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## HELVETAS SWISS INTERCOOPERATION NEPAL COUNTRY STRATEGY FOR 2019 TO 2022

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Kathmandu, October 2018

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**List of Abbreviations:**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| CCDRM | Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management             |
| CHF   | Swiss Franc   |
| CPMM  | Country Programme Management Meeting                    |
| CTEVT | Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training |
| DFID  | UK Department for International Development             |
| EDGE  | Economic Growth and Decent Employment                   |
| EFSR  | Employment Fund Skills for Reconstruction               |
| FSN   | Food Security and Nutrition                             |
| FY    | Fiscal Year   |
| GESI  | Gender Equality and Social Inclusion                    |
| GG    | Good Governance   |
| GOP   | Governance and Peace                                    |
| INGO  | International Non-Governmental Organization             |
| IWRM  | Integrated Water Resources Management                   |
| NGO   | Non-governmental Organization                           |
| ODF   | Open Defecation Free                                    |
| SDC   | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation            |
| TVET  | Technical and Vocational Education and Training         |
| WASH  | Water Sanitation and Hygiene                            |

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## Summary

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The HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (henceforward Helvetas) Nepal Country Strategy 2019–2022 is a medium-term strategic planning and management tool, which replaces an earlier Country Strategy (2016-2020). A mid-term review of this earlier text recommended its replacement due to the exceptional political and administrative changes that occurred in Nepal in 2017. Nevertheless, the current Country Strategy builds on the achievements and lessons learned from the previous one.

Over the course of 2017, Nepal transformed its form of government from a unitary to a federal system, as foreseen by the 2015 constitution. A series of elections were held, with the result that by the end of the year, elected representatives were in place in the governments of the 753 rural and urban municipalities (*gaunpalikas* and *nagarpalikas*) and seven states, as well as at national (federal) level. The Local Government Operations Act 2017 clearly delineates the responsibilities of these different governments. With considerable executive, legislative, and judicial powers being delegated to *palikas*, federalisation provides a huge opportunity for transparent, accountable local governance. This opportunity is nevertheless threatened by limited local level resources (human, financial, and physical infrastructure), and resistance amongst certain centralised interests. Similarly, the seven new state governments also suffer from limited resources and operational mechanisms. Development space for INGOs and NGOs engaged in social and institutional development is perceived to be shrinking, both because the government has placed priority on infrastructure development, and because the role of external funding agencies, including bilateral donors, is coming under increasing scrutiny. Increasingly, all donor funding is required to flow through government channels; direct channelling of funds for local development through INGOs and NGOs is strongly discouraged. Helvetas supports a “one door” policy of fund flow to *palikas* as an important mechanism for them to coordinate all development activities within their remit. This does not constrain our offer of technical assistance, but does mark a major change in implementation modality, in that we will avoid contracting service providers ourselves but will support *palikas* to do so.

Despite the shrinking operational space, a continuing role and contribution to Nepal’s development is foreseen for Helvetas Nepal in supporting the process of federalisation. This demands the building of new partnerships, especially with elected representatives at sub-national level, and new approaches to achieving development goals. We anticipate that our working modality will shift increasingly away from implementation (although we will endeavour to retain this role as far as possible) to greater technical assistance – also linking knowledge from practice into policy reform, adopting an advocacy role as appropriate in the new context. The organisation must also physically shift its staff and offices to a more local level as far as possible. The future focus must be on building synergies between thematic interventions in selected *palikas* within a limited geographical range - whilst maintaining high quality implementation of mandates across a wider swathe of the country. At the same time, we will retain and build upon opportunities for contributing to federal level policy in our areas of expertise: good governance, technical and vocational skills development leading to safe and decent employment, economic growth related to agriculture, rural infrastructure development, universal access to water and sanitation, and safer and more beneficial migration. Recognising the vulnerability of Nepal to climate change, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction will be a cross-cutting theme. With our pro-active approach to gender equality and social inclusion, we will continue to work with the most economically poor and socially disadvantaged, wherever and however we engage – so that all Nepalese women and men can lead dignified lives.

This country strategy is fully coherent with the National Planning Commission’s Fourteenth Plan, the SDGs, and the organisational strategies of Helvetas and SDC-Nepal. It builds on existing human resources and operational guidelines and is based on a projected total financial envelope of CHF 46 million, with an average annual budget of CHF 11-12 million. The main donor is expected to remain SDC, with smaller amounts from the UK Department for International Development, the European Union, and Helvetas donation funds. However, attempts to further diversify the fund base will continue.

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## Introduction

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### Purpose of the Country Strategy

The Helvetas Nepal Country Strategy 2019–2022 is a medium-term, strategic **planning and management tool** that serves to guide the organisation, as well as being a reference document for donors and partners. It **remains indicative** and needs to be responsive and adaptive to Nepal's political and administrative context.

### Validity

This Country Strategy covers the period January 2019 to December 2022. Due to the exceptional political developments in Nepal in 2017, it replaces an earlier Country Strategy covering the period 2016 to 2020. In responding to the challenges of supporting federalisation, it also builds on the achievements and lessons learned from the earlier Country Strategy.

### Country Strategy Development Process

The development of the Country Strategy evolved out of the mid-term review of the previous Country Strategy and followed an iterative process. (The ToRs for the mid-term review are given in Annex 1, and the reports from the consultations are available separately.)

- **Relevant document, financial and structural review:** The core review team analysed country programme achievements against outcomes, budgetary breakdowns and staffing structures by thematic programme as well as overall.
- **Key informant interviews (KIIs):** A total 31 persons were interviewed by the review team, using a standardised questionnaire developed for the purpose which comprised both quantitative and qualitative questions. Key informants included all senior staff (County Director, Deputy Director, Programme Managers and Team Leaders); selected field staff; Head Office staff; the former Programme Coordinator and former International Programme Adviser; as well as selected senior Government of Nepal, a Swiss partner representative, and SDC. The responses from the key informant interviews were collected in a separate report; and the major findings summarised and shared with participants at the Kathmandu workshop.
- **Peer review of programmes:** At the same time as the KIIs were being conducted, pairs of middle line managers were conducting a peer review of a programme other than their own. These peer reviews were intended to focus on field level insights and sharing, although their findings were shared with and agreed by the relevant Programme Manager. The peer review documents are collected together separately in one report; the reviewers presented key findings during the Kathmandu workshop.
- **Review workshops:** In March, a first, one-day workshop was held in Surkhet, with field staff from states 6 and 7 (in the West). This was followed by a two-day workshop in Kathmandu, bringing together senior staff as well as the peer reviewers and the review team. The conclusions were discussed in a Country Programme Management Meeting at the end of the same week. Subsequently, in April, a further one-day consultation workshop was held in Gaighat with staff from states 1 and 2 (in the East).

The main findings of the entire consultation process that particularly influenced the crafting of the new country strategy are given in section 4.3.

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## Context

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Nepal is undergoing historic changes. Chief amongst them are federalisation, and a changing demography that is being driven by labour migration and people's aspirations for a better life.

### Federalisation: Opportunities and Challenges

The implementation of the 2015 constitution represents a unique opportunity for the country to promote inclusive development through responsive, accountable and democratically established institutions. The creation of 753 new local governments and seven states, as the main political and administrative units, has paved the way for re-shaping the relationship between the federal and sub-national governments. Furthermore, the successful elections at the local, state and parliamentary levels have also renewed people's enthusiasm and expectation that the newly elected representatives will be more responsive and kickstart development, especially at the local levels.

However, in the absence of a well-organised transition management plan, significant questions remain about the functioning of the federal state as per the spirit of the constitution. Implementing a process of devolved power and resources to sub-national governments takes time, as does the development of new relationships with citizens, quality service delivery mechanisms, and governance systems. Moreover, while the promulgation of the Local Government Operation Act 2017 provides the legal foundation for institutionalising legislative, executive and quasi-judiciary practice to local governments, there are other laws that still need to be repealed, aligned or amended and then enforced. The deployment of civil servants to the local governments has not progressed as envisioned, leading to staffing shortages. The set-up at the state level, being completely new, raises various challenges in sharing authorities and resources with the federal and local governments.

