Reference Number: PVR-452
Project Number: 34306-013
Loan Number: 2143
August 2016

Nepal: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project

Independent Evaluation Department
Asian Development Bank
ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>DMF</td>
<td>design and monitoring framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>DWD</td>
<td>Department of Women’s Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>midterm review</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>Nepal Resident Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCR</td>
<td>project completion report</td>
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<tr>
<td>RRP</td>
<td>report and recommendation of the President</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>technical assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>WDO</td>
<td>women’s development office</td>
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</table>

NOTE

In this report, “$” refers to US dollars.

Key Words

adb, asian development bank, economic empowerment, empowerment, equality, gender, institutional strengthening, legal empowerment, midterm review, nepal, social empowerment, validation, women

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PROJECT BASIC DATA

<table>
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<th>Project Number</th>
<th>34306-013</th>
<th>PCR Circulation Date</th>
<th>11 Sep 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Loan Number</td>
<td>2143</td>
<td>PCR Validation Date</td>
<td>Aug 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Country: Nepal

Sector: Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development

Total Project Costs: $15.50
Actual: $12.87

ADB Financing ($ million): ADF: 10.00
Loan (SDR equivalent, million): 10.00 (6.64) 7.37 (4.75)
Borrower: 3.40 3.40
OCR: 0.00
Beneficiaries: 2.10 2.10
Others: 0.00 0.00
Cofinancer: Total Cofinancing 0.00 0.00

Approval Date: 16 Dec 2004
Effectiveness Date: 7 Sep 2006 28 Nov 2006
Signing Date: 9 Jun 2006
Closing Date: 30 Jun 2010 11 Dec 2013

Project Officers:
- M. Mongiorgi
- S. Nebel
- M. Watanabe
- S. Subba

Location:
- ADB headquarters
- ADB headquarters
- ADB headquarters
- Nepal Resident Mission

From:
- Jan 2005
- Oct 2008
- Feb 2010
- Nov 2010

To:
- Sep 2008
- Jan 2010
- Oct 2010
- Dec 2013

IED Review Director: W. Kolkma, IED1

Team members:
- F. Ahmed, Lead Evaluation Specialist, IED1
- H. Son, Principal Evaluation Specialist, IED1
- M. J. Dimayuga, Senior Evaluation Officer, IED1
- E. Breckner, Consultant

ADB = Asian Development Bank; ADF = Asian Development Fund; IED1 = Independent Evaluation Department, Division 1; OCR = ordinary capital resources; PCR = project completion report; SDR = special drawing right.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Rationale

1. The low status of women in Nepal can be traced to economic, legal, sociocultural, political, and institutional factors—which are interrelated, mutually reinforcing, and centuries old. The condition of women was exacerbated by the country’s caste system, as this defined access to resources and opportunities. The Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women project\(^1\) aimed to improve the socioeconomic conditions of poor rural women through the following four components (divided into a number of subcategories):

   (i) economic empowerment consisting of programs for promoting income generation and programs for promoting linkage to microfinance;

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(ii) legal empowerment consisting of (a) raising legal awareness and education, and (b) creating an enabling legal and administrative environment;

(iii) social empowerment consisting of (a) enhancing social processes at the community level, (b) setting up the household technology fund, and (c) establishing the community infrastructure fund; and

(iv) institutional strengthening and project management consisting of (a) strengthening the gender mainstreaming mechanisms of the Department of Women’s Development (DWD) and women’s development offices (WDOs), (b) strengthening gender mainstreaming methods of local bodies, and (c) project management.

2. These components were mutually supportive and sought to promote a virtuous circle of socioeconomic improvement among poor rural women. The proposals outlined at appraisal included a broad range of activities that included (i) economic group formation and training through legal reforms and advice, (ii) provision of improved household technology, (iii) provision of small-scale rural infrastructure, (iv) literacy training, (v) an audit of DWD, and (vi) gender sensitivity training for line agencies at the district level. All activities were to be done in 15 districts spread across three regions of the country (Far Western, Midwestern, and Central regions). In addition, the project was also expected to undertake follow-up activities in 12 districts and 5 towns, which are related to an earlier microfinance project for women.

