EU)
   - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Nepal Country Office, and EUSIF Project Team
   - Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA)
   - PLGSP at federal and Province level
   - Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers (OCMCM), Karnali Province
   - Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA)
   - Karnali Province Planning Commission (KPPC)
   - Mid-West University (MU) Policy Lab,
   - National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN)/ Municipal Association of Nepal(MuAN)
   - Model Palikas/LGs (Soru, Tila, Panchapuri, Chaurjahari and Dullu),
   - Relevant UNDP Projects (Access to Justice-A2J, Parliament Support Project-PSP, LocalInfrastructure Support Program-LISP, PLGSP-TA)
   - Other DPs (Eg. International IDEA, GIZ) working in Karnali,
   - CSOs and NGOs (Hriti Foundation, Karnali Foundation, Mugu GSS, Awaaj Nepal, Badi SarokarManch)

3. Evaluation Matrix template

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods/tools	Indicators/ success standards	Methods for data analysis

4. Evaluation related corporate templates[3]
   a. Inception Report content/outline template
   b. Evaluation Report template
   c. Evaluation Audit Trail Form
   d. UNEG Code of Conduct
5. Sample working days allocation and schedule for the evaluation

[3] Corporate templates will be provided to the selected consultants.

6. Updated Results Resource Framework (see below)
7. Project Theory of Change

Annex 5: Sample working days allocation and schedule for the evaluation

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED# OF PERSONS DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (Portfolio Manager, project staff as needed)	-	At the time of contract signing	UNDP/virtual	Evaluation Team
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing	Via email	Evaluation Manager
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	9 persons days	Within 10 days of contract signing	Home-based	Evaluation Team
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	-	Within 10 days of contract signing		Evaluation Team
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within two weeks of contract signing	UNDP	Evaluation Manager
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews and focus groups	39 persons days	Within 35 days of contract signing	Field With field visits	UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, local authorities, NGOs, etc.
Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders	3 persons days		UNDP	Evaluation team
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (4-5 pages)	16 persons days	Within 45 days of contract signing	Home-based	Evaluation team
Draft report submission Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	- -	Within two weeks of submission of the draft evaluation report	UNDP	Evaluation team Evaluation Manager

Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office, presentation of final findings	13 persons days	Within 55 days of contract signing	Home-based	Evaluation team
Submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP country office (50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)	-	Within 60 days of contract signing	Home-based	Evaluation team
Estimated total persons days for the evaluation	80			

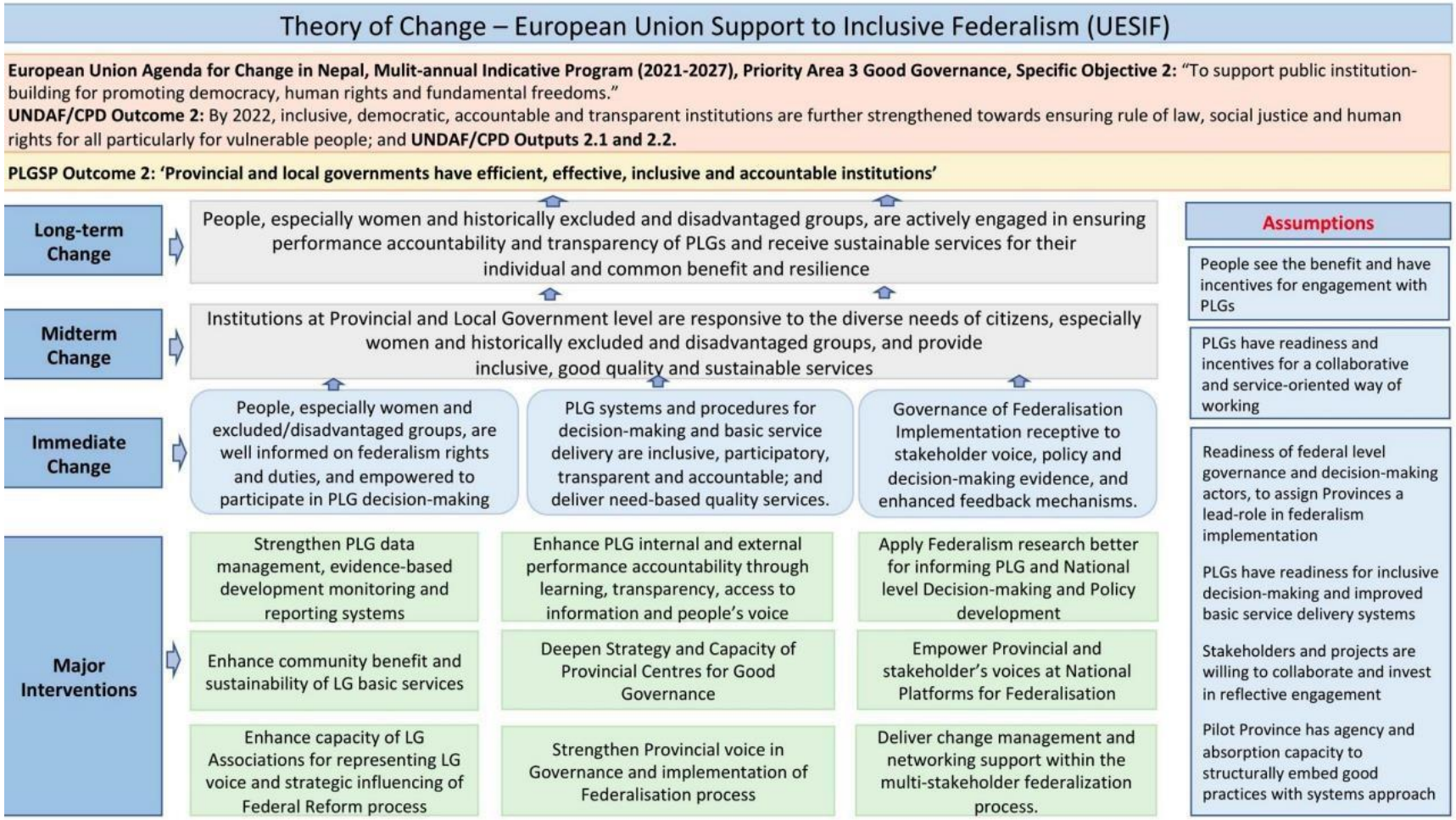
Annex 6: Results Framework

Outcome statement	Outcome indicator	Baseline	Cumulative Targetfor 2022-2024	Total target achieved till 2022	Milestones for 2023	Achievement for 2023	Cumulative Progress Till 2023	Source of data
Performance of Provincial and Local Government systems and staff is inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of people, especially women, historically excluded and marginalized groups	**OC1**-Number of PLGs/parliaments adopting (digital) systems/mechanisms for effective service delivery. *(CPD 2023-2027, Indicator 2.1.4)*	NA	2	0	2	0	0	NA
	OC2-Number of F/P/LGsimproving access to information, including through digital tools. *(CPD 2023-2027, Indicator 2.3.1)*	NA	5	5	5	5-IP	5-IP	*Socio-economic profilesof 5 Model Palikas prepared and thie link with PIMS. (Link: https://projects.karnali.gov.np) is in progress.*
	OC3-Number of people(particularly marginalized groups) utilizing open forums for enhanced participation in decision-making processes. *(CPD 2023-2027, Indicator 2.3.2)*	NA	240	1400	240	1400 (Women=1194, Dalits-525, PWDs-14)	1400	*Attendance sheet, NGO partner reports*
	OC4-Proportion of population in Karnali Province, who believe decision- making is inclusive and responsive by sex, age and disability. *(PLGSP Outcome 2 indicator #12)*	NA	50%	0	0	0	0	*Survey to be done at theend of the project.*
	OC5-Citizens receive efficient and timely public services from local governments in Karnali Province *(PLGSP Outcome 2 indicators #13)*	NA	40%	0	0	0	0	*Survey to be done at theend of the project.*
Result 1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit and Sustainabilityof Local Government and	**R 1.1:** Design of Karnali Province Basic Service Delivery systems and procedures ismore inclusive than at the startof the project and compared to other Provinces	NA	100%	NA	0	NA	0	*Survey to be done at theend of the project.*

Ward Basic Services enhancedin line with Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	**R 1.2:** Local Governments haveGESI strategy for inclusive new federal context	NA	100%	NA	100%	100%	100%	PLGSP report. (Five Model Palikas)
Result 2: PLG data management, monitoring and reporting systemsare evidence-basedand enable achieving PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	**R 2.1** Karnali Province 'Data and M&E-Reporting' systems and procedures functional, anddesign is more inclusive than atthe start of the project and compared to other provinces.	NA	50%	NA	0	0	0	Comparative analysis willbe done at the project end.
	R 2.2 Karnali Province publishes specific Policy Papers on inclusiveness of PLG data management and M&E/ Reporting system and on GESI objectives, using disaggregated data evidence.	0	3	0	1	7	7	MU Policy Lab Report (Policy papers on data and GESI issues by Policy Lab
Result 3: Capacityof Provincial Centres for Good Governance attuned to PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery.	**R 3.1** Pilot-Province PCGG has along-term Organizational strategy for becoming a state- of-the-art resource/training centre, including training strategy and approach for strengthening inclusiveness of PLG decision & policy making, GRID and LG basic service delivery.	0	1	0	1	0	0	Shifted to 2024
Result 4: Capacityof Local Government Associations enhanced for evidence-based advocacy and representation of	**R 4.1** Number of published policy papers of each (i) Municipality Association ofNepal (MuAN), and (ii) NepalAssociation of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN) on LG decision- making and BSD, with specific	NA	5	0	2	22	22	MU Policy Lab Report. (Policy briefs (11) and position papers (11) with Policy Lab (Mid-west University)