There is a risk that the legitimacy of the new institutions will be undermined if they are unable to meet the high expectations raised, or if they provide new spaces for resource capture by powerful elites. Hence, supporting the newly established federal structures, especially local governments, to deliver services in an inclusive and effective manner will be of paramount importance. This is both a challenge and an opportunity (see section 3.7).

Looking ahead, the majority victory by the left coalition during the parliamentary elections, and later unification into the Communist Party of Nepal, indicates a strong and stable government for the period of the Country Strategy. Although infighting cannot be ruled out, this is the strongest government that Nepal has seen for many years, and it is highly unlikely that the whole process of federalisation, in which so much effort has already been invested, will disintegrate. Nevertheless, there are still some political and regional forces in opposition, with views ranging from outright rejection of the constitution and federalism to a wish to amend certain specific constitutional provisions. This may impede the current government's vision of rapid development. Three possible scenarios for the unfolding implementation of federalism are outlined in Annex 4.

### Economy: Migration a key driver

The economy of the country continues to be heavily influenced by the monsoon, and dependent on remittances. Over two thirds of the population, especially women, are engaged in agriculture, although this only contributes to one third of the GDP, being still characterised by low productivity and limited adoption of improved technology. Despite recent progress and a degree of dynamism in some sub-sectors (such as vegetables and vegetable seeds, dairy and poultry), farming is still insufficient to lift large numbers of people out of poverty and assure food security of the country.

Remittances, meanwhile, have become and remain a key driver of poverty reduction and human development. It is estimated that 1,500 individuals leave Nepal daily for overseas work; similar numbers

return, although on average 3-4 per day do so in their coffins. Inflow of cash from migrants working abroad has emerged as the largest source of foreign exchange, equivalent to over one third of the GDP. Increases in remittances has led to rises in household consumption and investments, but less so for savings and investment on productive assets. Heavy reliance on a remittance economy also renders the country more vulnerable to global fluctuations and raises questions over sustainability and long-term impacts. Another facet is that the majority who go abroad are unskilled workers, who then undertake menial and low-paying jobs in vulnerable conditions. Protection of migrant workers, through the provision of skills, safer working conditions, easier access to information, legal support, credit and investment opportunities, is therefore important. Officially, 90% of migrant workers are men, although this figure hides many women travelling via irregular channels, given the ban on women's overseas domestic work in Gulf countries. The social costs of migration and support needs for left-behind families and returnees are significant.

The creation of domestic jobs is also crucial. It is estimated that approximately 500,000 youths currently enter the labour market every year. Due to the steady decline of birth and death rates in recent decades, there is a 'youth bulge' in the population. Strategic investments in human capital are needed now if the country is to take advantage of this demographic 'window of opportunity' and reap maximum benefits for the future.

### **Urbanisation: Rapid but unplanned**

Nepal is urbanising rapidly - mostly in large and medium cities, inner Terai valleys and markets located along east-west highway and north-south corridors. This change is largely unplanned, haphazard and uneven, and is leading to a distinctive set of challenges, including the need for housing, drinking water, waste disposal and public transportation. There is enormous pressure on limited resources, which were already under strain, and service delivery is therefore poor. Urban poverty, squatter settlements and congestion are on the rise. Meanwhile in peri-urban areas, urban growth is encroaching on fertile land, thereby affecting agricultural production and food security. Along with rapid urbanisation, the aspirations of youth are also changing away from agriculture as they seek other avenues to increase income and improve their living standards. This situation also poses a further work burden on women and elderly family members left behind in rural areas to keep subsistence farming going.

Unplanned cities as well as villages are also susceptible to natural disasters. In Nepal, this is quite significant as the country is one of the most disaster-prone in the world, due to its topography and climatic conditions. In recent years, erratic rainfall and extreme events, such as floods and landslides, have been on the rise. It is therefore important that mitigation or adaptation measures are taken to reduce the impact on lives and livelihoods. This is especially true given that the country is still recovering and rebuilding from the devastation of the 2015 earthquakes.

### **Poverty Reduction and Human Development**

Nepal has made significant strides in reducing poverty in recent years. The poverty rate has halved from 53% in 2004 to 25% in 2011 (calculated at USD 1.25 per day). Many Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the pre-cursor of the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have been achieved. These include reducing infant mortality and eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary school enrolment. Per capita income is also projected to rise to USD 1,004 in 2018 compared to USD 866 in 2017.

Despite these significant achievements, disparities persist. According to the multi-dimensional poverty report by the National Planning Commission, the rural-urban divide is still stark, with 33% of the population in rural areas classified as multi-dimensionally poor compared to 7% in urban areas. State 6 (MPI: 0.230) and state 2 (MPI: 0.217) have the highest rates of poverty, whereby, every second person is multi-dimensionally poor. Meanwhile, state 3 (MPI: 0.085), in which Kathmandu falls, has the lowest.

There are also wide disparities between castes and ethnic groups. Poverty is highest amongst Hill (43.6%) and Terai (38.1%) Dalits, followed by Janajatis other than Newars (28.2%). It is lowest for Newars (10.2%) and Brahmins (10.3%). Human development indicators also show that historical trends persist, with Dalits (HDI: 0.434) having the lowest values, followed by Janajatis (HDI: 0.482) and then Brahmin/Chhetris (HDI: 0.538). At the same time, generalisations can be misleading as there are huge differences within Janajatis and Brahmin/Chhetris. Amongst Janajatis, Sherpa, Thakali, and Gurungs have a high HDI, whilst Tamangs have the lowest. Brahmin/Chhetris of Karnali state 6 have a low HDI similar to that of Dalits. Human development indicators are generally significantly lower for women than for men, although herein also lie major caste, ethnic and regional differences. The disparities reflect the deep rooted historical and structural hierarchies and inequalities in power, remoteness and access over resources, along with past exclusionary development practices amongst various social, cultural, linguistic and religious groups.

While poverty is decreasing, census data (2011) shows that the poorest quintile only had 4.1% share of total income, compared to 56.2% for the richest quintile. Meanwhile, consumption has increased for the poorest quintile to 33.8% (from 24.1% in 2004) - indicating that consumption is being led by debt and/or remittances. Equally significant is that people can fall back into poverty in case of income shocks. For example, it is estimated that approximately 1 million people residing in the earthquake affected areas were pushed below the poverty line after the destruction in 2015.

### Relevant development policies

The National Planning Commission's **Fourteen Plan (2017-2019)** is the major development policy for Nepal. This overarching plan aims Nepal to become a middle-income country embracing public welfare and social justice. Socio-economic transformation and fast paced poverty reduction through productive, employment oriented and just economic growth is the objective of the plan. The next plan is due in 2020 and is expected to mirror the election manifesto of the ruling party: fast-paced economic growth and prosperity coupled with the social justice. It aims for 10% economic growth rate and 5,000 USD per capita by 10 years; and for Nepal to be a developed country in 25 years' time. The priority sectors are water resources and energy; transport infrastructure; agriculture; import substituting production industries; tourism; environment and natural resources conservation; and governance; including inclusive development and social equity; and human capital development. For this purpose, effective roles of public, private and cooperative sectors are envisioned as crucial. A balance between internal and foreign investment is sought.

### Development actors

Foreign aid continues to contribute significantly towards Nepal's development efforts. The amount entering the country has risen steadily year on year, with the highest recorded at USD 1,394.6 million in FY 2016/2017 (mostly due to the country receiving the pledged amounts for post-earthquake reconstruction). As the country implements a federal system, the need for aid is expected to rise further, given that internal resources will be insufficient to cover the costs of establishing state and local level institutions and funding development priorities. At the same time, the government is wary of aid dependence, and especially of development assistance being channelled to the local level rather than through federal channels.