B. Expected Impacts, Outcomes, and Outputs

3. At appraisal, the impact was intended to reduce poverty among poor rural women, including those belonging to low-caste and ethnic groups and their households in selected areas of rural Nepal. The expected outcome was to have poor rural women, including low-caste and ethnic groups, empowered economically, socially, and politically. The expected impact, outcomes, and outputs, as provided in the report and recommendation of the President (RRP), were modified (both in terms of substance and in their description) at the time of the midterm review (MTR) in 2010 and the original project framework converted into a design and monitoring framework (DMF). The original impact, outcomes, and outputs—along with the revised version—are summarized in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Original and Revised Impact, Outcomes, and Outputs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original Impact, Outcomes, and Outputs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(based on the project framework of the RRP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced poverty of poor rural women, including low-caste and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnic groups, and their households in selected areas of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rural Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor rural women—including low-caste and ethnic groups—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empowered economically, socially, and politically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets: 100,000 households have positive economic and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social development impacts from the project.</td>
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</table>

2 However, the project map in the RRP showed project sites in the Midwestern and Central regions only.
### Original Impact, Outcomes, and Outputs (based on the project framework of the RRP)

50,000 women have improved and regular sources of production and income.

### Revised Impact, Outcomes, and Outputs (based on the DMF as revised at midterm review)

At least 50% of beneficiaries belong to disadvantaged groups

#### Outputs

1. **Economic empowerment**: Increased income, assets, and employment opportunities for poor rural women to (i) increase women-led viable microenterprises; (ii) improve opportunities and conditions for female wage laborers; and (iii) increase access to microfinance for women’s groups, including SCCs and informal groups formed under MCPW

2. **Legal empowerment**: Increased control by poor rural women over their lives through the use of law to (i) increase knowledge and awareness of poor rural women and of society at large of their legal and administrative rights and obligations, and (ii) strengthen legal and administrative environment

3. **Social empowerment**: Increased available time and improved opportunities for the poor rural women to pursue both personal and community development to (i) enhance social processes at community level, (ii) improve household technology, and (iii) improve community infrastructure.

4. **Institutional strengthening on gender mainstreaming**: Increased capacity to mainstream gender and promote women’s empowerment to (i) strengthen gender mainstreaming mechanisms of DWD and WDO, (ii) strengthen gender mainstreaming mechanisms of local bodies, and (iii) upgrade DWD and WDO facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Economic empowerment: Increased income, assets, and employment opportunities for beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Legal empowerment: Increased legal awareness and improved access to legal services among beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social empowerment: Enhanced social welfare and capacity among beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Institutional strengthening and project management: Improved institutional capacity for promoting gender equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DMF = design and monitoring framework. DWD = Department of Women’s Development, MCPW = Microcredit Project for Women, RRP = report and recommendation of the President, SCC = Savings and Credit Cooperative, WDO = women’s development office.


#### C. Provision of Inputs

4. The total project cost was estimated at $15.5 million, for which the Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided a loan of SDR6.6 million or $10.0 million equivalent. The balance of funding was to be provided by the Government of Nepal ($3.4 million) and the beneficiaries ($2.1 million). The actual project cost was $12.87 million, $2.63 million less than at appraisal due to the low utilization of the ADB loan following (i) delays in loan effectiveness and in project commencement; (ii) the ongoing conflict situation, which affected timely staff recruitment; and (iii) the slow project implementation resulting from the difficulty in commuting to very remote and scattered project sites.

5. The project was approved in December 2004 but became effective 2 years later (November 2006) to allow the government to fulfill certain preconditions that were discussed during project appraisal. Following a comprehensive review of the project implementation in 2010, the project closure date was extended and the project closed in December 2013, almost
3.5 years after the original target date of June 2010. Project completion was extended twice due to difficulties in recruiting staff and in completing project activities.

6. The project proposed a total of 172 person-months of consulting services (22 person-months international and 150 person-months domestic) but only 150 person-months of domestic consulting were fielded. The project completion report (PCR) stated that international consultants were no longer required for the intended assignments (PCR, Appendix 6, p. 29). The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare deemed that international consultants were no longer required for the intended assignment based on its negative experience in recruiting international consultants on other technical assistance. The PCR considered the performance of the consultants satisfactory (PCR, para. 15).