Local Government Voice.	focus on LG capacity for and responsiveness to inclusive ways of working, GESI objectives and GRID.							
	R 4.2 Research organizations and networks are actively engaged in deliberations and discourse on inclusive federalism.	NA	2	0	1	3	3	MU Policy Lab Report and Reports from partners. [3 Policy dialogues in collaboration with Hriti Foundation, NARMIN andPolicy Lab]

Annex 7: EUSIF Theory of Change



Annex II. List of Stakeholders Consulted

SN	Name	Gender	Position	Organization	Remarks
KII at federal level					
1	Shraddha Raymajhi	Female	Governance Advisor	Norwegian Embassy	Development Partners (DPs)
2	Madhu Bishwakarma	Male	Governance Advisor	British Embassy	Development Partners (DPs)
3	Prakash Jha	Male		International IDEA, Coherence Programme (FCDO)	Development Partners (DPs)
4	Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé	Female	Resident Representative	UNDP	
5	Julien Chevillard,	Male	Deputy Residence Representative,	UNDP	
6	Binda Magar,	Female	Policy Advisor (Governance) & Assistant Resident Representative	UNDP	
7	Tek Tamata	Male	Portfolio Manager	UNDP	
8	Dinesh Bista	Male	RBM Analyst	UNDP	
9	Tulsi Sharan Sigdel	Male	Senior Director	NASC	
10	Pragya Basyal	Female			Ex Inclusive Governance Specialist, UNDP/EUSIF
11	Rajendra Prasad Pyakurel	Male	Executive Director	NARMIN	
KII with EUSIF Project Team					
12	Bikash Ranjan Dash	Male	Team Leader	UNDP/EUSIF	
13	Sewa Shrestha	Female	Inclusive Governanve Specialist	UNDP/EUSIF	
14	Shyam Bahadur Chand	Male	Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Analyst	UNDP/EUSIF	

15	Shangrila Thapa	Female	Basic Service Delivery Analyst	UNDP/EUSIF	Result 1
16	Ram Kumar Yadav	Male	Data Management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Analyst	UNDP/EUSIF	Result 2
17	Saroj Shrestha	Male	Strategic Planning and Organizational Development Analyst	UNDP/EUSIF	Result 3
18	Rita BC	Female	Gender and Social Inclusion Analyst	UNDP/EUSIF	Result 4
19	Tek Bahadur Rana	Male	Planning and Capacity Development Associate	UNDP/EUSIF	Chaurjahari Mun.
20	Akriti Basnet	Female	Planning and Capacity Development Associate	UNDP/EUSIF	Panchapuri Mun.
KII with Provincial Stakeholders					
21	Anand Saru	Male	Secretary and Province Programme Director (PPD)	Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers (OCMCM)	
22	Dr. Chandra Prasad Rijal plus others	Male	Professor	Mid-West University	Coordinator-Policy Lab
23	Yub Raj Neupane	Male	Officer	Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA)	
24	Netra Karki	Male	Administrative Chief	Karnali Policy and Planning Commission	
25	Dinesh Gautam	Male	Executive Director	Hriti Foundation	NGO/CSO
26	Hikmat Badi	Male	Chairperson	Badi Sarokar Manch Nepal	NGO/CSO
Meeting with UNDP Karnali Field Office					
26	Rafeeque Siddiqui	Male	Head of UNDP Field Office	UNDP	
27	Eman Sunar	Male	Legal Aid Outreach Officer	UNDP/ A2J Project	
28	Ganesh B.K.	Male	Early Recovery Cluster Coordinator	UNDP/Early Recovery	
Meeting with PLGSP Karnali Team					

29	Shilpa Kunwar	Female	Team Leader/ Local Governance Expert	PLGSP	
30	Hansa Kumari Malla	Female	Governance Cum Legal Expert(PPIU)	PLGSP	
31	Devi Shah	Female	GESI Expert	PLGSP	
32	Gokarna Upadhyaya	Male	National Project Manager	PLGSP	
33	Janak Bhattarai	Male	Partnership Expert	PLGSP	
Meeting with LGs					
34	Pushpa Badi	Male	Mayor	Chaurjahari Municipality, West Rukum	Model Palika
35	Ishwari Kumari Sharma B.M.	Female	Deputy Mayor	Chaurjahari Municipality, West Rukum	Model Palika
36	Sher Prasad Dhakal	Male	Acting Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	Chaurjahari Municipality, West Rukum	Model Palika
37	Sita Thapa	Female	Officer, Planning and Monitoring Section	Chaurjahari Municipality, West Rukum	Model Palika
38	Lalbir Bhandari	Male	Mayor	Panchapury Municipality	Model Palika
39	Mukti Devi Regmi	Female	Deputy Mayor	Panchapury Municipality	Model Palika
40	Dil Bahadur Karki	Male	Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	Panchapury Municipality	Model Palika
41	Bharat Prasad Rijal	Male	Mayor	Dullu Municpality	Proposed Model Palika
42	Bina Karki	Female	Deputy Mayor	Dullu Municpality	Proposed Model Palika
43	Tilak BK	Male	Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	Dullu Municpality	Proposed Model Palika

44	Karna Bahadur Budhathoki	Male	Mayor	Bangad Kupinde Municipality	Non-model Palika
45	Jagat Bahadur Gharti	Male	Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	Bangad Kupinde Municipality	Non-model Palika
46	Basudev Pokhrel	Male	Officer, Health Section	Bangad Kupinde Municipality	Non-model Palika
47	Mahesh Devkota	Male	Engineer, Technical person	Bangad Kupinde Municipality	Non-model Palika
48	Dev Raj Joshi	Male	Tourism Professional	Bangad Kupinde Municipality	Non-model Palika
49	Ain Bahadur Chand	Male	Chairperson	Simta Rural Municipality	Non-model Palika
50	Bhola Ram Pangali	Male	Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	Simta Rural Municipality	Non-model Palika
51	Sher Bahadur Rana	Male	Officer, Admin Planning and Monitoring Section	Simta Rural Municipality	Non-model Palika
52	Rita Kumari Shahi	Female	Chairperson	Bharabi Rural Municiaplity	Non-model Palika
53	Debi Bhandari	Female	Vice Chairperson	Bharabi Rural Municiaplity	Non-model Palika
54	Bhupendra Thapa	Male	Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	Bharabi Rural Municiaplity	Non-model Palika
55	Indra Karki	Female	Planning Section (Nutrition)	Bharabi Rural Municiaplity	Non-model Palika
FGD with MTOT Participants					
56	Tika Bista	Female	Freelancer		
57	Kamala Tiwari	Female	MU		
58	Kalpana Paudel	Female	Assistant Professor	Mid-West University	
59	Khimlal Regmi	Male	Freelancer		
FGD in Chaurjhari					
60	Tularam Sunar	Male	Ward Member	Chaurjahari Municipality-1	FGD Participant
61	Chandrakali Sunar	Female	Ward Member	Chaurjahari Municipality-1	FGD Participant
62	Ganesh Prasad Sharma	Male	Ward Member	Chaurjahari Municipality-1	FGD Participant
63	Dharma Raj Sapkota	Male	Ward Secretary	Chaurjahari Municipality-2	FGD Participant
64	Bir Bahadur Rana	Male	Ward Chairperson	Chaurjahari Municipality-2	FGD Participant
65	Kamala Kumal	Female	Woman Group	Chaurjahari Municipality-2	FGD Participant
66	Kamala Pokhrel	Female	Ward Member	Chaurjahari Municipality-3	FGD Participant

67	Bhagwati Pokhrel	Female	Ward Member	Chaurjahari Municipality-3	FGD Participant
68	Laxmi Sunar	Female	Ward Member	Chaurjahari Municipality-4	FGD Participant
FGD in Panchpuri					
69	Narendra Shahi	Male	Ward Chairperson	Panchapury Municipality-5	FGD Participant
70	Bhawana Rawal	Female	Executive Committee Member	Panchapury Municipality-5	FGD Participant
71	Anita B.K.	Female	Executive Committee Member	Panchapury Municipality-5	FGD Participant
72	Kopila Nepali	Female	Executive Committee Member	Panchapury Municipality-5	FGD Participant
73	Dipak Kumar Thapamagar	Male	Ward Chairperson	Panchapury Municipality-8	FGD Participant
74	Amrita Paudel	Female	Ward Secretary	Panchapury Municipality-5	FGD Participant
75	Tilak Ram Adhikari	Male	Government official	Division Forest Office	FGD Participant
76	Chudamani Kandel	Male	Planning and Administrative Officer	Planning and Administrative Section	FGD Participant
FGD in Dullu					
77	Dipendra Birkatta	Male	District Project Coordinator	Aawaj Nepal (CSO)	FGD Participant (CBO/NGO)
78	Narayan Prasad Rijal	Male	Member	Youth Sounding Board Nepal	FGD Participant (CBO/NGO)
79	Ratna Singh	Female	President	Dhuleshwor Buhari Group (CBO)-Aawaj Nepal	FGD Participant (CBO/NGO)
80	Sarala Khatri	Female	Member	Dhuleshwor Buhari Group (CBO)-Aawaj Nepal	FGD Participant (CBO/NGO)
81	Purna Kumari Thapa	Female	Social Mobilizer	Aawaj Nepal (CSO)	FGD Participant (CBO/NGO)
82	Sundar Giri	Male	Secretary	Youth Club	FGD Participant (CBO/NGO)
83	Asmita Pande	Female	President	Chagatra Buhari Club (CBO)-Aawaj Nepal	FGD Participant (CBO/NGO)