According to the Ministry of Finance, most aid disbursed in Nepal comprises grants (42%), followed by loans (39%) and technical assistance (19%). Currently over 65% is channelled through the government's treasury and 35% by development partners directly.

Amongst multilateral development partners, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank continue to be the most influential in terms of financial volume and policy influence. Aid provided by China and India is also significant in this respect. Except for DFID, European donors no longer have substantial portfolios for project implementation: one way in which they therefore increasingly seek leverage is through technical assistance. This represents an opportunity for Helvetas-Nepal, given our solid track record in



the country, especially with SDC as a trusted partner. For the upcoming period, our most important development partners will continue to be SDC, DFID (UKAid) and the European Union. In 2018, the new Swiss Country Strategy (2018-2021) was launched, setting its three domains of focus as federal state building, employment and income, and migration. Meanwhile, increasing agricultural productivity, job creation, market access infrastructure, education and strengthening governance were identified as priorities for the European Union.

## Opportunities and Challenges

We continue to see major **opportunities** to support Nepal's development. The most obvious need of this time, as already indicated, is support for **local governance**. *Palika* representatives are hungry for development support – both in specific activities, and in facilitating the establishment of all their operational processes. Given Helvetas' long history of supporting participatory planning, implementing and monitoring of earlier Village Development Committees, we have considerable experience that can be brought to the new federal situation. We also have good, long-standing relations with civil society organisations and NGO service providers, both of which have a role to play in ensuring good local governance on the demand side.

The core areas of Helvetas Nepal's interventions in the CS 2019-2022 will not change markedly from the previous Country Strategy, notably **technical and vocational skill development, agriculture, water and sanitation, safer and more family-friendly labour migration, trail bridges** and support for **gender equality and social inclusion**. We continue to consider adaptation to climate change and disaster risk management as an important issue in Nepal and will seek to make it a cross-cutting theme in our interventions, whilst recognising the limited funding opportunities (the sector is well occupied by other actors).

Helvetas Nepal expects to face the following **challenges**:

- There is a growing trend of questioning of **the role of I/NGOs in general**. A draft National Integrity Policy circulated by the government in mid-2018 outlined wide-ranging measures to "regulate" the activities of I/NGOs. Although unlikely to be approved and implemented in its original form, it raised considerable concern within the international community. Largely as a technical assistance service provider agency, Helvetas nevertheless has not experienced any negative impact of such trend except some delays in project approval and implementation process.
- Linked to the above, **donors are facing delays in getting approval for new projects** from the federal government. There are reports of particularly long and difficult negotiations. Ultimately compromises made by donors to gain approval can undermine our ability to implement projects to our quality standards.
- There are **various obstacles to working directly with palikas**, including - most importantly - mechanisms for channelling funds. There have also been bureaucratic formalities and demands for prior approval from the federal government to fund *palikas*.
- Donor agencies are increasingly **outsourcing project implementation to private companies** – a trend seen particularly with DFID and USAID. There is high competition for tenders, and chances of breaking into new markets (partnering with new donor agencies) are slim. Concerted efforts over recent years, involving heavy time investment, have not yielded any significant diversification of our portfolio.
- Although national politics have stabilised with a strong stable government in power, conflicts continue over the distribution of power and resources between federal and states, 'old' district institutions and new municipalities, various interest groups and different geographical locations. In this context, conflict sensitive programme management needs to be rethought as **constitution sensitive programme management**, upholding the rights that the constitution affords to all Nepalese citizens.

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## Learning from Past Engagement

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### Origin and history of the Helvetas engagement in the country

Helvetas has been operating in Nepal since 1956 and has built a highly credible reputation in the country as a trusted, professional development organisation. From trail bridges and dairies to vocational training and agricultural development, to support for good local governance and safer migration, Helvetas has responded to emerging development needs in the changing country context. We also retained a field presence, supporting development activities as feasible, throughout the difficult years of the civil conflict (1996 – 2006).

### Past strategy, resources provided and results achieved

The Nepal Country Strategy 2016-2020 was developed shortly after the 2015 earthquake, when the overall annual programme budget had reached some CHF 24 million (some CHF 4 million having been donated for immediate disaster recovery), and the SDGs had recently been announced. The strategy took inspiration from the SDGs in defining six outcomes – one for each of six thematic programmes. These comprised Economic Growth and Decent Employment (EGDE); Food Security and Nutrition (FSN); Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM); Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Good Governance (GG), and Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (CCDRM). In addition, the Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU) and South-South Coordination Unit (SSCU) were treated as stand-alone projects

Each programme was accorded a programme manager, and relevant projects were grouped under it<sup>1</sup>. In practice, this made for very different sized programmes with different perspectives. The management of human resources– recruitment, induction, reorientation, appraisal, motivation and mobilisation - required significant time and energy. EGDE was by far the largest in financial volume, containing three large SDC-supported projects which build on established experience (the Employment Fund, ENSSURE and SaMi) as well as the smaller project Elam, funded from donations. CCDRM was the next in financial volume with over 100 staff members, but contained only new, earthquake reconstruction projects, all with a limited life (none beyond mid-2019). Food Security and Nutrition brought together a variety of long-standing agricultural projects funded through donations, as well as the SDC Agricultural Extension project, Prayas and the (multi-country) Nutrition-sensitive Mountain Agriculture project. IWRM also built on a very long history of Helvetas engagement - in this case in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), primarily in the mid-West of the country. GESI and GG were recognised as essential themes within the country strategy, although neither had, at the time of their establishment, any significant externally funded project, and thus relied on core funds. Although programmes should not be judged by budget alone – especially GESI, GG and CCDRM, which should have activities integrated in all projects – in practice this could not be fully materialised. Acquisition efforts to gain new projects under GG, IWRM and GESI – especially the latter - met with limited success. The breakdown of the 2017 country programme budget by programme is shown in Annex 3.

Geographically, the Country Strategy 2016-2020 foresaw a continued concentration of activities in the Helvetas supported “western cluster” in the mid-West to far West (Dailekh, Jajarkot, Kalikot, Mugu, Bajura and Achham), and the SDC supported “central cluster” of central Nepal (Ramechhap, Okhaldunga, Khotang, Sindhuli and Udayapur), as well as the Terai corridors of the Far West (from Kanchanpur to Banke) and centre (from Parsa to Sarlahi). At the same time, the possibility was left open of activities elsewhere, according to donor demands.

Since the programme approach was only implemented over a little more than two years, the results achieved cannot be judged in any depth. Nevertheless, certain lessons can be drawn.

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<sup>1</sup> However, the role of Programme Manager positions for the EGDE and GESI programmes were played by the Country Director and Deputy Country Director, respectively.

## Lessons learned

The Country Strategy 2016-2020 assumed that **federalisation** would not be implemented fully so soon in terms of the establishment of elected local, state and federal governments within the strategy period. This assumption proved wrong – thus demanding a radical rethinking of approach. The logical response, given the number of new governments involved and the working relationship that needs to be developed with them, is greater geographical concentration (avoiding spreading resources too thinly).

The mid-term review found that the **organisation of the country programme into six thematic programmes** had various complications, as follows.

- A perceived heavy set of management structures in Kathmandu
- A significant imbalance in the financial volume and staff numbers of different thematic programmes, as indicated above
- Difficulties in convincing Swiss-based donors, who wish to fund specific projects rather than contribute to a thematic programme
- Heavy reporting needs, with double monitoring and reporting by thematic programme, and by Helvetas' Working Areas
- Despite the intention to improve knowledge management and sharing, missed opportunities for knowledge management and sharing between programmes, and the development of “silo thinking” within them
- The Trail Bridge Support Unit felt rather isolated, not being part of any thematic programme.

Other aspects of the earlier Strategy were found to be important to continue or adapt to the new context.