7. The RRP did not identify any significant environment and involuntary resettlement risks arising from the project. However, it identified significant risks to indigenous peoples (RRP, Appendix 14, p. 59) arising from the discrimination or social exclusion of *dalits*, especially women. As such, the project claimed to have specific actions to ensure effective targeting of ethnic minority women, which was integrated in the project design.

8. A stand-alone capacity development technical assistance (TA) was provided during the initial phase of the project to strengthen management and institutional capacities of the executing and implementing agencies. The TA was rated *partly successful* as the time frame was too short and the TA resources were limited to deliver the expected changes.

D. Implementation Arrangements

9. The project consisted, in large part, of reinforcing and extending the operations of the DWD and the WDOs. The project director was the Director General of DWD. The central project management team was based at the DWD, headed by a full-time project manager and a team of staff. WDOs (renamed Women and Children’s Officers in 2010) managed district project teams and project implementation in the districts. The project provided DWD and WDOs capacity building, technical, and logistical support.

II. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE AND RATINGS

A. Relevance of Design and Formulation

10. The PCR rated the project *relevant*. Given the need to target poverty reduction and improving the status of rural women in Nepal, the project was consistent with the strategies of ADB and the government at the time of preparation and at completion. The project built on the successful completion of the previous ADB gender-related Microcredit Project for Women in Nepal.

11. The project was designed to be comprehensive and innovative, supporting a number of activities. The project’s scope, albeit ambitious, was relevant to addressing the multidimensional aspects of women’s empowerment in Nepal including legal, social, and economic barriers specific to the country’s sociocultural context. It was also aligned with the government’s holistic approach to women’s empowerment. However, considering its scope and number of activities, the project may be deemed under-resourced with a base cost of only

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3 *Dalits* refer to the lowest caste of the Hindu caste system.


$12.9 million, targeting 100,000 poor households for 5 years, including the administrative capacity building of DWD and WDO offices.

12. Project activities were to be undertaken in 15 districts, many located in isolated parts of the country and experiencing armed insurgency of varying intensity at the time. Due to geographical challenges, remote project areas were often left out from the development process and required much-needed support. Moreover, the project covered women from dalits and ethnic minorities, who face social exclusion.

13. Despite delays, the project remained relevant to Nepal’s institutional reforms on gender equality. The project paved the way for the enactment of legislation and related regulations that addressed gender discriminatory practices in Nepal. The project’s effectivity date was 2 years after its approval to ensure the passage of the Gender Equality Act—which was a precondition. Several legal reforms on women’s rights followed the approval of this legislation, such as the passage of the Domestic Violence Act, National Women’s Commission Act 2007, and National Dalit Commission Act 2008. The project also encountered start-up delays in part due to the worsened political environment that was beyond the project’s control.

14. Following delays in implementation, a comprehensive review (called midterm review) of the project was completed toward the end of the initial implementation period. This review led to the extension of the project term from June 2010 to December 2013—a period of 3.5 years. The midterm review (MTR) mission reformulated the project into an implementable program, with support from the Nepal Resident Mission (NRM), which ensured the completion of the revised project after a project delegation’s official visit to the NRM in 2010. In addition, the original project design allowed for a degree of flexibility during implementation given that Nepal was undergoing social conflict at that time. The reformulated project design reduced the scope and redefined the outcome and output targets and associated indicators.

15. The project could have been made more relevant if the MTR had been undertaken earlier since it was clear from the start that this project was having problems—as the project monitoring status indicated unsatisfactory performance in the early years. As shown in Table 1, one of the critical changes adopted after the MTR was the shift in emphasis—from specifically targeting women and disadvantaged groups to the more general targeting of households as project beneficiaries. Further, neither the original design nor the MTR defined how to measure the increased status of beneficiaries—which is the indicator for measuring empowerment. The indicators for the intended outcomes were again used for the outputs, which again referred to empowerment under the economic, legal, social, and institutional categories. This validation assesses the project relevant.

B. Effectiveness in Achieving Project Outcomes and Outputs

16. The PCR rated the project effective on the basis that it had achieved its intended outcome of empowering the project beneficiaries legally, economically, and socially and because it also delivered on the related outputs in these three areas. As noted above, the outcome indicator (beneficiaries empowered economically, legally, and socially through an increase in their status) was not translated into indicators with baselines and targets.

