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## **SAJHEDARI BIKAAS PROGRAM**

Sajhedari Bikaas Quarterly Report #1 December-March, 2013

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NEPAL MISSION**

**Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Nepal**

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## Acronyms

CeLLRD - Center for Legal Research and Resource Development

CNAS - Center for Nepal and Asian Studies

CO – Contracting Officer

CoP – Chief of Party

COR – Contracting Officer’s Representative

DCoP – Deputy Chief of Party

EA – Equal Access

GESI – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

InSTEDD – Innovative Support to Emergencies, Diseases and Disasters

IP – Implementing Partner

LDO – Local Development Officer

LOE – Level of Effort

MoFALD – Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development

MoHA– Ministry of Home Affairs

NEPAN - Nepal Participatory Action Network

PBMS – Performance Based Management System

PMP – Project Management Plan

SWC – Social Welfare Council

VDC – Village Development Committee

WCF – Ward Citizen Forum

YI – Youth Initiative

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**I. Summary of the political and development environment in the targeted geographic areas**

**Political Situation**

The first quarter witnessed the rise of hopes among many Nepali's ending the political deadlock since the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on 28th May 2012. On 13th March, the four major political parties (UCPN- Maoist, Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal - UML and United Democratic Madheshi Front) signed an agreement to appoint an Interim Electoral Council of Ministers under the Chairpersonship of the current Chief Justice, Khil Raj Regmi. This has ended 10-months of political and constitutional deadlock.

The 11-point agreement between the four larger political parties mandated that the new administration hold elections for a new 491 member Constituent Assembly (CA) by 21 June, or mid December 2013 at the latest. On 24th March, Election Commissioners were appointed to the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) but an election date has yet to be announced and necessary changes to election laws have yet to be made. Several political, technical, and practical challenges for the election in June remain. Various identity based groups and leftist fringe parties, notably the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) opposed the process and disrupted attempts by the ECN to register new voters in nearly 30 districts. The protesting parties have objections over the lack of inclusiveness of the current political process and fear several provisions of the proposed elections will reverse their gains in representation made at the last election or be disadvantageous to them in this election.

Debate on the political proposal between stakeholders focused on the constitutionality of having a sitting head of the judiciary serve simultaneously as the head of government, which risks checks on the separation of powers and of politicizing the judiciary. These questions will now be answered by the Supreme Court, which is hearing a writ petition against the proposal. Several other issues, however, remained outstanding by the end of the quarter. These include, but not limited to, the terms for forming a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, determining voter registration (including the need of citizenship certifications), and questions of sequencing in the removal of constitutional difficulties to allow for elections as soon as possible.

The quarter, however, witnessed an increase in incidents particularly due to strikes/bandhs imposed by various political parties in protest of the decision by the four major parties to form the Chief Justice-led government. A CPN-Maoist led alliance of several smaller parties carried out a series of protests and conducted a nationwide strike on 19 February. On 6 March, a nationwide strike/bandh called by various parties, including CPN-Maoist, was observed effective across Nepal and led to the closure of markets and academic institutions. On 7 March, the nationwide bandh enforced by the Madheshi People's Right Forum-

Nepal (MPRF-Nepal)- led Federal Democratic Alliance was observed effective particularly in the Eastern Region (ER) and Tarai districts of the Mid West and Far West Regions. On 25th March, the police briefly detained two CPN-Maoist cadres in Banke District as they were allegedly disrupting the voter registration process and, on 26th of March, the police reportedly interfered to stop CPN- Maoist cadres from disrupting the registration process in Dang District.

During the quarter, the VDC Secretaries Rights Protection Center (VSRPC) and VDC Employees Association (VDCEA) staged sit-in's in front of the district-level District Development Committee's (DDC) in each respective district across the country during the last week of February. The VSRPC and VDCEA were demanding assurance of local elections, as corruption is rampant in local bodies due to the government's failure to hold local elections for over 16 years. It was reported that the agitation severely affected services delivery at the local level.

### **Operational Space in the Mid-West and Far West Regions**

Local grievances continue to create tensions in the Mid-West and Far-West Regions during this quarter. As noted in February, different groups have been carrying out protest programs across the Mid-West and Far-West Regions pressuring local authorities to address their concerns. While the protest programs were initiated by activist and civil society organizations, some of them were supported by the political parties and their sister organizations. Such protests by different groups also continued during the month of March and it is foreseeable that these groups may intensify their protests in the coming months if their demands remain unaddressed.

On 5th March, the District Forest Office (DFO) of Banke District in the forcibly evicted 29 families from a community forest area in the district. Following the eviction, the affected families staged sit-in-protest in front of the District Administration Office on 6th and 7th March, demanding for alternate arrangements. There has been an increasing trend of forest evictions over the last three months which has been a cause for rising tensions in the Hill and Tarai districts, particularly in the Mid-West Region.

On 14 March, landless people in Kanchanpur District in the Far-West Region organized a Bhumi Sabha or 'land assembly', which was reportedly attended by around 4,000 people, including small farmers, squatters, freed Haliya and victims of natural disasters. The assembly called for the implementation of previous landless commissions' recommendations and inclusion of land rights in the new Constitution. Similarly, freed Haliyas continued their protest programs demanding proper rehabilitation and to press the government to address their land concerns.

Similarly, the divorced Muslim women in Banke District also submitted a memorandum to the government on 12 February, demanding to ensure the inclusion of divorced women's rights in the new constitution, and distribution of social security allowances, as well as inclusion of their children in the higher education quota.

While national campaigns denouncing violence against women continue, there have been increased reports of violence against women across the Mid-West and Far West regions during February. During this reporting period, a girl was reportedly raped in Dang district. On 14 and 20 February, police arrested one person in Kohalpur VDC of Banke District on charges of rape. In yet another incident, a 62 year old man

reportedly raped a 12-year old girl of Dandagaun VDC in Salyan District. Furthermore, on 10 February, police made one arrest at Rajhena, Banke on the charge of killing his wife.

## **Relevant national trends that may impact the project**

### **National Budget**

For recent past, Nepal's development has immensely affected for not having full budget on time. This has huge implication over the social security and other local development priorities. The government of Nepal (GoN) is preparing to introduce the full budget for the next fiscal year 2013/14 by mid-April. The budget is said to focus primarily on election and security purposes. The budget would also support the proper implementation of the ongoing projects, as stated by the Finance Minister of the Interim Election Government. The project will face some negative impacts if the fiscal year budget does not prioritize local development. Manipulation of fiscal budget allocation and disbursement, during electoral process, is not always fair and transparent. At the same time, Nepal is facing increasing problem of unsettled public expenditures that have direct impact on public financial management of local bodies. As a governance project, these and other budget-related issues will have short and long term impact on the project.