- The promotion of **gender equality and social inclusion** should remain at the core of Helvetas Nepal's work, and needs to be mainstreamed even more systematically across all projects, with very clear budgetary provisions and indicators.
- Addressing **private sector engagement** and use of remittances for enterprise and business development in a conceptually clear manner should remain a priority for the coming strategy period.
- **Monitoring** has been significantly improved through information technology and enhanced human resources capacity; this allocation of resources should be continued.
- **Peri-urban issues** continue to gain importance in the country and demand further attention, particularly in exploring rural-urban linkages and working in emerging small towns.
- **Disaster response:** The April 2015 earthquake and its aftermath represented a steep learning curve for Helvetas Nepal on humanitarian assistance, and the linking of recovery to longer term development efforts. A rapid response mechanism for future disasters is established in outline. In order to pursue the development of the rapid response capacity, a new position will be created following TORs established with the support of the Senior Advisor Humanitarian Response.
- **Security and safety** measures need to be adapted to the new context in which security threats have reduced (Nepal is now classed “green”, as a low security risk).

Based on their findings, the mid-term review team recommended:

- The reorganisation and alignment of the organisational structure and functions based on federal structures.
- The incorporation of useful elements and ideas from the thematic programme strategy documents - in which considerable time had been invested - when developing future project tenders.

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## Strategic Orientation

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### Mission and values

Our organizational vision is of a just world in which all men and women determine the course of their lives in dignity and security, using environmental resources in a sustainable manner. Our work in Nepal is fully consistent with the overall organizational mission and values.

- We support poor and disadvantaged women, men and communities in their efforts to improve their living conditions.
- We support women and men in improving their livelihoods themselves in a sustainable manner.
- We promote equitable access to the resources and services necessary for life and thus contribute to overcoming the root causes of poverty.
- We uphold the protection and promotion of social, economic, political, environmental and cultural rights and responsibilities, and seek to ensure their practical implementation.
- We support our partners in engaging in development policy issues.
- We accompany and support our partners on a long-term basis.

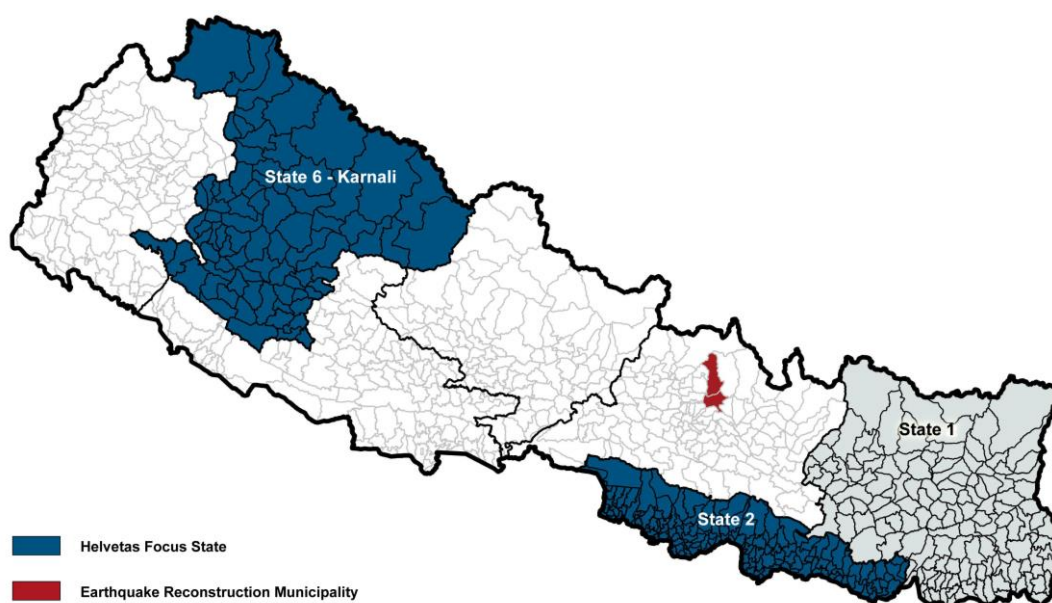
The values that we uphold in all our work are:

- Our engagement is based on solidarity and partnership.
- We work towards achieving human rights and upholding the principle of self-determined development.
- We are committed to social equity and strive for equal opportunities for men and women regardless of age, origin, language, religion, culture or political convictions.
- Our collaboration with our partners is based on mutual respect for cultural values and principles.
- We stand for development that balances economic viability, environmental appropriateness and social benefits.

### Geographic focus

Helvetas Nepal will continue to address economic poverty and social exclusion in both the mid-hills and the Terai. Considering wide-spread poverty, geographical remoteness, low HDI and Helvetas' long-term past engagements, we will continue our work in Karnali (state 6, mostly the earlier mid-western region). We will also focus increasingly in state 2, considering the high social inequality and deep-rooted exclusion, low HDI, and potential for greater impact per CHF spent. Since SDC intends to focus on state 1 in the coming years, our SDC-supported activities will move progressively Eastwards. While Helvetas will continue to work in rural areas, in recognition of growing urbanisation and rural-urban linkages, we will increasingly engage in peri-urban and urban areas in any of the States if the projects are found to be of strategic importance. We will also continue to work at federal level wherever there are opportunities to contribute to Nepal's development through our areas of expertise (for example, vocational education, labour migration and trail bridges) – offering our knowledge and experience in policy fora and interacting with the relevant ministries as appropriate.

Helvetas Nepal will target its interventions geographically in the following manner (see Figure 2):



**Figure 2: Map of Helvetas' planned involvement in Nepal**

**Focus Gaun- and Nagarpalikas in states 2 and 6:** These are administrative boundaries in which Helvetas will aim to concentrate activities that are funded through donations – that is, where there is a choice of location. Selection will be based on

- Helvetas' historic involvement and existing Swiss-supported activities
- physical proximity to each other with road inter-connectivity, thus allowing a cluster approach (this rules out the mountainous areas of Karnali)
- willingness/interest of the concerned stakeholders and government representatives
- potential for market systems development.

Taken together, all these criteria aim to maximise development synergies between and within the selected areas.

**Swiss-supported gaun- and nagarpalikas in state 1:** These will be the *gaun-* and *nagarpalikas* selected by SDC; the selection criteria are very similar to those indicated for the Helvetas focus *gaun-* and *nagarpalikas*.

**Earthquake reconstruction:** Those reconstruction activities still on-going following the 2015 earthquake will continue in Melamchi *nagarpalika* and Helambu *gaunpalika*, as well as (for EF-SR) selected badly affected *palikas* of Ramechhap, Okhaldunga and Khotang. This work is expected to be completed within the early part of this Country Strategy.

Helvetas Nepal will also work with key state-level stakeholders in **states 1, 2 and 6**, ensuring that lessons from working with *gaun* and *nagarpalikas* are brought to the attention of state policy makers, and disseminated more widely. Similarly, we will engage at national level, as appropriate – building on our reputation as an organisation with strong practical experience and using this to contribute to national level interventions. Here we may partner with other like-minded NGOs and INGOs (see section 8). For activities funded through donations, we will exit from all other states, informing the respective authorities and aiming to ensure that our interventions are continued as far as possible through government and other national programmes. Nevertheless, we will remain open to working in states 3, 4, 5 and 7, particularly through the provision of technical assistance, if there are strategic reasons to do so.

### Theory of change

The theory of change for this country strategy is based on the premise that a federal state, as set out in Nepal's 2015 constitution, is the most appropriate mechanism to ensure the country's sustainable and inclusive development, and the upholding of the equal rights and equal voice of all Nepalese women and men that the constitution guarantees. Helvetas therefore puts at the heart of this Country Strategy

2019-2022 its support for the implementation of federalisation in the manner envisaged by the constitution.