Annex III. Evaluation Matrix

Relevant evaluation/review criteria	Key questions	Specific sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods/ tools	Indicators/ success standards	Methods for data analysis
The **relevance** of the project design, with a specific focus on its theory of change and how the four project outputs realistically and effectively contributed to its overall objective.	• To what extend was the project design relevant and appropriate in line with the political developments, national and sub-national development priorities of GoN, UN/UNDP Strategic documents and needs of intended beneficiaries? • To what extent is the Project's engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including the role of the EU, UNDP and its comparative advantage in the context of implementation of federalism? • To what extent the project has been able to address the needs of the intended beneficiaries including Provincial and local governments (PLGs) and marginalized communities? • To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant and preceding projects and interventions incorporated in project design?	Were any stakeholder inputs/concerns addressed at the project formulation stage? How does the project address the human development needs of intended beneficiaries? What analysis, in particular of the GESI/HRBA context and its political economy was done in designing the project? To what extent has the project integrated the HRBA and GESI in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? Was the project able to adapt to evolving needs/changing context? To what extent did it use adaptive management to maintain its relevance? What project revisions were made – if any - and why? What is the level of acceptance for and support	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	N/A	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team

	• Was the project design responsive to GESI? • To what extent were the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and deliverables) logical and coherent?	to the Project by relevant stakeholders? Were vulnerable groups consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning and implementation?				
The **coherence** of the project – i.e. the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in Nepal	• To what extent was the project appropriately responsive to contextual changes (political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental) and other institutional changes in the country? • To what extent did the project address and contribute to synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP or the Government of Nepal? (Internal coherence). • To what extent was the project consistent with interventions of other UN agencies, development partners, government agencies and others supporting the PLGSP? Was the project adding value to avoid duplication of efforts in Karnali? How did the project align with other relevant EU supported projects? (External coherence).	To what extent were opportunities for synergies and complementarities explored and leveraged? Was there any overlap and duplication with other initiatives? To what extent was there coordination and communication with other actors in the field? Do donor coordination mechanisms exist? Have activities relating to different outputs been designed and implemented together to reach greater output with minimal input? How well does the project respond to national strategies and plans? What project revisions were made – if any - and why?	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	N/A	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team
Effectiveness – The overall effectiveness	• To what extent the project's intended results (objectives, outcome and	What are the key internal and external factors (success & failure factors)	National policy documents, sector	• Document review and desk research	N/A	Qualitative and quantitative data

of the implemented project activities towards the expected results	outputs) have been achieved or are on track to be achieved within the project period? What were the contributing factors in achieving or not achieving the intended results? • To what extent the project has been effective in enhancing the capacity of PLGs, NARMIN, MuAN and communities to create an enabling environment for evidence-based policy advocacy? What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving this objective? • To what extent the provincial and local government systems and mechanisms have become more inclusive and responsive to rights holders? o To what extent the people of Karnali believe that the decision making in the province is more inclusive and responsive? o To what extent the people of Karnali receive more efficient and effective services at the local level (Model Palikas)? o To what extent the design of basic delivery systems and procedures is more inclusive than at the start of the	that have contributed, affected, or impeded the achievements, and how UNDP and the partners have managed these factors? How effective were the strategies used in the implementation of the project, in particular the HRBA, GESI, transparency/ accountability/anti-corruption and environmental sustainability and resilience approaches? To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation? In what ways did the Project come up with innovative measures for problem solving? What good practices or successful experiences or transferable examples have been identified? In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? Why is this and what are the constraining factors? How can or could they be overcome?	strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports	• Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary		analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team

	project and in comparison, to other provinces? • To what extent the project results, including GESI results, have been able to contribute to the PLGSP outcomes and outputs, as well as UNDP's CPD and UNSDCF results and EU's priorities? • In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? • In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome? • To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation? • To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, yielding local ownership?					
Result 1 Inclusiveness, Community Benefit and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic	1.1 How has the design of the Basic Service Delivery systems in Karnali Province evolved since the inception of the EUSIF project in terms of inclusiveness?	How is the project monitoring its achievements under this result? Is any qualitative data gathered? How frequently?	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports	R 1.1: Design of Karnali Province Basic Service Delivery systems and procedures is more inclusive than at the start of the project and	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis

Services enhanced in line with Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	In what ways does the inclusiveness of the Basic Service Delivery systems in Karnali Province compare to similar systems in other Nepalese provinces? 1.2 What strategies have local governments in Karnali Province implemented to integrate GESI into their operations and service delivery under the new federal context? How effective are the GESI strategies in enhancing inclusivity and addressing the needs of marginalized groups within the local governance framework in Karnali Province?	To what extent does the project ensure participation vulnerable groups in its activities under this result? What have been the main challenges and how have these been overcome? Which achievements can be replicated and upscaled? What more needs to be done to achieve the results and consolidate those that have been achieved? What are the main lessons learned?	Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports	• Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	compared to other Provinces R 1.2: Local Governments have GESI strategy for inclusive new federal context	Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team

Result 2 PLG data management, monitoring and reporting systems are evidence-based and enable achieving PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	2.1 How have the Data and M&E-Reporting systems in Karnali Province evolved in terms of functionality and inclusiveness since the start of the EUSIF project? How does the inclusiveness and functionality of Karnali Province's Data and M&E systems compare with those in other Nepalese provinces? 2.2 What specific Policy Papers have been published by Karnali Province regarding the inclusiveness of PLG data management and M&E/Reporting systems, and what impact have these papers had on improving inclusiveness in local governance? How effectively do the published Policy Papers utilize disaggregated data to support GESI objectives, and what evidence indicates success or areas for improvement?	How is the project monitoring its achievements under this result? Is any qualitative data gathered? How frequently? To what extent does the project ensure participation vulnerable groups in its activities under this result? What have been the main challenges and how have these been overcome? Which achievements can be replicated and upscaled? What more needs to be done to achieve the results and consolidate those that have been achieved? What are the main lessons learned?	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports,	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	R 2.1 Karnali Province 'Data and M&E-Reporting' systems and procedures functional, and design is more inclusive than at the start of the project and compared to other provinces. R 2.2 Karnali Province publishes specific Policy Papers on inclusiveness of PLG data management and M&E/ Reporting system and on GESI objectives, using disaggregated data evidence.	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team

			Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports			
Result 3 Capacity of Provincial Centres for Good Governance attuned to PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery.	3.1 How comprehensive is the long-term organizational strategy of the Pilot-Province PCGG in defining its path toward becoming a state-of-the-art resource/training center, and how well does this strategy integrate training and approaches for strengthening inclusiveness in PLG decision-making and policy, GRID, and local governance basic service delivery? What specific initiatives and programs have been implemented by the Pilot-Province PCGG as part of its strategy to become a leading resource and training center, and how effective have these initiatives been in enhancing the capacities of PLG staff for inclusive decision-making and policy formulation?	How is the project monitoring its achievements under this result? Is any qualitative data gathered? How frequently? To what extent does the project ensure participation vulnerable groups in its activities under this result? What have been the main challenges and how have these been overcome? Which achievements can be replicated and upscaled? What more needs to be done to achieve the results and consolidate those that have been achieved? What are the main lessons learned?	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	R 3.1 Pilot-Province PCGG has a long-term Organizational strategy for becoming a state-of-the-art resource/training centre, including training strategy and approach for strengthening inclusiveness of PLG decision & policy making, GRID and LG basic service delivery.	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team

			Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports			
Result 4 Capacity of Local Government Associations enhanced for evidence-based advocacy and representation of Local Government Voice.	4.1 How many policy papers have MuAN and NARMIN published on local government decision-making and basic service delivery (BSD), and how do these papers address LG capacity and responsiveness to inclusivity, GESI objectives, and GRID? What impact have the policy papers published by MuAN and NARMIN had on local government practices, particularly in terms of adopting inclusive ways of working and integrating GESI objectives and GRID principles? 4.2 What role have research organizations and networks played in shaping the discourse	How is the project monitoring its achievements under this result? Is any qualitative data gathered? How frequently? To what extent does the project ensure participation vulnerable groups in its activities under this result? What have been the main challenges and how have these been overcome? Which achievements can be replicated and upscaled? What more needs to be done to achieve the results and consolidate those that have been achieved?	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	R 4.1 Number of published policy papers of each (i) Municipality Association of Nepal (MuAN), and (ii) Nepal Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN) on LG decision-making and BSD, with specific focus on LG capacity for and responsiveness to inclusive ways of working, GESI objectives and GRID. R 4.2 Research organizations and	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and

	on inclusive federalism, and how have their contributions influenced policy and practice at the local government level?	What are the main lessons learned?	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports		networks are actively engaged in deliberations and discourse on inclusive federalism.	feedback to evaluation team
Efficiency – The cost efficiency of the implemented project activities towards the expected results	• To what extent were resources (financial, human, institutional, time, expertise, etc.) strategically allocated and delivered on time to achieve project objectives? • To what extent were the project management and governance structures appropriate and efficient in supporting timely implementation and generating the expected results? • Has the project implementation strategy been	Have the implementation modalities been appropriate and cost-effective? Was the project implemented within deadline and cost estimates? Did UNDP solve any implementation issues promptly? How often has the Project Board met? To what extent were UNDP able to synergize with	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports,	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	N/A	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the

