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USAID KARNALI WATER ACTIVITY यएसएआइडी कणली जल परियोजना



Photo: A woman demonstrating the proper handwashing techniques, alongside community members, to celebrate Global Handwashing Day on October 15th in Chaukune, Surkhet.

MONTHLY UPDATE – October 2023

OBJECTIVE I – INCREASED SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND WATER FOR PRODUCTIVE USES

- USAID Karnali Water Activity (the Activity) completed the construction of all 64 Water and Sanitation Service (WSS) schemes that started in Year 2 which included 57 drinking water systems (DWS) and 7 multiple-use systems (MUS) after the completion of one new DWS in Dopka, Surkhet and a rehabilitation in Chaura, Kalikot this month.
- The detailed engineering surveys that were planned for 151 WSS schemes have been completed; out of which, the survey of 40 schemes were completed in this month. Furthermore, the detailed engineering design for 79 WSS schemes and Bills of Quantity (BOQs) for 23 WSS schemes were completed.
- 82 Water User and Sanitation Committees (WUSCs), 22 this month, were formed in 24 local governments (LGs) to oversee the construction and management of WSS schemes.
- The team completed the evaluation of proposals received for Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs) for Construction. The Request for Proposal (RFP) was announced on September 8, 2023, and the proposal submission deadline was on October 8, 2023.
- Guiding manuals for the capacity development standards, norms, and processes were drafted and are going through the final review process. In addition, the training module and materials on WUSC governance, planning, and management was prepared, reviewed, and finalized.
- Five three-day events on WUSC governance, planning, and management training were conducted to capacitate 38 WUSCs in four Watersheds. A total of 154 members, out of which 45 percent were female, benefitted from the training, which included the chairperson, treasurer, secretary, and Village Maintenance Workers (VMWs).
- The Activity team drafted the Scope of Work (SoW) to hire the service provider to conduct training for VMWs and circulated for suggestions and feedback with the goal of announcing the RFP in November 2023.
- The Social Behavioral Change (SBC) Challenge grant was awarded to Himali Rural Youth Social Development Center (HIRYSDEC), Mugu, and a kick-off meeting was organized to orient them on the grant policies and procedures of the Activity.
- Five potential Water Champion Communities were recommended by the Middle and Lower Karnali Watershed teams. The Activity team visited and interacted with these communities and families to assess the situation and scope of the communities.
- October 15th, Global Handwashing Day, was marked by various community-level awareness campaigns and events in Watersheds. The Activity organized community-level events to raise awareness on handwashing by demonstrating proper handwashing techniques in communities and schools in Rara, Tila, and Lower Karnali Watersheds.

“A notable community-level engagement was observed among Raji Community, an ethnic minority community, in Chaukune-9. A total of 30 community members were actively involved, of which approximately 50% were female.”

- New WUSCs members were oriented on SBC priorities, messages, and how to create an enabling environment during the training event on WUSC governance, operations, and management in all four Watersheds.
- The Activity initiated one-year non-life insurance policies for 36 WSS schemes from 33 insurance policies (1 insurance policy covers all 4 rehab schemes from Mugu) to ensure financial backup to WUSCs for any unintended damage or loss of WSS structures from natural disasters or extreme weather conditions such as landslides, earthquakes, floods, thunderstorms, etc through the private insurance company up to the reporting period. Scheme insurance of the remaining 9 Y2 schemes from Barahatal RM was processed in this month and will be completed by December 2023. The Activity has been drafting the standalone document regarding the scheme insurance process through existing non-life insurance policies available with insurance companies.

OBJECTIVE 2 – INCREASED SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO AND USE OF SANITATION THROUGH FECAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT

- The preliminary progress towards the construction of a Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) in Dullu Municipality was shared in the coordination meeting with other three associated municipalities (Narayan, Chamunda Bindrasaini, and Bhairabi RM) on October 18th. During the meeting, the LG expressed their interest in constructing the FSTP and their willingness to share the cost maximum of 30 percent of total construction costs due to resource limitations. Similarly, a brief analytical report of FSTP design and capacity was prepared based on the conceptual design, and a topographic survey has been planned in the first week of November.
- Rajapur Municipality has submitted the required documents for the FSTP land approval process to the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA). Likewise, a meeting was organized for FSTP land acquisition in Lamki Municipality and the municipality has communicated it to the Karnali Province for the approval process.
- The team prepared and submitted the report on the inception and orientation meeting for City Wide Sanitation Plan (CSP). Similarly, the team completed the household and institutional survey for the sanitation situation assessment in Chhayanth Rara municipality.
- Drafting of the Sanitation Status Report of Panchapuri municipality is ongoing.
- The team developed a plan for alternative FSM schemes where FSTPs are not feasible and submitted it to the USAID COR for review and feedback. The alternative plan includes a collective purpose of enhancing sanitation practices and services in municipalities, facilitating the formulation of sanitation bylaws which will serve as a foundation for initiating safe practices and future infrastructure development. It also includes capacity building programs targeting key municipal personnel (municipality engineer, planner, and WASH focal person) and local masons which will impart a correct understanding of FSM, bolster the planning and implementation of FSM services, and ensure the construction of standard containment facilities. Additionally, targeted interventions are aimed at improving emptying and transport services in specific municipalities.

OBJECTIVE 3 - STRENGTHENED GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE RESILIENT MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

- A policy gap analysis of Lamkichuha Municipality was completed, and the final review of Panchadewal Binayak, Thandikanth, and Ramaroshan LGs is ongoing.
- The team completed the community level consultation in Lamkichuha Municipality and Ramaroshan Rural Municipality to ensure the voices, needs, and challenges of marginalized people from remote locations, people with disabilities, and other diverse communities were addressed in the WASH Bill.
- The outline and content of the WASH Bill was shared among the representatives and the Bill Drafting Committee of Lamkichuha Municipality for their final confirmation before drafting the Bill.
- The drafted WASH Bill was shared and validated by Ramaroshan Rural Municipality through the LG level multi-stakeholders' workshop. The suggestions and feedback received were incorporated for the finalization of the Bill.
- The final draft of the province level WASH bill has been submitted to the MoWRED for their final review and to plan the consultation meeting with WASH stakeholders before submitting it for approval to the provincial parliament.

OBJECTIVE 4 - STRENGTHENED CONSERVATION OF WATER-RELATED WATERSHED BIODIVERSITY

- The Activity team completed the remaining 13 detailed engineering surveys and designs, finalizing all 50 planned source protection schemes. All four A&E firms submitted source protection reports for all the watersheds, which were reviewed and provided feedback to the respective firms by the Activity team.
- Rupantaran Nepal was selected to develop Integrated Watershed Management Plans (IWMP) for four Watersheds. After the kickoff meeting, Rupantaran Nepal submitted the inception report which is now under review by the Activity for submission to the Home Office.
- The Activity conducted three workshops among lower and downstream communities in the Payment for Ecosystem (PES) priority sites in the Middle Karnali, Tila, and Lower Karnali Watersheds. The Activity has been consolidating and reviewing the data and information to draft an evaluation report on the ecological services of these three priority sites. The table below presents the disaggregated data of the participants of the workshops:

Disaggregated data of participants:

Location	Male	Female	Dalit	A/J	BCTS	Total
Ramaroshan, Middle Karnali	27	2	4	2	23	29
Simlegad, Tila	9	14	8	0	15	23
Jyamire, Lower Karnali	12	10	8	8	6	22
Total	48	26	20	10	44	74
%	64.9	35.1	27.0	13.5	59.5	100.0

SUMMARY OF KEY MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

MEETING DATE(S)	SUMMARY OF MEETING NOTES
September 25	The Activity held a coordination meeting with PHASE Nepal to explore potential collaboration between the Activity and the USAID Local Works program, with a particular focus on the Soru Rural Municipality. Their goal is to enhance the livelihoods of single women, individuals with disabilities, and returnee migrants. The USAID Local Works program is scheduled to conclude in December 2023; however, the Activity is exploring possibilities to provide support to single women and people with disabilities to help them generate income by assisting them with small-scale irrigation projects and waste-water management.
September 29	The Activity team had a discussion with the Division Forest Officer (DFO) of Achham, The DFO is very interested in collaborating with the Activity for PES business planning in Ramaroshan Lake.
October 8	The Activity team met municipal representatives (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Chief Administrative Officer) of Mohanyal Rural Municipality. The Activity team presented the progress in the LG and shared the plans and priorities going forward. The LG has provided a letter to match the 15% fund for the 8 schemes. Further, the team shared quality control approaches and environmental compliance aspects of the Activity. WBCS shared the PES business planning progress, the findings of ecological services valuation, and detailed assessment of Jyamire sub-watershed, which is a prioritized site for PES business planning. RM is enthusiastic about developing the PES business plan and is committed to developing the necessary policy documents.
October 9-10	The GESI team supported the organization of a provincial level Dignified Menstrual Management Workshop in collaboration with other member organizations of the KADMM (Karnali Alliance for Dignified Menstrual Management) alliance. Deputy Mayors from 27 municipalities in the Karnali Province, including one working LG of the Activity, participated in the event to develop the Dignified Menstrual Management declaration paper. This declaration will serve as a strong foundation for mobilizing local governments to ensure equitable access to water for girls and women during their menstruation and post-partum period, challenging the social malpractice of untouchability during these periods.
October 17	The Provincial and Local Governance Program (PLGSP), in Karnali Province's Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers (OCMCM), recently met with Development Partners (DPs) to discuss potential collaboration for the Spatial Periodic Plan in Birendranagar and Panchapuri Municipalities in the Surkhet district. Attendees included OCMCM officials, PLGSP technical experts, and