The rights and responsibilities devolved to local governments under the Local Government Operations Act (2017) include many of the development activities in which Helvetas specialises: local infrastructure (trail bridges), water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), agricultural extension, local economic growth, safer and beneficial migration, as well as – most obviously – good governance. However, the local government responsibilities are in general not matched by the funds, human resources and infrastructure available to them. There is a high risk that the local governments will be undermined in their attempts to govern their own affairs by anti-federalist forces. There is also a risk of elite capture at local level, and/or of local governments knowingly and unknowingly attempting to control everything, rather than leaving space for the private sector and civil society to flourish. It is thus essential that Helvetas support is channelled into building local governance systems that respond to the needs and legitimate demands of all citizens and to strengthening government and other duty bearers' capacity so that they are responsive and accountable to citizens.

Some activities in which Helvetas specialises are the responsibility of state or federal government; here Helvetas will partner accordingly. For example, responsibility for agricultural research is shared between the local, state and federal spheres; similarly, different aspects of technical and vocational skills training are allocated to *gaun-* and *nagarपालिकास*, states and the federal government. Meanwhile, negotiation with foreign governments over migrant rights is clearly a federal responsibility.

The theory of change may be summarised as follows. ***If the appropriate governance systems under Nepal's federal system are strengthened and operate in a transparent, accountable, socially inclusive, efficient and effective manner, then Nepalese women and men, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalised, will be able to claim and exercise their rights to access resources and services, and lead dignified lives.***

This theory of change is significantly different from that of previous country strategies in that it places the development of democratic governance systems in the centre, rather than the primary stakeholders themselves. This is essential at this early stage of federalisation, when the local governments are new – compared to our former main partners, the NGO service providers, which have been receiving donor support and capacity building for many years. The Theory of Change recognises that to develop strong relationships and foster mutual understanding with all concerned in the new working context (local government representatives and administrative staff, civil society, service providers, the media and other private sector actors), a focus on a limited number of *पालिकास* and states is necessary. The theory of change also requires that good local governance allows civil society to have an effective voice, and the private sector to operate in a transparent and market-responsive manner.

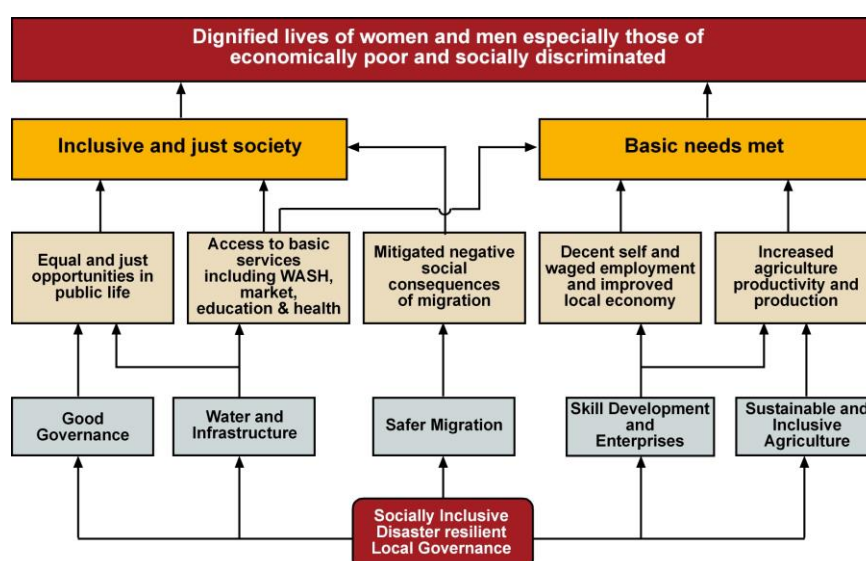


Figure 3: Theory of change of Helvetas Nepal

## Alignment

The Country Strategy 2019-2022 is aligned with the **government of Nepal's Fourteenth Plan 2016/17 to 2018/19** with the long-term vision of a prosperous Nepal with a self-dependent, progressive and socialist-oriented national economy.

The CS 2019-2022 is also aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goals**, its outcomes being aligned to the goals 2, 5, 6, 8, 10 (target 10.7) and 16 with both direct and indirect connection to goal 1, i.e. to end poverty in all its forms. The government of Nepal is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals and has localised indicators for all 17 goals. It is also envisaged that donors will prioritise the SDGs in their strategies, and design projects accordingly.

The CS 2019-2022 is guided by the **Helvetas Strategy 2018-2020**. It is further aligned with the **Swiss Cooperation Strategy** for Nepal 2018-2021, which has three main domains: federal state-building; employment and income; and migration. It shares the guiding principles of SDC in contributing to these three domains.

## Development goal

**All women and men in Nepal, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalized, have dignified lives.**

Poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon and cannot be understood only in economic terms. The denial of social, cultural, political and economic opportunities to women and other disadvantaged individuals creates unequal power relations and prevents enjoyment of a dignified life. The theory of change in this Country Strategy assumes that all Nepalese citizens, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalised, can attain a dignified life if the federalised structures perform effectively.

## Expected outcomes

The Country Strategy foresees six outcomes. These are based on four of the five Working Areas of Helvetas plus an additional Working Area: Migration (which does not fit readily under GOP in the Nepal country context). The sixth outcome pertains to the cross-cutting theme of GESI. Adaptation to climate change, including disaster risk management, is foreseen as a cross-cutting theme, but without a specific outcome given the lack of any dedicated projects on this topic. A draft logical framework, which will be finalised in the operational preparations of the strategy implementation, is attached as Annex 2.

### **Outcome 1 Governance and Peace (GOP):**

**Local governments are effective, transparent and accountable to women and men citizens, who are empowered to demand better services**

**Aligned with SDG 16:** *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.*

Governance and Peace is a key thematic working area of this Country Strategy, as well as being a cross-cutting theme. Democratic governance can be attained only by following the principles of accountability, transparency, social inclusiveness, effectiveness and effectiveness. The establishment of a two-way interaction and engagement between the local government and every one of its citizens plays a vital role in institutionalising effective, transparent and accountable governance. Promoting the rule of law at all levels, and strengthening knowledge and participation, will ensure the protection of fundamental freedoms and access to justice for all.

Helvetas Nepal builds its governance efforts on long-term experience with participatory village development planning and social accountability tools. At this crucial time in the implementation of federalisation, we will support selected *palikas* in the participatory development of their strategic vision, sectorial plans and budgets. We will build capacity to implement these plans amongst elected representatives, especially women and Dalit members, as well as administrative staff; and support

transparent monitoring using tools for social accountability. At the same time, we will raise awareness amongst citizens, especially women and other marginalised groups - mobilising them to realise their rights and responsibilities.

Appropriate support for good governance will also be targeted to the state governments of states 1, 2 and 6, (whilst not ruling out our possible interventions from donor or government funded mandated projects in other states). Good relations will also be maintained with relevant federal government bodies. Helvetas-Nepal will contribute to supporting local governments in their interpretation and implementation of federal laws and guidelines, at the same time as feeding this field level governance experience into policy discussion at state and federal spheres.

### **Outcome 2 Sustainable and Inclusive Economy (SIE):**

**Women and men farmers implement sustainable and resilient food production and benefit from advisory services and marketing systems that foster increased productivity and production.**

**Aligned with SDG 2:** *End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.*

Agriculture remains an important sector for the economy of Nepal, although it is changing, with increasing commercialisation in addition to subsistence farming. This trend is supported by the Government of Nepal's Agricultural Development Strategy, which places emphasis on the cultivation of commercial crops, including those for export. Some of the major challenges facing the sector include the increasing feminisation of agricultural labour due to male out-migration; low enthusiasm for agriculture of the part of youth; limited access to affordable credit facilities or to adequate extension services; and increasingly erratic weather patterns, attributed to climate change.

Under the federal system, agricultural extension services are devolved to *palikas*. We will therefore work with them in improving their services, building systems and capacities to provide advice and inputs on climate smart agricultural practices and modern agricultural technologies, as well as making linkages to business services and improving market understanding – for example, through Farmer Business Schools. We will ensure that such activities are as accessible to women (didactically and physically) as they are to men. Behaviour change communication for food and nutrition security, the use of information and communication technology, and evidence-based advocacy will further contribute to this outcome, as will appropriate agricultural research.

