

Nepal: Open Government Partnership Readiness Assessment

September 2017



Catalyzing a New Generation of Active Citizens
and Responsible Leaders Around the World



Summary

- As countries around the world attempt to address citizens' rising demand for greater openness and transparency, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) provides a unique platform for national governments to develop a multilateral, coordinated effort to make their societies more transparent, accountable and responsive;
- Nepal has made important progress on issues related to open governance over the course of the past several years and is further ahead in many respects than some existing OGP member countries;
- Nepal is now eligible for the OGP, and signing up would provide a variety of benefits including technical and peer support and international open governance platform and a means to engage civil society;
- To open governance challenges in Nepal are related to service delivery, followed by corruption, access to information, lack of citizen participation, lack of data, access to justice/rule of law and lack of private sector accountability;
- Structural challenges to open government in Nepal include capacity and coordination issues within government, lack of local ownership of the development process, issues of organizational culture and a lack of accountability among civil society;
- Areas on which the OGP could focus in Nepal include service delivery, the business environment, anti-corruption, citizen participation, open data and local government;
- Ways forward for the OGP in Nepal could include efforts to: build on what exists in terms of progress around open governance and multi-stakeholder initiatives; raise awareness through outreach, events and social media engagement; create political buy-in through indicating where synergies lie with existing initiatives, particularly for mid-level officials; and agreeing on the institutional arrangements for OGP within government.

Introduction

As countries around the world attempt to address citizens' rising demand for greater openness and transparency, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) provides a unique platform for national governments to develop a multilateral, coordinated effort to make their societies more transparent, accountable and responsive. As such, the OGP is becoming increasingly important – particularly for countries like Nepal - that have made progress in terms of accountability and transparency but still face challenges in terms of democratic governance and citizen-centric decision-making.

Following the establishment of a Nepal as a federal democratic republic in 2008, efforts to support the open government movement have evolved, both inside and outside of government, albeit sporadically. With the promulgation of a new constitution in September 2015, the recent local elections in 2017 and a process of decentralization underway, now is the time to push forward the open government agenda.

As part of our focus on promoting and supporting creative open government initiatives, **Accountability Lab Nepal** conducted an OGP Readiness Assessment in partnership with the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) in mid-2017. This research was aided by Local Interventions Group and the National Information Commission of Nepal along with a number of other civil society organizations (CSOs) and think tanks operating in Nepal.

The OGP, Accountability Lab Nepal and CIPE

The **Open Government Partnership** is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance

Accountability Lab Nepal is building a movement of active citizens and responsible leaders around the world. We support youth change-makers to develop ideas for integrity in their communities. By enabling people to use information and knowledge to hold those in power accountable, we help to unleash positive social and economic change.

The **Center for International Private Enterprise** (CIPE) strengthens democracy around the globe through private enterprise and market-oriented reform. CIPE is one of the four core institutes of the National Endowment for Democracy and an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Since 1983, CIPE has worked with business leaders, policymakers, and civil society to build the institutions vital to a democratic society.

Background

The **2015 Nepali Constitution** provides a progressive framework for open government, enshrining multiparty democracy, civil liberties, fundamental rights, periodic elections, full freedom of the press, an independent, impartial and competent judiciary and the concept of the rule of law. In practical terms, Nepal is also much further ahead in a number of areas related to open government than many existing members of the OGP. It has national institutions in place to support openness, plans around critical elements of open data and an informed civil society. Recently, Nepal also opted-in to the World Bank's **Global Partnership for Social Accountability** (GPSA).

There is more awareness of the importance of open government in Nepal than ever before; and a **nascent movement to push for Nepal's membership of the OGP.**¹ In recent months there have also been a number of delegations from various OGP-related bodies or partners to discuss open government issues in Nepal with the government, civil society and other stakeholders.

We believe that the OGP can play a critical role in efforts to build integrity in Nepal, ensure that public services are responsive and efficient, and develop public policies that are inclusive. OGP represents an important platform for peer learning, networking among reformers inside and outside government, and trust-building across the public, private and civil society sectors. If the process of co-creation and implementation of commitments through the OGP is carried out effectively, it provides a framework that will allow the ideas of transparency and accountability to grow and make a meaningful difference in the lives of Nepali citizens.

¹ See for example: http://opennepal.net/sites/default/files/resources/open_nepal_briefing_-_open_government_partnership.pdf

Benefits of Joining the OGP

Joining the OGP would provide Nepal with a variety of benefits, including:

- i) **Technical and Peer Support for Implementing Open Government Reforms.** The OGP Support Unit assesses needs, connects governments, and helps them and civil society organizations share expertise and lessons to ensure stronger co-creation and implementation of action plans. If Nepal were to join OGP, the Support Unit would provide advice and support at all stages of participation. This would include specific technical assistance in developing and making commitments, supporting the co-creation process, and brokering assistance from partner organizations and governments around the world.
- ii) **An International Platform.** At the international level, OGP provides a global platform to connect, empower and support domestic reformers committed to transforming government and society through openness. Government champions of reform are constantly working to overcome resistance within their own bureaucracies. Through peer exchanges supported by working groups, civil society and multilateral organizations, OGP provides a forum for sharing expertise, exchanging experiences, and providing technical assistance to support action plan development and implementation. The community of reformers in OGP participating countries can harness international networks to develop and implement ambitious OGP commitments across a variety of themes outlined below. OGP also has partnerships with leading multilateral institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, UNDP and World Bank, and bilateral agencies for development cooperation that have pledged support to OGP member countries to promote open government and increase accountability.
- iii) **Meaningful Engagement with Civil Society.** At the national level, OGP introduces a domestic policy mechanism through which government and civil society establish an ongoing dialogue on the design, implementation and monitoring of the commitments included in their OGP national action plan.

Solving jointly identified problems together holds the potential to accelerate, and make more efficient, the common task of finding solutions in the public interest. OGP has played a role to kick-start dialogues for joint problem solving in participating countries, helping to shift governments toward a more open and inclusive approach to policy-making. OGP action plans introduce a regular cycle of policy planning, implementation and monitoring results. Each stage in the cycle presents an opportunity and obligation for governments to engage with civil society to seek their input and feedback. Promoting dialogue with civil society helps increase public trust and accountability, but also helps determine policy priorities that are important to citizens. Dialogue with civil society may be one of the most critical contributions OGP can make in many countries, especially in the early stages of the initiative.

- iv) **A Means to Build Trust and Sustain Peace.** Building trust between citizens, civil society, and government for countries undergoing reconciliation processes context is critical to building and sustaining lasting peace and security. OGP provides a platform for constructive engagement between civil society and government, improving adversarial relationships and helping government build credibility in the eyes of the people. As Nepal transitions from to a federal structure, OGP can offer innovations in finding new forms of civic participation in democratic governance processes.

Nepal's OGP Eligibility

Eligibility to join OGP is determined by evaluations of a country's performance in four critical areas of open government: fiscal transparency, access to information, public officials' asset disclosure and citizen engagement. **Nepal's eligibility** has been vacillating - previously backsliding in the area of fiscal governance (timely publishing of budget documents) had undermined Nepal's assessment score - but currently the country is judged eligible again, with a score of 13 out of a possible 16 points, as assessed by the OGP Secretariat.