### **Protests Against the Interim Election Government**

Terming the 11-point deal between the major political parties "unconstitutional", several political and professional bodies in Nepal are continue with agitating against the Chief Justice (CJ) Khil Raj Regmi led election government. CPN-Maoist (Baidhya), Upendra Yadav-led Federal Democratic Front (FDF), a group of eight parties, Nepal Bar Association, the national umbrella organization of legal practitioners in Nepal, and the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), the umbrella organization of indigenous peoples across the country, has expressed their deep dissatisfaction over the formation of the interim government and provision of High Level Political Committee (HLPC) among others.

General and road strikes have been a common type of protests in the country. There are several incidents of disrupting voter registration process which is likely to continue. Citizenship distribution and delineating the election constituencies are other key issues that need to be resolved in order to have CA election as planned. As citizenship certificates and voter registration are an entry point to an inclusive electoral process, the project will be exploring ways to minimize the risks of being engaged in this important electoral process.

## **II. Review of accomplishments towards meeting the intended outcomes for the period as defined in the work plan.**

### **Start-up Deliverables and Tasks**

During the reporting period Pact met all start-up deliverables and tasks. These include the following:

- Personnel Manual, EBDs, and CVs submitted.
- Start-Up / Deployment work plan submitted.

- Field Staffing Plan, including organizational chart submitted.
- All key personnel deployed.
- Two-Day Start-up Conference in Kathmandu at USAID's offices.
- Revised Start-up/Deployment Plan submitted after CoR's initial comments.
- Financial management framework delivered.
- Communications, information and technology security plan delivered.
- Communications and information technology systems were established.
- Administrative procedures established.
- Office identified & leased.
- Recruitment of non-key personnel was conducted during the project period, particularly for senior staff that would relocate from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj. Nepalgunj based recruitments continued after the reporting period.
- Financial guidelines and systems established.
- Proposed target geographic areas submitted.
- Assessment of local level conflict in target areas conducted by Saferworld.
- Assessment of community development in target areas conducted by NEPAN.
- Geographic scope has been determined, although USAID and Pact continued beyond the reporting period to seek approval from MoFALD.
- Assessment of local governance in target areas conducted by CNAS.
- Grant management handbook & grant development cycle submitted.
- GESI strategy submitted.
- Anti-corruption procedures established.
- Procurement guide and systems established.
- In-country grant making capability established.
- Property inventory established & inventory management plan submitted.
- Performance Based Management System (PBMS) established.
- First strategic planning / team building session held.
- Results Framework submitted.

### **Semi-Annual Workplan**

The Semi-Annual Workplan was produced and submitted to USAID/COR for review and approval. After follow-on meetings with the COR and ACOR, Pact/Sajhedari submitted a third revision of the Semi-Annual Workplan that was reviewed approved by USAID. It was important to all, both Pact/Sajhedari and USAID, to thoroughly review and revise this first Workplan as it established the template, and the expectations by USAID for future Workplan submissions.

### **GESI**

The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion strategy has been recognized by Pact/Sajhedari, and particularly its national staff, to be the cornerstone for the Project's successful realization of goals and outcomes. This, along with its local NGO implementing partner selections, are key to the Project's success – one, as it represents the principles and approaches (GESI) for the Project; the other as it represents the “face” and

operational modality of Sajhedari within the final six districts and VDC's in which the Project will operate. Given the import of the GESI strategy, Pact/Sajhedari reviewed the GESI strategies currently available within the GON ministerial pool, and those developed by other donor and INGO organizations operating in Nepal. The Project recognized the quality of the GESI strategy produced by Charla Britt, Ph.D., for USAID in 2006-2007, and reached out to her in December 2012 as a potential consultant and producer of its own GESI strategy. Dr. Britt was subsequently employed by Pact/Sajhedari and through January and February of 2013 conducted research of extant GESI strategies in Nepal, the state of GESI within the context of INGO and GON implementation of its principles and programming elements, and scheduled meetings with as many organizations and GON agencies as possible to survey the current state of GESI strategic implementation and research documentation currently in Nepal. As her counterpart, the Project assigned Sheela Yogi, one of its two Regional Program Managers (RPO), to shadow and work with Dr. Britt. With input from many sources, Dr. Britt successfully completed the GESI strategy production assignment by early-March 2013. Drafts of the strategy were reviewed by Project staff and USAID, and incorporated into Dr. Britt's final draft of the GESI strategy, which was submitted and approved by USAID/COR.

### **Rapid Assessment**

Following on to the desk-top research conducted by the Project's program staff in December 2012 and January 2013, that provided an objective basis from which the 24 districts of the Far West and Mid-West regions could be narrowed to a final eight (8) for consideration of inclusion in the Project, a Rapid Assessment was proposed by Pact/Sajhedari to USAID of those eight districts that would survey and measure levels of conflict, availability of infrastructure, and provide an assessment of district-level and VDC-level governance performance. The purpose of the Rapid Assessment was to establish an objective basis from which the Project could make final recommendations of six districts, and 50% of their concomitant VDC's, in which the Project would target its interventions and programs.

The rapid assessments used to inform district and VDC selection were conducted by three different NGOs, each with a different focus and expertise. More specifically: the Center for Nepali and Asian Studies (CNAS) – governance, Nepali Participatory Action Research Network (NEPAN) – community development infrastructure, and Saferworld – conflict. These studies compiled information collected from the Districts and VDCs into reports and data sets. These data provide insights into government functioning and inclusive planning mechanisms, community development infrastructure and resources, human development conditions, and conflict-related trends or sensitivities. In the complex social, economic, and geographic environments that characterize this region, this kind of information was essential for informing an evidence-based approach to deciding which districts and VDCs in which to work.

- **Community Development Infrastructure**

NEPAN conducted the rapid assessment that focused on basic demographics and community development infrastructure, broadly defined. This information was mostly available at the district level, from District Development Committees (DDCs) and different line agencies. A team of 13 field researchers, supervised by a Core Team (including Team Leader, Demographer, and Coordinator), covered the eight districts collecting

secondary information and meeting with DDC Secretaries or other staff. A data entry operator was also part of the overall Team.

The rapid assessment was largely based on information provided in district offices and available relevant publications. Official documents (i.e., district development profiles and VDC profiles), published and unpublished district office records, and national census reports (2011 and 2001) were the major sources of information. District and VDC level information provided by census was an alternative source of information. More than 12 different sources of information were identified at district level. In addition, a few key informants were interviewed, particularly when basic information on VDCs was not available. A structured survey was used to collect the information. Researchers were trained to collect information as per the instruction given and instruments designed. After building rapport with district officials, available and necessary documents and publications were collected. Field researchers also visited different district level offices to collect information related to the concerned agency.