### **Outcome 3 Skill Development and Education (SDE):**

**Adequately skilled women and men are in decent waged or self-employment.**

**Aligned with SDG 8:** *promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.*

The lack of employment opportunities for young women and men, due in large part to a lack of appropriate skills, is a major source of frustration in Nepalese society. It pushes young men, particularly, to migrate abroad – where, without sufficient knowledge or skills to command a decent job, they are vulnerable to exploitation. Under this outcome, we build on our long-standing experience in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), training young people to acquire technical skills demanded in domestic and overseas labour markets as well as in areas such as agriculture, construction and tourism for self-employment - thus enhancing their ability to gain decent work. We will work with the private sector in tailoring training to needs, developing apprenticeship and on-the-job training models. At the same time, we will engage with the government in the development and/or improvement of curricula and training materials, career counselling, conducting studies of the labour market, and developing appropriate policies, strategies, and guidelines. In supporting self-employment, facilitating



access to finance and business development services will be an integral part of the skills development approach.

#### **Outcome 4 Water and Infrastructure (WIN):**

**Women and men in rural and urban settlements have access to markets and services through trail bridges, and sustained access to adequate drinking water, sanitation and hygiene**

**Aligned with SDG 6:** *Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.*

Trail bridges were the very first development intervention of Helvetas-Nepal. Although there are now over 7,500 in the country, they remain a highly demanded development intervention – in the Terai as well as the hills, linking growing urban areas as well as remote rural settlements. Support for trail bridge construction and maintenance has proved an important entry point in discussions with local governments, given that local infrastructure falls under their responsibility. The new context demands continued engagement in the trail bridge sector - this time with local government.

Water for consumption, sanitation and hygiene is a crucial requisite for a dignified life. Despite considerable advances, the need for adequate and reliable water supply remains unfulfilled in some parts of the country - both rural and urban - with poor and marginalised communities being the most affected. Mismanagement, strong seasonality, negative impacts of climate change and disasters, and inadequate water infrastructure mean that water is not always accessible to all citizens. Many water schemes across the country are only partially functional, or in need of complete renovation. Drinking water quality is variable, and often poor.

The enjoyment of sufficient, safe, affordable and physically accessible water and sanitation is a human right. This has been the basic principle underpinning Helvetas' work in supporting good water governance in Nepal over many years. The approach of Water Use Master Planning, focusing on integrated water resources management, is now widely used and recognised. We will support the uptake of such planning in both *gaun* and *nagarpalikas* level. We will also continue to support participatory planning and decision making in the construction and rehabilitation of drinking water schemes and to promote hygiene awareness including household water treatment and safe storage. Our strategic engagement at *palika*, state and federal level will emphasise the needs of women regarding menstrual hygiene management and the demands of unpaid care work – aiming to transform their traditional roles in water management towards active engagement and leadership. In adapting to climate change, we will also implement “3 Rs” technologies for the retention, recharge and reuse of water.

#### **Outcome 5 Migration and remittance (M&R):**

**Women and men migrants and their families have increased benefits from remittances and have mitigated the negative social consequences of migration**

**Aligned with SDG Target 10.7:** *Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies*

Labour migration abroad, especially to Malaysia and Gulf countries, is such an important factor shaping Nepal's economy and society that it merits a separate Working Area and outcome. Furthermore, Helvetas is recognised in Nepal as a leading actor in the topic, with significant experience and expertise. We will continue to raise awareness on the “do's and don'ts” of migration, offering legal/paralegal support, advice to would-be migrants, and training opportunities to some of the most disadvantaged amongst them. We will further seek to ensure that these training opportunities conform to market demand and are recognised through certification in the host countries. Providing vocational skills training and awareness raising to the potential women migrant will be another focus area. At the same time, we will work with left-behind family members, building their capacities to use remittances productively, and offering psycho-social counselling to them and returnee migrants, as necessary for reducing social cost of migration

In this CS 2019-2022, we will place greater emphasis on the productive use of migrant remittances through financial literacy classes and training in entrepreneurial activities, and linkages to business services and affordable credit.

We also recognise that seasonal migration within Nepal, longer term migration to urban areas, and labour migration to India are all important patterns of human movement in Nepal. We will seek opportunities to expand our activities to these other types of migrants, especially those travelling to India. The latter often hail from particularly disadvantaged backgrounds and are vulnerable to abuse – yet tracking this form of migration, and intervening in a constructive manner, is especially difficult.

### **Outcome 6 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI):**

**Women, Dalits and minorities access equal and just opportunities in political, economic and public life.**

#### **Aligned with SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

The prevailing inequalities in Nepalese society are structural, and the product of entrenched social, cultural and religious discrimination. Recognising this, Helvetas Nepal places gender equality and social inclusion as a cross-cutting theme in all interventions. Throughout Nepal, traditional gender roles, placing women in a secondary position to men, remain widespread, whilst gender-based violence is common (although reliable figures are difficult to obtain). Women bear the brunt of unpaid care work, which can be especially physically demanding where water must be carried long distances, and/or no mechanised food processing technologies are available. Dalits, meanwhile, due to their traditional artisanal roles, are spread across the country, generally living on the most marginal lands in any given location. Socially isolated and excluded for centuries, they remain the least likely to benefit from development interventions, despite legal protection from discrimination.

The marginalisation of women and Dalits from political, economic and public life is particularly manifest in the Helvetas areas of geographical concentration. In state 6, *chhaupadi*, the ostracising women during menstruation, continues in many communities. This degrading custom hinders women from leading a dignified life in many ways, having negative psychological and health consequences, as well as preventing communities from reaching ODF (open defecation free) status, since women are not permitted to use toilets during menstruation. In state 2, social inequalities are stark, with Madheshi Dalit and Muslim communities experiencing marked discrimination – and women from Muslim communities having particularly few economic opportunities.

Despite the above challenges, women in Nepal have a growing voice. In general, younger women and girls have far better educational opportunities and access to information, and correspondingly higher life aspirations, than their mothers. The system of quotas adopted in the 2017 elections means that there are now many women and Dalit elected representatives in the *palika*, state and federal governments. This is a huge opportunity for building more inclusive governance that will be undermined if those elected are not fully supported. Due to the rule that either the *palika* Chair or Deputy Chair must be a woman, some 92% of all Deputy Mayors, who oversee local government judicial committees, are women. Helvetas-Nepal will work on raising awareness of legal provisions, administrative systems and structures amongst women and Dalit representatives, supporting them to perform to their full capacities. Initiatives to redistribute and reduce the burden of women's unpaid care work, as well as campaigning against discriminatory practices, will continue to be integrated into project activities whenever appropriate.

In summary, by the end of the CS period (December 2022), Helvetas Nepal expects to have made a significant contribution to the implementation of federalisation through supporting selected *palikas* to strengthen their whole system of governance. This includes transparent, participatory and efficient working procedures and practices adapted to the needs of women, Dalits and other disadvantaged groups; space for civil society and media to openly express diverse views, and an enabling environment for a well-functioning private sector. It also includes service delivery that is responsive to citizen needs

– especially in thematic areas of Helvetas expertise such as agricultural extension services, vocational training, WASH and safer migration. We aim to be innovative, continuing our usual approach of testing and developing new ideas and appropriate ways of working in all these sectors. The experience of working closely with selected *palikas* – both in rural and urban settings - will be shared at state and national level. In this way, and in targeted federal and state level support, we expect to contribute to improved state and federal policies, guidelines and processes. At the same time, Helvetas Nepal aims, with SDC support, to have brought the government of Nepal trail bridge programme to completion, thus opening development opportunities for citizens who are still waiting for safe and easy access to government services and markets.

