



Provincial and Local Governance Support Program (PLGSP)
Province Government
Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministries
Provincial Program Implementation Unit (PPIU)
Biratnagar, Koshi Province

Outcome 2: Provincial and local governments have efficient, effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions.

In the fiscal year 2022/23, the Provincial Program Implementation Unit (PPIU) in Koshi Province, planned 24 activities and 56 milestones/targets and successfully completed 21 of these activities. Notably, PPIU Koshi played a crucial role in assisting the Provincial Government (PG) in drafting four laws, including two model laws for local governance. These laws, the Community-Based Tourism Development Policy-2079 and the Land Management (utilization, development, and regularization) Act-2079, have been submitted to the Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers (OCMCM) for cabinet approval.

Extensive consultations and interactions took place with federal, local stakeholders, thematic experts, and provincial government and ministries to create the legislation. Additionally, PPIU provided technical support and resources to the PGs in formulating two model laws for Local Governments: the Local Government Inter-Coordination Act, 2080, and the Local Environment Conservation Act, 2080. These have also been submitted to OCMCM for dissemination to all local governments. Through various interventions, enhanced the capacity of elected representatives (PA members, and committees) and civil servants of PLGs regarding law formulation and its implementation, including mobilization of the law drafting committee of OCMCM and MoIAL, identifying the areas of the law in exclusive and concurrent rights by the three tiers governments. Finally, PLG's joint collaborations have enabled efficient, effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions through legislative measures.

PPIU Koshi, under output 5, aimed to enhance provincial administration by promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability. They achieved this through various means, such as developing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) audit guidelines for the province, conducting GESI audits of ministries, and capacity building for GESI focal persons and high-level officials. Additionally, they organized three Public Hearings for major provincial projects, fostering citizen engagement and accountability. The three projects were related to infrastructure development: - Deuri river bridge construction (71m) at Triyuga Municipality, Udayapur, Ghinaghat Road project (22.5 KM), Morang district and Khawana river irrigation project at Chulachuli Rural Municipality, Illam. A citizen satisfaction survey, exit poll, and Focused group discussion were conducted by the facilitation team, and later it was presented in the public hearing event where Province Parliament members, Local elected representatives, Project officials, and other civic stakeholders were present at the event. As an impact of the event, it was found that the projects office had done a public audit, kept holding a board with detailed project details, addressed the issues raised by the public regarding the quality of materials used for construction, and increased the trust and ownership of the project by local government. This has created a sense of accountability among government officials, and elected representatives. These events provide citizens with access to information about government initiatives, policies, and projects.

To streamline governance programs, reduce duplication, and establish a governance and capacity development framework, PPIU organized a review and sharing workshop with development partners in Koshi Province. This resulted in the development of an online reporting system for the registration and reporting of annual activities of development partners to the provincial government. There are more than 13 DPs who are currently working at the provincial level in close coordination with the Province Government, DPs like (UNOPS, WFP, WHO, SWISSCONTACT, GiZ, Karuna Foundation, Save The Children, A2J, PsP, and Helvitas,) are working on different thematic areas. Such coordination meetings



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have created an understanding of PG's priorities, policies, programs, and plans. PLGSP, Province Support Program (PSP), and A2J have been working in the province to strengthen federalism, such coordination meetings have created a common understanding for the planning and implementation of the annual programs reducing the chance of the duplication of annual activities. The provincial government has placed a regulatory act to facilitate the DPs and create an enabling environment to work jointly with the PG, for this an online reporting system has been developed to facilitate the registration and reporting of annual activities and progress reporting to the provincial government.

PPIU's Provincial Annual Sectoral Implementation Plan (PASIP) included six activities to strengthen the province's public administration in areas such as service delivery, data management, public financial management, and civil service management, successfully introduced digitalization in the Province Public Service Commission with the Optical Mark Reader system and expanded the use of the Office Automation System to 13 institutions, including province agencies and ministries, for improved information and document exchange.

The rollout of the Province Personnel Information System (PIS) has enhanced the management of the province's civil service by the OCMCM.

Moreover, the Provincial FRA system rollout was completed with some remaining online portal improvements. The FRA assessment by province ministries and agencies in the previous fiscal year will now use the portal for future assessments. PPIU also initiated the preparation of management audit guidelines and provided orientation on the internal control system, further strengthening the province's public administration.

Furthermore, the Innovative Partnership Fund Program (IPF) has seen the implementation of ten schemes across nine local governments. These schemes focused on local economic development and the digitization of service delivery, including the promotion of local tourism, agriculture, and entrepreneurship, and several programs aimed to uplift marginalized communities and promote good governance through the adoption of ICT in administration.

The local Government Institutional Capacity Self-Assessment (LISA) system has been an innovative tool to track the performance of local governments in Nepal. The LISA intends to improve local governance which can be considered as a public sector innovation following the global trend of ICT development and e-governance. The assessment of the last three fiscal years of the Koshi Province shows the adoption of these tools has increased from 86% to 100% i.e., all 137 LGs. Moreover, the analysis of the last three years shows that the thematic indicator horizontal and vertical coordination as the weak area among the 10 thematic indicators has been gradually improving from 24.89% to 36.31%, local government has started to work collaboratively in areas like solid waste management, construction of the common resource center for Disaster preparedness and response center. Similarly, the service delivery indicator shows a remarkable improvement from 51.71% to 73.93%. The adoption of the ICT and e-governance initiative in service delivery at LGs with the mobilization of IT officers has been seen as a great impact. The Local government has initiated to demand the capacity development program to PCGG on the basis of the LISA thematic indicators.