- **Governance**

The CNAS rapid assessment concentrated socio-political information, particularly the effectiveness local governance down to the VDC level. This included information about local government bodies' (DDCs and VDCs) functions and planning processes, the Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCDP), Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs), Community Mediation Centers (CMCs), Citizen Awareness Centers (CACs), local adaptation plans of action (LAPAs), local disaster risk plans (LDRPs), as well as remittances, road access, and concentrations of disadvantaged groups (DAGs). Information was also collected on resource distributions and grants management.

Various tools and techniques were used, including desk review and collection of secondary information, consultations and interaction meetings with different stakeholders, semi-structured interviews and field surveys with local government bodies, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs). The research team developed a semi-structured questionnaire and checklist for the purpose, and conducted a two-day orientation on the information collection methodology for field staff. Information about VDCs, municipalities and DDCs were collected separately with the use of questionnaires (in addition to the questionnaire for basic information). The formats for these questionnaires were developed separately for different levels (DDC, municipality and VDCs).

Information was collected from 325 VDCs and eight municipalities in the eight study districts, by 32 enumerators who were guided by eight district supervisors and four experts (and an additional two experts to support district level meetings).

- **Conflict**

Saferworld's rapid assessment offers an initial snapshot of existing or potential tensions, including conflict and security issues at the district and VDC level, in order to inform the further design and implementation of Sajhedari Bikaas. The rapid conflict assessment was carried out in the eight target districts in Mid- and Far Western Nepal. It provides an overview of the following conflict-related issues: (1) simmering dissatisfaction and tensions that could potentially result in protests and violent conflict; (2) insecurity and

local level crime (as this can be a result of instability/poor governance and have destabilizing effects); and, (3) more pronounced conflicts around political issues (including war-related grievances), and identity-based issues or resources. The assessment used qualitative research methods rooted in a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach, in addition to an initial phase of desk research, to provide the deeper analysis necessary to understand potential conflict factors and dynamics.

Over 100 interviews were conducted, including 86 KIIs (with representatives from the administration, security and justice provision service providers, civil society and others well placed to comment on conflict and security dynamics), and 15 Group Discussions (GDs) (with representatives from local communities, such as marginalized groups, women, youth and ex-combatants) mainly at the district and regional level. An additional six KIIs were conducted in Kathmandu, in order to uncover initial and complementary information on the context and dynamics between the central and district/regional level.<sup>1</sup>

The Rapid Assessment report constituted the basis for the “rationale and reasonable” selection of the Project’s target six districts, from among the 24 districts within the Far West and Mid-West regions. A draft of the Rapid Assessment was presented to USAID at the end of this reporting period. The full and final Rapid Assessment report, with district and VDC findings and recommendations, will be presented to USAID and MoFALD for their review, comments, and concurrence in early-April.

## **Staffing**

Recruitment of national staff was initiated and continued throughout this reporting period. The two Regional Program Managers (RPM’s) were identified and interviewed within the first month of Project start-up through the initial public solicitation process. Arjun Kumar and Sheela Yogi were the first of the Key Staff, as identified in the Project’s Contract, to be employed, after the Chief of Party (CoP), Michael Dockrey was recruited and employed by Pact in late-November/early-December 2012. Soon following, the Operations Manager, the only other expatriate position, was identified and employed. Amy Conlee was working with DAI in Afghanistan when she applied for the Ops Manager position with Pact/Sajhedari. The Director of Finance post was also quickly identified through the initial public solicitation process, and Arun Shrestha was engaged, following the usual interview and vetting processes inherent in all Project staff employment.

At this point, in order to accelerate and facilitate the local hiring process, a personnel employment services group (Suvidha Sewa) was engaged by the Project to assist in developing the public announcement notices, insuring broad dissemination of the announcements through public media, internet and web services, newspapers and radio. There were dozens, and often, hundreds of applicants for each staffing position, which were first screened for applicable skills and experience (established by the Project and Pact HQ staff, who also developed SOW’s and Job Descriptions for each new position) and then scheduled for interviews by appropriate senior staff. In this manner, using the newly drafted GESI strategy that Sajhedari was committing to, candidates were further screened for gender, ethnicity, and other attributes that may have disenfranchised or disempowered them within the Nepali cultural context. As broad a spectrum of highly

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<sup>1</sup> “Sajhedari Bikaas – Initial Rapid Assessments,” Britt, Charla, Ph.D., Vandelanotte, Joris, Ph.D., and Kandel, Raju, USAID, March 2013.

qualified candidates were then screened for finalists, and subsequently interviewed. Finalists were vetted, and after submission to USAID/CO for approval, offered employment by Sajhedari/Pact. Unfortunately, due to the non-registration of Pact during this reporting period, all new-hires have been working under short-term consultancy agreements, rather than FT staffing posts.

The staffing chart, updated to March 30, is attached in Annex 1. The Project “team” has been building its cohesion and strength through immediate cooperative tasking on Project activities, and shared decision-making. One comment that seems universal with new staff is their appreciation for the collaborative and inclusive decision-making processes practiced within the Project, and their inclusion on information important to the fullest performance of their jobs.

Staffing is almost complete, with only a few lower-level administrative and support staff yet to be hired. Drivers for instance, aren’t immediately needed as there are no vehicles to be driven. But, early in the next Quarterly Reporting period, all staff will be on-board, with the exception of the Women’s Economic Growth (WORTH) program specialist. That position, and its related LOE, has yet to be agreed upon fully by USAID/CO. In addition, two open G&C officer positions are to be filled. This is a critical element of the Project, and selecting them has been somewhat problematic as finding qualified candidates, with real, on-ground grants management experience, has been difficult. In addition, it remains an additional challenge to find highly qualified staff that will relocate to Nepalgunj. This will be discussed further in the following sections.

Of note and sadness to the staff was the sudden departure of Amy Conlee, our Operations Manager. Amy gave 30-day notice in mid-March and was not persuaded to change her decision. She simply wasn’t prepared to live, and work, full-time in Nepalgunj. Some attention to this issue has been raised to Pact’s HR, which may have not been fully informing of the rigors presented by life in Nepalgunj to either expatriate candidate. It takes a certain personality type among expatriates to find daily life enjoyable and energizing in these kinds of hardship postings. Pact HR is actively recruiting a replacement for this position, and as of this writing, has found a very qualified, more seasoned, candidate. Sajhedari/Pact has insisted that the position remain gender-specific and filled by a highly qualified female candidate. One seems to have been found and is undergoing interviews and vetting. It is anticipated that she will be on-boarded to the Project by the third week in May.