### Summary of the Country Strategy logical framework

#### Mission

- We support poor and disadvantaged women, men and communities in their efforts to improve their living conditions.
- We support women and men in improving their livelihoods themselves in a sustainable manner.
- We promote equitable access to the resources and services necessary for life and thus contribute to overcoming the root causes of poverty.
- We uphold the protection and promotion of social, economic, political, environmental and cultural rights and responsibilities, and seek to ensure their practical implementation.
- We support our partners in engaging in development policy issues.
- We accompany and support our partners on a long-term basis.

#### Implementation context

- New federal structures, 753 local, 7 states and 1 federal governments
- Regional, caste and ethnicity-based disparities
- Migration a key economic driver
- Rapid but haphazard urbanization
- Slow pace of earthquake recovery

- Focus *gaun*- and *nagarपालिकास* in states 2 and 6
- Swiss-supported *gaun*- and *nagarपालिकास* in state 1
- *Gaun* and *nagarपालिकास* in states 1 and 3 for earthquake reconstruction
- National coverage for selected sector support programmes
- Any other state for intervention of strategic interest

#### Target Population

Women and men, particularly economically poor and socially marginalised in terms of gender, ethnicity and caste.

#### Development Goal

**All women and men in Nepal, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalised, have dignified lives.**

#### Outcomes

- Local governments are effective, transparent and accountable to women and men citizens, who are empowered to demand better services
- Women and men farmers implement sustainable and resilient food production and benefit from advisory services and marketing systems that foster increased productivity and production.
- Adequately skilled women and men are in decent waged or self-employment.
- Women and men in rural and urban settlements have access to markets and services through trail bridges, and sustained access to adequate drinking water, sanitation and hygiene
- Women and men migrants and their families have increased benefits from remittances and have mitigated the negative social consequences of migration
- Women, Dalits and minorities access equal and just opportunities in political, economic and public life.

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## Working Areas and Accents

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### Working Areas

The outcomes of the Country Strategy 2019 – 2022 are largely defined by the Helvetas Working Areas plus Migration and Remittance and have already been described in section 5.6.

**Governance and Peace (GOP):** This is considered a crucial working area in the current CS and corresponds to outcome 1. Nevertheless, funded activities in GOP are currently limited to an EU-supported project in 8 *palikas* of state 6 and a few small mainly donor-funded initiatives. Further funding opportunities will be sought pro-actively.

**Sustainable and Inclusive Economies (SIE):** Under this working area fall our interventions in agriculture, chiefly the SDC-supported agriculture extension project, Prayas (NASDP), which will focus in state 1 in coming years. With SDC funds, we will also be providing TA in agricultural extension to *palikas* in state 6 through the IFAD-supported ASDP. We will also continue our small engagement in promoting the nut value chain (specifically walnuts) in state 6, and riverbed farming in states 1 and 2. We will only continue our long-standing work with small farmers in coffee if donor-funded opportunities arise.

**Skills Development and Education (SDE):** Our support for technical and vocational training will continue both in collaboration with the federal government through the SDC-supported ENSSURE project, and with private sector training institutions through the EF-SR. The latter is concerned with building skills in post-earthquake reconstruction and is now extended to June 2020. Being integrated into the government institution CTVET, ENSSURE is a nation-wide project, with its central and state offices.

**Water and Infrastructure (WIN):** It had been foreseen that the current phase of the TBSU, ending in mid-2019, would be the last. However, the new context of working with *palikas* requires further engagement. Provisional agreement between the Government of Nepal and SDC has been secured for a final three-year phase of TBSU (mid 2019 – mid 2022), completing the final government target of 10,000 trail bridges across the country. Our activities in WASH and IWRM will continue in state 6 as far as funding permits; currently they are supported through a variety of relatively small funding mechanisms. Since such activities are also much in demand by *palikas*, we will seek further funding opportunities whenever possible.

**Environment and Climate Change (ECC):** The large portfolio of projects grouped under this thematic area in the previous CS was entirely focused on earthquake reconstruction; all the projects within it will be completed by mid-2019, latest. Although Nepal is a country highly threatened by climate change and disasters, representing an opportunity for engagement, it is also a country in which many organisations are already working on the topic, and have well recognised expertise and competence. To date Helvetas Nepal has funded one project from core (contribution) funds but has not managed to attract any donor funds for specific climate change projects. We see the best opportunity for developing our profile in this working area as highlighting it in our on-going activities, and documenting achievements. It will thus become a cross-cutting theme.

### Cross-cutting themes

Cross-cutting themes need to be integrated across all project activities as far as possible, whatever the working area. Three cross-cutting themes are identified for the CS 2019-2022, notably:

- **Gender equality and social inclusion**
- **Good governance**
- **Climate change adaptation and disaster risk management**

The first two need no further elaboration as they are both defined at outcome level. As noted previously, climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk management (DRM) are thematic areas in which Helvetas Nepal has experiences and competences, although these enjoy limited recognition in the

country. In making CCA and DRM a cross-cutting theme, we anticipate building on and deepening this expertise, at the same time as profiling it for future engagement. In addition, we believe that Nepal country programme will build on its knowledge and experience gained from emergency response and reconstruction work and gradually set up a Humanitarian Response team which will work initially on the preparedness and attempt to win the new humanitarian projects.

### Accents

As described earlier in this document, the relative **youth** of Nepal's population, and the rapid rate of **urbanisation** both represent an opportunity for the country's development, as well as a potential threat. We will therefore place emphasis on youth in our work in vocational training, safer migration, and agriculture – as well as encouraging the engagement of young people in especially local government affairs. When designing new interventions or revising existing ones, we will explore opportunities for promoting the sustainable development of emerging urban areas, bearing in mind the social and economic dynamics of rural-urban linkages, remittance economy, social and economic impact of labour migration and remittance.

The current project portfolio is provided in Annex 3.

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## Implementation Approaches

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### Role of Helvetas Nepal

Helvetas Nepal continues to take on the role of an implementer, back-stopper, advisor, monitor, trainer, coach, innovator and facilitator, and advocate. In these roles, we strive to assure quality, to ensure optimal engagement and to mainstream our learning in policy and implementation work of others. As in the organisation's global strategy, we have three intervention modes:

- On-the-ground, **implementation** of programmes strengthens our legitimacy for the other intervention modes. We will continue to work with all spheres of government, civil society and private partners (including NGO service providers), maintaining a reputation for quality work and developing new tools, instruments, approaches and methods as appropriate. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, the new working modality requires that we place *palikas* at the centre of local development activities; this means that we will increasingly advise rather than implement.
- In our **advisory** role, we aim to spread knowledge about proven approaches and state-of-the-art thinking in our working areas – working particularly with local government, but also other spheres of government and relevant organisations in Nepal. In this we will seek to expand our advisory portfolio - offering our advisory services to other countries (especially in Asia), at the same time as using this experience to enrich work in Nepal. The South-South Cooperation Unit has already led the way in advisory services through the provision of technical advice on trail bridges to many other countries. We anticipate that such trail bridge services to clients outside Nepal will continue over the CS 2019-2022, eventually probably organised through a social enterprise based in Switzerland.
- Helvetas Nepal will engage in evidence-based **advocacy** at the field – policy interface when there is an opportunity to contribute in a constructive manner on issues linked to our working areas. Our approach is to support the legitimate rights holders in expressing their views, rather than speaking on their behalf. Often this may entail working through partner organisations, although we will also show solidarity in campaigns as appropriate - for example, in actions against *chhaupadi*, in promoting ODF, or raising awareness on the nutritional values of different foods.

In the current political context of Nepal, and the decreasing opportunities for implementation, we see a significant shift towards advisory support in the coming CS 2019-2022. In this we can build on our experience in advising government through TBSU, SaMi and ENSSURE. We will aim to further foster staff capacity in this regard – coaching our technical specialists in “soft” advisory skills appropriate for different clients, ensuring that opportunities for regional and wider exposure are as fair as possible, and

supporting staff to improve their report-writing capacities. Our engagement in advocacy must be assessed carefully in the current shrinking space for INGOs and NGOs. Nevertheless, we will advocate on behalf of poor and marginalised citizens wherever there is an opportunity to do so constructively on issues related to our work, working in partnership with like-minded organisations and building on our implementation experience.