MEETING DATE(S)**SUMMARY OF MEETING NOTES**

various DPs, including the Activity. The main focus was establishing resource partnerships to support the planning process, whether through financial or technical assistance. [REDACTED], the OCMCM Secretary, proposed a budget of [REDACTED] for plan preparation and encouraged DP representatives to contribute resources. During the meeting, the Activity's Capacity Building and Training Specialist shared insights on the Activity's progress and plans, specifically mentioning potential technical support for integrating the Water Use Master Plan into the Spatial Periodic Plan for Panchpuri Municipality. [REDACTED] thanked all participants and called for continued cooperation between the Province and Development Partners.

October 18

The Activity held a coordination meeting in Dullu Municipality to discuss the progress and challenges of constructing the Dullu FSTP. Led by [REDACTED], DCOP, and attended by the representatives from Narayan, Dullu, Bhairabi, and Chamunda Bindrasaini, the meeting focused on the FSTP's construction and operation. It included presentations on project progress, cost estimates, and environmental studies. Mayors emphasized the need to consider a desludging vehicle and land costs in the total estimate, seeking to reduce the municipalities' share from 45% to 30% of the total preliminary estimate of NPR [REDACTED], excluding vehicle and land expenses. This will be further discussed after finalizing costs. To improve coordination and oversight, a task force will be established, with the next meeting in Bhairabi Rural Municipality once cost estimates are finalized.

October 19

A meeting with the Nepal Engineering Services (NES) Activity team was held to discuss their findings after visiting three DWS schemes of Khadachakra Municipality in Tila Watershed. The meeting was attended by the COP, DCOP, other technical team members including [REDACTED] (the Program Director of B360inc) from NES, and technical team members from USAID Karnali Water Activity. In general, the NES team appreciated the efforts made by the USAID Karnali Water Activity team to complete quality construction in remote locations. They reported that local governments and communities were highly appreciative of the work. They also pointed out a couple of minor technical improvements that need to be made in the schemes and these will be addressed after receiving the final report of the visit.

CROSSCUTTING CONSIDERATIONS

MONITORING, EVALUATION, RESEARCH & LEARNING

- The Activity team prepared a validation report for the Detail Engineering Survey Data and shared with the Technical and Watersheds teams. The report includes the numbers, validation status, and preliminary findings.

“Data from 9,408 HHs, 1,029 DWS structures, and 129 institutions (98 schools and 31 health care facilities) was submitted from the survey of 157 DWSs. The preliminary findings based on survey indicates that out of total surveyed HHs, only 0.36% have access to safely managed water service, 14.51% have basic water service and the rest, more than 85%, have limited or unimproved water services.”

- The team completed and submitted the Performance and Plan Report (PPR) and reporting of all indicators in DIS to USAID.
- The team supported the collection of data and information for PES, site selection, and workshop facilitation in four Watersheds. The MERL team facilitated the focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and data entry for the PES, and collection of PES story.
- Three new subcontractors were oriented on DAICollect and the data collection process for completing the detailed engineering survey to prepare the Detail Project Report (DPR) in the Watersheds.
- All Activity staff attended an orientation on learning agendas, where a plan was created to carry out five learning agendas for the Activity. During the orientation, the team discussed the purpose and methodology of developing a learning agenda, which is a plan for systematically collecting and using data to learn from project activities and improve decision-making.
- The Watershed and Technical teams were oriented on PEA on October 11. The session provided insights into the process of examining the political, social, and economic factors that can impact the overall goal and milestones of the Activity, helping the team to understand the broader context in which they are working. These orientations were designed to equip the team with valuable knowledge and tools for more effective project planning and implementation through PEA.
- The digital copy of the second bi-monthly newsletter of the Activity was distributed to the USAID Nepal’s Development Outreach and Communications (DOC) team, USAID Learning for Development team, and DAI’s Nepal team.

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI)

- GESI sessions and grievance handling sessions were integrated into the WUSC governance and PES trainings conducted across the four Watersheds. A meaningful participation of women and Dalit were encouraged in these trainings.
- The team developed a community dialogue and LG level GESI training module, along with training materials for LG level GESI training.

- A field monitoring on social survey of the Detail Engineering Survey for GESI was conducted in Ward No-9 and 6 of Panchapuri LGs. It was found that household surveys and community meetings adhered to the forms and formats provided by the Activity. The community meetings for the detail engineering surveys had more than 50 percent participation from females.
- From a GESI perspective, a field-level observation and monitoring of WUSC formation was observed in Chaukune RM. An inclusive committee was formed with a Dalit member leading the WUSC. One female VMW was selected out of two VMWs.
- The leadership positions of WUSCs continued to have 50 percent female representation, as in the previous month. Furthermore, in Rara, three WUSCs were chaired by representatives of the *Dalit* community.
- A significant number of female VMWs were selected; 38 percent of the total selected VMWs were female.
- The GESI team provided orientation to all Activity staff on the recently approved GESI Action Plan of Year 3.

OPERATIONS

Personnel

The tables below present the status of staff recruited, onboarded, and resigned during this month and positions under recruitment.

LTTA STAFF – ONBOARDED				
SN	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE LOCATION	START DATE
1	[REDACTED]	Grants and Procurement Coordinator	Kathmandu	02 October 2023

LTTA STAFF – RESIGNED				
SN	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE LOCATION	Effective DATE
1	[REDACTED]	GESI Director	Kathmandu	October 15, 2023
2	[REDACTED]	Finance and Administration Manager	Kathmandu	October 29, 2023

STATUS OF POSITIONS UNDER RECRUITMENT			
SN	POSITION, LOCATION	STATUS	TARGET START DATE
LTTA			
1	Finance Assistant (Surkhet)	Employment Agreement signed	1 st November 2023

2	Finance Officer (Kathmandu)	Vacancy posted with the timeline 15 October 2023, 198 Applications received, Initial Shortlisting in progress	20 th November 2023
3	Water Supply and Sanitation Sub Engineers (9 Positions)	Received 477 applications for the 9 positions of WSS Sub Engineers. The Written test has been completed for 22 shortlisted candidates.	20 th November 2023
4	GESI Director (Kathmandu)	Vacancy posted with the timeline 13 October 2023, 37 applications received, Initial Shortlisting in progress	1 st December 2023

STTA

I	Technical Editor	The Scope of Work (SoW) was finalized, and the vacancy was posted on 18 October 2023 with an application timeline of November 5, 2023.	15 th Nov 2023
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Procurement

Major procurements for the month of October 2023:

- Awarded a purchase order to Rupantaran Nepal for development of IWMP for four Watersheds.
- A total of 22 proposals were received from 15 NGOs under RFP IQC for construction subcontract and are under evaluation with the deadline of 19 October 2023.
- Revised budget for Task Order Proposal #6 for Detailed Technical Survey, Design, and DPR of Dullu FSTP under IQC is being reviewed by Senior Management Team before further processing.
- Contract for support staff services for Kathmandu, Surkhet, and Watershed Offices was awarded on 19 October 2023.
- Subcontract modification for reduction in cost of ECEP (subcontractor for Lower Karnali DPR service) has been approved by USAID on 19th October.
- A total of 7 proposals were received under the Radio PSA Production and Broadcasting RFP and are under evaluation.
- RFP for the Scoping Study for Construction of a new Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) in Dullu municipality has been announced on 3 October 2023 with submission deadline of 17 October 2023.

Grant

Grant status for the month of October 2023:

Grant No.	Grantee	Grant Title	Amount (USD)	Status / Remarks
G-KAT-002	WindPower Nepal Pvt. Ltd.	Water-efficient Fodder production technology to enhance livelihood of climate vulnerable communities	██████████	Awarded on Sept 15, 2023, kick off meeting with grantee completed. The grantee working on the Inception Report and Detail Implementation Plan.
G-KAT-003	Executive Consulting Engineering and Planner Pvt. Ltd. (ECEP)	Floating Wetland – A Solution to Karnali Water Challenge	██████████	Awarded on Sept 15, 2023, kick off meeting with grantee completed. The grantee working on the Inception Report and Detail Implementation Plan.