### **III. Explanations for why intended outcomes were not met (if applicable).**

District Selection. While all Semi-Annual Workplan targets are being addressed, and progress toward attainment of outcomes has been measured during this reporting period, some delays in implementation have been realized, primarily due to the distended period invested in the Project’s target district and VDC selection process – the Rapid Assessment, and its requisite review and confirmation of recommendations and findings by both USAID and MoFALD. As originally conceived, Sajhedari would have been implemented in 50% of six eastern terai districts specified by USAID in its original RFP. Very soon after contract signing by Pact in the first week of December, meetings were held between Pact’s new COP (Michael Dockrey) and the Vice-President for the Asia/East Asia (VP/AEA) region (Kurt Macleod), and USAID’s Mission Director (David Atteberry) and Deputy Mission Director (Sheila Lutjens). Included in

this meeting was the COR (Chris Hobbs) and ACOR (Narendra Mishra). One of the first agenda items to be discussed with Pact was the relocation of the Project's geographical focus to the western regions – and specifically, to the Far West and Mid-West regions and districts. USAID asked Pact to “conduct an assessment” of the 24 districts within the region and from that assessment, recommend eight districts for final consideration, and a more rigorous “rapid assessment” that would be largely, field-based. The initial assessment of the 24 districts required a month's level of effort by two Program staff, and the DCOP when he came on-board in early January. Even then, presentations of the findings, including the recommendation of the eight districts to be included in the Rapid Assessment, had to be made to both USAID and MoFALD for their review and consent to proceed. This entire process drew staff's focus for nearly seven of the first eight weeks of the Project. The Rapid Assessment (see above) required dedication of effort over another eight weeks of staff, and consultant's time. So, as of this reporting period, Pact/Sajhedari still has not finalized either the six districts, or the 50% of their concomitant VDC's in which it will work. All implementation of the Project's most important components – inclusionary planning and resource allocation processes at the VDC and district levels – cannot begin until this “first phase” of the Project is completed. Recruitment of the local NGO partners will not begin until USAID and MoFALD have reached concurrence on the Project's target districts. And, introductions to the districts' respective LDO's and DDC's can't begin until this process is completed. Those introductions will include presentation of the “recommended” VDC selections, informed by the Rapid Assessment process, but not limited to it. Districts will be allowed to contribute their input on VDC selection, so the process could continue another month, into late-April and early-May.

Registration. While not an inhibiting factor as yet, it should be mentioned here that as of this reporting period, Pact has not completed the registration process with the Social Welfare Council (SWC). At the very end of the reporting period, March 31, Pact did present to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW), as one of the concluding mandatory components of the INGO registration process. During this interview process, Pact/Sajhedari was informed that “under new guidelines” established by the Government of Nepal, all implementing INGO's would have to budget their respective projects across three programming activities; 1) “soft” interventions (i.e., adult literacy, immunizations, small-business management training, media, etc.), 2) “hard” interventions (i.e., infrastructure, road construction, etc.), and 3) “capacity development” (i.e., PETS, OPI, inclusionary organizational outreach and management, etc.). Further, Pact/Sajhedari was warned that it was inconsistent with GON guidelines for one INGO to allocate Project funds to another INGO – referencing Pact's sub-contracts with Saferworld and Equal Access. That being said, the interview process went very smoothly, lasting less than 20 minutes. As a result, a letter was sent from MoWCSW to the SWC recommending their entering into a General Agreement with Pact, Inc., which constitutes the “registration” process.

Without completing the registration process with the SWC, Pact/Sajhedari has been unable to open a Project bank account (though Standard Charter is working with us, and we've been able to transfer funds via Western Union), successfully apply for Official Visas for the two expatriated staff (again, movement toward acquisition of one Official Visa has been noted and reported to the COR toward the end of this reporting period), or most importantly, move current staff from STTA consultancy contracts to full-time employment, with benefits. This is beginning to affect staff morale. And given the rigors of living and

working in Nepalgunj, especially those senior staff who have relocated from Kathmandu, this becomes a serious management issue for Pact. Further, Pact's HQ (Legal Office) has ordered the COP not to endorse the General Agreement as presented (the template can be referenced on SWC's web site). The COP has been instructed by Pact/HQ to "negotiate" certain prescriptive clauses out of the General Agreement prior to endorsement. While this may be possible, it will further extend the registration completion process. Registration delays have been noted below.

#### **IV. Information on management issues**

- **Administrative problems**

Procurement. Some procurement and delivery of critically important equipment to Project implementation (i.e., laptop computers, office equipment, vehicles, etc.) has been seriously delayed due to vendor's inability to meet delivery schedule compliance. Often, these issues are inherent to the Nepali context (unexpected "bandhs" or strikes), but too often, vendors simply cannot manage their own external suppliers and their contracted delivery schedules. In addition, after surveying the markets in Nepalgunj for items like office furniture, it is clear that these procurements must come from Kathmandu, which incurs further costs and time for delivery associated with transportation – but still cost below what is bid by local vendors in Nepalgunj. Also, some procurement of items such as vehicles, have proven more time-consuming as the Neg Memo's had to be scrutinized by Pact/G&C for assurance of compliance with latest federal acquisition regulations, which further distends the final delivery schedule of these critically needed vehicles. As a result, the Project is over-spending on its vehicle rental budget, which will have to be addressed in internal budget revisions through the LOP.

Registration. (see "Registration section above). What was anticipated as a 30-45 day process to complete Pact's organizational registration with the Social Welfare Council has now extended into 120+ days. Following the "presentation" of Pact's General Agreement application to the MoWCSW, a letter was sent from the collective group (at least five other ministries were represented at the presentation hearing) to the Social Welfare Council recommending their approval of Pact's application. As of this writing, Pact is scheduled to meet with the SWC in mid-April to receive the final General Agreement document for endorsement. This process too, has demanded an inordinate amount of staff time and effort to respond to SWC's repeated inquiries and demands for additional documentation. The question of "asset handover," contained within both the General Agreement and the follow-on "Project Agreement" has yet to be resolved by USAID/DOS with the GON/SWC, so Pact has asked USAID for guidance once the final General Agreement is presented for endorsement. Pact/Sajhedari continues to wait for some formal guidance to the General Agreement endorsement by USAID.

