



# Province and Local Governance Support Program (PLGSP)

Post Event Report

## Interaction Program with Provincial Government for Effective Program Implementation

22-23, January 2021

Park Village Resort, Kathmandu

Government Of Nepal

Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration

Provincial and Local Governance Support Program

Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

# **Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme**



## **INTERACTION PROGRAMME WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION**

**Park Village Resort, Kathmandu, 22-23, January 2021**

## **1. BACKGROUND**

The provincial and local governance support programme (PLGSP) is a national flagship programme of the Government of Nepal (GoN) and development partners (DPs) which aims to strengthen provincial and local governance systems and procedures; and intergovernmental relationships to maximize benefits of cooperative federalism. The ministry of federal affairs and general administration (MoFAGA) is the executing agency while the offices of the chief ministers and council of ministers (OCMCM) is the implementing agencies of the PLGSP. The primary focus of PLGSP is on the local governments given the principle of subsidiary as local governments are closest to the people and service delivery mechanisms that impact most peoples' lives on a daily basis.

PLGSP was formally approved and initiated in 2019, with recruitment for technical assistance staff positions underway till early 2020. However, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the evolving situation in Nepal, including a nation-wide lockdown in place since 22 March 2020, recruitment processes and programme implementation has faced many challenges. GoN, development partners, and the technical assistance service providers are continuously engaged in regular dialogue to ensure that the future consequences for programme implementation are minimal, and that relevant contingency measures are adopted.

Due to COVID-19, it was not possible to meet and interact directly with the provincial government representatives spearheading the PLGSP programme at the provincial and local level. Virtual meetings and phone conversations were the only available options used to communicate the expectations through the technical assistant staff at each province. With the aim to understand the perspective of the provincial government representatives and also to comprehend the level of the programme implementation at each province along with the challenges; it was deemed important to have an interaction programme. Thus, a two day interaction workshop was organised by PLGSP in Park Village Resort, with high level government officials from all the seven provincial governments, various line ministries, MoFAGA and PLGSP/PCU team.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

The major objective of the interaction programme was to bring together all the high level provincial government officials ( PPD/PPM/ED) together in one forum and understand their comprehension, role, contribution and progress so far and expectations from the PLGSP. The specific objectives of the programme was to:

- Build common understanding of the programme in terms of result delivery and the expectations from the Programme
- Strengthen the coordination, communication and internal relations among inter-governments for the effective delivery of the programme
- Understand the progress of the provinces in the programme
- Identify the major challenges faced and sharing of the way forward

### **3. OUTPUT DELIVERED**

- 2 days interaction and discussion successfully held with over 30 high level government officials representing **all** provinces to reflect and discuss on the PLGSP delivery
- Feedback on the programme provided and documented

### **4. METHODOLOGY/PROCEEDINGS**

The first day of the programme started with a warm welcome by Mr. Chiranjivi Timsina, National Programme Manager (NPM) to all the participants. The forum was then passed to Mr. Gopi K. Khanal, National Programme Director (NPD) who clarified that the main objective of the interaction program was to build cooperation and coordination and strengthen the relationship among governments for the success of the programme by expediting the activities. He stressed that PLGSP is perceived as a “software” programme but that is not entirely true as it also holds the IPF component and that will be rolled out sooner. He concluded that the ownership of the programme is entirely of the government and urged all the officials to work more strenuously on the fiscal and financial progress of the programme and seek help where required.

The provincial presentations started right after the PLGSP introduction slides were shared. The major sections of the presentations were providing the current update of the programme in each province, plans for the coming months, and the major challenges faced in the programme.

The programme continued with sharing by Bidyadhar Mallik who enlightened on the theory of change of the programme being the process, intergovernmental relations and human resources and capacity. He stressed the importance of data and digitization in federal states all over the world and mentioned digital progression and IT and e-governance is a key tool for effective implementation of the programme.