	efficient and cost effective? What cost effectiveness measures did the project adopt? And what were the results? • Did the project activities overlap, and duplicate other similar interventions funded nationally, and/or by other donors? • To what extent was there any identified synergy between UNDP initiatives/projects that contributed to reducing costs while supporting results? • To what extent did monitoring and knowledge management systems provide the Project and UNDP management with relevant data and information, disaggregated by sex, that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly? • To what extent the project interventions have been able to create value for money?	other UN agencies to ensure efficiency? Is the project fully staffed and are the staffing/management arrangements efficient? Are procurements processed in a timely manner? Are the resources allocated sufficient/too much? What were the reasons for over or under expenditure within the Project? To what extent is the existing project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results? Was there good coordination and communication between partners in the project?	Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports			evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team
Impact – The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant	• What impact did the project make in the provision of basic services to people, especially women, historically excluded and marginalized groups in the Karnali Province in Nepal? What is the evidence of impact?	How has the access to and quality of basic services for historically excluded and marginalized groups, including women, improved in Karnali Province since the inception of the EUSIF	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports	N/A	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis

positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects	• Has the EUSIF bolstered the performance of provincial and local government systems? Have GRID objectives been uptaken by the authorities? • What are the potentials for replicating the intervention onto other provinces of Nepal? • What is the status of implementation of the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme? How has the EUSIF intervention contributed to its implementation? • To what extent the project has been able to contribute to enhanced inter-governmental relations, implementation of federalism, and inclusive governance? • To what extent the project has been able to generate lessons, practices and innovations that could be replicated in the future?	project, and what specific measures contributed to these improvements? What changes in provincial and local government systems, particularly in adopting and implementing GRID objectives, have been observed as a result of the EUSIF interventions, and how have these changes affected the performance of these government systems? Considering the successes and challenges of the EUSIF project in Karnali, what are the key factors that need to be considered for replicating similar interventions in other provinces of Nepal? In what ways has the EUSIF project supported and contributed to the goals of the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP), particularly in enhancing inter-governmental relations and advancing the implementation of federalism in Karnali Province? What innovative practices and lessons have been	Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports	• Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary		Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team

		generated by the EUSIF project that could inform future governance projects, and how effectively can these innovations be documented and disseminated for broader use?				
Sustainability of the project	• To what extent did the federal, provincial, and local governments express ownership of the project, demonstrate institutional capacity and commitment to continue its implementation? • To what extent the project contributed to build capacities of provincial and local governments, and community empowerment which will contribute to sustainability of the results achieved ensuring ownership of the PLGs? • What are the plans or action taken by the provincial and local governments, and what are the stakeholders' views to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project completion? • To what extent were lessons learned and good practices documented by the Project team on a continual basis and shared with	To what extent are the project activities likely to be institutionalized and implemented by the relevant institutions after the completion of this project? What are the key factors that will require attention to improve the prospects of sustainability of Project results? To what extent do stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives? To what extent were sustainability considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? Is there an exit strategy for the Project? Does it take into account political, financial, technical and environmental factors?	National policy documents, sector strategies and action plans; UNDP Strategic Documents incl. UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP CPD, EUSIF Project Document, EUSIF Project Progress Reports, Project board and other meeting minutes; Relevant partner reports	• Document review and desk research • Independent external research and reports • Key informant interviews • Focus group discussions • Email, phone and online follow-up where necessary	N/A	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis and disaggregation Data synthesis Descriptive statistical analysis Political economy analysis Contribution analysis Process tracing Triangulation Discussion of data amongst the evaluation team and the UNDP EUSIF project team Verification of data with Stakeholders Fact checking by UNDP EUSIF project team, comment and feedback to evaluation team

	appropriate parties who could learn from the project? • To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained? Are there any risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits? • Is there a need for any further interventions or support to ensure the sustainable impact of the project? What could be potential new areas of work and innovative measures for sustaining the results? • To what extent communities participated and expressed their ownership and understanding in addition to the provincial and local governments?	What is the level of national and sub-national ownership of the project activities? To what extent has the project created a shift in attitudinal and cultural behaviour? *Does the project provide for the handover of any activities? *What are the perceived capacities of the relevant institutions for taking the initiatives forward?				

Annex IV. Summary of output progress and activity level progress

A table summary of the overall project progress and result level progress against indicators is provided below:

Outcome statement	Outcome indicator	Baseline	Source of data	Cumulative Target for 2022-2024	Total target achieved till 2022	Cum Progress Till May 2024	Source of data	Status
Performance of Provincial and Local Government systems and staff is inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of people, especially women, historically excluded and marginalized groups	3. Number of local governments in Pilot-Province with planning, monitoring and oversight systems and procedures for accountable government functions and inclusive risk-informed service delivery	NA		50% of LGs (3 LGs)	0			Applicable only till 2022 as the new CPD replaces the old one.
	(CPD 2018-2022, Indicator 2.2.1, SDG 16.6)							
	4. Number of provincial/local government institutions in Pilot-Province that ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national constitution, laws/legislation, international agreements and best practice in the region.	NA		50% of LGs (3 LGs)	1		*Project Information Management Systtem for Karnali Policy and Planning Commission (KPPC)*	Applicable only till 2022 as the new CPD replaces the old one.
	(CPD 2018-2022, Indicator 2.2.2, SDG 16.10)							

	OC1-Number of PLGs/parliaments adopting (digital) systems/mechanisms for effective service delivery. *(CPD 2023-2027, Indicator 2.1.4)*	NA		2	0	3	*Established OSSD systems in 3 LGs (Panchapuri, Chaurjahari and Dullu)*	Exceeded
	OC2-Number of F/P/LGs improving access to information, including through digital tools. *(CPD 2023-2027, Indicator 2.3.1)*	NA		5	5	5	*Socio-economic profiles of 5 Model Palikas prepared and thie link with PIMS. (Link: https://projects.karnali.gov.np) is in progress.*	Target met
	OC3-Number of people (particularly marginalized groups) utilizing open forums for enhanced participation in decision-making processes. *(CPD 2023-2027, Indicator 2.3.2)*	NA		265	1400	1400	*Attendance sheet, NGO partner reports*	Exceeded
	OC4-Proportion of population in Karnali Province, who believe decision- making is inclusive and responsive by sex, age and disability. *(PLGSP Outcome 2 indicator #12)*	Incl.=22% Resp.=54%	PLGSP Baseline Report	Incl.=33% Resp.=81%	0	0	*Survey to be done at the end of the project.*	No data
	OC5-Citizens receive efficient and timely public services from local governments in Karnali Province	Eff=33% Tim=24%	PLGSP Baseline Report	Eff=46% Tim=37%	0	0	*Survey to be done at the end of the project.*	No data

	(PLGSP Outcome 2 indicators #13)							
Result 1: Inclusiveness, Community Benefit and Sustainability of Local Government and Ward Basic Services enhanced in line with Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	**R 1.1:** Design of Karnali Province Basic Service Delivery systems and procedures is more inclusive than at the start of the project and compared to other Provinces	56%	PLGSP Baseline Report	100%	NA	0	*Survey to be done at the end of the project.*	No data
	R 1.2: Local Governments have GESI strategy for inclusive new federal context	56%	BSD Mapping Report of EUSIF	100%	NA	100%	PLGSP report. (Five Model Palikas)	Fully met
Result 2: PLG data management, monitoring and reporting systems are evidence-based and enable achieving PLG	**R 2.1** Karnali Province 'Data and M&E-Reporting' systems and procedures functional, and design is more inclusive than at the start of the project and compared to other provinces.	NA		50%	NA	NA	*Comparative analysis to be done at the end.*	No data

Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development objectives.	**R 2.2** Karnali Province publishes specific Policy Papers on inclusiveness of PLG data management and M&E/ Reporting system and on GESI objectives, using disaggregated data evidence.	0	NA	3	0	7=Completed 2=In-progress	MU Policy Lab Report (Policy papers on data and GESI issues by Policy Lab	Exceeded
Result 3: Capacity of Provincial Centres for Good Governance attuned to PLG Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development and Basic Service Delivery.	**R 3.1** Pilot-Province PCGG has a long-term Organizational strategy for becoming a state-of-the-art resource/training centre, including training strategy and approach for strengthening inclusiveness of PLG decision & policy making, GRID and LG basic service delivery.	0		1	0	1-IP	Shifted from 2023 to 2024	In progress

Result 4: Capacity of Local Government Associations enhanced for evidence-based advocacy and representation of Local Government Voice.	**R 4.1** Number of published policy papers of each (i) Municipality Association of Nepal (MuAN), and (ii) Nepal Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN) on LG decision-making and BSD, with specific focus on LG capacity for and responsiveness to inclusive ways of working, GESI objectives and GRID.	NA		5	0	22= Completed 4=In-progress	MU Policy Lab Report. (Policy briefs (11) and position papers (11) with Policy Lab (Mid-west University)	Exceeded
	R 4.2 Research organizations and networks are actively engaged in deliberations and discourse on inclusive federalism.	NA		2	0	3=Completed 3=In-Progress	MU Policy Lab Report and Reports from partners. [3 Policy dialogues in collaboration with Hriti Foundation, NARMIN and Policy Lab]	Exceeded

Annex V. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

Relevance: appropriateness of the project design, particularly project's objectives, Theory of Change, Results and Resource Frameworks, project management arrangement, as it relates to the achievement of project objectives, its linkages with the government's national strategic plans, UNSDCF, UNDP Country Programme Document, and problems it intends to address, and relevance to beneficiaries need, including by considering LNOB aspects, using the following guiding questions:

- To what extent was the project design relevant and appropriate in line with the political developments, national and sub-national development priorities of GoN, UN/UNDP Strategic documents and needs of intended beneficiaries?
- To what extent is the Project's engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including the role of the EU, UNDP and its comparative advantage in the context of implementation of federalism?
- To what extent the project has been able to address the needs of the intended beneficiaries including Provincial and local governments (PLGs) and marginalized communities?
- To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant and preceding projects and interventions incorporated in project design?
- Was the project design responsive to GESI?
- To what extent were the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and deliverables) logical and coherent?