G-KAT-004	Himali Rural Youth Social Development Center (HIRYSDEC)	Promoting Water Secure and Dignified Menstrual Hygiene Friendly Behavior	[REDACTED]	Awarded on October 1, 2023, kick off meeting with grantee completed on October 5, 2023. The grantee working on the Inception Report and Detail Implementation Plan.
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Financial Performance

- The Activity is expecting to receive the VAT refund amounting to Rs [REDACTED] tentatively US\$ [REDACTED] for the period April to June 2023 from Inland Revenue Office (IRO).
- The team is working to process VAT refund amounting to Rs [REDACTED] - tentatively US\$ [REDACTED] for the period July to September 2023 and will be submitting the request to the Inland Revenue Office by mid-November.
- An External audit for DAI Global LLC for fiscal year 2079/2080 (15th July 2022 to 16th July 2023) is under way. The project has already submitted the response to the Auditors' preliminary comments along with the financial statement for auditor's review and is waiting for the Auditor's Management Letter for final response.
- An Internal Audit for USAID Karnali Water Activity through HO is ongoing and the team is expecting to receive the internal audit report by mid November 2023.

CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS

- The A&E Subcontractors are delivering poor quality reports for the WSS scheme design, estimates, ERR, and DPR which is causing delays. Consequently, the technical team had to invest additional time and effort in mobilizing the Subcontractors' personnel, providing on-site guidance, and completing document revisions due to the substandard quality of their work and reports.
- The delay in submitting the deliverable report by Subcontractors and consequently the delay in the Karnali Water Activity technical team's verification in the field resulted in a delay in paying the subcontractors.
- Payment for a completed milestone was delayed due to the requirement for submission of a performance bond/bank guarantee letter by the subcontractors.

UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES IN NOVEMBER

Technical

- Complete the final monitoring of WSS scheme sites on request from WUSC and construction subcontractors, mobilization of WUSC and construction subcontractors for improvement of rectified construction and operational issues for improvement, as well as final testing and commissioning of WSS Systems.
- Complete site-specific engineering designs and BOQs for survey completed WSS schemes, as well as ERR and DPR reports for design and estimate completed WSS schemes.
- Complete the formation of WUSCs to provide support for the construction and management of WSS schemes planned to be constructed in Year 3.

- Select the IQC holders for construction contracts, as well as the start of the Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP) process with the IQC holders to begin construction subcontractors.
- Conduct the remaining 12 events on WUSC governance, planning, and management training in all four Watersheds.
- Prepare and finalize the Scope of Work (SoW) to hire a Training Service Provider for VMW Training.
- Conduct FGD and quantification part of the Q&Q survey under the CSP planning process in the three municipalities – Panchapuri, Chamunda Bindrasaini and Chhayanaath Rara.
- Prepare and submit Sanitation Status Report of Panchapuri and Chamunda Bindrasaini municipalities as part of the CSP planning process.
- Conduct topographic survey and other technical assessment in Dullu FSTP site.
- Prepare design report for Dullu FSTP.
- Collect final land documents (Lalpurja) from Dullu Municipality, Dailekh for FSTP construction.
- Support Ministry of Water Resources and Energy Development (MoWRED) conducting stakeholders' consultative meeting to finalize Karnali Province WASH Bills.
- Carry out field assessments for IWRM plan of all four Watersheds.
- Prepare assessment report of proposed PES sites.

GESI

- Finalize the developed training contents for LG level GESI training.
- Finalize the Community Dialogue Manual.
- Review the Social Survey Reports/DPR and provide input for better GESI integration.
- Develop GESI session for the OWSC training and facilitate the training.

MERL

- Finalize and submit MEL plan for Year 3 to USAID.
- Review DAICollect tools and monitoring checklist.
- Provide additional orientation and detailed guidance to the watershed advisors and MERL team on PEA and collection of the best practices to identify topics for learning documentation.
- Explore an opportunity from the field to find some stories related to use of the toilets in the community to share on World Toilet Day, November 19th, 2023.
- Finalize a two-page summary of the major accomplishments from Year 2 for sharing externally with USAID and local governments.
- Work on the third bimonthly newsletter of the activity and finalize it by the end of November.