Upon the arrival of Secretaries of MoFAGA, OPMCM and Financial comptroller General, of FCGO, all the provinces were requested to summarise the key challenges/concerns facing PLGSP implementation. A snapshot of the key challenges has been captured in the points below:

- The ASIP of PLGSP has many activities that pertain to other line ministries beyond OCMCM thus good coordination and opening the doors and channeling of the programme activities through the respective and relevant ministries will help to execute the programme better and only then it will be possible to spend the budget
- The spending and budget is a key concern as the calendar of the budget does not match between provincial and federal level. Due to the overlapping of the budget calendar between the federal and provincial government, the provincial budget discussion moves forward before receiving the budget ceiling from the federal government. Further, clear expenditure guideline to be worked out and set by PCU.

- More coordination and collaboration is required between MoFAGA, PCU, and OCMCM; TA staff are hired by UNDP, guided by PCU and the programme is to be implemented in provinces and thus oneness is required for smooth implementation which is also a challenge
- Inadequate human resources (accounts, admin, training and support staff) from the government end in the province has led to day to day operational difficulty; there are more experts in the province and their optimum utilisation is a challenge
- The lack of vehicle/s has limited field movements, there is an immediate need to fulfill this gap in provinces.
- The programme is not owned at the local level and mostly viewed a “project”; political ownership is also missing at the local level and there is a need to disseminate the project document in Nepali for better comprehension
- Basic programme guidelines and norms needs to be standardised for consistency among all provinces especially for consultancy services, procurement and expenditure
- Unclear on whether the guidelines directed for local level should be developed by provincial or central level, duplication needs to be avoided as much possible
- COVID19 has posed many challenges for smooth implementation of the programme and the government safety norms has posed limitations for organising various events

The first day was closed by remarks from secretaries of MoFAGA, OPMCM and Financial comptroller General of FCGO and they together stressed on the role of each province to make the programme successful. Mr. Dhanaraj Gyawali, Secretary, OPMCM stated the constitution has provisioned exclusive and concurrent rights to all levels and that needs to be exercised. In general, the standard and quality is to be ensured by federal level, operation and promotion by provincial level and service delivery by the local level. He emphasized how the provincial level should connect both the local and federal level and liaise between the two effectively. The Financial Comptroller General of FCGO, Mr. Madhu Marasini, focused on recognising, and utilising own capacities and also encouraged provinces to use new approaches and technology while utilising their own capacities. He mentioned the importance of “value for money” and elaborated that it should incorporate the three elements viz planning, reporting and auditing. He related them with the three major elements of the PLGSP namely policy preparation, institution building and system. He gave an example of SuTRA and emphasized how the reports of 753 local levels have been consolidated with the help of the system. He explained the role of digital governance and how FCGO is working towards achieving the same and urged the provinces to think in similar lines for better efficiency of the programme.

Finally, the Secretary of MoFAGA, Mr. Eaknarayan Aryal in his closing remarks requested to understand PLGSP as the only national flagship program with major stake of the government and everyone should strive to make this programme successful. It should not be taken as any “standalone” programme of the ministry and that ownership of the programme at the provincial

level is one of the drivers of success for the programme implementation. He highlighted how the perception of the programme being a software focus needs to be revised, highlighted the important role of PCGG for building capacity of the elected representatives and government officials and also promoting the international standards for training and development through exchange and learning programs. He ended his remarks by clarifying the expectation of the programme to deliver and expedite the activities.

The second day started with brief reflection on the first day by the moderator. Then NPD of PLGSP took the floor and explained the importance of data analysis and shared a widely used tool named E-view which was a simple data analysis tool. He also summarised the main takeaways from day one and restated how important it is for all the provincial government to own the PLGSP. The major response provided by NPD is summarised as under:

- In terms of the land ownership issue of LDTA, it was clarified that as per the cabinet decision LDTA land is transferred to PCGG
- The federal level has deputed 210 (7\*30) under secretaries at the provincial level and no request for additional staff has been received
- In terms of guidelines and norms of procurement and more, there is the plan to develop standard norms for PLGSP and ASIP format, it will be sent over immediately after its ready.
- The tender for new vehicles is in place and the most effective and short process of procurement has been followed. It is expected to receive the Jeep sooner and the pickup vehicle might take some time further.
- The role of District Coordination Committee will be more active and participatory when the IPF will be rolled out
- In the near future, the plan is to hold more interaction programs in all the 7 provinces as the recent event in Gandaki was really good and we are also planning to organise joint workshop to develop ASIP