To join the OGP, Nepal must endorse the Open Government Declaration, develop a National Action Plan (NAP) through consultations across the country, and commit to independent monitoring of progress against commitments over time. Members of the Nepali government attended the OGP summits in Mexico in 2015 and Paris in 2016 but have yet to sign up to the initiative.

Joining the OGP

If Nepal decides to join OGP, the government of Nepal will need to send a letter of intent to join addressed to the current OGP co-chairs. The letter itself needs to include a few specific elements - it must: formally express the government's intention to join OGP; confirm that the government is eligible to join OGP (Nepal's score is [here](#)); specifically endorse the [Open Government Declaration](#); describe past open government reforms; and finally, specify the individual and Ministry that will be responsible for OGP within the government.

Examples of past letters can be found on individual country pages on OGP's [website](#), and a few recent examples are from [Tunisia](#) and [Papua New Guinea](#). The letter of intent can come from any agency within government, as long as that agency has received approval from the Head of State to join the initiative. The letter should be signed by a Ministerial-level official. Upon joining, Nepal will be required to:

- i) **Identify a Lead Ministry or Agency:** A member of the Support Unit's Government Support and Exchange Team will connect with Nepal's government's designated representative soon after receiving the letter in order to answer any questions and provide an orientation to OGP. The Support Unit will also connect the government representative with relevant technical experts or other resources. The Support Unit recommends the official point of contact is a senior civil servant in a function that typically coordinates across government. Chapter one of [the OGP government points of contact manual](#) describes the responsibilities of the point of contact.
- ii) **Develop an OGP National Action Plan:** The National Action Plan will be the core of Nepal's participation in the OGP. Chapters 2 and 3 of the [OGP government points of contact manual](#) describe the process for developing a National Action Plan. Action plans should contain 10-15 specific open government reform commitments that should be implemented over a two-year period. These commitments should be relevant to the values of transparency, accountability and participation, and contain a clear 'openness' dimension. In addition, a multi-stakeholder forum should be established for the coordination of OGP at country level.

- iii) **Implement the commitments over a two-year period, and provide an annual self-assessment to track progress:** Throughout the implementation period there should be an element on permanent dialogue with civil society in Nepal. Inter-ministerial coordination with the lead ministry is essential to encouraging strong implementation of the commitments. The OGP Support Unit, which acts as the Secretariat, is able to support this implementation phase if required, for example by brokering support from multilateral organizations or from other OGP countries who have expertise in a particular area.

- iv) **Facilitate independent reporting of progress on the National Action Plan by the Independent Reporting Mechanism:** This assessment provides meaningful and independent accountability for progress against commitments and makes recommendations about how to strengthen and improve subsequent national action plans.

Research Objectives

The overarching objectives of the assessment were:

- i) To identify the key challenges encountered by Nepal's civil society, government, and private sector in relation to government transparency and openness;
- ii) To investigate current attitudes towards the open government movement across Nepal;
- iii) To suggest a set of recommendations for Nepal that may provide a basis for considering possible membership in the OGP in the future.

Through this research we conducted over 50 interviews with government, civil society and political party leaders across the country; a series of focus group discussions with experts from the media, private sector and civil society; and an online survey of key thinkers and practitioners on this topic between February and August 2017 (see Annex I for a further explanation of the methodology, Annex II full list of focus group types, participants and locations and Annex III for a full list of survey respondents and individual interviewees). Frequency calculations were conducted to analyze the survey data, responses to open-ended questions were coded and thematic analysis was used to draw out key themes and areas of shared understanding.

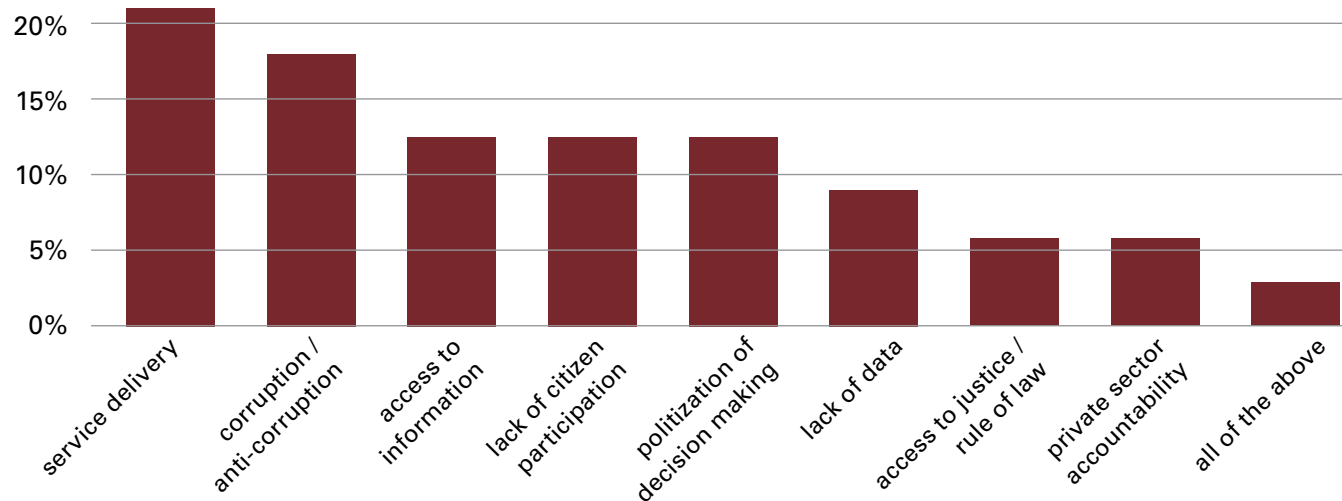
Data and Analysis

Through our survey, respondents were asked to identify the top challenges they faced in their field of work in relation to open governance, and the necessary changes required from the government to address those challenges. They were also asked to identify current initiatives in this domain and their interest in efforts to address the challenges identified. Finally, they were asked to identify any key individuals and/or organizations that should be included as part of this research.

The survey findings indicated that in Nepal, the top challenges created by lack of open governance are to service delivery, followed by corruption, access to information, lack of citizen participation, lack of data, access to justice/rule of law and lack of private sector accountability. These concerns resonate closely with areas outlined by the **Open Government Declaration** as possible commitment areas- indicating the potential “fit” for Nepal with the OGP.

Top challenges faced in relation to government transparency and openness

% of Total Number of Responses



While there was some specificity in terms of the challenges faced by the survey respondents, when asked in an open ended way which collaborative initiatives are addressing these issues in Nepal, the group provided few concrete ideas. Responses included broad generalizations such as the government, political parties and law enforcement agencies. There seem to be no multi-stakeholder initiatives of note that Nepali stakeholders felt could be coordinated with the OGP at this stage. Equally, when asked what changes the government could make to solve some of the challenges above, most responses were broad and lacked specificity, such as: “transparency”, “discouragement of political involvement” and “promoting democratic values”.

