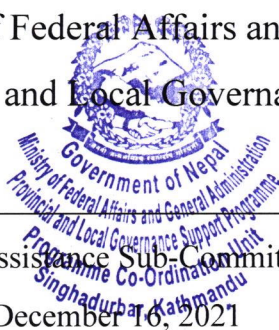




Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration  
Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme



5<sup>th</sup> Technical Assistance Sub-Committee Meeting  
December 16, 2021

## Aide Memoire

### 1. Introduction

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Technical Assistance Sub-Committee (TASC) of the Provincial and Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP) was held under the chair of Mr. Gopi Krishna Khanal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021. The main purpose of the meeting was to receive updates on the implementation status of PLGSP Technical Assistance (TA) and to discuss and approve the revised TA Annual Work Plan 2021. The meeting was participated by the representatives of the Joint Financing Agreement (JFA) Development Partners (DPs), UNDP and PLGSP/Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) staff members (list of the participants is given in Annex 2). The meeting was held both in person & online.

### 2. Agendas of Meeting

- 1) Review of the last TASC meeting decisions
- 2) Presentation and acceptance of progress report (January-November 2021)
- 3) Presentation and acceptance of revised 2021 TA AWP
- 4) Presentation and approval of 2022 TA AWP
- 5) Key points- staff retention independent survey
- 6) Governance & dates of future meetings
- 7) AOB –
  - 1) EU-UNDP Complementary Project updates

### 3. Decisions

The meeting concluded with the following decisions;

1. The TASC meeting took note of progress of 4<sup>th</sup> TASC meeting decisions.
2. The TASC meeting took note of TA progress made during January - November 2021.
3. The TASC meeting approved the revised 2021 TA Annual Work Plan, in line with ASIP 2021/22
4. The TASC meeting approved the revised TA AWP 2022
5. The TASC meeting took note of initial key points of staff retention independent survey findings and requested PCU to analyze the findings of the independent staff retention survey and develop a strategy for improvements to be presented at the next TASC meeting

6. The TASC meeting took note of date for all meetings as mentioned in the PLGSP programme document and requested PCU to timely and sequentially organize the governing committee meetings.
7. The TASC requested MoFAGA/PCU and UNDP to update the status of the implementation of EU-UNDP Complementary Project to be presented in the next TASC meeting



**Annex-1: Presentation and Discussion****1. Opening Remarks**

Dr. Gopi Khanal, as PLGSP NPD, welcomed all attendees, in person and online and gave an overview of the agenda. He noted that TA is an integral part to manage PLGSP programme. There is staff retention issue, salary is higher in other projects and people move around. There is a need to revisit the result matrix after mid-term review. The secretary has asked to focus on the Capacity Building of the elected representatives considering the upcoming elections, frequent discussions with PPIU and PCGG and organizing visits periodically in provinces. The success of the programme is despite provincial performance and challenges of having 5 minister and 3 secretaries in 1.5 years. There is also need of massive capacity building to the local politicians on increasing revenue and also guide on local spending. Ministry has asked to prepare a concrete action plan at ward level to improve service delivery.

2. Egbert Pos, on behalf of the DPs, asked that the agenda be revised to prioritize discussion on the MTR ToRs as the first item of business and then go ahead with the agenda. National Programme Director, Dr. Gopi Krishna Khanal, responded stating that the technical matter of the ToR was agreed already. He further expressed his acceptance to keep the time line of maximum 60 days open to the bidders to complete the assignment and submit final MTR report. He also underlined the team composition to be led by International Team Leader and other members as National experts.

**2. Presentation**

1. Mr. Chiranjivi Timsina, PLGSP NPM, shared the agenda as follows:
  - I. Review of the last TASC meeting decisions
  - II. Presentation and acceptance of progress report (January-November 2021)
  - III. Presentation and acceptance of revised 2021 TA AWP
  - IV. Presentation and approval of 2022 TA AWP
  - V. Key points- staff retention independent survey
  - VI. Governance & dates of future meetings
  - VII. AOB
2. Mr. Chiranjivi Timsina, PLGSP NPM, provided the following updates on the 4<sup>th</sup> TASC meeting decisions:
  - The TASC meeting recognized the efforts and decided to approve the TA progress made in January-May 2021- No further action required;
  - The TASC meeting decided to approve the revised 2021 TA Annual Work Plan, in line with ASIP 2021/22- Completed;
  - The TASC requested PCU to plan a virtual field visit to provide a platform for sharing, dialogue and interaction among representatives from three tiers of government and DPs on PLGSP implementation, progress, challenges, opportunities and needs at the provincial and local levels - Organized a virtual visit on 30 June 2021, covered Lumbini (PPIU and Province Treasury Controller Office)



and Sudurpaschim (PCGG, Amargadhi Municipality, Dadeldhura). Debriefed participants after the visit.