Baseline Survey/LOC. During this reporting period a significant amount of staff time, including that of the Deputy Director/MERL unit (Joris Vandelanotte) has been dedicated to the development of a Concept Note, Budget and Budget Notes in support of Pact's undertaking the Baseline Survey, as specified in USAID's original procurement solicitation (ref: SOL-367-11-000003). While Pact is anxious to undertake and complete the Baseline Survey, its budget was unexpectedly associated with the Letter of Credit (LOC) request, and initial approval, to USAID by Pact. Addressing these issues, both separately and together, has

again demanded a significant amount of time for Pact's senior staff, and particularly, the COP. As of this reporting period, no formal decision has been made as to the conduct of the Baseline Survey, though verbal approval to move ahead with planning on the Baseline Survey implementation has been received from the COR. Nor has final disposition of the LOC issue been resolved, though a meeting was convened in March that included the CO, COR, USAID/Nepal's Controller, the Director of the D&G Unit, and the Vice-President and CFO of Pact, Inc. Pact/Sajhedari's COP also attended. An agreement, tentative, was reached at the conclusion of that meeting that addressed the LOC issue, as well as other associated Project funding and Contract Modification issues. A formal presentation of the findings of that meeting will be presented to USAID by Pact in early-April for USAID's consideration. It is likely that a Project Budget Modification will be necessary as the LOC agreement included waiver by Pact of its 1% Fee on GUC's, as well as an increase in Pact's NICRA rate from 4.0% to 4.5%. In addition, USAID has given verbal indications that they would "contribute" the savings realized from the waiver of the 1% Fee on GUC's to the cost of the Baseline Survey. It is anticipated that all these issues will be resolved by mid-April and included in a comprehensive Contract Modification.

Communications. Regardless of the level of investment the Project has made, and continues to make, in reliable communications and internet, it remains problematic at best in Nepalgunj. Until fully operational in the new office, with alternative power supply (generator installation and three-phase wiring completion), poor communications will continue to plague the Project. The utilities situation at the new office complex in Nepalgunj is scheduled to be completed by the end of April. As with everything else however, this schedule needs to remain flexible.

The situation with the Project office in Kathmandu though, has solidified, with all Project staff now relocated to Nepalgunj, with the exception of the Administration Manager position (Ram Chandra Paudel). This has proved an invaluable asset to the Project. What was initially considered a part-time need at most, has proven to be a full-time position, requiring the level of accounting and management expertise that are well within Ram Chandra's capabilities. The need for a fully functioning office for Pact/Sajhedari will continue through the LOP.

- **Problems with implementing partners or community groups**

During this reporting period, the Project's most significant "problem" with its implementing partners has been developing and endorsing its sub-contracts and sub-agreements. Both contractual mechanisms were predicated on production of Workplan deliverables and approved budgets that supported the designed work to achieve those deliverables. So, Workplans had to be developed for all implementing partners (IP's), which was at best, an uneven process. The Workplan development process was further convoluted with Equal Access, Pact's largest IP, and Saferworld – Pact's two INGO partners.

Equal Access. The sub-contract between Pact and Equal Access is formally with Equal Access (US), but Equal Access (Nepal) will conduct most of the work related to direct Project implementation, and all the work with media locally. So, while agreements were reached with Equal Access's local staff on work plans and budgets, those had to be reviewed and approved at the contractor's level – with Equal Access's US office and staff in California. The process was facilitated in late-January and early-February by the arrival in-

country of Equal Access (US)'s President and CEO, Ronni Goldfarb. However, language and expectations of work and operational modalities between Pact and EA continued to obstruct the sub-contract endorsement process. Pact/Sajhedari insisted on having a meaningful presence by EA in Nepalgunj, something no one had anticipated from the original RFP by USAID, or Pact's original proposal submission. As conceived, Sajhedari would have been implemented much as Winrock's Feed-the-Future (FtF) or RTP's Health for Life (H4L) is currently managed – with most senior staff, and all major decision-making and operations, located in Kathmandu, while field work is conducted through smaller, less-established, field offices. Soon after arrival in-country, and following on to discussions with USAID's Mission Director, and Deputy Mission Director, Pact/Sajhedari made the decision to relocate nearly all its operational and programming representation and implementation to its Regional Project Office (RPO) in Nepalgunj. Similar relocation of programming effort was then expected of EA, as Pact/Sajhedari's largest sub-contracting partner. Equal Access did not at first concur, but eventually conceded the need to have an immediate programming presence in Banke' district, near Pact/Sajhedari's own compound. They have now proposed, and provided budgetary support, to four full-time staff based in a field office in Nepalgunj. They will also identify a local radio station, within their existing network of local, community-serving stations, to provide direct radio programming support – including production equipment. The Project will use this local capability to produce local radio programs reflecting immediate issues and networking opportunities within the Project's six target districts in the Far West and Mid-West regions.

Just at the end of this reporting period, a consensually arrived-at sub-contract was approved by EA and Pact/Sajhedari. It is expected to be endorsed by Pact HQ and Equal Access (US) in the first week of April. It is notable that Pact/Sajhedari included GESI language in the contract, which compels EA to an more aggressive social and gender inclusive recruitment process for its new hires in KTM, the new field office, and its own network of radio stations. The GESI strategy, developed and adopted by Pact/Sajhedari, and consistent with GON standards and aspirations, flows down to its sub-contracting IP's.

Saferworld. Saferworld presented an entirely different set of challenges to Pact/Sajhedari during this reporting period. While the project was anxious to conclude its sub-contract with Saferworld, in fact, it was at first excluded from being an implementing partner due its basing the in UK – violating the contract's Geographic Code 937 restrictions. The Project, and Pact, made a decision to move forward with Saferworld as its Implementing Partner, due its exceptional expertise in conflict assessment, “Do No Harm” approach to community development, and experience with CMM-type programming in the Mid-West and Far West regions. That decision locked Pact/Sajhedari into a two-month Geo Code 937 exemption process, that engaged the Regional Legal Office for USAID (based in New Delhi), and at least three revisions of the original Negotiation Memo (“Neg Memo”) submitted by Pact/Sajhedari to USAID/CO in advocacy of Saferworld's inclusion, and waiver to the Contract's Geo Code 937 exclusions. This unanticipated issue demanded an inordinate amount of staff time and LOE to its resolution with USAID. In early-March, the Contract's CO upheld the waiver application, and agreed to inclusion of Saferworld as an implementing partner on the Sajhedari project. Saferworld of course, had been excluded from charging to the Project until its contract was finalized, and approved by USAID, so was unable to recover some costs associated with early work on the Rapid Assessment implementation (see Rapid Assessment section).

Other issues with Saferworld's approval by USAID clouded its participation during the first three months of this reporting period (December 2012 – February 2013). Of greatest import, was the absence of an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with USAID. By not having a recognized NICRA under applicable USAID procurement regulations, Saferworld's sub-contracting budget could not be fully established, much less approved, by USAID. Eventually, with considerable assistance and effort by Pact's financial services staff, Saferworld's indirect costs were calculated and a useful NICRA created for application to the Project's budget...and Saferworld's sub-contract.