Coherence: alignment with UNDP's core documents (e.g., UNDP's Strategic Plan, UNSCDF, UNDP Nepal's CPD), national priorities (e.g., Nepal's 15th Plan), and project's coordination and collaboration with PLGSP, UNDP's other projects, EU supported projects and other relevant development partner projects, using the following guiding questions:

- To what extent was the project appropriately responsive to contextual changes (political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental) and other institutional changes in the country?
- To what extent did the project address and contribute to synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP or the Government of Nepal? (Internal coherence).
- To what extent was the project consistent with interventions of other UN agencies, development partners, government agencies and others supporting the PLGSP? Was the project adding value to avoid duplication of efforts in Karnali? How did the project align with other relevant EU supported projects? (External coherence).

Effectiveness: assess the project's direct and indirect results (both short term and long term) and its contributions towards the achievement of the anticipated results, including any constraints on its effectiveness, and any unintended results, the reporting and monitoring system, assess the effectiveness of the project's management arrangements, analyse the underlying factors beyond UNDP control that affect the achievement of the project results, using the following guiding questions:

- To what extent the project's intended results (objectives, outcome and outputs) have been achieved or are on track to be achieved within the project period? What were the contributing factors in achieving or not achieving the intended results?
- To what extent the project has been effective in enhancing the capacity of PLGs, NARMIN, MuAN and communities to create an enabling environment for evidence-based policy advocacy? What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving this objective?
- To what extent the provincial and local government systems and mechanisms have become more inclusive and responsive to rights holders?
    - To what extent the people of Karnali believe that the decision making in the province is more inclusive and responsive?
    - To what extent the people of Karnali receive more efficient and effective services at the local level (Model Palikas)?
    - To what extent the design of basic delivery systems and procedures is more inclusive than at the start of the project and in comparison, to other provinces?
- To what extent the project results, including GESI results, have been able to contribute to the PLGSP outcomes and outputs, as well as UNDP's CPD and UNSDCF results and EU's priorities?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
- To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
- To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, yielding local ownership?

Efficiency: assess the cost efficiency of the project intervention, the quality and timeliness of the project resources and approaches towards their efficient use, using the following guiding questions:

- To what extent were resources (financial, human, institutional, time, expertise, etc.) strategically allocated and delivered on time to achieve project objectives?
- To what extent were the project management and governance structures appropriate and efficient in supporting timely implementation and generating the expected results?
- Has the project implementation strategy been efficient and cost effective? What cost effectiveness measures did the project adopt? And what were the results?
- Did the project activities overlap, and duplicate other similar interventions funded nationally, and/or by other donors?
- To what extent was there any identified synergy between UNDP initiatives/projects that contributed to reducing costs while supporting results?
- To what extent did monitoring and knowledge management systems provide the Project and UNDP management with relevant data and information, disaggregated by sex, that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?
- To what extent the project interventions have been able to create value for money?

Impact: assess the quality of project results such as knowledge products, pool of local trainers, system, mechanisms and institutions, capacity development, skill transfer, coordination & collaboration with emphasis of their uses, replication using "so what" aspect, using the following guiding questions:

- What impact did the project make in the provision of basic services to people, especially women, historically excluded and marginalized groups in the Karnali Province in Nepal? What is the evidence of impact?
- Has the EUSIF bolstered the performance of provincial and local government systems? Have GRID objectives been uptaken by the authorities?
- What are the potentials for replicating the intervention onto other provinces of Nepal?
- What is the status of implementation of the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme? How has the EUSIF intervention contributed to its implementation?
- To what extent the project has been able to contribute to enhanced inter-governmental relations, implementation of federalism, and inclusive governance?
- To what extent the project has been able to generate lessons, practices and innovations that could be replicated in the future?

Sustainability: examining the sustainability of the system, mechanisms and capacity developed under the project and their continuity beyond the project life and opportunities for scalability, using the following guiding questions:

- To what extent did the federal, provincial, and local governments express ownership of the project, demonstrate institutional capacity and commitment to continue its implementation?
- To what extent the project contributed to build capacities of provincial and local governments, and community empowerment which will contribute to sustainability of the results achieved ensuring ownership of the PLGs?
- What are the plans or action taken by the provincial and local governments, and what are the stakeholders' views to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project completion?
- To what extent were lessons learned and good practices documented by the Project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained? Are there any risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- Is there a need for any further interventions or support to ensure the sustainable impact of the project? What could be potential new areas of work and innovative measures for sustaining the results?
- To what extent communities participated and expressed their ownership and understanding in addition to the provincial and local governments?

Cross-cutting themes

- To what extent was gender equality and social inclusion considered in project design, implementation, and monitoring?
- To what extent did the project promote positive changes (leadership, empowerment) for women and persons from excluded/marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities? Are there any negative impact, what lesson can be learnt from that?
- Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning and implementation? What barriers did persons with disabilities face in accessing the government services?
- To what extent have poor, persons with disabilities, women, and other excluded and marginalized groups benefited from the project?
- To what extent has the project integrated the Human Rights Based Approach in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
- What changes have been made with regards to access to basic service of women and excluded groups, how was it possible? (R1)

- To what extent was gender equality and social inclusion considered in project design, implementation, and monitoring? What is the state of GESI disaggregated PLG data? (R2)
- What role did the Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA) play for inclusive development and inclusive basic service delivery and what effects did this have? (R3)
- What interventions did the LGs Associations make on account of GESI and what were the impacts? (R4)
- How effective has the EUSIF project been in promoting environmental sustainability in local governance practices?
- In what ways has the EUSIF project ensured the inclusivity of marginalized and vulnerable groups in its GRID-related activities?
- What lessons have been learned from the application of the GRID approach in the EUSIF project that could inform future projects?
- How are risks identified, managed, and mitigated in the EUSIF project, and what are the effectiveness of these risk management strategies?
- How well does the EUSIF project coordinate and communicate with stakeholders, and how are responsibilities distributed within the project's governing structure?
- How effective are the planning, management, and quality assurance mechanisms of the EUSIF project in ensuring the delivery of project interventions?
- To what extent was the project able to promote the principles of transparency and accountability in design, implementation, and monitoring?

Annex VI. Informed Consent Protocol And Data Collection Tools And Instruments

Informed Consent Protocol

Date: _____Time: Start_____End_____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Location: _____ Male ___ Female _____

Confidentiality and Informed Consent Statements: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We are a team of external evaluators including Olivera Puric (the team leader) and Pratap Chhatkuli and Tej Sunar. We are conducting an independent Final evaluation of the **European Union Support to Inclusive Federalism project in Nepal (EUSIF).** We have been hired by UNDP for this assignment but are not employees of UNDP and are independent from both UNDP and the project. All information shared will be kept confidential and anonymous. We will aggregate and present our findings from interviews in a way that cannot be tied back to any individual or organization. Therefore, please feel free to speak openly and candidly with us.

Your participation is voluntary. Please feel free to ask to skip any question that you do not feel comfortable answering or ending the interview at any point. In terms of use, we will produce a draft report following our fieldwork which will be shared with UNDP stakeholders for their comments. We will then revise and finalize the draft based on comments received. UNDP Nepal will be responsible for the circulation of the report.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this interview. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Key Informant Interview Guides

KIIs Guide for UNDP EUSIF Project Staff

Introduction

For UNDP project staff – please describe your role in the EUSIF project and for how long you have been involved in the project.

Relevance

1. To what extent was the EUSIF project design relevant and appropriate considering the political developments and national development priorities of the Government of Nepal?
2. How did the project's design align with UN/UNDP strategic documents and the specific needs of the intended beneficiaries?

3. Did the project adequately reflect strategic considerations, including the roles and comparative advantages of the EU and UNDP in the context of Nepal's federalism implementation?
4. How were the needs of historically excluded and marginalized groups addressed in the project's planning and execution?
5. What processes were followed to integrate lessons learned from other relevant projects and interventions into the EUSIF project design?

Effectiveness

6. What evidence exists that the EUSIF project has achieved its intended results (objectives, outcomes, and outputs) within the projected timeline?
7. Which specific activities of the EUSIF project were most effective in enhancing the capacity of PLGs for evidence-based policy advocacy?
8. To what extent have internal and external factors influenced the project's effectiveness, and how were these factors managed?
9. In what ways did the project's activities foster an enabling environment for the historically excluded and marginalized groups to participate in policymaking?
10. What alternative strategies could have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?

Efficiency

11. How were the project's financial and human resources managed to ensure timely achievement of objectives?
12. Were there any instances of resource allocation that impacted the project's efficiency either positively or negatively?
13. What cost-effectiveness measures were implemented, and how successful were they in optimizing the project's outputs?
14. Did the project activities overlap with, or duplicate other interventions funded nationally or by other donors? How was this addressed?
15. To what extent did synergy among UNDP initiatives/projects contribute to reducing costs while supporting the project results?

Impact

16. Can you provide specific examples or evidence of the project's impact on the provision of basic services to targeted groups in Karnali Province?
17. What has been the project's role in bolstering the performance of provincial and local government systems under the new federal context?
18. How have GRID objectives been integrated into the governance structures as a result of the project?
19. What are the potentials and challenges for replicating the EUSIF project's interventions in other provinces of Nepal?

20. To what extent has the project contributed to sustainable changes in inter-governmental relations and governance practices?

Sustainability

21. What specific actions have been taken by provincial and local governments to ensure the continuation of the project's initiatives post-completion?
22. How were the lessons learned and best practices documented throughout the project lifecycle and shared with relevant stakeholders?
23. Are there mechanisms in place that will allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained by the project?
24. What risks might jeopardize the sustainability of the project benefits, and how might these be mitigated?
25. Is there a perceived need for further interventions to support the sustained impact of the project, and what could these look like?