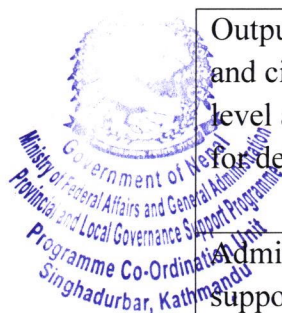


3. Mr. Timsina elaborated further on the TA Progress Report (January – November 2021):

- Recruitment of staff and consultancy services
- Capacity Development and Knowledge Enhancement
- Procurement of Vehicles
- Implementation of 2021 TA AWP: Milestones and Achievements
- Financial Progress, January – November 2021
- GESI mainstreaming initiatives
- Pipeline activities
- Delivery acceleration strategy and quality assurance

4. Mr. Timsina presented further the financial progress under TA (January – November 2021), as follows:

Outputs	Allocated budget (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Expenditure %
Output 1: Federal level institutions develop legislations and policies to support Provincial and Local Governments in a consultative manner	26,317.43	7,508.78	28.53%
Output 2: Federal level institutions develop tools and systems to support Provincial and Local Governments in a consultative process.	135,659.01	82,995.13	61.18%
Output 9: LG systems enable horizontal and vertical accountability to all citizens	8,531.05	4,777.39	56.00%
Output 12: Innovative Partnership Fund (IPF) is operational and transparently supporting Local Governments (LGs)	3,583.04	3,555.07	99.22%



Output 13: Elected representatives and civil servants at the provincial level are incentivized and trained for delivering high quality services	145,360.09	83,616.73	57.52%
Administration and Logistic support	2,829,114.33	1,595,213.83	56.39%
Total	3,148,564.95	1,777,666.93	56.46%

## 5. Plenary Discussion

- Mr Egbert Pos, for DPs, focused his comments on the TA part of the presentation and expressed DPs' appreciation for UNDP, PCU and provincial PLGSP staff and recognised all the hard work, seen in field visits and in discussions with PLGSP.

He noted the good plans mentioned in the last slides on quality assurance and requested further details, as DPs would like to substantially discuss and understand these. UNDP and its role to add value to the programme not just recruitment in the context of quality assurance. In the progress report, baseline has been stated as 'completed', yet this remains work in progress. Third party monitoring's delay remains an area of concern and remedial action must put in place as a priority, including IPF in TPM going forward.

Mr Pos asked that the C-19 report be shared with DPs, in order to draw lessons. Further areas require analysis and action, including vertical and horizontal accountability, how other programs can also engage in PLGSP, how the TA program can help strengthen that dimension and the impact of frequent staff turnover- what can be done for improving staff retention?

Mr Pos noted that the AWP budget for MTR has to increase, as the MTR requires international competitive bidding and the full scope of the ToRs must be fulfilled to give value for money and recommend a way forward for the Programme. The indicative range advised by Regional Research Hub colleagues at FCDO is between 75-90K dollars. He suggested proceeding with procurement with UNDP and assessing competitive, good bids received.

- In response, NPD noted that on staff retention, PCU are doing all their best, and expressed hope that the federal civil service act shall resolve the issue of PPM/PPD/ED; the Public Service Commission (PSC) recruits civil servants and there is no other mechanism. The support of UNDP has been great throughout. The major onus of PLGSP success lies with the chief minister and provincial governments, and the TA is only there to support them- if PLGs do not provide the required support, the implementation is very difficult. TA are working very hard, but delivery is often impacted by areas outside their control.

MTR budget needs to be increased, but PCU believes only a little. Procurement will be done by UNDP independently, without undue influence from anyone including govt





and DPs. The MTR should be completed within 60 days, and this will be fixed as a deadline in the ToRs / procurement documents.

## 6. Closing Remarks

Mr Bernardo Cocco, UNDP, noted TASC presented a good opportunity to take stock of progress, challenges, and plans to address these challenges and reach a shared understanding with MoFAGA and the DPs on areas to prioritize TA. From the TA's point of view, 2021 saw significant progress compared to 2020, including completion of PLGSP baseline study; mapping of ongoing DP engagements in the areas of federalism and local governance; preparation a report on stock-taking of tools and product developed /used by government and DPs; finalization of IPF guidelines; procurement of vehicles; knowledge enhancement of TA staff; and, importantly, consolidation of the staff complement of the PLGSP TA, at central and province level.

The third-party monitoring is in progress, and we are heading towards commissioning the MTR.

The UN component of the TA was largely delivered, in spite of these challenges; Delivery rate under TA as of end October 2021 is 56% and this will increase once payments for vehicles are made by end of this year. As UN TA provider, we have been providing support and hope to do even more through the acceleration plan to expedite the delivery. Since the PCGGs are functional and the IPF guideline is finalized, I believe that the delivery will now accelerate pick up pace accordingly.