17. A second outcome specifically referred to 50% of the beneficiaries being from the disadvantaged groups. Although the DMF of the PCR showed that the disadvantaged ethnic and caste minorities were able to participate in project activities, there was little measure at the outcome level of how they benefited from that engagement. Nevertheless, the government
undertook an impact study and prepared its own project completion review and both showed benefits accruing to women under each of the three outcome empowerment categories. Women had increased incomes, increased access to assets, and were more aware of their legal rights. There was also greater social empowerment through increased acceptance of their economic role and through their engagement in local committees and cooperatives. The impact study was undertaken in 2012, while the bulk of the project disbursement took place between 2009 and 2012, with 50% of disbursement taking place in 2011 and 2012. This is a very short period in which the level of benefits described by the study could have been generated, monitored, and assessed. Thus, it may be possible that the study also captured external benefits of other projects and programs or the general overall economic improvement in Nepal since project inception. Nevertheless, data from the impact study pointed to some direct correlation between the project outputs and the outcomes produced and there was some data to show that disadvantaged groups benefited even though there was no clear target. Even with the complexity of the project and lack of clarity on the indicators, project achievements against intended outcomes were nevertheless positive.

18. On the targeted outputs of economic empowerment, data showed women’s increased engagement in activities funded by the project, and income increases at the household level. On legal empowerment, none was disbursed under this output so it is not clear how the achievements related to this project activity were carried out. Also, two critical indicators—on the increased reporting of gender-based violence to police and the number of women’s rights-related cases processed by the district courts—were not measured, possibly because no gender cases got that far. However, on social empowerment and on enhanced social welfare and capacity among beneficiaries, the achievements were clear. There was increased (i) women’s participation at various committees at the community level, (ii) commercial activity, and (iii) benefits for women due to improved service delivery at the household level that the project funded. Women gained additional free time through the introduction of household time-saving devices. The output of improved institutional capacity for promoting gender equality was possibly the most successful as achievements on interagency coordination of gender-related activities were measured and the capacity of the WDO in district development planning on gender issues were strengthened. In conclusion, positive achievements were measured against the outcome targets, and the cumulative outputs did point to a growing improvement in the empowerment of women and of some disadvantaged groups. The project is assessed effective.

C. Efficiency of Resource Use in Achieving Outcomes and Outputs

19. The PCR rated the project less than efficient in achieving its outcome and outputs based on the project’s economic benefits and time slippage. The PCR noted in Appendix 6 that not all of the benefits of empowerment were quantifiable such that calculating the economic internal rates of return (EIRR) for the project may not have been meaningful. Nonetheless, the PCR undertook financial analyses for some of the livelihood activities and time saving analyses for some of the small-scale infrastructure components. These were found to be positive. However, in the context of overall economic efficiency, these results only cover a small portion of the project cost (SDR1.4 million out of SDR4.7 million), which was devoted to this kind of productive investment.

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7 According to the poverty analysis of ADB undertaken in 2012, using an international poverty line of $1.25 per day, the incidence of poverty in Nepal has declined steadily from 53.1% in 2004 to 24.8% in 2011. However, not all of this can be attributed to the project.
8 See, for example the PCR for the Nepal Microcredit Project for Women in which financial internal rates of return (FIRR) for similar activities ranged from 23% to 46% and EIRR ranged from 26% to 47%.
20. The project implementation process was not efficient. The project was approved in 2004 but did not become effective until June 2006 because of the government’s delayed compliance with conditions of loan effectiveness. Implementation started on 28 November 2006, 2 years after loan approval. The project schedule was also greatly affected by delays in hiring local staff and the very remote locations of project areas, which required longer time for staff mobilization, activity implementation, and monitoring. The remote location of the project areas caused high staff turnover and delays in filling vacant positions, which influenced overall implementation. Political and politically associated instability in the early years of implementation affected this situation. Despite having a 5-year implementation period, the first major disbursements did not occur until 2009, and despite being extended twice until 2013, the project could not fully utilize the meager funds that were provided for the project (with 28% undisbursed). Given these drawbacks, the project is assessed less than efficient.