These responses are concerning in that very few of the leading practitioners of accountability and transparency in Nepal can name successful coalitions working on these issues and many seemed to have few concrete solutions to the challenges faced. This may in part reflect the somewhat siloed nature of civil society in Nepal at times (more on civil society dynamics below). At the same time, however, this represents a potential opportunity for the OGP to act as a platform to bring together the ideas that are emerging around transparency and accountability issues (see Moving Forwards below).

The OGP and the SDGs in Nepal

One area where the OGP can clearly build on existing multi-stakeholder efforts in Nepal is around the SDGs. The OGP Declaration on the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals encourages OGP member countries to align effort to meet the SDGs with OGP commitments that are relevant to their local context; and supports the idea of integrating open government into monitoring and reviewing implementation of the SDGs. Nepal has set a few, very high-level targets around SDG16 but these do not place sufficient focus on accountability or transparency issues.

In Nepal, SDG localization and implementation is being led by the Prime Minister who chairs a high-level steering committee and coordinates with the National Planning Commission (NPC) in conjunction with various relevant line ministries. On the civil society side, the NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) has been working to promote the SDGs with its members through awareness raising campaigns, CSO consultations and dialogue with the government. A donor-funded local governance program has also been linked to SDG16.

While the government is working to align efforts towards the SDGs with sectoral action plans, as yet, however, there is little overlap in thinking or planning with the OGP. A [recent report on implementation of the SDGs](#) in Nepal omits any details on SDG16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) entirely. If and when the Nepali government signs up to the OGP there will be an opportunity to better align these agendas, integrate SDG16 and ensure collective movement towards larger shared open government and development goals. A [special edition](#) of the Open Government Guide is useful - it provides examples of how to spur progress across the 17 Goals, including in improving public services and, ultimately, in reducing poverty.

The findings from the survey research were validated by additional in-depth interviews and focus group discussions we conducted across the country. This process indicated that additional collective conversations and more concerted consensus-building are needed around the OGP. Very few people know what the OGP is or how it works. Additionally, the focus group discussions and interviews often functioned (in a valuable way) as an outlet for the participants to discuss broad challenges related to open government and find their voice around these issues, but not as a means to draw out OGP related inputs. When pushed, the participants (particularly during focus groups) found it difficult to provide specific ideas for possible commitments or tools/ organizations that they would like to see strengthened through the OGP.

Structural Challenges

Our research highlighted a number of structural challenges to the OGP in Nepal. These included:

- i) **Capacity and Coordination Issues** - our conversations indicated that capacity within government is an ongoing challenge. A variety of stakeholders explained that working with government counterparts can be difficult - either as a result of a lack of political will to address accountability issues, or- often- a lack of ability to do so, due to antiquated systems, lack of training, the legacy of a culture of secrecy, or the absence of management tools. Additionally, constant personnel transfers hamper institutional knowledge and impede policy coherence. For Nepal to effectively implement the OGP it will be essential to focus on capacity development within the bureaucracy through both conceptual and technical training. Topics that came up in our conversations as priorities in this respect include: IT skills, data analysis, integrity training, effective communication skills and the use of project management tools.

Right to Information in Nepal

Nepal has made important progress in opening up information to the public - a robust Right to Information Law has been in place since 2007, an active National Information Commission and civil society group is pushing the issue and there has been some important momentum developing around the law.

However, open governance advocates still feel that access to information is a significant problem. For those citizens who are less familiar with government processes and have less access to the internet, access to information is almost impossible.

Our interviews indicated that a lack of information is due to a combination of government efforts in some cases (lack of political will) and capacity in others (lack of information management systems). A number of our focus group discussions focused on the fact that despite the RTI law, the mindset of government has not shifted towards transparency, but rather continues to support opacity.

A key element of realizing the right to information going forwards will be using tools like the OGP to find ways to open up thinking within the bureaucracy as well as opening up information to citizens. As pointed out by a high-level government official working in this domain, this also requires building the relationships between information providers within government and information consumers - citizens, journalists - to ensure both know the relevant procedures and respective responsibilities.

Several respondents also indicated that the government of Nepal needs to establish better mechanisms for cross ministerial communication, as well as improve communication between the various arms of any given ministry. The Government of Nepal has at least 6 core bodies working directly on anti-corruption, for example - the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), the National Vigilance Centre (NVC), the Department of Revenue Investigation, the Financial Comptroller General's Office, the Department of Anti Money Laundering and the Public Procurement Monitoring Office; and many others working on aspects of related issues (Nepal Police, Department of Customs, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the Central Investigation Bureau, the Auditor General and so on). However, our interviews indicated that these bodies do not have an integrated information sharing system, hold only periodic meetings (often bilaterally rather than among the entire group) and often refuse to share data as a result of political, organizational or bureaucratic problems.

A key challenge here is incentives for coordination. Many of our interviewees pointed out that there are no repercussions for "doing nothing" in Nepal and this means efforts to coordinate often break down. The OGP NAP could be a process through which to more clearly define responsibilities and to find a way to generate commitments around policies and rules for coordination between government agencies. The feedback we received indicated that commitments cannot only focus on online platforms or regular meetings, which soon fizzle out.²

The experience of other countries within OGP may also be instructive in terms of how commitments can be used to improve intra-governmental coordination. In Nigeria, for example, a commitment in the most recent NAP aims to develop a platform for information sharing and coordination among law enforcement, anti-corruption and justice agencies.

- ii) **Lack of Local Ownership of Development Processes.** Participants in our research confirmed a larger challenge that the process of development tends to face in Nepal beyond a focus on open government. Western-oriented development concepts have often been imported into the country without sufficient

² A case in point is Nepal Business Forum (a forum for public-private dialogue between the government and private sector) supported by donors initially but which is now defunct.

attention to context, traditions or relationships - and as a result have suffered from a lack of ownership and impact. A variety of research attests to this fact, as do a number of conversations we had with donor representatives as part of this process.

While this dynamic is not unique to Nepal, our feedback from stakeholders indicated that there is a danger that the OGP could be perceived as a Western, supply-driven agenda. As a result, it is critical at the outset that OGP is “Nepalified” as one discussant put it; and adapted in meaningful ways to the Nepali context. In practice this means: truly inclusive consultations on a possible National Action Plan (moving beyond sparse consultations with civil society and towards meaningful engagement - such as ongoing community radio shows around the NAP and discussion of the draft through online and offline tools across the country); increasing the diversity of voices included in the process - including religious groups, trade unions and workers groups, traditional community bodies and groups of politically excluded citizens, under-represented ethnic groups and women’s groups; and making sure the process remains alive through constant efforts to share success stories and close feedback loops on problems.

- iii) **Issues of Organizational Culture** - the somewhat vague nature of some of the responses to our survey are useful in that many of them touch on some of the deeper issues that prevent transparency in Nepal (“politicization” “lack of transparency”, “lack of incentives” and so on). There is clearly a sense among practitioners that open government cannot be developed simply through a focus on institutions or laws; but will require a concomitant effort to shift organizational cultures and change mindsets. Indeed, Nepali citizens complain constantly about the superiority complex and inaccessible nature of public officials and cite it as something that has to change if a public-oriented civil service is ever to develop.

It may be difficult to develop concrete OGP commitments around this issue, but a focus on penalties for non-performance of government officials could be integrated into the rubric, for example. The OGP process itself provides peer learning, network-building and experience sharing opportunities and repeated interactions between government officials and citizens in a way that can also build trust, understanding and mutual empathy around governance challenges.

- iv) **Challenges to Civil Society Accountability** - our research showed clearly that civil society efforts in Nepal are competitive, uncoordinated and often exclusionary. Elites based in Kathmandu control much of the access to resources, dictate agendas and control programs. Many organizations do not focus on an area of comparative advantage but operate across sectors. A number of focus groups and interviews indicated that there is a perception that these groups have become professionalized and rarely represent ground-level interests. At the same time, civil society groups jealousy guard relationships and data because of funding imperatives and a lack of understanding of the value of partnership. This means collective efforts are often undermined and the sum of civil society is not more than its parts.

While the OGP process cannot solve these problems, of course, it does provide the opportunity to convene and coordinate civil society groups and bring new voices into the discussion around open governance, as outlined above. Beyond Kathmandu there are promising examples of groups that are now working in new ways to change governance dynamics, which can be drawn upon both within their specific contexts and to inform larger approaches. As it evolves, the **Civil Society Mutual Accountability Project** (CS-MAP) - which is supporting the development of an eco-system for bottom-up, shared accountability among civil society, the media and government - also has the potential to contribute to a more effective movement for civil society accountability building across Nepal.

Beyond Kathmandu: Bikalpa in Biratnagar

In Biratnagar, Bikalpa “An Alternative” is an example of an organization working to move beyond traditional NGO dynamics in the accountability space. The group has built on authentic local ownership, commitment and networks to develop creative approaches to issues of accountability. Bikalpa finds ways to form partnerships with local businesses to provide in-kind support for events; mobilizes young people through regular networking events; and runs accountability campaigns around specific time-bound issues of public concern, such as strikes, elections or the recent floods. Despite difficult conditions and minimal resources, the organization now has the ability to convene civil society actors across the region; advocate at the highest levels for change; and reach hundreds of thousands of followers online.

Possible Areas of Focus for the OGP

Our research also identified five key potential areas of focus for the OGP in Nepal. These are by no means exhaustive but provide the basis for an ongoing exchange of ideas and conversation:

- i) **Service Delivery** - a key focus of the OGP globally is making sure that open government commitments improve lives in tangible ways, and this idea seems to resonate in Nepal. Service delivery (defined most often as health, education and infrastructure in more in-depth interviews) was the top concern among our survey respondents and interviews.³ One interviewee spoke about the priority for citizens in Pokhara being a public toilet; and for citizens in Surkhet a mechanism to resolve landlord-tenant issues, for example. In Kathmandu, we have also discussed air quality as an accountability challenge with a variety of stakeholders, and there is the clear potential for a tangible, measurable commitment related to the reduction in air pollution.⁴

These are not large, all-encompassing issues of openness, but very specific, immediate concerns. One challenge is to identify precisely where service delivery accountability gaps exist, and how to develop indicators to measure those gaps. If delays in service are one gap, for example, an initial effort could be made to understand what form these days take and how these affect the lives of citizens. If and when Nepal signs up to the OGP, the country will also need to find a way to ensure that meaningful changes in service delivery are part of any National Action Plan. This will require identifying these concerns and then understanding how a constituency can be mobilized around them in a way that can lead to the “push” that is needed for progress.

- ii) **Business Environment** - the role of a stable state based on political consensus is catalytic in the market formation process through facilitation of the environment for business growth. The private sector in Nepal, however, remains stymied by regulation, underpinned by cartels and debilitated by unionization.

³ This is despite some recent progress in this regard- for example office like the tax and transportation offices now provide online options for service registration etc.

⁴ And tools that could be adapted for this- see for example the [Moz Vozduh](#) app in Macedonia.

Corruption and cronyism in business undermine confidence in the market itself. In terms of doing business, there are challenges from top to bottom: a weak financial sector, unreliable power supply (although **recent changes** have improved this significantly) and bureaucratic red tape. Cross-border trade is difficult due to lengthy bureaucratic procedures and high costs, even before complicated customs and cargo processing activities. Nepal currently ranks 107th out of 190 countries on the World Bank's **Ease of Doing Business Index**. The business people we spoke with unanimously complained about government corruption in relation to the market; but also freely admitted that they needed to engage in corrupt practices to operate at any level of profitability.

The OGP may provide ground for constructive private sector engagement in governance reform. Our focus group discussions, for example, generated a consensus across business owners for more transparency from government on procedures related to licensing, contracting and implementation; much more open public procurement processes; and clarity of laws related to business practices. Lessons from elsewhere may be instructive - in the Philippines, the administration in Manila has engaged the **private sector in very positive ways around OGP**, and has made significant progress on issues such as the ease of doing business as a result; and **in Pakistan, the private sector played a key role** in pushing the government to sign-up to OGP.

- iii) **Anti-Corruption** - Nepal has an extensive institutional architecture and set of legal arrangements in place for fighting corruption (although coordination is a challenge as outlined above), and is in the process of reviewing various aspects of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) as they relate to the country. There are areas - such as open contracting - where important progress is being made and on which the OGP has a basis to build as part of a first set of commitments.

Open Contracting in Nepal

The Public Procurement Monitoring Office (PPMO) of the Government of Nepal is collaborating with the Open Contracting Partnership (OCP) and Young Innovations, a local technology development enterprise, on the Public Procurement Transparency Initiative in Nepal (PPTIN). This is an effort to facilitate strategic disclosure of public procurement data at various stages of procurement processes and to encourage its use among key stakeholders in Nepal to increase fairness, integrity & effectiveness, in line with the Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDS). The project is working both on the supply side, to develop tools to disclose data on procurement by linking it with the centralized systems and building the capacity of government officials around open contracting; and on the demand side with civil society and other intermediaries on the use of data and monitoring of projects.

However, illicit financial flows (with over \$9 billion diverted during the 2002-2011 period), lack of judicial independence, and the absence of beneficial ownership information for companies remain serious problems. Political parties remain opaque, with the political system deeply skewed at all levels towards individual and party benefit rather than the collective good. A number of interviewees cited the Special Court, Office of the Attorney General and the Judicial Council as partisan and open to influence, undermining anti-corruption efforts. The Public Accounts Committee of the parliament provides sub-optimal oversight of the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). At the same time, some key pieces of legislation related to corruption issues - such as a whistleblowing law - are still to be considered; and others such as the asset declaration act require further development to allow for meaningful implementation.⁵ The OGP could provide the basis for driving these forward.

Our research indicated that corruption is an issue that generates huge amounts of anger among Nepali citizens across the country. On a daily basis there is a deep sense of disillusionment with the fact, as one respondent told us, that bribes are needed “to get anything done.”⁶ In terms of open government

⁵ The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority Act of 1991 and the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2002 have no provisions with regards to sources of income, interests, moveable assets or liabilities of elected officials, for example.

⁶ A recent report from Transparency International indicated that in Nepal, 40% of those who had contact with the land services reported paying bribes, 37% reported paying bribes to the judiciary services and 30% to the police. See: https://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/Corruption_trends_in_Asia_Pacific_region.pdf

priorities, alongside improved service delivery, efforts to fight corruption are at the top of citizen demands. While government efforts remain a work in progress, donors are pushing forwards on these issues. A sub-set of donors has created an Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) for example, through which a variety of ideas are now emerging including the creation of a local independent entity to define and manage local Nepali indicators for corruption.⁷ Within the framework of the upcoming Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact, which will provide the biggest grant in Nepal's history (around \$500 million), there is also scope to both support, leverage and enforce anti-corruption efforts.

- iv) **Citizen Participation** - in the words of one interviewee: "The public will be more concerned with making leadership accountable once there are regular elections." Now that local elections have taken place in Nepal for the first time in almost 20 years, there is an opening to engage citizens in democratic decision-making in more regular ways. Our research indicated that there has a perceptible shift already in terms of the hopes of citizens vis-à-vis local decision-makers - with Nepalis now developing greater expectations for delivery from the over 36,000 local government officials elected across 753 local councils.⁸

Participants in our focus groups also emphasized the importance of honest government participation with citizens beyond elections too - through participatory local-level planning and citizen charters, for example, to allow for collective agreement on goals. Social audits also allow citizens to monitor how public finances are spent at the local level. The key will be to ensure that these **social accountability tools** do not become "check box" exercises for the government and remain meaningful modalities through which to generate conversations about priorities. There is incredible social capital at the local level in Nepal - through community management of forests or schools, for example - but historically where social accountability tools have been taken up by government, they have not built on these strengths. As a result their impact has been piecemeal - and has not led to a larger shift in accountability outcomes.

⁷ The National Vigilance Centre also has some experience collecting data on corruption and may be another place for any national indicators to be housed.

⁸ Citizens are now mobilizing to hold those elected to their promises. Tanner Chaso worked before elections in 2008 to publicize MP's promises, and this experience may be instructive. It's motto is "gunaso hoiana prasna garam" or "raise questions not grievances".

The opportunity for the OGP is to provide an avenue for thinking through how insights from social accountability practice can strengthen open government ecosystems more broadly through, for example: allowing linkages and ideas to be cross-pollinated among organizations working on these issues; feeding successful social accountability techniques into the decentralization process; and redefining social accountability to mean other types of citizen engagement in governance beyond technical tools, such as campaigns and movement-building efforts.

- v) **Open Data** - data on governance issues is still difficult to access in Nepal. Processes are opaque, a culture of secrecy is entrenched and information is rarely provided online in machine-readable ways. In many cases, it is unclear whether the government is collecting data around key accountability issues such as procurement, expenditures and itemized revenues; and the transparency of the budget remains an area for further work.

To date, there are very few examples of data actually being used for specific advocacy campaigns around policy issues. The understanding of data related to corruption for example, tends to be limited to bribery surveys or investigations rather than data for expenditure tracking.⁹ Members of the open data community voiced frustration at the absence of an eco-system to support their efforts. Data, one interviewee pointed out “is rarely in a form that the public can easily locate, understand and use, and in formats that facilitate reuse.”

⁹ Coffey International Data Options Paper on Corruption in Nepal, December 2016

Open Budget: Assessing Budget Transparency, Participation and Oversight

While the transparency of the budget has improved in Nepal, there is further progress to be made. Freedom Forum has been undertaking the biennial **Open Budget Survey** (OBS) in Nepal in collaboration with the International Budget Partnership (IBP) since 2010. Drawing on internationally accepted criteria developed by multilateral organizations, the Open Budget Survey uses 109 indicators to measure budget transparency.

Nepal's score in the Open Budget Survey (OBS) has dropped from 44 out of 100 in 2012 to 24 out of 100 in 2015; and in terms of public participation Nepal's score has dropped to 19 out of 100 (lower than the global average of 25). Budget oversight by the legislature ranks at just 18 out of 100, while oversight by the Supreme Audit Institution (Office of the Auditor General) is a much higher 75 out of 100.

Nepal's overall score of 24 out of 100 is substantially lower than the global average score of 45. At the same time, this regression in transparency appears to be temporary, as it relates to a large degree to the failure to make the fiscal year 2013-14 Executive's Budget Proposal publicly available, which has since been rectified.

The report suggests a variety of measures that should be taken to improve the timeliness and comprehensiveness of the budget process and includes ideas for improving public participation in the budget process such as public hearings, legislative hearings, focus groups; and for strengthening budget oversight including the establishment of a specialized budget research office for the legislature to enable more robust discussions on the budget.

At the same time, there are new initiatives in civil society using ICTs to support open data - through organizations such as **Open Nepal**, **Open Knowledge Nepal**, **Kathmandu Living Labs** and **Code for Nepal** - to name a few. These organizations have contributed significantly to increased awareness and interest around open data by organizing dialogues, events and conferences, consistently engaging stakeholders and building tools.

While there is still no explicit law or regulation for open data,¹⁰ the government has also agreed to an Open Government Data (OGD) Action Plan, which has some important, detailed and fairly ambitious goals including: the initiation of an Open Government Data Working Group; the nomination of an OGD contact person in each ministry and agency; public consultations and events on open data, and sensitization

¹⁰ Beyond the proactive disclosure requirement in the Right to Information law.

campaigns as to the value of open data.¹¹ Additionally, the UN has been active in pushing for more open government data, especially around issues related to the SDGs. All of this represents important progress and creative ways to raise resources for further open data work should be considered.¹²

Using ICTs for Evidence Based Decision Making

Smart Health Nepal is a good example of a public-private partnership in Nepal - between the government and a civic tech company - that is opening up health data to ensure evidence-based decision-making. Smart Health has developed an integrated campaign to track the performance of health agencies, monitor the availability of health supplies, highlight the absenteeism of health staff, provide information about health institutions and track the Ministry of Health's process against health targets.

Hamro Police, developed by **Local Interventions Group**, is an app that enables the public to swiftly report crime, locate police stations and complain/commend officers to the Nepal Police using their mobile phones with geo-tagged pictures and information. Use of the app has now spread to major urban centers across Nepal and the data is being used by the police to map "crime hotspots" to improve resource deployment, improve security and build trust with citizens.

Our research indicated that ordinary Nepali citizens rarely question decisions when they are made in an evidence-based manner - meaning that more open data could provide the basis for a stronger state-citizen compact. At the same time, however, the answer is not simply more data or more advocacy with data. Policymakers also have individual interests and we heard a number of stories about data being used by government officials when it was seen to support narrow personal interests but discarded when it challenged the existing status quo. Addressing this problem through the OGP requires greater effort to understand incentives and the institutional structures that give rise to spaces for interest groups to engage in policy development processes in Nepal.¹³

¹¹ The OGD Strategy and Action Plan (a word document currently in draft form) builds on the findings and recommendations established in the **OGD Assessment Report for Nepal** and the outcomes from both the **OGD Capacity Development Workshop** (held in November 2015) and the **National Substantive Training on OGD** (held in April 2016).

¹² In Pakistan, **Ignite** (formerly the national IT R&D Fund) is resourced through a mandatory allocation from telecoms companies at 0.5% revenue annually; and has supported a variety of civic tech ideas, incubators and businesses. A similar fund in Nepal could catalyze the eco-system for open data and tech based citizen engagement.

¹³ Samridhi is thinking about this in relation to the private sector. They have developed **Econity**, for example, a forum for public private dialogue that includes the media to push policymakers around data that may not otherwise be integrated into policymaking (such as during the drafting process of the recent **Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act** (FITTA) for example).

vi) **Local Government** - after local elections, power is currently being devolved to local governments across Nepal, which provides a huge opportunity and set of challenges for open government. There are large numbers of local government officials who have now taken power with very little experience of governance and often very little understanding of the role of government. These officials are working within a system that is evolving, and require orientation around laws, constitutional issues, state-citizen relations, policy and planning, and management issues. At the same time, a number of officials are being reassigned from Kathmandu to the periphery, and are unaware of local procedures, customs, contexts and languages. At the same time, at the central level there are a variety of organizations with a mandate to work on issues of accountability, openness and anti-corruption - as described above. More effort is needed to understand where their mandates and capacities begin and end, where overlaps exist and what role they will play at the local level in the context of devolved power.

There is huge potential for OGP, within this fluid context, to provide the framework for a shift towards meaningful, open local governance for the first time in history. Key elements for the OGP coalition to consider might include: the division and use of power between national and local authorities; the harmonization and alignment of central institutions, policies and laws within the new decentralized structures; creative means by which to build networks, share best practices and ensure motivation among local government officials; and the development and roll-out of new tools for elected representatives to set priorities, formulate plans, manage resources and deliver on promises in a citizen-centric manner.

Moving Forwards

In practical terms, there are several points that came through in our conversations around OGP related to potential implementation going forwards. These included:

- i) **Build on What Exists** - despite the challenges, there are a number of open government reforms in Nepal that could be coordinated with and accelerated further through the structure of the OGP as outlined above (steps towards implementation of the RTI law, open contracting, open data, and the recent **citizen's climate budget** for example). While our research indicated that stakeholders find it difficult to identify multi-stakeholder structures that could be mobilized around OGP issues, the Prime Minister's SDG Steering Committee, a variety of relevant parliamentary committees (including the Parliamentary Accounts Committee, the Development Committee, the Good Governance and Monitoring Committee and the Committee for Social Justice and Human Rights, among others) and additional efforts such as UNCDF's **Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility** and the **Growing Forest Partnerships** could provide platforms for coordination with the OGP. The OGP process can both build on these efforts and harmonize existing initiatives around aspects of open governance.
- ii) **Awareness Raising** - while openness and transparency as concepts are more widely understood in Nepal than previously, the OGP itself is not well-known. Various civil society groups including Accountability Lab Nepal and Open Nepal have held outreach and awareness events (read more [here](#) and [here](#) for example), parliamentarians have been briefed on the initiative and the Government of Nepal has been represented at two large international OGP meetings - but very few people within government or civil society know how the OGP works. Our contacts in government have indicated that there would be willingness to sign up to the OGP if all of the necessary stakeholders within the system fully understood the benefit. Additional awareness raising is an important next step, therefore, including

outreach events, peer learning sessions with key stakeholders and ongoing social media engagement. If and when the government of Nepal signs up to the OGP, national consultations - offline and online - will allow for collective agreement on commitments.

- iii) **Creating Political Buy-In** - the political will for implementation of the OGP relates to incentives, relationships and timing. There are specific moments, with specific individuals in certain positions of power (largely inside government but also outside), who can push both for Nepal to sign up to the OGP and for progress against specific commitments once those have been agreed. At this stage, an important next step is to map the stakeholders who are potentially involved in this process to understand how their interests can be aligned behind the OGP agenda. Our analysis indicates that there is buy-in from some important key actors at the top of the Nepali government for the OGP; and there is the interest, energy and capacity among civil society to push for the initiative. The key will be supporting mid-level power-holders and decision-makers to view the OGP as a benefit to their work, rather than an additional burden.

Nepalis will need to create echo chambers around the OGP, through government officials, parliamentarians, the media, private sector, local citizens' groups and donors to ensure a collective push for the OGP objectives. Part of this process also involves understanding and explaining OGP not just as a means to improve transparency, but also efficiency. There are thousands of newly elected officials at the local (and soon provincial and national level) in Nepal who want to find ways to ensure they stay in power (and hopefully deliver for citizens). If we can explain OGP as a way to show that opening up can also lead to more support from citizens, this may improve the feasibility of commitment implementation.

iv) **Institutional Arrangements** - the OGP works best when it is placed and supported from within the relevant government ministry - with a core team that can provide research coordination and logistical support. This ministry may vary across countries - the Prime Ministers' office often provides the authority needed; in other cases the Ministry of Finance can provide the necessary leverage given its control of resources. The OGP works less well when it is positioned within ministries with less control over information, resources and politics. In Nepal, our conversations indicate that an ideal position for the OGP would be within the Prime Minister's Office, given the mandate of this office for coordination across government and the continued hierarchical nature of Nepali decision-making - and to give the initiative the backing, authority and support it needs.¹⁴

¹⁴ **Hello Sarkar**, one of the more consistently supported and used accountability tools, is also based in the Prime Minister's office, indicating the support efforts in this domain can receive when situated in the right place.

Conclusion

Nepal is moving towards greater openness, there is little doubt- but there are continued challenges that will make this process contentious and difficult. Capacity exists in pockets but not always in places where accountability is needed; coordination within and across government agencies is often weak; the process of federalism is difficult and contentious; civil society can be competitive and itself lack transparency; business is beholden to cartels and special interests; corruption remains entrenched and information is often not useful or sharable.

At the same time, with a new constitution and post local-elections, Nepal has an opportunity to use the OGP to meaningfully build on governance progress to date. The sense of solidarity and community felt directly after the earthquakes has faded, but there remains a strong history of community engagement and management of resources. Now that locally elected officials are in place, this can be combined with a renewed sense of expectations for and engagement by citizens in local governance processes as the decentralization process continues.

While civic space can be difficult to navigate, young Nepalis are politically aware, highly connected and there are a variety of entrepreneurs and civic leaders among them who are forging new approaches to economic and social change. There is also more international interest and leverage around transparency and accountability issues in Nepal now than there has been for a long time - which can provide the right kind of support for reforms if channeled intelligently.

Accountability Lab Nepal is very open to feedback, ideas or comments on this report.

Please feel free to contact us at: narayan@accountabilitylab.org or engage us on social media around these ideas [@accountlab](#).

Annex I - Explanation of Methodology

This research used a mixed methods approach: a survey administered to members of civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions, government, the media, and small businesses; a series of focus group discussions with media, civil society and the private sector in different parts of the country; and individual stakeholder interviews with government officials, parliamentarians and civil society leaders.

A short online survey was conducted to grasp:

- i) the challenges faced by supporters of open governance in Nepal;
 - ii) the priorities of stakeholders and citizens in relation to open governance;
 - iii) and ideas as to possible solutions with regards to government transparency and openness in Nepal.
- The survey was not representative - but rather targeted to individuals within our network who we knew were engaged in the movement for open governance. It was intended to provide an overview and background information to use as we began to conduct the individual interviews and focus group discussions. 33 people from across government, civil society, the media and business responded to the survey.

