

SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	Nepal	Project Title:	Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project	Department/ Division:	South Asia Department Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture Division

I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

Targeting classification: targeted intervention—geographic

A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy

Nepal's poverty reduction strategy aims to reduce poverty through broad-based economic growth, inclusive social development, good governance, targeted programs, and rural infrastructure development. The strategy envisages tangible improvements in the living standards of the poor, disadvantaged, and socially excluded sections of the population.^a The government's Three-Year Interim Plan (2010–2013) recognizes the importance of adopting the principle of integrated water resources management for water security and disaster risk prevention. These objectives were supported by the Asian Development Bank's 2010–2012 country partnership strategy for Nepal, which proposed to support broad-based inclusive economic growth through investments in rural development, including investments in irrigation, water supply and sanitation, and roads. The country partnership strategy had four development pillars: (i) inclusive economic growth, (ii) inclusive social development, (iii) governance and capacity building, and (iv) climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability. The project will support inclusive social development and sustainable peace building by reducing the vulnerability of rural mountain people to water scarcity and land degradation. It will also reduce poverty by installing water storage systems to make water more available during the dry season for both agricultural and domestic use. The project will thereby contribute to increasing the agricultural productivity, improving the food security, and raising the incomes of poor households, as well as to reducing conflicts over allocation of increasingly scarce water. Once water supply is made reliable, farmers will be more willing to invest in improved production practices (and required inputs) because the climatic risk of crop failure due to water deficiency will have been reduced or alleviated. For low-income households, increased production will increase food security and raise cash incomes by enabling them to sell small quantities of crops and reduce time spent collecting water and fodder from afar.

B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during PPTA or Due Diligence

1. Key poverty and social issues. The project area has isolated communities with low thresholds of resilience to such effects of climate change as extended periods of drought or untimely rains. The project districts suffer from malnutrition and poor public health conditions that are worse than national averages. The incidence of undernourishment in the population is about 50%. Around 22% of the area's adult males are absentee migrants, leaving many households to be run by women. The poverty rate in the Far-Western Development Region, where the project is located, is 46%, the highest in Nepal. The poverty index for the project districts ranges from 0.37 to 0.52. The key issues related to higher poverty in the areas are (i) limited or no employment opportunities near home; (ii) a high workload for women, the elderly, and children due to seasonal out-migration of men to India; (iii) inequality in land ownership or tenure; (iv) poor agricultural yields and a lack of market facilities for goods and services; and (v) discrimination by gender and social class, symbolized by oppressive traditional cultural practices enforced on women during menstruation and childbirth and on the Dalit (particularly during common use of water).^b The mean annual per capita income based on a household survey is NRs21,934. Households have subsistence lifestyles that are based on mixed agriculture, grazing activity, and collection of non-timber forest products. The poverty analysis showed that only 13% of the households have year-round food sufficiency. The project will address the issue of poverty by helping reduce the unreliability of water supply for agriculture, livestock, and domestic use. This will be achieved through a participatory program of integrated water, land, and catchment management in upland areas, supplemented by the construction of tanks to store drinking water for use over long periods and irrigation water ponds to enhance irrigated agriculture. Women will spend less time each day collecting water, and agricultural production will increase through expanded storage for irrigation and efficient water application. Disadvantaged groups are expected to have proportionally more benefits as a result of project activities to break down current exclusion.

Basis for targeting classification: the two project watersheds are in the Far-Western Development Region, which has a higher incidence of poverty than the national average and is targeted for development under the Three-Year Interim Plan.

2. Beneficiaries. The project will be implemented in two watersheds that lie in six districts: Achham, Baitadi, Bajang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, and Doti. The majority of people (85%) in the project areas are near springs and on areas of relatively flat mountainside land at elevations of 1,100–1,800 meters. The main beneficiaries will be poor upland communities that are forced to cope with water shortages during dry periods of the year. There will be no secondary beneficiaries. The project will help disadvantaged groups overcome constraints related to water availability.

3. Impact channels. The project will address water security issues that exacerbate poverty in mountain eco-regions in Nepal by emphasizing water resource aspects of watershed management and building water storage in vulnerable communities most in need.

4. Other social and poverty issues. Temporary out-migration has led to HIV/AIDS being brought back to the communities by returning males. This is an issue being addressed by other development partners in cooperation with civil

society organizations (CSOs).
5. Design features. Subproject selection will be driven by demand in the communities, including the needs of the poor, women, and Dalit groups. Women and the Dalit will be represented in community development group (CDG) committees. This will allow them to voice their needs related to catchment management measures and water storage. The project specifically aims to reduce the time women and children spend on daily domestic water collection and train poor communities in effective use of water for agriculture and other purposes. Resources are dedicated to developing knowledge products on improving water accessibility by women, the poor, and excluded communities.
II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR
1. Summarize the participatory approaches and the proposed project activities that strengthen inclusiveness and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable in project implementation. The project is participatory in all its components. Detailed information on the project and its selection criteria will be disseminated in all village development committee wards. Communities will submit applications for project benefits. Selection criteria require the inclusion of the Dalit. CDG committees organized during the project will serve an executive function for catchment management measures and will have at least 33% female and proportional representation of Dalits in leadership.
2. If civil society has a specific role in the project, summarize the actions taken to ensure their participation. Participation includes consultation, coaching to ensure the adequate participation of vulnerable groups, and leadership development to ensure communities manage subproject preparation and implementation.
3. Explain how the project ensures adequate participation of civil society organizations in project implementation. District CSOs will be members of project implementation coordination committees, and national CSOs will be informed and consulted about project progress and lessons emanating from project experiences.
4. What forms of civil society organization participation is envisaged during project implementation? In addition to the above activities, one CSO will be recruited (competitive basis) for designing and implementing a training program for participating communities in water and land conservation practices. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information gathering and sharing (H) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation (M) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration (L) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership (L)
5. Will a project level participation plan be prepared to strengthen participation of civil society as interest holders for affected persons particularly the poor and vulnerable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> No. A consultation, participation, and communications plan has been prepared for project implementation. The plan will focus the communities' attention on critical issues related to water availability within the watershed area, with the aim of aligning planning with long-range livelihoods needs in the face of climate variability.
III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT
Gender mainstreaming category: effective gender mainstreaming
A. Key issues. The scarcity of domestic water impacts women the most. A considerable part of their day is spent collecting water, often from distant sources. The food security risks, labor load, and household responsibilities of women are increased by the out-migration of job-seeking men, which is in turn partly induced by the scarcity of irrigation water in dry periods. Male out-migration also leaves women the de facto heads of households, burdening them with tasks and duties they must undertake while still subject to cultural male child preference and deference to patriarchal order. Women, the poor, and the excluded not only have limited access to water resources but face the added difficulty of discrimination in accessing and benefitting from what resources are available. Inequity in distribution of water from collected sources is another key issue, and households headed by women are impacted by it most. Women lack access to information and a voice and influence in decision making. Women, the poor, and the excluded have limited involvement in management of water sources and storage as decision makers and lack technical capacity and understanding of water storage and the preservation of water sources. The ease and extent of access and use of water resources are very much guided by sociocultural values and practices that give preference to groups designated as elites and upper castes over poor and socially excluded groups, specifically the Dalit. Discrimination based on cultural norms of so-called untouchability is still practiced in the project areas and gives the least preference to Dalit access to water.
B. Key actions. The selection of subprojects and public meetings will require that women take an active part (40% participation by women and 25% by other excluded groups). The design of project schemes will give preference to the needs and priorities of women, the poor, and the excluded. Water storage infrastructure will be improved to reduce the time women and children spend collecting domestic water during the dry season. The fact that women are the de facto heads of many households due to male out-migration will be leveraged to institute greater gender balance in community leadership. CDG committee membership in subproject areas will be at least 33% female. At least 60% of those trained in water conservation and equitable water sharing will be women or Dalit. Leadership training is foreseen for women in subproject CDG committees. All project staff and consultants will be sensitized on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) mainstreaming and capacity developed on GESI. Technical and vocation training programs are targeted on women. Knowledge products produced will focus on gender equality. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender action plan <input type="checkbox"/> Other actions or measures <input type="checkbox"/> No action or measure
IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES
A. Involuntary Resettlement Safeguard Category: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI

<p>1. Key impacts. The project funds small community-driven schemes with no resettlement or involuntary land acquisition. Project beneficiaries will agree to voluntarily donate small parcels of their land for building the necessary small water storage tanks and ponds. Catchment protection measures will increase the reliability of the pasture and fodder and will benefit those currently accessing the area without excluding them in any manner.</p> <p>2. Strategy to address the impacts. A due-diligence framework for voluntary land donation has been prepared to ensure that the required land is given voluntarily and that nobody is impoverished by the land donation.</p> <p>3. Plan or other Actions.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement plan <input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement and indigenous peoples plan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement framework <input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement <input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action^c</p>	
<p>B. Indigenous Peoples Safeguard Category: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI</p>	
<p>1. Key impacts. While Janajati and Raute people live in the project area, the indigenous peoples safeguard requirements will not be triggered because the project will seek to avoid any impact on them and on customary lands they use, occupy, or claim as their traditional lands and/or resources.</p> <p>Is broad community support triggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	
<p>2. Strategy to address the impacts. Subproject selection criteria will (i) exclude proposals that involve land that is traditionally owned or customarily used and claimed by indigenous peoples; and (ii) ensure avoidance of project water storage interventions on land where Raute people are known to camp, even though untapped water sources may exist.</p>	
<p>3. Plan or other actions.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan <input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement plan and indigenous peoples plan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples planning framework <input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan elements integrated in project with a summary</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action</p>	
<p>V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS</p>	
<p>A. Risks in the Labor Market</p> <p>1. Relevance of the project for the country's or region's or sector's labor market.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unemployment (L) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> underemployment (L) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> retrenchment (L) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> core labor standards (L)</p> <p>2. Labor market impact. No impact.</p>	
<p>B. Affordability</p> <p>Limited affordability. Poor and disadvantaged households' contributions of cash and labor will be made through consensus building. No action plan.</p>	
<p>C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks</p> <p>1. Indicate the respective risks, if any, and rate the impact as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Communicable diseases (NA) <input type="checkbox"/> Human trafficking (NA) <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____</p> <p>2. Describe the related risks of the project on people in project area. Not applicable.</p>	
<p>VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION</p>	
<p>1. Targets and indicators: The overall impact anticipated from improved resilience to climate change in Nepal mountain communities will be indicated primarily by increased food security. Improved catchment management and water storage will be measured by an increase per person of domestic water collected in the dry season, reduction in time spent by women and children collecting domestic water, and increase in the availability of irrigation water. Other output targets and indicators relate to the capacity of the Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, inclusion of women and the Dalit in leadership roles in CDGs, and development and consensus on new models for climate responsive watershed management. The data sources to monitor target indicators will be national and local government statistics, project management unit monitoring reports, subproject preparation reports, baseline data and post construction surveys, and publications of knowledge products and research.</p> <p>2. Required human resources: monitoring and evaluation specialist (national, 30 person-months) and a gender and social development specialist (international, 30 person-months) guiding project monitoring and evaluation activities and building capacity.</p> <p>3. Information in PAM: Regular monitoring will be done by the project management unit and project staff to measure effectiveness and quality of activities. Progress and challenges will be reported each trimester.</p> <p>4. Monitoring tools: A management information system will assist in monitoring benefits and implementation.</p>	

^a The groups identified for the project as disadvantaged are primarily women, the poor, and such socially excluded groups such as the Dalit, the Janajati, Muslims, and other minorities.

^b Dalit literally means crushed. Figuratively, it encompasses the oppressed or marginalized people who are socially outcast due to prejudiced majority cultural perceptions that they are low in terms of birth, social status, and occupation, and are members of so-called untouchable castes.

^c A voluntary land donation due diligence framework has been prepared.