Once these early, but substantive, issues with Saferworld were resolved with both USAID and Pact, the working relationship has been very positive. Saferworld's contribution to the Rapid Assessment was at a qualitative level above that generally provided under performance contracts with the other two local partners – CNAS and NEPAN – though all met the contractual performance standards set by Pact/Sajhedari, and were very responsive to follow-up revisions and additional information requested of the Rapid Assessment's coordinator, Dr. Charla Britt. Saferworld has continued to work closely with the Project, refining its workplan through the end of Year I of the Project, and scheduling its senior staff's attendance at the Implementing Partners' Coordination Workshop, to be held in mid-April in Nepalgunj. The Project will continue to rely on Saferworld's semi-annual conflict assessments within the six target districts as monitor to emerging issues that can fester and erupt in ethnic, or political violence. They will also be an advisor to the Project on the SMS-driven conflict mapping system, which will enumerate incidences of conflict (ethnic, political, land-based, gender, etc.) within the six districts, down to the VDC and ward levels.

Youth Initiative (YI). YI has proved an energetic partner, but has not implemented any Project-related activities within this reporting period. They have however, enthusiastically and fully participated in the Annual budget and workplan development process with relevant Project staff. It is clear that the Project will need to focus more organizational capacity-building attention and training toward Youth Initiative, but this should prove invaluable to both Pact/Sajhedari, and USAID, in the long run, as YI represents a national network of youth that are generally well-organized, down to the VDC level, and have established working and focus groups, such as their "Smart Clubs" that can be mobilized to disseminate information, employment opportunities, elections readiness and awareness campaigns, anti-violence messaging and practices, conflict-mitigation trainings, and other skills development and positive behavioral trainings.

The sub-agreement for Youth Initiative has been produced, reviewed, revised and concluded during this reporting period.

Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLLRd). CeLLRd's sub-agreement has been completed during this reporting period, but was not yet endorsed by all parties by the end of March. It is expected to be fully endorsed by both parties by mid-April. As with YI, no Project activities, other than the development of the annual workplan and budget, have been undertaken by CeLLRd during this reporting period. However, CeLLRd did send two of its VDC-based Conflict Mediators to Kathmandu to participate in the Project's development of the SMS-based conflict reporting system, being designed by Pact/Sajhedari under contract to InSTEDD, a California-based software development and applications company. InSTEDD's regional software expert, Channe Suy, completed a two-week working session with the

Project's Program staff, as well as CeLLRd's senior staff in Kathmandu. At the request of the Project M&E staff, with Joris Vandelanotte, Deputy Director of Pact's MERL unit in attendance (working with Project M&E staff on the draft PMP and Results Framework) CeLLRd brought in two VDC-level Conflict Mediators (CM's) to "ground truth" the SMS conflict reporting and mapping system. By the end of the two-week STTA, InSTEDD had fully vetted the system with Project's Program and M&E staff, as well as CeLLRd's Kathmandu-based senior staff, and two of its VDC-level CM's.

As with Saferworld, Youth Initiative, and Equal Access, CeLLRd has committed its senior, M&E and Finance staff to participation in the Project's Implementing Partners Coordination Workshop, to be held in mid-April.

- **Steps taken to resolve those problems identified**

As described above, the Project has worked through most of the constraining issues with its primary Implementing Partners during this reporting period. Longer-termed issues, such as organizational capacity development, will be the subject of assessments with Pact's very tenured and professional Capacity Development staff, led by Matt Reeves, and follow-up training. Those trainings will include Organizational Performance Indexing (OPI), Organizational Network Analysis (ONA), Public Expenditure Tracking Systems (PETS), as well as Grants & Contracts, Financial Reporting and Management, and Conflict Sensitivity trainings. Most will be in the Training of Trainers modality, so that subsequent capacity development trainings can be offered to the Project's district-level NGO and CSO partners.

All contracts and sub-agreements have been finalized with the Projects IP's, with only final review by Pact HQ and endorsements awaiting the CeLLRd's and Youth Initiative sub-agreement. Saferworld and Equal Access have all endorsed their final contracts with Pact during this reporting period. All supporting documentation has been submitted to Pact HQ's G&C office during this reporting period, and the final two agreements are expected to be endorsed and fully operational by the end of April.

## **V. Anticipated future problems, delays, or conditions or constraints that may adversely impact implementation of the project**

A number of issues have adversely impacted on the Project's implementation to date, and fall into both institutional and cultural categories. They are:

Registration. Pact's INGO registration with the Social Welfare Council (SWC) was anticipated to take at most 90 days. It is now more than 120 and as of this reporting period, only the presentation to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) has been scheduled. That being said, the Project expects the SWC registration process to conclude successfully by the end of April. Many factors have contributed to the delay, not the least of which was Pact's failure to re-register with SWC in March of 2012 when its previous five-year extension termed. Also, Pact is working under a contract with USAID, which has clouded the registration process a bit with SWC, and its attending ministries. In addition, there has been a turnover at the top of SWC, which is not unusual for Government of Nepal standards, that lent to decisions being put-off and deferred for indefinite and unspecified periods while the new administrator

established himself in his new office. In hindsight, Pact probably should have registered as a contractor to USAID, effectively circumventing the SWC registration process, as contractors submit their registration applications through the Ministry of Finance's prescribed application process – generally more efficient, and less affected by corruption issues.

District and VDC Selection. Probably the most inhibiting factor to the Project's planned implementation schedule was the need for a rigorous and "reasonable" process from which Pact/Sajhedari could select the six districts, and half of their respective VDC's, for inclusion in the Project's direct programming implementation. The need for this selection process followed on USAID decision, made only after the Contract was signed by Pact, Inc., that the Project's geographical focus should be in districts located in the Far West and Mid-West regions. Originally, the six districts, all located in eastern terai regions, had been prescribed in USAID RFP solicitation, and in Pact's subsequent Project proposal. All budgetary and programming elements were conceived in that context. Having to re-envision the Project in the Mid-West and Far West required a considerable effort on the part of the Start-up team. Further, USAID did not want to specify the new six districts or VDC's, but instead, asked Pact/Sajhedari to propose ways and means that were "reasonable" and "rationale" by which the selections could be made. The follow-on desk-top research and survey of the 14 districts (from the total of 24 located within the Far West and Mid-West regions – 10 being eliminated immediately by agreement with USAID due their remoteness, operational accessibilities, and very low densities in population), and construction of the weighted "categories" and their attendant "indicators" into which the data collected was infused and calculated, required considerable investment of time and effort on Project staff. That time could have been used in the recruitment of other Project staff, operationalizing the field office, introductions to district leadership, relationship-building with local and national government officials, etc. As stated, to date the Project has invested over four months in the district and VDC selection process, and anticipates the final selections of both won't be concluded until the end of April. At that time, Program staff will begin scheduling the "Project introductions" to the six district LDO and DDC offices.