Following the clarifications by the NPD, LISA session started and a detailed presentation was shared with the participants covering the introduction, objective, use and process. It was shared that LISA is a very integral part of the programme and even though it took two years to complete the LISA guidelines, a lot of great feedback was received from MTOT participants to improve the system. It was stated that out of 753 LGs, 400 are very active and functional and 350 LGs are not so active and functional. It was also shared that the Ministry will ask for their standing in LISA and the result of LISA shall be directly linked with performance of administration officers. One of the queries raised was regarding the chances of manipulation and how can that be controlled. It was suggested to have another reference guideline/manual which supports and defines the indicators of LISA guidelines.

The IPF guideline was introduced and shared next by the researcher Mr. Prakash Bhattarai of Kathmandu University. He shared that many consultations with different stakeholders-planning commission, ministry, provincial government officials and PLGSP team members were consulted for the process. The major components of the guidelines were shared as promoting transparency, accountability of LGs for good governance and better infrastructures. The guideline aims to develop and improve innovative approaches. The structure of IPF was shared, technical committee composition was mentioned and the process of the fund release was also highlighted along with eligibility of LGs. It was mentioned that learning, sharing and communication will be an important part of IPF.

Following the IPF guideline presentation various concerns and suggestions were provided by various provincial officials and they are summarised as under:

- Two points need to be added in the IPF: one is employment generation activities and next is usage of skills and capacity of local level
- Income generation was the expectation from IPF but it seems leaning more towards the “soft” side and focuses on capacity building, training etc.
- The resource for IPF is under PCGG but it is not really clear what is the role of PCGG on IPF
- The need for a separate committee can be rethought along with the members as there already exists thematic committee in the provinces
- The 15 days timeline in IPF can be revised and the structure can be revised as well
- IPF has to be a simple process and there has to be a list of what the provinces cannot do in IPF. Further, the same indicators of LISA might not be applicable to himal, hill and terai
- The IPF partnerships should be both monetary and nonmonetary too
- The IPF guideline should provide clear ideas/concepts with example of innovative projects and it should be linked with LISA as well

The programme ended with Vote of thanks by Province 3 PPD- Mr. Hari Lamsal. It was mentioned that the programme was very productive and useful even though it was the first kind of a meeting in eight months of the PLGSP. He stated two level discourse with political and bureaucratic level is required and he thanked MoFAGA for initiating the bureaucratic discourse. He mentioned PLGSP has been slow in terms of progress and many discussions ahead including IPF should be held at province level. He concluded by restating that provincial government is very committed to support the programme and urged to increase interactions in the future.



## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS**

Some of the key recommendations and way forward discussed in the interaction programme is highlighted below:

- Operational manual will be developed for effective roll out of LISA guidelines
- The feedback and suggestions received on the IPF guideline shall be incorporated as much possible while finalising the document
- The interactions at the provincial and local level shall be continued on a regular basis and the provinces are also encouraged to come forward openly as and when required
- The TA staff are deputed by the programme for supporting the provincial and local governments and thus they have to be fully utilised and their expertise needs to be harnessed well by the respective government officials at the provinces. It was encouraged to reach out to the federal level in terms of any confusion but the provincial government has the full mandate to maximize their potential.
- IT and e-governance being the core of the federal programme, each province is requested to make their work visible and use the website and new technology as much as possible.
- The onus of the programme lies with the government thus all provinces must own the programme.
- Procurement of vehicles is in progress and the effort will be in place to procure them in short time as possible.



**Annex 1**

- List of Participants: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d2qN1-vifXrL4K06nskEmgCNQK8iwAmR/view>

**Annex 2**

- Programme Schedule:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uTuoQAWW6syFptKdEcLkXMpGvVWWtefD/view?ts=6018e26c>

**Annex 3**

- Presentations/ Materials:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jj631EiPdW\\_6UFir-o7tQuQY7bozyiXi?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jj631EiPdW_6UFir-o7tQuQY7bozyiXi?usp=sharing)

Government Of Nepal  
Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration  
Provincial and Local Governance Support Program  
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu