Government of Nepal

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
स्वीस सरकार विकास सहयोग एसडिसि

Adapting Local Agricultural Services to Federalized Nepal: 8

A Monitoring and Reporting System Within *palikas*

This is the eighth Briefing Note in a series drawing on the experiences of the Nepal Agriculture Services Development Programme or Prayas (January 2016 - November 2020), a bilateral initiative of the Governments of Nepal and Switzerland (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC) with technical support from Helvetas Nepal. The project covered 61 selected *palikas* in provinces 1, 3 - Bagmati and 6 - Karnali (the latter in collaboration with the ASDP, Agriculture Sector Development Project).

This Briefing Note outlines how Prayas supported *palika*s in developing their system of monitoring and reporting. Under the Local Government Operation Act, LGOA (2017), the Deputy Mayor or Vice Chair (who in most cases is a woman) is entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and supervising plans and programmes within the *palika*. The Deputy Mayor or Vice Chair also has the authority to form and lead a monitoring committee. However, in the early days of federalization, little importance was attached to establishing a monitoring system or forming such a committee – in part because there was so much else to do, and in part because the necessity of systematic data collection and analysis was not fully realized. Monitoring was seen more as a tool of control used by federal authorities rather than a system that would help the *palika* in its procurement, planning, resource allocation and decision-making processes. The lack of skilled staff, ICT equipment, a good internet connection, and an adequate budget to put these in place were also constraining factors.

What did the project do?

Prayas drew the attention of *palika* elected representatives and staff to the importance of establishing a robust monitoring system for efficient *palika* functioning, and then helped the *palika* monitoring committee to become operational. This included sensitizing its members, clarifying the roles of the committee, and facilitating its institutionalization. In selected *palikas*, Prayas worked closely with the monitoring committee, assisting its members and especially the technical staff to elaborate the necessary formats, tools and database for systematic records. The team further assisted a few *palikas* to conduct effective periodic review and reflection meetings. Some *palikas* immediately grasped the need for monitoring and established their own database system, using their own funds (as in the case of Belaka *nagarpalika*). Through monitoring the implementation of their strategic plans and annual consolidated agriculture plans, some *palikas* are now able to make planning decisions based on reliable data. In addition, the *palika* Agriculture Development Committees (PADC) are now conducting regular monitoring of agriculture sector activities, verifying farmer demands and making recommendations for *palika* resource allocation accordingly.

Key achievements

- Prayas support has resulted in the emergence of monitoring and reporting systems for the agriculture sector in 56 *palikas*, with clear guidelines and procedures in place. The systems detail who should collect what data, when; a range of actors are involved including *tole* (hamlet) development committees, sectoral staff, PADC members and the *palika* monitoring committee.

- The *palika* monitoring committee and the thematic committees have started monitoring agriculture programs and reporting performance according to pre-prepared formats. In 32 *palikas,* sectoral units generating quarterly disaggregated data are operational.

- Some Prayas-supported *palikas* have established database management systems using software applications. These databases include information such as the name and location of farmers, the type of crops they cultivate, and the type of support they have received from the *palikas.* Enumerators collect data in the field using tablets or mobile phones from which the data is uploaded automatically; should there be no internet coverage, the data is entered offline and uploaded as soon as connectivity is regained. The most advanced example is Belaka *nagarpalika,* which has *developed* a 'production control system' database. Other *palikas* are now replicating this type of database system.

- Drawing on data obtained from monitoring, ten *palikas* have prepared and distributed agriculture information booklets.

Challenges

The two main challenges were sensitizing *palikas* to the need for accurate monitoring, and then establishing and implementing such a system with limited human and material resources.

Lessons learned

- The original indifference of *palikas* towards monitoring was primarily due to their limited perception of its use. Once they realized how **accurate data could improve their decision-making** and planning, bringing about better results and promoting accountability, they were convinced.

- Through effective monitoring*, palika*s are better able to avoid the duplication of resource allocation and can make **objective decisions** on service provision based on farmers' needs and performance.

- The **activities of all development partners** operating within the territory of a given *palika* needs to be included in *palika* planning and budgetary processes for the *palika* to be able to plan and allocate resources efficiently and effectively.

- Institutional innovation alone (such as the development of a database) is not enough to ensure good monitoring; **staff capacity is a crucial element.**

"One of our achievements has been to systematize the data for our palika's agriculture sector. We didn't have a database of farmers and their production and we lacked interventions to regulate the output, monitor the production and provide agriculture services according to need. We outsourced to Dream Work Solutions consultancy service the task of developing a software called Production Control System. The Prayas team provided us with technical recommendations and played an important role in mainstreaming this web-based software in our system. This has become a tool to manage data and digitally present our agriculture profile. Today, this software has become our monitoring and accountability tool and we have been using it in planning, organizing service delivery, and overall data management…"

Durga Kumar Thapa, Mayor, Belaka *nagarpalika*

"We regularly visit the pocket area, collect issues and challenges from the field and facilitate palika to allocate justifiable budget to incorporate new program in annual plan to mitigate the challenges, expand the cultivation and strengthen the value chain. For FY 2077/78 [2020-2021], we have aimed to extend the garlic pocket area in 500 ropani (25.43 hectare). We have perceived Dolpa as a potential market for the harvest. Following our Sectoral Strategy, we are also going to operate pocket program of other commodities and subsectors like honey, rainy season potato, maize, goat and diary"

Keshav Prasad Sharma, Coordinator, PADC Nalgad *nagarpalika*

"In the beginning of 2019, I and a team (gaunpalika elects and staff) went to monitor Min Kumar Dhakal's farm to check his eligibility for agricultural loan. With satisfactory results, I am happy that his loan of NPR 10 lakhs was approved with interest rate of 6% per annum"

Chuda Raj Subedi, Manager, Sunrise Bank Limited, Molung *gaunpalika*

Photos:

(first page) Bhupendra Rajbhandari, a kiwi farmer and a Local Agriculture Resource Person (LARP) inspecting kiwi fruit. LARPs are mobilized for field monitoring and providing advisory service to the farmers by Aiselukharkha *gaunpalika*.

(third page) Ramnidhi Acharya inspecting lime, he manages citrus nursery supported by Diprung Chuichuma *gaunpalika* that has been selected as an orange and lime resource center by the National Horticulture Development Center, Godabari.

(last page) Maina B.K, deputy mayor of Gurwakot *nagarpalika* - who also leads the *nagarpalikas'* monitoring mechanism - visiting a farmer's field to monitor agricultural development activities in the *palika*.

प्रयास
Nepal Agricultural Services Development Programme

HELVETAS NEPAL