Bandhs/Holidays. National and local strikes, or *bandhs*, have impacted on the Project during this reporting period. Over eight days have been lost during this reporting period, to local and national bandhs that have either prevented staff from reaching the office, or effectively closed offices and vendors that would have otherwise been available to the Project for normal business. In addition, Nepal is a culture rich with holidays and festivals. This too, impacts on the Project's ability to implement. While the festival schedule was reportedly "light" during this reporting period, it will become increasingly disruptive to implementation schedules as the year progression – with October and November being largely "unscheduled" as far as expectations of work performance are concerned. These both represent culturally acceptable interruptions in work performance delivery, and need to be taken into consideration by Project management. To that end, many of the senior staff have taken housing near the office, so won't be subject to delays or non-attendance due to local bandhs, which are prevalent in the western terai.

National Elections. Toward the end of this reporting period, a new interim government was formed among the four major parties (see Section I) for the purpose of holding national elections that will result in the

formation of a new (second) Constituent Assembly, charged with producing a Constitution for Nepal. Collegial governance organizations meeting monthly at the US Ambassador's "Governance" sector meeting have reported their expectations of an escalation of politically-motivated and induced incidences of violence running up to the national elections – tentatively scheduled for November 2013, as of the end of this reporting period. With elections comes electioneering, so the Project anticipates escalating levels of disruptions to its operations, due increased numbers of strikes/bandhs, and violence that may contribute to security issues negatively impacting on the Project. The Project will closely monitor these conditions in its target six districts, through its trained program staff, and through its connections to established networks (Youth Initiative's, Equal Access, Carter Center's Long-term Observers, etc.), as well as its evolving and collegial relationships with local government bodies.

- **Plan to deal with anticipated problems, delays or constraints**

See sections above for remedial actions to be taken for each of the described problems and/or constraints.

## **VI. Information of security issues affecting project integrity and safety of implementing partners and community groups**

Strikes and road blockade. As the parties and some groups are still agitating against this government, we're expecting general and road strikes in coming days. This will affect our field movement, be it a district level consultation meeting with government stakeholders or DNGO selection process. Likewise, Equal Access, CeLRRd and Youth Initiative have planned for field visits to introduce the project, organize community meetings and form groups. Frequent strikes and road blockade will affect the timely execution of the planned activities.

Electoral process. As a governance project, Sajhedari is cautiously planning to engage in upcoming election making sure we try our best to contribute in making it more inclusive and transparent. We're envisioning our role in public awareness-raising through mass media and citizenship/voter registration process in our project areas. Some political parties and other groups are obstructing the process and so our engagement in election related activities may be misinterpreted as Sajhedari being in side of the government.

Violence over citizenship/voter registration. To support the government's effort in voter registration and citizenship certificate distribution, political parties, mainly UCPN-Maoist, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and United Democratic Madheshi Front (UDMF), are discussing to mobilize their youth wings to support the election process in general and create favourable environment for registration process in particular. On the contrary, Baidhya-led CPN-Maoist and other parties opposing to the interim government are already obstructing the process. Mobilization of youth wings from both sides is likely to fuel tension, as both tend to be hostile in interacting with each other. If this issue is not solved through dialogue, this affect our field based activities.

Issues of landless and freed Haliyas: landless people and their associations in the Mid-West and Far-West regions are in struggle for last two months. This protest is more likely to continue in this quarter as well if

government does not address their demands of implementing the recommendations of the previous landless commissions. Similarly, freed Haliyas will continue their protest programs demanding proper rehabilitation and to press the government to address their land concerns. It will not have direct impact on the project activities in this quarter but will affect our operations in the future as their demands relate to local government as well.

## **VII. Status of finances and expenditures -- analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs**

There were no cost overruns or high unit costs to report during this period. All major procurements were done in accordance with FAR and Pact, Inc.'s own procurement regulations and guidelines, and were submitted for review and approval to the Project's CO at USAID. In addition, unit costs have been compared within the market, and across other purchasing agencies and businesses by our Finance and G&C staff. The Project will continue to rigorously analyze costs, and its own procurement processes – both externally and internally – to assure “best value” for donor funds.

## **VIII. Status on the expenditure of funds for Monitoring and Evaluation purposes by cost type**

Below, please find the current status of funds expended through the end of this reporting period for Monitoring and Evaluation activities:

<b>Direct Cost</b>	
Personnel	7,275
Fringe Benefits	2,132
Allowances	53
Travel	6,936
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	14,922
Workshops	
Other Direct	
<b>Subtotal Direct Costs</b>	<b>31,318</b>
Indirect Costs	5,590
<b>Subtotal Indirect Costs</b>	<b>5,590</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$36,908</b>

## **IX. Status of utilization of Level of Effort (LOE) as compared with Section F Level of Effort**

A total of 642.55 days have been utilized as of March 31, 2013;

- **Expressed as work days**

or, 643 work days, which is equal to;

- **Expressed as a percentage of annual available LOE**

13.24% of annual available LOE.

## **X. Project available LOE -- by labor category**

Long-Term Technical Assistance (LTTA) – Key Personnel: 6,211 days

Long-Term Professional and Support Staff: 13,367 days

Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA): 1,879 day

## **XI. Success stories and good practices**

During the first Quarter of the Project through which this report covers, most of the Project’s early focus was on Start-up and meeting a very tight schedule of Contract Deliverables to USAID – most due within the first 90 days of the Project. However, within that exaggerated and hurried schedule, some successes and good practices are notable;

1. GESI Strategy. The recruitment of Charla Britt, Ph.D. by Pact to produce its requisite GESI Strategy as certainly a success that was realized during this reporting period. She also was able to assume the role of “Coordinator” and technical expert to the social research conducted under the Rapid Assessment. The draft GESI strategy was submitted to USAID at the very end of this reporting period, and comments from Pact and USAID staff have been incorporated into the final draft by Dr. Britt, and submitted to USAID during this reporting period.

2. Deployment to Nepalgunj. With the approval of the COR in late-February, Pact invested staff time and Project resources to planning and start-up of its deployment to its new Regional Project Office (RPO) in Nepalgunj. In compliance with the Contract, Pact will maintain a representational office in Kathmandu, currently housed within the Equal Access offices located in Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur, Kathmandu. During this reporting period, residences for senior staff (national and expatriate) were identified, and negotiations with

landlords completed. Nearly a dozen office compounds and complexes in Nepalgunj were surveyed, for price, facilities and space, and security. Two office complexes were finally decided upon, and after a field site visit by both the DCOP and Operations Manager, a decision was made on one and negotiations begun and concluded with the landlord. Leases for all properties have been reviewed by Pact during this period, and approved. They were signed, and work begun on office upgrades (wiring, IT installation, upgrade of training/conference room, installation of generator, paint, etc.) has nearly been completed by the close of this reporting period. Additional work, and equipping of the offices, will continue through April 2013. The offices should be fully operational, including the Project's Conference/Training room, by early May. Pact staff, located in Kathmandu, have nearly completed relocating to Nepalgunj by the end of this reporting period (March 31, 2013).