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with leaders and experts from civil society, the private sector, media and the government to gather a variety of unique perspectives on open governance challenges in Nepal. These interviews included a set of guiding questions that focused on three principal themes: challenges of openness and transparency that related to individuals' professional and personal lives; the changes needed in policy, practice and culture for Nepal to successfully join the OGP; and opinions on the value of Nepal joining the OGP. A referral sampling method was used to identify and recruit informants that were not initially identified by the Lab's Nepal team. (See Annex III for a full list of survey respondents and individuals interviewed).

We conducted 12 focus group discussions with groups of 8-40 people in Nepalganj, Janakpur, Biratnagar, and around the Kathmandu Valley. The groups were separated by type (media, youth organizations and so on - see full list of groups in Annex II). Every group discussion was led by a mediator from Accountability Lab Nepal, and the discussions lasted between 1-1.5 hours. The mediator asked a series of semi-structured questions, derived from the same principal themes asked in individual interviews.

Feedback from independent reviewers has been incorporated into this report. The review panel included: the Civil Society Coordinator for the OGP in Asia, the Chief Commissioner of the National Information Commission (NIC) in Nepal, the CEO of Young Innovations, the President of Freedom Forum, a Professor of Kathmandu University, the CEO of Samriddhi, a Policy Advisor at the Civil Society Mutual Accountability Project and several others.

The survey, interviews and focus group discussions were not representative. Discussions were not conducted in all parts of the country, and thus did not reflect the full potential diversity of opinions. Gender participation was also more limited in individual interviews, with men largely outnumbering women given the structures that tend to limit the access of women to positions of power in Nepal.

Annex II - Full list of focus group types, participants & locations

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Entrepreneurs		
Kripa Shrestha	Supply Support	Kathmandu
Shailendra Raj Giri	Mero Job Dot Com	Kathmandu
Khadananda Shiwakoti	Shiwakoti Bags	Kathmandu
Sushil Khadka	Bajeko Sekuwa	Kathmandu
Reema Khadja	K Shree Villa	Kathmandu
Narottam Aryal	Kings College	Kathmandu
Pushkar Dhungel	Hydropower	Kathmandu
Anjana Tamrakar	Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries	Kathmandu

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Environmentalists		
Sunil K Pariyar	DANAR	Kathmandu
Sita Pariyar	DANAR	Kathmandu
Sulochana Sigdel Sharma	Feden	Kathmandu
Yogendra Bijay Dahal	FEUWUN	Kathmandu
Deepak Bhandari	FEIFO	Kathmandu
Yagya Bdr. Niraula	NFPON	Kathmandu
Tomoki Yamanaka		Kathmandu
Binita Chauhan	ACOFUN	Kathmandu
Anita Pariyar	MECO-Nepal	Kathmandu
Nabaraj Pokharel	RDRC Nepal	Kathmandu

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Citizen Helpdesks		
Shankar Shrestha	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
MahesworSubedi	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
Rajesh Shrestha	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
NamunaBogati	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
Keshav Raj Paudyal	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
Rojan Tamang	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
SabitaNeupane	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
BhumikaPriyar	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
Kalpana Bhandari	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
Naniram Nepal	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu
Santosh Sigdel	Citizen Helpdesks	Kathmandu

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Youth in Technology and Aspiring Entrepreneurs		
Raju Rauniyar	NA	Janakpur
Agastya Ray	NA	Janakpur
Santosh Kr. Shah	NA	Janakpur
Promisha Mishra	NA	Janakpur
Bikash Raj Shah	NA	Janakpur
Vijayeta Jha	NA	Janakpur

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Womens' Groups		
Aasha GC	Jayapur Mahila Jagriti Sahakari Sanstha	Nepalgunj
Purnima KC	Hariyali Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nepalgunj
Kamala Upreti	Hariyali Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nepalgunj
Madhaba GC	Hariyali Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nepalgunj
Basundhara Bhatta	Hariyali Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nepalgunj
Diya Thapa	DECC Nepal Apangata Chettra	Nepalgunj
Uma Upadhyaya	NA	Nepalgunj
Kamala Sharma	Hariyali Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nepalgunj
Subhadra Sharma	Hariyali Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nepalgunj
Lilawati Uipadhyaya	Janajyoti Mahila Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Sharada Singh	Mahila tatha Balbalika karyalaya	Nepalgunj
Kamala Thapa	Mahila tatha Balbalika karyalaya	Nepalgunj
Geeta Shahi	Mahila tatha Balbalika karyalaya	Nepalgunj
Ghatana Shah	Mahila tatha Balbalika karyalaya	Nepalgunj
Sunita Thapa	Mahila Utthan	Nepalgunj
Laxmi Bista	NA	Nepalgunj
Sunita Ale	NA	Nepalgunj

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Womens' Groups (continued)		
Sunita Ale	NA	Nepalgunj
Indira Budhathoki	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Manisha Swarnakar	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Usha Sunar	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Bimala Giri	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Sushma Hamal	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Sabina Shrestha	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Parwati Rawal	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Bishnumaya Budamagar	Chandeshwori Mahila Bikash Sahakari	Nepalgunj
Janakpura Sunar	Deurali Bahuudheshya Mahila Sahakari	Nepalgunj

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Marginalized Groups		
Ankit Pun	Naulo Srijana Nepal	Nepalgunj
Sheela Gurung	Naulo Srijana Nepal	Nepalgunj
Rati Maya Gurung	Naulo Srijana Nepal	Nepalgunj
Roshani Ansari	NA	Nepalgunj
Sheeba Ansari	NA	Nepalgunj
Binita B.K	NA	Nepalgunj
Nariya Kouser	NA	Nepalgunj
Yasmeen Halwai	NA	Nepalgunj
Amna Khatoon Halwai	Fatima Foundation Nepal	Nepalgunj
Mo Ismail	Fatima Foundation Nepal	Nepalgunj

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Business Leaders		
Rachana Shrestha	NPS Member	Nepalgunj
Panita Subba Shrestha	Everest Distillery	Nepalgunj
Nandalal Baisya	Chair – Nepalgunj FNJ	Nepalgunj
Bhim Lal Kandel	Hotel Association	Nepalgunj
Bhoj Raj Timilsena	NA	Nepalgunj
Gagan Singh Thapa	NPJ	Nepalgunj
Rabindra Lamichhane	Hotel Association	Nepalgunj
Mina Dhakal	Maxwell Prints PVT. Ltd.	Nepalgunj
Sabitra Basnet	WEAN	Nepalgunj
Niru Chaudhary	NA	Nepalgunj
Dilli Ram Poudel	Gandaki Restaurant	Nepalgunj
Mandira Pandey	New Trivei Pustak Sadan	Nepalgunj
Ramesh Sitaula	HCRC Hospital	Nepalgunj

Focus Group	Organization	Location
CSOs		
Raju Regmi	Multiple Service Center	Nepalgunj
Sita Bohara	DEC-Nepal	Nepalgunj
Man Bhandari	BAS	Nepalgunj
Kamala Nepali	FODO	Nepalgunj
Balika Devi Rawat	CASE	Nepalgunj
Chandra Prasad Timilsena	Samarpan Nepal	Nepalgunj
Gaje Thapa	Nepalgunj Youth Center	Nepalgunj
Khem Bista	Youth Advocacy Nepal	Nepalgunj
Rajan Barma	Rising Idols Banke	Nepalgunj
Ashish Barma	District Club Network	Nepalgunj
Bamdev Pokhrel	Success Forum	Nepalgunj
Namaskar Shah	BAS	Nepalgunj
Hem Raj Bhatta	NYFN Banke	Nepalgunj
Jayanti Khatri	Conflict Victims and Single Women Network Banke	Nepalgunj
Pratiksha Giri	BAS	Nepalgunj
Tej Bikram Shah	ENPROC	Nepalgunj
Sapna Bhattarai	NA	Nepalgunj
Radhika Giri	KINE	Nepalgunj