UNDP, as a TA provider, has been doing our best to offer technical inputs in drafting essential programme documents. For example, UNDP provided inputs to IPF guideline, PLGSP GESI strategy, ASIP and its narrative note, DP mapping report, to mention just a few. We have approached this in two ways. The firstly is through our TA team/colleagues to offer necessary technical support to ensure quality service; and the secondly through our comparative advantage of outreach, conducting observations, and meeting with the provincial team.

Staff retention has been identified as an issue. It is encouraging that PLGSP has started working on the development of a retention strategy, informed by evidence of what works and what doesn't at present. The Staff retention strategy will be finalized soon, and UNDP look forward to its effective implementation. UNDP remains committed to providing necessary support to implement the recommendations and findings of this strategy.

Mr Cocco further congratulated PCU on organizing the half-yearly review workshop focused on the delivery acceleration of PLGSP, noting this was an opportunity for the TA staff to air any concerns that might affect staff retention. The workshop has come up with actions points. UNDP is committed to contributing continuously in order to accelerate delivery.

Mid-Term Review will provide a rigorous, independent, and thorough review, identifying and making recommendations to improve the performance and impact



of the programme including delivery, quality assurance, and the scope of the programme itself. UNDP stands ready to provide support to procure services of an independent, professional outfit on the basis of an agreed TOR, and remains committed to contributing effectively to the MTR and its lessons learned- informing the next programming period.

MoFAGA, in close coordination with UNDP, has provided thematic training to PLGSP staff and provincial government officials across a range of topics. These are important contributions to capacity building. Further training is needed to continue the backstop capacity of staff and be able to play a catalytic role in the attainment of functional, sustainable, inclusive, and accountable provincial and local government. 23 training models are ready to roll out for essential staff training and development.

UNDP will continue to work with PCU, stakeholders and DPs on strengthening and improving consistency, compliance and delivery of programme governance processes and stakeholder engagement and the collective efforts in this regard are appreciated and welcomed the continued collaboration/partnership and working with UNDP, DPs, MoFAGA & PLGs to deliver and accelerate federalization.

Finally, Mr Cocco thanked MoFAGA colleagues and DPs for having UNDP in an important role as TA partner and looked forward to continued feedback and constructive inputs to the TA component of the programme and wished for the great success of this TASC meeting.

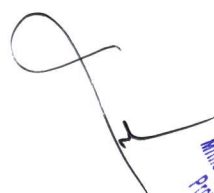

- Mr Pos thanked everyone for their participation and shared that the meeting had been constructive and covered a lot of ground, and requested follow up action on the points raised.
- Dr. Gopi Khanal, NPD, committed to be in frequent touch with all DPs and thanked DPs & stakeholders for their ongoing support. He closed the meeting thanking all for their active participation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.



***Annex-2: List of the participants***

S.N.	Name of the participant	Designation	Organization
1	Dr. Gopi K. Khanal	Joint Secretary/National programme Director	MoFAGA/PLGSP
2	Mr. Chiranjivi Timsina	Under Secretary/National Programme Manager	MoFAGA/PLGSP
3	Mr. Egbert Pos	Governance Advisor and Deputy Team Leader for GPST	FCDO/British Embassy
4	Mr. Madhu Bishwakarma	Gov. Advisor	FCDO/British Embassy
5	Ms. Shailee Manandhar	Senior Programme Manager	FCDO/British Embassy
6	Ms. Preeti Das	Program Officer	FCDO/British Embassy
7	Mr. Rajkumar Dhungana	Governance Advisor	Royal Norwegian Embassy
8	Ms Odile HUMBLLOT	PO	EU, participated virtually
9	Ms. Silvana Hogg	Head of Cooperation/ Deputy Head of Mission	SDC
10	Ms. Shradha Rayamajhi	National Programme Officer	SDC
11	Mr. Bernardo Cocco	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP
12	Mr. Tek Tamata	Portfolio Specialist	UNDP
13	Mr. Anders Magnusson	Programme Specialist	UNDP
14	Mr. Krishna Bhattarai	TA coordinator	UNDP
15	Mr. Hari P. Guragain	Administrative Officer	MoFAGA/PLGSP
16	Mr. Chandra Kanta Sharma Paudel	Coordination and Monitoring Specialist	PLGSP
17	Mr. Ian MacDougall	Federal Governance Specialist & Development Partner Co-Ordinator	UNDP/PLGSP
18	Ms. Dixita Silwal	HR and Liaison Specialist	PLGSP
19	Mr. Surendra Bhandari	Admin and Finance Officer	PLGSP
20	Mr. Umesh Thagunna	IT Assistant	PLGSP

***The End***