D. Preliminary Assessment of Sustainability

21. The PCR rated the project likely sustainable. The PCR mission indicated that women’s groups established during the project continue to operate and function, and source credit funds either from their own savings or from outside sources. The indicative net cash flow, internal rates of return, and labor requirements of sample microenterprises visited by the mission showed that these were viable and provided a steady stream of income within a short time. In addition, project activities undertaken in the 15 project districts through 82 village development committees have been integrated into the regular program of DWD and paralegal groups institutionalized by the project are now being expanded nationwide. Moreover, the small-scale infrastructure provided by the project is appropriate for local groups that will undertake maintenance and repairs, and committees have been set up to do so. Based on the above, this validation assesses the limited project achievements likely sustainable.

E. Impact

22. The PCR appraised the project impact significant and cited the impact study undertaken in 2012 to support this. The revised impact of the project was reduced incidence of poverty among poor and disadvantaged rural women in project areas (beneficiaries). The indicator for this was poverty incidence in project area communities reduced by 20% from baseline.

23. While a large number of people may have participated in the project through skills training or group formation and have access to small-scale infrastructure; and while measures of economic, social, and legal improvement in the project districts may well have improved over the project period, it may be difficult to assume that the project has had a profound impact on a wide section of the project area population given the modest amount of funding provided, the size of the intended beneficiary population (70,000 households), and the broad and widely scattered project area (15 districts in 3 different development regions).

24. It is not clear how an impact assessment undertaken in 2012 could have captured the impact of recently disbursed funds and attributed such a high level of benefits to the project activities, especially since there is normally a gestation period before benefits start accruing. Given the above, this validation considers the impact of the project moderate.
III. OTHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

A. Performance of the Borrower and Executing Agency

25. The PCR rated the performance of the borrower and the executing agency satisfactory, indicating that counterpart funding was provided as required, loan covenants were complied with, staff were fielded in remote areas with difficult responsibilities, innovative techniques were applied, and ultimately, implementation targets were achieved. The MTR, however, painted a very different picture. Prior to the MTR, the project manager’s position was left vacant for 18 months only to have the newly appointed manager leave after 2.5 months; 33% of staff positions in the district were vacant; contract awards was at 26% and disbursements at 30%, at 78% of the implementation period; required service providers and consultants had not been recruited; and only 61% of Chief Women Worker posts in the districts had been filled. One of the strategies proposed to complete the project outcomes was to focus on successful districts, thus, it is likely that some districts were ultimately not included in the project as intended. Despite statements in the PCR that the full revised project outputs were achieved, this validation, under the circumstances, assesses the performance of the borrower and executing agency less than satisfactory.

B. Performance of the Asian Development Bank

26. The PCR rated ADB performance satisfactory, but also noted that “the project’s scope placed difficult demands upon relatively weak executing and implementing agencies in a politically unstable and challenging environment” (PCR, para. 17) and mentioned the remote location of project areas and the fragmented nature of project activities. These issues were raised in the staff review committee and management review meeting but the project was still approved. This validation also notes the fact that the original complex design managed to get through the screening process at appraisal and that nothing was done to revise the design until the MTR 6 years later, despite impractical proposals. This raises questions on ADB performance during both the design and implementation phases. In addition, the PCR also noted that “frequent changes of headquarters-based project officers affected implementation.” This validation has already noted, in the section on relevance, that the project design, scope, and identified activities were theoretically relevant but difficult to implement.

27. This validation considers that several factors should be taken into consideration when assessing ADB performance. These include the following: (i) failure to identify the deficiencies in the original project proposal (far too many diverse and unconnected project activities, a widely dispersed project area, a weak executing agency and a conflict-ridden volatile environment); (ii) frequent changes in project officers contributed to a lack of management continuity and, thus, ineffective implementation supervision; (iii) for a 6-year period from Board approval in 2004 to the MTR in 2010, no major effort was made to resolve design issues and to review and revise the project scope, despite the project’s obvious implementation problems; and (iv) there was an inexplicable delay in fielding the MTR mission until 2010—the year the project was originally expected to close. While it is noted that the completion of the scaled-down project was a laudable achievement, this validation assesses the performance of ADB less than satisfactory.
IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Overall Assessment and Ratings