Cross-Cutting Issues: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

26. To what extent was gender equality and social inclusion considered in the project design, implementation, and monitoring?
27. What specific GESI-related challenges were encountered during the project implementation and how were they addressed?
28. How effective were the GESI-targeted interventions in achieving their objectives, and what improvements could be made in future projects?
29. Can you provide examples of how the project empowered women and persons from excluded/marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities?
30. Were GESI considerations effectively integrated into the project's evaluation methodologies, and how did this influence the findings and outcomes reported?
31. Which aspects of the EUSIF GESI strategy became instrumental in achieving greater GESI responsive results? How?

Cross-Cutting Issues: Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

32. How was the Human Rights-Based Approach integrated into the various stages of the project cycle?
33. What were the key outcomes from implementing HRBA in the project, particularly concerning the rights of marginalized groups?
34. Did the project face any challenges in implementing HRBA, and how were these challenges overcome?
35. To what extent did the project facilitate access to basic services for historically excluded groups, and what barriers remain?
36. How has the project contributed to enhancing local governance capabilities to uphold human rights standards?

Cross-Cutting Issues: Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID)

36. How effectively has the EUSIF project promoted environmental sustainability in local governance practices?
37. In what ways has the project ensured the inclusivity of marginalized and vulnerable groups in its GRID-related activities?
38. What lessons have been learned from the application of the GRID approach in the EUSIF project that could inform future projects?
39. How has the project contributed to building resilience in local communities against environmental and socio-economic shocks?
40. What innovative practices have been developed under the GRID framework, and how can these be scaled or adapted for broader use?

KIIs Guide for UNDP Senior Management

Introduction

Please describe your role with regard to the EUSIF project and how long you have been involved with the project.

Relevance

1. How did the EUSIF project align with UNDP's strategic objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level?
2. Can you describe the processes that were used to ensure the project was designed to meet the specific needs of historically excluded and marginalized groups in Karnali Province?
3. What were the key considerations from UNDP's previous experiences in Nepal that shaped the EUSIF project's design?
4. How did UNDP ensure that the project design was adaptable to the rapidly changing political and social landscape in Nepal?

Effectiveness

5. To what extent has the EUSIF project met its projected outcomes as per the original plan?
6. What were the most significant challenges faced by the project in achieving its goals, and how were these addressed?
7. How has the project impacted the capacity building of local governance bodies?
8. What are some of the standout successes of the EUSIF project from UNDP's perspective?

Efficiency

9. How were resources managed to maximize the efficiency of the project delivery?

10. Were there any resource allocation decisions that significantly affected the project outcomes, either positively or negatively?
11. How did UNDP manage coordination among various donors and stakeholders to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure efficient use of resources?

Impact

12. What lasting impacts has the EUSIF project had on the local communities, especially in terms of service delivery and governance?
13. How has the project contributed to the broader objectives of promoting federalism in Nepal?
14. What measures has UNDP put in place to track the long-term impacts of the project on Karnali Province's development?

Sustainability

15. What strategies are in place to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes achieved through the EUSIF project?
16. How is UNDP working with local and provincial governments to maintain and scale the project's achievements?
17. Is there any exit and sustainability strategy initiated for the project?
18. What are the risks to the sustainability of the project's results, and how is UNDP addressing these risks?

Coherence

19. How has the EUSIF project aligned with other UNDP projects and initiatives in Nepal to ensure a coherent approach to development?
20. In what ways has the project leveraged partnerships with other development agencies to enhance its effectiveness and reach?

Cross-Cutting Issues

20. How has UNDP ensured that gender equality and social inclusion principles were not only integrated but effectively implemented in the EUSIF project?
21. Can you discuss any innovative practices introduced by the EUSIF project that have potential for replication in other regions or projects?

KIIs Guide for the EU as the Donor

Introduction

Please describe your role in relation to the EUSIF project and for how long you have been involved with the project.

Relevance

1. How did the EUSIF project align with the EU's strategic priorities for development cooperation in Nepal?
2. What were the key factors that influenced the EU's decision to fund this project, particularly in relation to its focus on inclusiveness and federalism?
3. In what ways did the EU ensure that the project addressed the specific needs and contexts of the target communities in Karnali Province?
4. How did the EU perceive the project's alignment with Nepal's national development priorities and policies?

Effectiveness

5. From the EU's perspective, how effectively has the EUSIF project met its intended outcomes and objectives?
6. What were the EU's criteria for measuring the success of the project's interventions, particularly in enhancing local governance?
7. How has the project contributed to building local capacities, and what are the most notable successes in this area?
8. Can you identify any particular strategies within the project that the EU found most effective in achieving the project goals?

Efficiency

9. How did the EU assess the efficiency of resource use in the EUSIF project?
10. Were there any particular efficiency challenges or successes that the EU observed during the project implementation?
11. How did the EU's funding mechanisms and guidelines influence the project's efficiency and resource allocation?

Impact

12. What significant impacts has the EU observed as a result of the EUSIF project, particularly in terms of service delivery and governance?
13. How does the EU evaluate the impact of the project on historically excluded and marginalized groups?
14. What long-term impacts does the EU anticipate the EUSIF project will have on Karnali Province and potentially broader federalism initiatives in Nepal?

Sustainability

15. What mechanisms has the EU seen as crucial for ensuring the sustainability of the EUSIF project's outcomes?

16. How does the EU plan to support the continuation or scaling of the project's successes?
17. What are the main risks to sustainability identified by the EU, and how can they be mitigated?

Coherence

18. How does the EUSIF project fit within the broader portfolio of EU-funded initiatives in Nepal?
19. How has the EU worked to ensure that the project complements other international efforts and aligns with global best practices?

Cross-Cutting Issues

20. How has the EU monitored the integration and effectiveness of GESI policies within the EUSIF project?
21. What innovative practices or lessons learned from the EUSIF project does the EU find valuable for future projects in Nepal or other similar contexts?

KIIs Guide for the Government Authorities at Different Levels

Introduction

Please describe your association with the EUSIF project.

Relevance

1. How did the EUSIF project align with your department's strategic goals?
2. What were the primary factors that made the EUSIF project necessary for Karnali Province?
3. How did the project address the unique needs of historically excluded and marginalized groups in your jurisdiction?
4. In what ways did the project's objectives complement existing government programs or initiatives?
5. Did the EUSIF project fill any critical gaps in local governance and service delivery?
6. How was the local community involved in the project planning process?
7. Were there any aspects of the project that were particularly well-received by the community?

Effectiveness

8. To what extent have the project's goals been achieved from your perspective?

9. What were the most significant changes in governance or service delivery as a result of the project?
10. How has the project enhanced the capabilities of local government officials and staff?
11. What were some of the key challenges faced during the implementation of the project?
12. How effective were the training and capacity-building initiatives under the project?
13. Were there any unexpected outcomes from the project, and how were they managed?
14. Can you provide examples of how the project has improved decision-making processes at the local level?

Efficiency

15. Were the resources provided by the EUSIF project used efficiently in your area?
16. How did the project manage its budget and resources to achieve its objectives?
17. Were there any instances of resource wastage, and if so, how were they addressed?
18. Did the project implementation strategy facilitate timely completion of its milestones?
19. How were the project activities coordinated with other ongoing initiatives?

Impact

20. What lasting impacts do you anticipate the EUSIF project will have on local governance?
21. How has the project impacted on the overall quality of services provided to the community?
22. What impact has the project had on gender equality and social inclusion in local governance?
23. How have historically marginalized groups benefited from the project?
24. What are the most significant achievements of the EUSIF project in your view?
25. How has EUSIF contributed in enhancing inclusive federalism?

Sustainability

26. What measures are in place to ensure the sustainability of the EUSIF project's outcomes?

27. How are local governments planning to continue the initiatives started under the project?
28. What are the major risks to the continuation of the project benefits, and how are they being addressed?
29. How has the project built local capacity to sustain the improvements made?
30. What support from national or international partners would be necessary to sustain the project outcomes?

Coherence

31. How well did the EUSIF project integrate with other national and provincial initiatives?
32. Was there effective collaboration between different levels of government during the project?
33. How did the project align with national policies on federalism and local governance?

Cross-Cutting Issues

34. How effectively were gender equality and social inclusion integrated into the project activities?
35. What efforts were made to ensure that environmental sustainability was considered in project implementation?
36. How did the project address the needs of vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities?
37. What policies or practices has the government adopted or modified as a result of the project?

Additional Insights

38. What lessons have been learned from the EUSIF project that could inform future projects?
39. What innovations or new approaches introduced by the project could be applied elsewhere?
40. How has the project influenced policy development or reform at the local or provincial level?
41. What additional support would enhance the effectiveness of similar projects in the future?

KIIs Guide for Other Development Partners

Introduction

Please describe your association with the EUSIF project.

Relevance

1. How do you view the alignment of the EUSIF project with the broader development goals in Nepal?
2. In what ways do your organization's initiatives complement the objectives of the EUSIF project?
3. How does the EUSIF project address gaps that your organization has identified in local governance and service delivery?
4. What aspects of the EUSIF project do you find most relevant to the current needs of Nepal's provincial and local governments?
5. How could international projects better address the needs of historically excluded and marginalized groups in regions like Karnali Province?

Effectiveness

6. From your observation, how effective has the EUSIF project been in achieving its stated outcomes?
7. What impacts have you noticed from the EUSIF project on local governance practices in Karnali Province?
8. How does the effectiveness of the EUSIF project compare to similar initiatives your organization has been involved in?
9. What collaborative efforts have been most successful in enhancing the project's effectiveness?
10. Can you identify any unique strategies within the EUSIF project that have led to successful outcomes?