3. Webinars. Pact continued in January and February, with its scheduled webinars on organizational capacity development, led by the Director of Capacity Development, Matt Reeves. These have been well attended and well received by Pact staff, and have had the effect of raising their expectations of professional development, and application of the new technologies to their community development and organizational capacity development in the field. USAID has also participated in these forte-nightly instructional workshops. To date, Matt Reeves has reviewed some of the organizational assessment (ONA, OPI, OCA, etc.) tools within Pact's area of expertise. The scheduled webinars were suspended in March due the relocation of Project staff, and inoperability of the office in Nepalgunj. The webinars were scheduled to be continued in May, with Matt Reeves scheduled to conduct Organizational Capacity Development TOT trainings Project staff later in the year, prior to the selection of the local NGO implementing partners. In March, the COP began discussions with Root Change, once affiliated with Pact, Inc. and its Executive Director, Evan Bloom, on Root Changes own CD training, particularly Public Expenditure Tracking System (PETS). Both Pact's CD Director, and Root Change will lead on-site TOT training in these subject areas with Sajhedari Program staff, and outreach staff from our local partners (CeLLRd, Youth Initiative, and Equal Access). Those trainings are schedule for June and July, so that Sajhedari staff can then train staff from the Project's LNGO implementing partners. As of this writing, Root Change are scheduled to conduct a short training in Kathmandu in April. The COP will meet with their senior staff at that time.

4. Relationship with Implementing Partners. Pact staff have made a concerted effort to promote mutual understanding and coordination of effort with its Project implementing partners. Within the last three months, we've been able to strengthen our relationship with implementing partners -- CeLLRd, Youth Initiative and Equal Access. Together, we revisited the draft work plans and agreed on budgets that support those work plans, to ensure flexibility while working in a fluid environment, and gaining best value for funding. This also helped us build synergy among the efforts that the various partners are planning to put in the project.

5. Relationships with Donors and Collegial Initiatives. During this reporting period, Pact staff attended a series of formal and informal meetings with donors and collegial implementing agency representatives that began building solid programming and communications relationships with development partners, INGOs, and line agencies. We've been successful in meeting and strengthening relationships with major development partners and international organizations working in Nepal. During January – March we met

with representatives of the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, DFID, UNDP, GIZ, ILO, and Transparency International among others. We also have had a series of discussions with USAID's implementing partners such as RTI, NDI, TAF, WWF, IFES and The Carter Center, and have explored opportunities for collaboration, including follow-up meetings with The Carter Center on including their Long-term Observers (LTO's) in the SMS Conflict Reporting and Mapping system. We also met with MFALD and SWC several times to share information about the project and approaches the project is going to adopt that will contribute to improved governance and economic growth in the Project's target districts and VDC's.

Finally, Pact/Sajhedari took lead in creating a "coordination" mechanism within the four Presidential Initiative projects currently funded by USAID/Nepal. They include; RTI's Health4Life (GHI), Save the Children's Suuara (GHI), Winrock's Feed the Future (FtF), and World Wildlife Fund's Hariyo Ban (GCC). Pact/Sajhedari's COP developed the agenda and produced Meeting Notes for/from the first such inter-agency coordination meeting, held at WWF's new conference room in their Kathmandu HQs. Follow-up communications, informal meetings, and collaborations have resulted from just this first meeting, with a sharing of M&E data and information (i.e., PMP's, Results Frameworks, Indicators, etc.) between the collegial groups, as a first-step toward reduction of duplication of efforts, and non-measurement on identical indicators within the same area of operation. In addition, opportunities to collaborate on programming elements, where costs can be shared, or synergies developed using other related donor and GON resources (i.e., H4L's relationship with Ministry of Health, and Hariyo Ban's need for "governance" interventions with the District Forest Offices, etc.) have already been discussed. Further, Pact/Sajhedari and Winrock have used this forum to finalize their own disposition requests for equipment and vehicles handed over from the close-out of Chemonics' NEAT project. In addition, the communications between the COP's and senior staff of the respective projects has been enhanced, and invitations to events, including trainings, had been extended to the respective "members" of this coordination group.

The group has committed to meeting formally on a monthly basis, usually the last Wednesday of each month, which provides Pact/Sajhedari an additional rationale to be in Kathmandu (to also attend the US Ambassador's Governance Coordination Group meeting). The group agreed to meet every other month in Nepalgunj. And, the Pact/Sajhedari office will be used by all as a potential training center for local trainings with small groups.

**Attachments:**

- Staff Recruitment Matrix

## Attachment A – Staff Recruitment Matrix

Position	Target start date	Recruitment status	Name
Chief of Party	3-Dec	Hired	Michael Dockrey
Deputy Chief of Party	15-Dec	Hired	Rakesh Karna
Regional Program Manager	15-Dec	Hired	Arjun Kumar
Regional Program Manager	15-Dec	Hired	Sheela Yogi
Operations Manager	7-Jan	Hired	Amy Conlee
Program Specialist, Local Governance	1-Apr	Hired	Lilaraj Limbu
Program Specialist, Engineer	18 March	Hired	Dinesh Mandel
Program Specialist, Conflict Mitigation	15 March	Hired	Reena Chaudhary
Performance Based Management System Manager (PBMS)	4-Mar	Hired	Raju Kandel
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	10-Apr	Hired	Sudan Shivakoti
GIS/IT Specialist	28-Feb	Candidate selected/Employment offer presented	Basant Adhikari
Director of Grants & Contracts	1-Apr	Hired	Shib Nath Mahato
Grants Specialist	9 Jan	Hired	Tek Lawati
Director of Coordination	29-Jan	Hired	Ram Chandra Paudel
Grants Specialist/Officer	TBD	Candidate selected/Submitting to USAID/CO for approval	Suresh Sarki
Grants Specialist	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Director of Finance	9 Jan	Hired	Arun Shrestha
Finance Manager	18 March	Hired	Surya Upadhyaya
Finance Officer	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Finance Assistant	TBD	Candidate selected/Employment offer presented	Rita Diwan
Senior Grant & Finance Officer	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Grant & Finance Officer	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Grant & Finance Officer	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Director of Administration	25-Feb	Hired	Kamalesh K. Lal
Administrative Officer	24-Apr	Candidate selected/Employment offer presented	Satya Narayan Chaudhary
Administrative Officer	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Temp Administrative Assistant	23 Jan	Hired/Employment terminated effective April 22, 2013	Kamal Nepal

Administration Assistant	23-Apr	Candidate selected/Employment offer presented	Ameeruddin Ansari
Receptionist	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Driver	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD
Driver	TBD	Nepalgunj recruitment	TBD