28. The PCR rated the project *successful*. In view of this validation’s *relevant, effective, less than efficient, and likely sustainable* ratings, the project is considered *successful* overall. While the project faced delays in the staffing of project positions, and in the recruitment of organizers and trainers, the project supported crucial legislative reforms relating to gender equity. It also contributed to economic and social empowerment of women, including those belonging to ethnic minority groups and *dalits*. The project was exploratory in nature and some of the activities and organizational procedures incorporated into or developed by the project are still being used by the DWD and other development partner agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>PCR</th>
<th>IED Review</th>
<th>Reason for Disagreement and/or Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness in achieving outcome</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency in achieving outcome and outputs</td>
<td>Less than efficient</td>
<td>Less than efficient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary assessment of sustainability</td>
<td>Likely sustainable</td>
<td>Likely sustainable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall assessment</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>The modest amount of funding provided on a district-by-district basis and the timing of the impact study (during the disbursement period) suggest that the high levels of economic, legal, and social improvement cannot be wholly attributed to the project (paras. 22–24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The unfavorable state of the project after 6 years of implementation, as described in the MTR BTOR, must be taken into account in assessing the borrower and executing agency performances (para. 25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrower and executing agency</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Less than satisfactory</td>
<td>The original project design was impractical; this was pointed out in internal reviews but not acted upon. There were frequent changes in project officer. The implementation suffered due to the lack of action in resolving design issues and the delayed MTR (paras. 26–27).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance of ADB</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Less than satisfactory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of PCR</td>
<td></td>
<td>Less than satisfactory</td>
<td>Refer to para. 32.</td>
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*ADB = Asian Development Bank, BTOR = back-to-office report, IED = Independent Evaluation Department, MTR = midterm review, PCR = project completion report.*

Source: ADB Independent Evaluation Department.
B. Lessons

29. In view of the fact that the project is one of a limited number of direct gender interventions undertaken by ADB, and in view of the less than optimal history of the project, substantial and meaningful lessons could have been drawn from it. Instead, the lessons provided in the PCR are general, and lacking in depth. This validation notes more appropriate lessons could have included, such as the following:

(i) A project’s scope must be within the implementation capacity of the executing and implementing agencies.

(ii) Geographic targeting of poor, isolated areas is crucial in reaching communities that are most in need of development support, but it may undermine project implementation and viability.

(iii) Project success depends, to a large extent, on continuous support and attention by ADB—as shown by the long delays and lack of progress when the project was managed from headquarters—in contrast to the quick successful completion after its delegation to the NRM.

C. Recommendations for Follow-Up

30. Recommendations in the PCR reflect the need for institution-building activities for the DWD. However, more incisive and analytical recommendations could have been made, given the obvious importance of this project as a model from which the design of future lending activities for direct gender intervention can evolve, both in Nepal and in other countries.

V. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

A. Monitoring and Evaluation Design, Implementation, and Utilization

31. The PCR indicated that “a project monitoring and management information system for process-monitoring and results-based data was established at the DWD to capture and track information from the districts. The staff were trained on [the] use of the system and the monitoring and management information system will be used for the DWD’s overall program” (PCR, para. 8). This may be a significant achievement since it is often difficult to get executing and implementing agencies to effectively establish and implement monitoring arrangements even just for project activities. However, the review mission aide memoire of June 2012 indicated that the implementation of the monitoring system was only to be initiated in July 2012, almost at the end of the project. It is useful to know that a monitoring system was put in place and will be used by the DWD, but it would have limited usefulness for the project, which ended in 2013.

B. Comments on Project Completion Report Quality

32. The PCR could have better presented the project’s scope and intent and implementation history, as well as the changes made during the MTR, to ensure its eventual success. In view of the mixed history of the project, the PCR provided insufficient justification for the assessment of effectiveness; the lessons learned provided were also insufficient. In view of the fact that the PCR could have presented the project background more clearly, more analytical in its conclusions, and more frank about the performance of both the ADB and the executing agency, this validation considers the PCR less than satisfactory.
C. Data Sources for Validation

33. Data sources used for this validation include the PCR, the RRP, the country partnership strategy at the time of appraisal and at the time of PCR preparation, minutes of internal reviews, and loan review mission reports.

D. Recommendation for Independent Evaluation Department Follow-Up

34. The PCR recommended a project performance evaluation report on the third quarter of 2017. This validation suggests that if this is to be undertaken, or if done earlier, it would be desirable to ensure that the mission for this has adequate access to project records and personnel.