Efficiency

11. How do you assess the efficiency of resource use in the EUSIF project compared to similar projects?
12. What lessons on project management and resource allocation from the EUSIF project could be applied to other initiatives?
13. Have there been any notable efficiencies gained through collaboration between your organization and the EUSIF project?

Impact

14. What significant changes or impacts has the EUSIF project had on the communities it serves, particularly in terms of inclusivity and service delivery?
15. How sustainable do you think the impacts of the EUSIF project are likely to be in the long term?
16. What are the broader social or economic impacts of the EUSIF project that you have observed in your work?

Sustainability

17. What are the key factors that will determine the sustainability of the EUSIF project's outcomes?
18. How could international partners support the continuation of successful practices from the EUSIF project?
19. What risks to sustainability should be addressed to ensure the long-term success of projects like EUSIF?
20. How did you coordinate with the EUSIF Project? Are there any regular donor coordination groups in this field?

Cross-Cutting Issues

21. How well has the EUSIF project integrated cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability compared to other initiatives in the region?

KIIs Guide for CSOs/NGOs

Introduction

Please describe your association with the EUSIF project.

Relevance

1. How did the EUSIF project address the priorities and needs of the communities you serve?
2. In what ways has the project aligned with the missions and objectives of your organization?
3. How has the EUSIF project complemented or differed from other similar initiatives by CSOs or NGOs in the region?
4. Did the EUSIF project effectively identify and target historically marginalized groups within Karnali Province?
5. What were the main gaps in service delivery or governance that the EUSIF project aimed to fill according to your experience?

Effectiveness

6. How effective do you believe the EUSIF project has been in achieving its stated objectives?
7. Can you provide examples of successful outcomes from the EUSIF project as observed in your work?
8. What were some of the most significant challenges encountered during the project, and how were they addressed?
9. How has the project influenced community engagement and participation in local governance?
10. What measures were taken to ensure that the benefits of the project reached the intended beneficiaries?

Efficiency

11. How would you evaluate the efficiency of the project's use of resources and funds?
12. Were there any practices or strategies that particularly enhanced the project's efficiency?
13. How were CSOs and NGOs involved in the monitoring and evaluation processes of the EUSIF project?
14. Did the project demonstrate effective coordination among various stakeholders to maximize resource use?
15. Were there instances of overlap or duplication with other initiatives, and how were these handled?

Impact

16. What lasting impact do you anticipate the EUSIF project will have on the communities it served?
17. How has the project impacted the overall capacity of local governments in Karnali Province?
18. What significant changes have you observed in the inclusiveness of governance practices as a result of the project?
19. How has the project contributed to sustainable development practices within the communities?
20. What is in your opinion, the state of implementation of the PLGSP? How much did the EUSIF project contribute to its acceleration?
21. What are the most notable impacts of the project on women, youth, and other vulnerable groups?

Sustainability

22. What strategies are in place to ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes?
23. How is your organization planning to continue the work initiated by the EUSIF project?
24. What are the main risks or barriers to sustaining the project's outcomes, and how can they be overcome?
25. How dependent are the project's achievements on continued external funding?
26. What capacity building or empowerment efforts does the project leave behind?

Coherence and Coordination

27. How well did the EUSIF project coordinate with other programs and initiatives undertaken by your organization?

28. In what ways did the project foster partnerships among CSOs, NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders?
29. How did the project handle the integration of different sectoral activities to ensure a holistic approach to development?

Cross-Cutting Issues

30. How effectively were gender and social inclusion integrated into the project's activities and outcomes?
31. What innovative practices or approaches from the EUSIF project could be replicated or scaled up by CSOs and NGOs in other regions or projects?

Focus Group Discussion Guide with Final Beneficiaries of the EUSIF Project

1. Have you noticed any recent improvements in the services provided by your local government, such as healthcare, education, or public transportation or any other basic services, such as quality services received in a timely manner without any hassles/hurdles etc.?
2. Can you describe how these changes have impacted on your daily life or the well-being of your community?
3. What improvements in your local services have you found most helpful or significant?
4. Have you experienced any changes in how you or your community members interact with local government officials? Please share any specific instances.
5. Have you observed that there are GESI friendly infrastructures and behaviors to service seekers such as help desk, use of gender and inclusion sensitive language, disability friendly atmosphere, provision of interpreter, breast feeding space, separate toilets for men and women, etc. in local service providing places?
6. Do you feel that the services now better address the needs of all community members, including women and traditionally underrepresented groups?
7. Have there been any new community meetings you or someone you know has attended recently? What did you gain from these experiences?
8. Have you faced any challenges or problems with the new or improved services in your area? What kind of support do you think could help resolve these issues?
9. What additional services or support do you hope to see in the future to further improve your community's quality of life?
10. Do you believe the recent improvements in local services will last over time? Why or why not?
11. What advice would you give to those managing the local services to better meet the needs of your community moving forward?

FGD Guide with a Community that Did Not Benefit from the EUSIF Project

To facilitate a focus group discussion with a community that did not benefit from the EUSIF project, the questions are designed to gather information about their current experiences with local government services, community needs, and any observed changes independent of the project's interventions. Here are 10 questions tailored for such a discussion that allow comparison with the findings of the FGD of final project beneficiaries:

1. What is your current experience with the services provided by your local government, such as healthcare, education, or public transportation?
2. Have there been any changes in these services over the past few years? If yes, can you describe these changes?
3. What aspects of your local services do you find most beneficial or significant to your daily life and the well-being of your community?
4. Can you describe how you and other community members typically interact with local government officials? Are there any recent changes in this interaction?
5. Do you feel that the current services adequately address the needs of all community members, including women and traditionally underrepresented groups?
6. Have there been any new training programs or community meetings that you or someone you know has participated in recently? What was discussed or achieved?
7. What challenges or problems are you currently facing with the services provided in your area? What kind of support do you think could help resolve these issues?
8. Looking forward, what additional services or improvements would you like to see to enhance your community's quality of life?
9. Do you believe the current level of services and community engagement will improve in the foreseeable future? Why or why not?
10. What advice would you give to those managing the local services to better meet the needs of your community?

Annex VII. Detailed Delivery Breakdown

The following is a detailed delivery breakdown, per result area and year, based on data from progress reports provided to the evaluators, with indicative expenditures (as they were drafted prior to closure of annual statements by UNDP):

Period: January- December 2022

Result Area	Budget (in $)	Indicative Expenditure (In $)	Delivery %
Result Area-1	257,057	229,683	89%
Result Area-2	34,251	23,620	69%
Result Area-3	38,119	27,490	72%
Result Area-4	43,870	39,610	90%
Operations	127,010	124,220	98%
Total	**500,307**	**444,623**	**89%**

Period: January- December 2023

Result Area	Budget (in $)	Indicative Expenditure (In $)	Delivery %
Result Area-1	427,508	301,976	71%
Result Area-2	166,257	154,601	93%
Result Area-3	253,205	225,866	89%
Result Area-4	212,963	206,830	97%
Operations	113,632	94,324	83%
Total	**1,173,565**	**983,597**	**84%**

Period: January- June 2024

Result Area	Budget (in $)	Indicative Expenditure (In $)	Delivery %
Result Area-1	199,016	156,903	79%
Result Area-2	160,121	147,914	92%
Result Area-3	148,298	124,543	84%
Result Area-4	247,072	164,122	66%
Operations	80,676	61,147	76%
Total	**835,183**	**654,628**	**78%**

Note:* Out of total budget of USD 835,183, USD 50,000 allocated from TRAC-II (UNDP) and rest USD 785,183 is from donor fund EU

** Above indicative expenditure included the disbursement done as of 25th June and commitment for the pipeline activities which will be completed by end of July

*** Financial delivery is forecasted at 96% by the end of August 2024

Total GESI Expenditure stands at USD 236,528 which is 36% of total expenditure

Monitoring Expenditure is USD 58,916 which is 9% of total expenditure

The data reflected on UNDP's Transparency Portal at the time of closure of the evaluation process (August 2024), is the following:

Year	Budget	Expense
2022	$500,306	$450,800
2023	$1.23M	$946,409
2024	$836,183	$499,127

Annex VIII. List of Stakeholders engaged in EUSIF implementation

Type	Stakeholder/Partner	Link/Relevance with EUSIF
Donor	European Union (EU)	Federalism, Governance reform and policy support
	Norwegian Embassy	Federalism, Governance reform, policy support and economic development
	FCDO	Federalism, Governance reform policy support, Environment/Climate change and economic Development
UNDP	Country Office	Governance reform, Gender and social inclusion, Environment and climate change and Economic development
GOVT.	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA)/Provincial and Local Governance Support Program (PLGSP)	Policy Support, Governance reform, Gender and social inclusion.
	Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Minister (OCMCM) Karnali	Policy Support, Governance reform, Gender and social inclusion, multisector development
	Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)	Support to Women, Children, Senior citizen and Dis-Advantage Groups of Society
	Karnali Province Training Academy (KPTA)/PLGSP	Provide induction, and in service training to Provincial level staff working in Provinical Ministry and Local Government in different theme

	Karnali Province Planning Commission (KPPC)	Prepare Annual, Periodic and strategic plan of Provincial government covering all the sectors
	Mid-west University (Policy Lab)	Support to Provincial Government in the areas of policy review, policy formulation and policy research
	National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN)	Result 4: Support to Local Government for policy formulation, advocacy of Local government in line to policy reform and development agenda of local government
	LGs (Soru, Tila, Panchapuri, Chaurjahari and Dullu)	Result 1, 2 and 3: Support to Implement the EUSIF activities on a partnership basis as well as coordinate to the LG level stakeholders to implement EUSIF activities at Local Level.
	NASC	Result 3: Provide suppor to the UNDP/EUSIF in the areas of capacity development of Staffs of FG,PG and LG.
UNDP PROJECTS	UNDP Field Office	Coordinate to DPs and PG ministry at provincial level
	LISP (Local Infrastructure Support Programme	Result 4: Implement the program in coordination with other DPs at PG and LG level.
	PSP (Parliament Support Programme)	Result 4: Implement the program in coordination with other DPs at PG and LG level.
OTHER DPs	International IDEA	Result 3: Implement the program to support LGs and local youth for socio-economic development.
	GIZ/CDSG	Result 3: Capacity development of PG and LG

CSOs and NGOs	Hriti Foundation	Result 1 and 3: Enhance Local capacity to prepare plan and conduct research at Karnali Province level.
	Badi Sarokar Manch	Result 1 and 3: Support to enhance the socio-Economic capacity of Badi people
Beneficiaries	MTOT holders from KPTA	Result 3: Training skill development to provide training in different theme.
	Training participants	Training participants in different theme e.g. planning, GESI, LED.