GESI audit and various training related to GESI Mainstreaming and GRB has been conducted from 2020/021 to FY 2022/2023 in provincial ministries and Local government in Koshi Province. The impact of the activities was seen gradually in the provincial government. The provincial government and Offices have a GESI focal person, adapting GESI policy, GESI audit guidelines, and GESI audit assessment



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of PGs. Provincial and Local Government focused their budget on supporting to the marginalized especially women, Dalit, and disabled communities. Provincial ministries and Offices as well as local government have seriously adapted gender-responsive planning and budgeting. After receiving the training, most of the officials were aware and sensitized on gender-friendly workplaces, gender violence social inclusion, etc. *Rabin Karki, GESI focal person*, and Minister of Physical Infrastructure shares his view “Before I used to think GESI was only related to women, after the capacity development training received from PCGG my received learning and perspective has completely changed in GESI, now I have been assigned as a focal person and have been continuously lobbying whenever necessary whether it can be in construction level or policy level “.

Suman Lingden, Chief Administration Officer to Yangwarak Rural Municipality, Panchthar shares his practice of GESI mainstreaming at local government as “*GESI Audit is a monitoring method that makes it easier for us to make action plans and work in the field of GESI because of the feedback that comes from it. Using the GESI Audit tool, improvements have been made, and the LISA has also supported us in the adoption of the GESI strategy. If this can be done compulsorily, the performance of many local levels will increase*”.

After the result and recommendation of the GESI audit assessment at our municipality, we have changed the following activities: -

- *Breastfeeding rooms have been built in municipal and ward offices.*
- *women who are victims of violence and are unable to return home have been provided with food and accommodation as well as legal assistance. Ward no. 1,2 and 4 are in operation to provide such a special service.*
- *Preparation of a detailed action plan and budget allocation in the annual program.*
- *To develop the capacity of disabled people, a special program has been organized to provide vocational training as well as provision of grants for disabled people who want to be financially independent.*

The collective efforts of PPIU and PCGG have been instrumental in transforming provincial and local governments into more inclusive and accountable institutions. These activities will contribute to deeper institutional reforms for improved provincial and local governance. In the upcoming fiscal year, ten IPF programs will become operational, introducing innovation in institutional and governance reforms at the local government level and generating insights for future policy reform.

Outcome 3: Elected representatives and civil servants at provincial and local governments have the capacity and serve citizens to their satisfaction.

Koshi PCGG has conducted various capacity development training and orientations for provincial government staff, aiming to enhance their skills and knowledge. The goal is to improve service delivery and the infrastructure of good governance within provincial institutions. Six major training programs have been organized for provincial staff in areas such as e-GP, budgeting & planning, result-based monitoring, MTEF preparation, parliamentary system, secretariat management, CD ToT for PCGG staff, motivational and behavioral change, and the localization of CoC to prevent sexual harassment.

During this fiscal year, the PCGG has also provided support to local government staff and elected representatives to enhance their capabilities in areas including the application of IEE and EIA provisions, budgeting & planning, result-based monitoring system, operation of VERSP-MIS, IT, pre-



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service/induction for new government staff, CD plan, and LISA result management at the local government level.

Given that a significant number of elected representatives at the local level are new after the second term of elections, they require broader knowledge and skills to effectively manage local government operations. To address this, PCGG has provided support through constitutional and Local Government Act provisions orientation, as well as training on the service delivery system for ward members in 137 local governments.

This training and orientation program has successfully built the functional capacity of 1,745 provincial and local government staff, 1,342 elected representatives, and 61 freelance experts. As a result, these trained leaders and staff are now well-equipped to utilize their acquired knowledge and skills, demonstrating a strong commitment to serving the citizens to their satisfaction.

Case study:

Leveraging ICT in Public Administration: A Success Case of Province Public Service Commission

With the objective to promote public administration with competent, strong, transparent, and fairness through a selection of qualified skilled manpower for Province and Local government, the Public Service Commission of Koshi Province was established in 2076 BS, Magh 6, and is fully functional. As per the Annual Progress report of FY 2078/79 BS, the PPSC has announced the vacancy for 577 positions where it has to examine more than 54 thousand answer sheets, including 20 thousand multiple choice OMR sheets. On average the overall process from the examination to the result publication for a vacancy position takes more than 6 months, also it varies on the number of applicants.

In an era where technology continues to reshape traditional processes, the PPSC examination system was still practicing the traditional human-based manual approach for the result assessment process, which faced several challenges before adopting the ICT-based technology in its administrative process. The challenges like time-consuming manual assessment, human



Figure 1 OMR machine, and PPSC officials trained to use OMR and software for assessment

errors, handling and storing large amounts of data, and lack of ensuring confidentiality and security of the examination information were constant concerns.

The PLGSP has continued to strengthen the Provincial Public administration function more effectively with the introduction of ICT-based technology. In FY 2021/22 PLGSP has supported the PPSC to operationalize the online public service management portal with the necessary



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hardware and software support. And now in FY 2022/23 the implementation of the Optical Mark Reader system (hardware and software) to address the challenges that exist in the manual approach and hence modernize the administrative operation with improved efficiency, accuracy, and security. As per the administrative Officer of PPSC Mr. Dipak Dahal, they found the overall administrative process was improved by more than 80% when they sample-tested the OMR-based assessment for the multiple-choice answer sheet on certain positions.

With the adoption of ICT-based OMR technology, the PPSC not only raised the bar for assessment quality but also paved the way for a transparent, fair, and trustworthy institution in the selection of skilled human resource.