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Local Journalists		
Sabitri Giri	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Niraj Gautam	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Uma Thapa	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Bhagat Ram Tharu	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Tilak Gaunle	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Tula Adhikari	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Shukrarishi Chaulagain	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Jayanarayan Shah	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Thakur Singh Tharu	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Jhalak Gairhe	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Krishna Adhikari	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Madhav Adhikari	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Kalendra Sejuwal	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Amrita KC	Journalist	Nepalgunj
Namaskar Shah	Journalist	Nepalgunj

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Youth Groups - Private Sector		
Punit Poudyal	Janaki Furniture	Biratnagar
Prajendra Shrestha	Nena Suppliers	Biratnagar
Agesh Bhattarai	Purwanchal Carpet Udhyog	Biratnagar
Yunesh Raj Shrestha	Hotel Namaskar	Biratnagar
Pratik Raut	Raut Construction	Biratnagar
Aasish Khanal	Relief Ahmad Studies Pvt. Ltd	Biratnagar
Gopi Kumar Shah	COC Traders	Biratnagar
Raghav Koirala	Fujima Oil Company	Biratnagar
Sanatan Kumar Mandal	Golden Hospital	Biratnagar
Bishwesh Rijal	Graduate Coach	Biratnagar
Gangadhar mainali	Mainali Pustak Bhandar	Biratnagar
Sandesh Dan Shrestha	BFM 91.2	Biratnagar

Focus Group	Organization	Location
Youth Groups		
Sarhuinsha Siddiqui	BYV (Biratnagar Youth Vision)	Biratnagar
Saroj Karki	Youth For Blood (OB Media Pvt. Ltd.)	Biratnagar
Abhinash Thapa	NA	Biratnagar
Bibek Dahal	Youth For Blood (OB Media Pvt. Ltd.)	Biratnagar
Mukesh Yadav	Biratnagar Basketball Academy	Biratnagar
Suman Rai	Bikalpa An Alternative	Biratnagar
Basanta Adhikari	Bikalpa An Alternative	Biratnagar
Galzen Dukpa Lama	Let's Change	Biratnagar
Birkrish Subba	Let's Change	Biratnagar
Shreeti Dutta	Student	Biratnagar
Ankit Gupta	NA	Biratnagar
Saroj Lamsal	OB Media Pvt. Ltd	Biratnagar
Abhishek Bhattarai	Hami Yuwa	Biratnagar
Hari Adhikari	Udhyosh Daily	Biratnagar

Annex III - Full list of research interviewees & survey respondents

Name	Organization
Guiseppe Savino	International Organization for Migration
Bibhusan Bista	Young Innovations
Pavitra Rana	Open Nepal
Krishna Hari Baskota	National Information Commission
Pradip Kanel	Government of Nepal
Ujwal Thapa	Bibeksheel Nepali
Kedar Khadka	GoGo Foundation
Prem Sapkota	Alliance for Social Dialogue
Trilochan Pokharel	Staff College
Asim Pandey	Safer World
Pranav Budathoki	Local Interventions Group
Srijana Bhattarai	Nepal Investment Board
Prakash Bhattarai	Center for Social Change
Brabim Kumar	People and Power
Tanka Aryal	FHI360
Tara Nath Dahal	Freedom Forum
Elijah Lewien	Carter Center
Kiran Wagle	Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) - Nepal
Surya Nath Upadhyay	Former Head of the CIAA

Name	Organization
Ganesh Shah	Former Minister of Science and Technology
Young Politicians	A selection of youth politicians from across political parties
Rabindra Adhikari	UML party
Pradip Poudel	Nepali Congress
Joe Powell	Open Government Partnership
Abhinav Bahl	Open Government Partnership
Kim Bettcher	CIPE
Jennifer Anderson	CIPE
Hammad Siddiqui	CIPE
Coen Pustjens	National Democratic Institute
Anil Pratap Adhikari	Ministry of Health
Bidushi Dhungel	National Democratic Institute
Chandra Mohan Yadav	Member of Parliament - Nepali Congress – Dhanusha
Ram Baran Yadav	Ex- President of Nepal
Kiran Yadav	Member of Parliament and a Central Committee Member of the Nepal Women's Association of the Nepali Congress.
Hira Mani Ghimire	DFID Nepal
Ravi Phuyal	NA
Bhola Bhattarai	Environmentalist/Natural Resource Management Expert

Name	Organization
Bishnu Sapkota	FHI 360
Amit Jha	Communications and Technical Expert
Abdul Wahid Mansuri	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) – Nepalgunj
Nanda Basnet	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) – Nepalgunj
Saurav Aryal	NA
Pemba Lama	Member of Parliament- UML
Nikesh Balami	Open Knowledge Initiative
Sunil Pariyar	Dalit Alliance for Natural Resources (DANAR)-Nepal
Bhoj Raj Poudel	Asian Development Bank
Gareth Rannamets	DFID Nepal
Manish Raj Shah	Entrepreneurs Nepal
Milan Kumar Sardar Tharu	Teach for Nepal
Bigyan Pradhan	World Bank Nepal
Charu Chadha	Media 9
Binoy Sharma	Human Resource Development Center
Bharat Thapa	Transparency International Nepal
Sneha Tamrakar	Accountability Lab Nepal
Ramesh Pandey	Action Works Nepal

Name	Organization
Rebat Kumar Dhakal	KUSOED Integrity Alliance
Navin Chandra Ghirime	CRC-Nepal
Gyan Mani Nepal	Government of Nepal (Khotang District)
Kedar Khadka	GoGo Foundation
Bhishma	National Reconstruction Authority
Basanta Rai	Center for International Studies and Cooperation
Prakash Ghimire	Development Communication Society Nepal
Prakash Bhattarai	Center for Social Change
Raj Shahi	Phase Nepal
Vidhan Rana	Biruwa Advisors
Tulsi Shah	Youth Network Morang
Mukesh Kumar Kushawaha	Human Awareness Society Nepal
Shreedeeep Rayamajhi	RayZnews
Sushmita Dahal	Independent Media
Purna Prasad Paudel	Regional Food Quality Control Office, Nepalgunj
Madhav Paudel	RDMSC
Rajib Timalisina	Galli Galli
Bhadra Sharma	Republica
Basanta Adhikari	Bikalpa

Name	Organization
Sunil Poudyal	Accountability Lab Nepal
Ashim Pandey	SaferWorld
Pratap Adhikari	Association of Youth Organizations in Nepal (AYON)
Bhola Bhattarai	National Forum for Advocacy Nepal (NAFAN)
Avinash Jha	Enigma Consulting Services
Krishna Sapkota	Freedom Forum