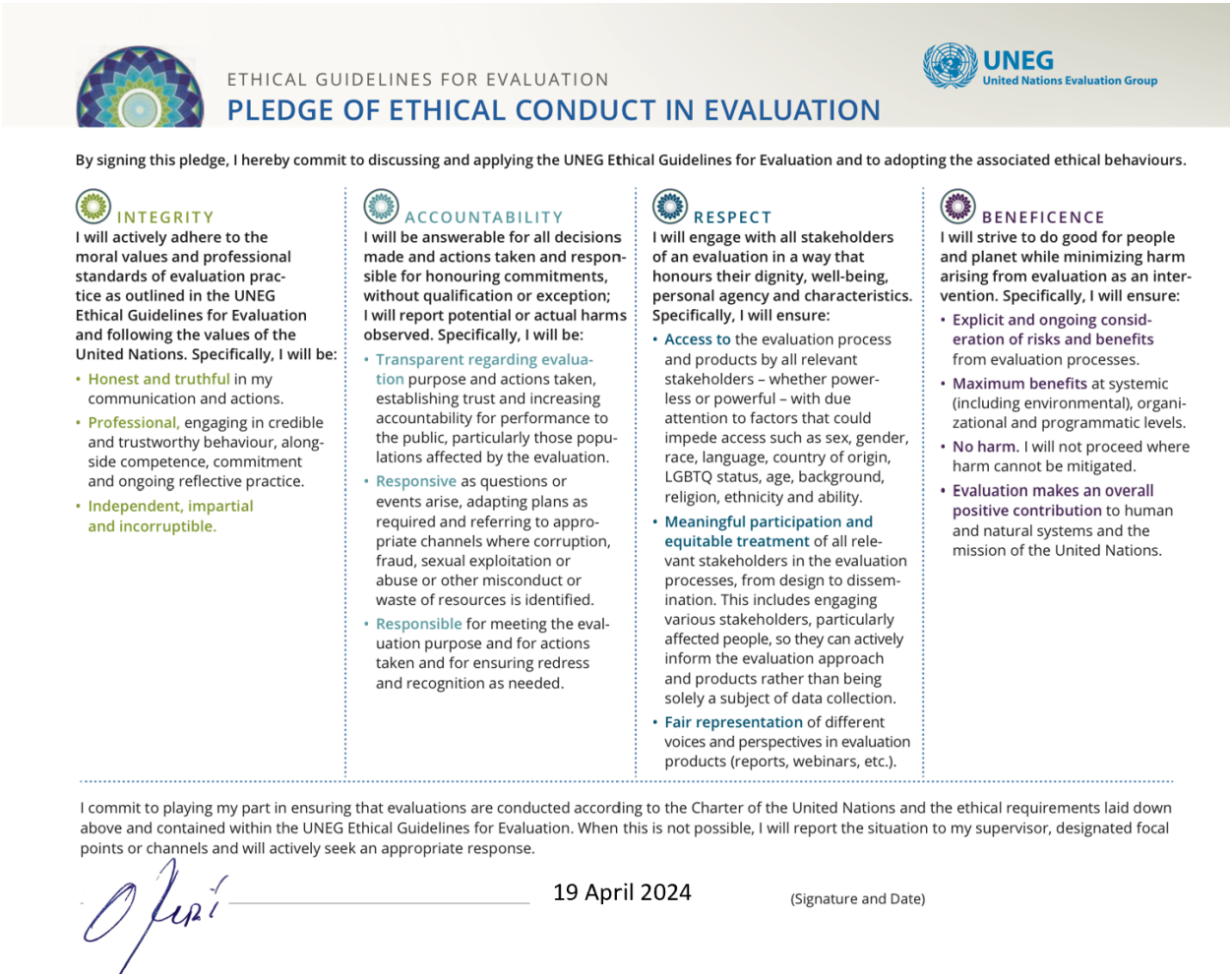
Annex IX. Field mission itinerary

Date	Time	Programme	Remarks
27-May		Olivera Puric, Team Leader arrives in Kathmandu	
		Separate meeting with, Julien Chevillard, DRR	In-depth interview (KII) about UNDP and projects
		Separate meeting with Binda Magar, Policy Advisor, Tek Tamata, Portfolio Manager and Sewa Shrestha, Inclusive Governance Specialist	On Project
		Separate meeting with Bipana Dhimal, Policy Analyst	GESI Analyst
	5.00- 5.30	Introductory meeting with UNDP CO & EUSIF	Julien Chevillard, Deputy Resident Representative, Binda Magar, Tek Tamata, Bikash Ranjan Dash, Sewa Shrestha
28-May	9.45- 10.45	Meeting with Norwegian Embassy	Aneela Khan, Shradha Rayamajhi
	11.30 - 12.00	Meeting with NASC	Tulasi Sigdel, Sr. Director
	12.15 - 1.00	Meeting with Binda Magar/Bipana Dhimal	
	1.15- 2.15	Lunch	
	3.30- 4.30	Meeting with FCDO	Mette Nielson, Madhu Bishwakarma
29-May	9:30-10:30	Fly to Surkhet	Hotel check-in

	10:45-11:30	Meeting with UNDP Field Office and UNDP Projects (PSP, LISP, A2J)	Rafeeque Siddiqui, Head of UNDP FO Kyarina Shrestha, Ganesh BK, Eman Sunar
	11:45-12:30	Meeting with KPTA	Yub Raj Neupane, Officer
	12:45-01:30	Meeting with PLGSP	PLGSP TA Team
	1:30-2:30	Lunch	
	02:45-03:15	Meeting with Kanali Prov. Planning Commission (KPPC)	Netra Karki, Chief Admin Officer
	3:30-4:30	Meeting with OCMCM	Anand Saru, Secretary and Province Programme Director (PPD), Gita Barai Magar, Province Programme Manager (PPM)
	04:45-05:15	Meeting with MU Policy Lab and observation	Dr. Chandra Prasad Rijal
	05:15-06:00	Meeting with EUSIF Team	Project Team
30 May-31 May	NA	Field Trip to Chaurjahari (Evaluation Team)	Meeting with LG Authorities (30 May) OSSD Observation and meeting with citizens (31 May) Focused Group Discussion among Ward Level Representatives, CBO members (31 May)
31 May		Field Trip to Bangad Kupinde Municipality (Non-Model Palika) (Evaluation Team)	Meeting with LG authorities
1 June		Meeting with Simta Rural Municipality (Non-Model Palika) Field Trip to Panchapuri (Evaluation Team)	Meeting with LG authorities
2 June		Field Trip to Panchapuri (Evaluation Team)	Meeting with LG Authorities (2 June) OSSD Observation and meeting with citizens (2 June) Focused Group Discussion among Ward Level Representatives, CBO members (2 June)
02-Jun	3:30-4:30	Meeting with Badi Sarokar Munch	Hikmat Badi, Chair (BSM)
	4:45-05:15	Meeting with Hriti Foundation	Dinesh Gautam, ED (HF)
03-Jun	TBD	Meeting with PLGSP (NPD/NPM)	

	TBD	Meeting with NARMIN	
	3-4 pm	Meeting with Kaluwa Vergamota, EU	
	TBD	Meeting with Chevillard, Deputy Resident Representative	
	5-5.30 pm	Meeting with NARMIN	Rajendra Pyakurel
04-Jun		**Olivera Puric, Team Leader departure**	
3 June- 4 June	NA	Field Trip to Dullu Mun. (National Consultants)	Meeting with LG Authorities (3 June) OSSD Observation and meeting with citizens (4 June)
5 June- 6 June	NA	Bhairabi Rural Municipality Non-Model Palika (National Consultants)	Meeting with LG Authorities
06-Jun	11:00-12:00	Meeting with MTOT participants (national consultants)	
	01:30-02:15	Meeting with KPPC	Yogendra Shahi, Former Vice Chair-KPPC
	02:30-3:15	Meeting with International IDEA	Prakash Jha
	03:30-05:00	Additional	
	05:00-06:00	De-briefing at EUSIF office	
07-Jun		Debriefing with UNDP CO	

Annex X. 2020 Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation Pledge and Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form



ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION

UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group

By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.

INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- Honest and truthful in my communication and actions.
- Professional, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- Independent, impartial and incorruptible.

ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- Transparent regarding evaluation purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- Responsive as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- Responsible for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.

RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- Access to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- Meaningful participation and equitable treatment of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- Fair representation of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).

BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits from evaluation processes.
- Maximum benefits at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- No harm. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

19 April 2024

(Signature and Date)

Evaluator:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. Should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. The evaluator must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. The evaluator is not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluator should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the evaluator must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. Should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, the evaluator should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Is responsible for their performance and their product(s), and responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[1]

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation

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[1]www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

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