Project: Pro-Active Support for Disclosure of Fiscal and Governance Information

Funding Partner: The Asia Foundation (TAF)
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End Date: March 20, 2015

Municipal governance is being exercised through 58 municipalities including a metropolitan (Kathmandu) and three sub metropolitans (Lalitpur, Pokhara and Biratnagar) in Nepal. The Government of Nepal has established 72 Municipalities in May 2014 (declared on Baishak 25, 2071). Then new 61 municipalities were declared on December 2, 2014 (Mangsir 16, 2071). Hence, there are a total 191 municipalities. Municipalities in Nepal come in three levels of self-government: metropolitan city, sub-metropolitan city and municipality. The first level applies to only one which is Kathmandu, the second one to the 11 sub-metro cities and third one to the 179 Municipalities.

It is reliably learnt that some more municipalities are in the offing. The organizational structures of the municipalities i.e. power, functions and financial sources, planning responsibilities, administrative structures, human resource management systems and relationship with the government of Nepal are as provisioned in the Local Self Governance ACT 1999 (LSGA), the Local Self Governance Rules, 1999 (LSGR). However, in the absence of elected representatives and other attendant structural impediments the governing process and mechanism in the municipalities is very weak. Moreover, citizen's access to fiscal and governance information of the municipalities tends to be very inadequate and poor.

> **Summary of the Activities at a glance**
> - Inception Workshop/orientation stakeholders about program (June 9, 2014, Kathmandu)
> - Standard Website design and development and finalization and Installation, information/data upload
> - IOs, ICT Volunteer and ICT Regional experts trained/capacitated on website operation (December 10-11, 2014, Pokhara and 15-16 January Bharatpur)
> - Server set up / Installation at GIDC and Orientation/training for concerned officials (February 12-13)

At this backdrop, Institute for Governance and Development (IGD) with support of The Asia Foundation has implemented the project - "**Local Governance Action Research Phase II: Pro-Active Support for Disclosure of Fiscal and Governance Information**" from April 25, 2014 to March 20, 2015. The project has been implemented in concurrence and ownership of Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), Municipalities. And Partnership of Freedom Forum (FF), IGD developed standardized website that ensures all information required for proactive disclosure of fiscal and governance information is accommodated, in close coordination with EOs/IOs/ICT Volunteers at the municipal level and ICT experts/officials at the MoFALD. The standard websites have been installed in the 20 targeted municipalities - Dhangadhi, Amargadhi, Tikapur, Gularia, Nepalgunj, Butwal, Suddharthanagar, Kapilvastu, Tansen, Ramgram, Pokhara, Lekhnath, Putalibazar, Waling, Baglungbazar, Hetauda, Bharatpur, Kalaiya, Gaur and Malangawa. A separate server was installed and setup for the website and web-based information of the municipalities at GIDC in Singhdurbar. Moreover, the project trained/oriented the IOs and ICT Volunteers to upload existing data and updating the information in their websites and ICT officials of the MoFALD on operational part of the server.

The project built and followed up on the piloting initiatives held in five municipalities - Dharan, Dhulikhel, Byas, Dailekh and Dhangadhi during the previous year.

The Overall objective of the project is to enhance Right to Information (RTI) in Nepal. Moreover, the program intends to contribute towards strengthening capacity of municipalities for

pro-active disclosure of fiscal and governance information in the selected cluster of the municipalities.

The specific objectives are:

- To boost capacity of municipalities to improve access of citizen to fiscal and governance information for an effective service delivery at the municipal level
- To contribute towards strengthening capacity of municipalities for pro-active disclosure of fiscal and governance information in the selected cluster of the municipalities
- To strengthen response readiness for RTI

Target Municipalities

The Municipalities for the implementation of the project were selected based on the criteria such as: Geographical coverage (both hill and Terai), proximity to each other, need etc. The criteria were set in concurrence with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD). The target municipalities were selected and finalized in consultation with the MoFALD. The list of the clusters and target municipalities is as follows:

Clusters		Municipalities	
1.	Dhangadhi	1.	Dhangadhi, Kailali
		2.	Tikapur, Kailali
		3.	Amargadhi, Dadheldhura
		4.	Gularia, Bardiya
		5.	Nepalgunj, Banke
2.	Butwal	6.	Butwal, Rupandehi
		7.	Siddharthnagar, Rupandehi
		8.	Kapilvastu, Kapilvastu
		9.	Tansen, palpa
		10.	Ramgram, Nawalparasi
3.	Pokhara	11.	Pokhara, Kaski
		12.	Lekhnath, Kaski
		13.	Putalibazar, Syanja
		14.	Waling, Syanja
		15.	Baglungbazar, Baglung
4.	Hetauda	16.	Hetauda, Makawanpur
		17.	Bharatpur, Chitwan
		18.	Kalaya, Bara
		19.	Malangawa, Sarlahi
		20.	Gaur, Rauthat

Detailed Description of the Actual Services provided

- Coordination and rapport building with MoFALD and Municipalities established
- Disclosure of fiscal and governance Information through the municipal websites reviewed
- Organizational and IT Capacity Assessment of the target 20 Municipalities undertaken

- Standard Website for municipalities developed and designed and installed in the targeted municipalities
- Trainings/orientation provided to the IOs, ICT Volunteers of the 20 Municipalities and MoFALD/LGCDP Experts
- A separate server for municipal websites and web-based information documentation set up and installed
- Process leanings of the project activities implementation shared with the stakeholders

Results:
- A guideline/checklist of information to be documented and disclosed through the municipal websites has been prepared and owned by the MoFALD and the targeted municipalities.
- Standard Website for Municipalities designed and developed. The website is installed in the targeted 20 Municipalities. MoFALD is going to plan to install the same website as a template in each of the 191 municipalities.
- ICT Experts (8 persons), IOs (20 persons), ICT Volunteers (20 persons) of the targeted 20 municipalities trained on how to upload information/update website
- A separate server for all the municipalities' websites and web-based information documentation has been set up/installed at GIDC. ICT Experts at MoFALD and concerned Officials at GIDC (7 persons) have been trained on Server operationalization
- **Information in the website tracked**: **The websites of the 20 municipalities were tracked and reviewed the status of information disclosure.** The newly installed websites in the municipalities have been seemed improved in regard to the fiscal and governance information. The upload of the data/information is smoothly taking place in the website of some of the municipalities such as Malangawa, Dhangadhi, Nepalgunj. Likewise, Gulariya and Tikapur seem fairly improved in regard to upload data/information and update of the website. Amargadhi is in improving position. The complete of the data/information upload takes time.