## Approaches

Helvetas Nepal uses a variety of well-established approaches when implementing activities. These include a **systems development approach**, in all local governance and market-related activities – ensuring a thorough systems analysis is made before devising interventions and ensuring that these interventions are beneficial to the poor and disadvantaged. Although this CS places support for federalisation at its core, we will continue to adopt a **multi-stakeholder approach**, engaging not only with different spheres of government, but also with civil society organisations and the private sector. We will also aim to implement **constitution sensitive programme management**, by which we mean seeking to uphold the spirit and letter of the constitution which guarantees the equal rights of all Nepalese citizens. We are guided by the Basic Operating Guidelines and maintain a politically neutral and religiously secular stance.

## Emergency response

The 2015 earthquake – both the emergency response and the subsequent reconstruction effort – afforded many lessons for Helvetas Nepal. With the projects arising from the disaster coming to an end, the main lessons learned are being analysed and documented, drawing also on Helvetas experience elsewhere. Many of the staff who experienced the emergency response will remain in the organisation. In addition, the country office will install a long-term emergency response mechanism relying on one Emergency Response Officer (focal person) who will coordinate future responses, drawing on the experiences of staff who were involved in the 2015 earthquake response.

## Stakeholders and Partners

### Target population - right holders or primary stakeholders

HELVETAS Nepal is committed to working towards an equal and just Nepali society, understanding poverty to be multidimensional as outlined above. We therefore define our primary stakeholders or rights holders as **women and men, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalised in terms of gender, ethnicity and caste** (i.e. disadvantaged persons as defined in the Gender Equity, Social Inclusion and Poverty Orientation Guidelines for HELVETAS Nepal).

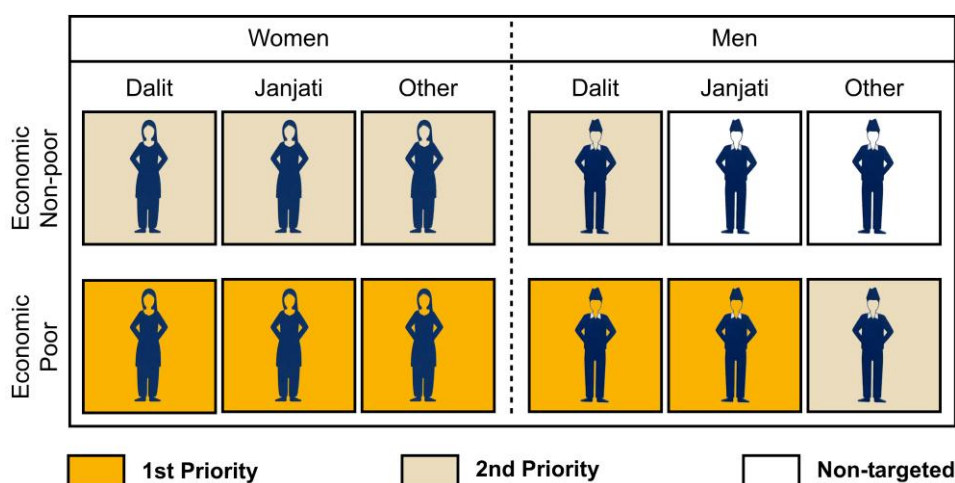


Figure 4: Primary stakeholders of Helvetas Nepal

Our **priority primary stakeholders**, are economically poor women, Dalits and Adibasi Janajati (indicated in Table 1). Non-poor women and Dalits as well as poor Brahmin, Chhetri and Thakuri men are considered as **second priority primary stakeholders**. Non-poor Adibasi Janajati, Brahmin, Chhetri and Thakuri are not targeted in our work, although we engage with them as representatives to promote broad understanding of inclusive development, and to be effective in our interventions.

As in our last Country Strategy, we continue in this Country Strategy 2019-2022 with the aim of reaching 60% priority primary stakeholders overall, 30% second priority primary stakeholders and the rest from non-priority groups. However, we recognise that in the context of working in collaboration with the new government structures, this targeting may be challenging, and not always easy to monitor.

### Partners and duty bearers



Figure 1: Stakeholders and partners of Helvetas Nepal

## Participation in networks

Helvetas is a founding member of the Association of International Non-governmental organisations in Nepal (AIN). We will continue to participate in this platform to enhance solidarity amongst international NGOs with donors and the government. We are also a member of the loose Swiss NGOs network in Nepal, coordinated through SDC. Collaboration with Alliance 2015 partners was important during the immediate recovery and reconstruction period after the earthquake; however, it is anticipated that interactions will reduce in future following the departure of several of the Alliance partners from Nepal. At most, only Welt Hunger Hilfe (WHH) and People in Need (PIN) will still be present in Nepal during the Country Strategy 2019-2022 period. We are an active member (current chair) of the Nepal Market Development Forum, and participate as appropriate in the Dutch WASH Alliance, the Riverbed Farming Alliance, the Rights and Resources Initiative, Migrant Forum in Asia and the Mountain Agro-ecosystems Action Network (MAAN). We may join other networks in future, according to need.

## Coordination with other development organisations

HELVETAS-Nepal will continue to work in close coordination with SDC, aiming to promote synergies between its different projects, especially in state 1.

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## Resources and Management

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### Human resources

The knowledge, experience, commitment, and shared values of Helvetas-Nepal staff, backed by occasional timely inputs from Swiss-based professionals, are the basis of the good name of the organisation in Nepal. A team of Nepalese staff together with a few international staff will implement the Country Strategy 2019 - 2022. We maintain a Human Resources Inventory System, which is continuously updated. We encourage staff to participate in activities that enhance their capacity through internal and external interactive events. We also encourage regional opportunities for technical advisory roles within the Helvetas network or beyond.

Although Helvetas-Nepal has made considerable progress in promoting workforce diversity, we have yet to bring a proportionate number of women, or of various groups - Dalit, Adibasi Janajati, Madhesi, people with disability and people originating from our working areas - into the organisation. We will continue explicit efforts to promote women and members of marginalised communities in recruitment and in-service training, applying the SDC workforce diversity guidelines in all cases. Respecting the provisions of the Labour Act 2017, will also offer internships to promote the entry of young professionals from socially marginalised groups into the organisation.

Helvetas Nepal also anticipates sporadic thematic advisory inputs and support in acquisition and fund-raising from the Head Office in Switzerland, and from other Helvetas country programmes as appropriate.

### Programme structure / Management / Offices / Steering

- The **Country Office** ensures that the HELVETAS global mission, vision and organisational values are reflected in all initiatives, and steers the implementation of the Country Strategy 2019-2022. It steers financial and administrative matters and ensures coordination between and among the projects under the different working areas - promoting the integration of the cross-cutting themes and thematic accents. The Country Office is organised with shared responsibilities of various functions led by Country Director namely Finance and administration, Programme development and knowledge management, Human resource management, Humanitarian response, Staff safety as below.
- Finance and administration – comprising a team of finance, procurement, logistics and administrative personnel, reporting to the Head of Finance and Administration



- Programme development and knowledge management - comprising a small team with expertise in acquisitions, IT and website development/management, monitoring and evaluation. This team is expected to develop projects in cross-cutting themes namely GESI and CCA/DRM. Preparedness for Humanitarian Response will also be a priority area for Nepal country programme. In addition, the accents of urbanisation, youth, and remittances will be coordinated through the team, working with the relevant personnel. For the time being, the SSCU is also coordinated through this team. This team is headed by the International Programme Adviser
- Human resource management – comprising a team of a Coordinator and an Officer and Human Resource Focal Persons
- Humanitarian response – It is a part time position dedicated initially for preparedness.
- Staff safety – It is a part time position responsible for staff security and safety. Team Leaders and State Focal Persons will take the responsibilities of safety of staff in their respective projects and working areas.

The Country Director and the International Programme Advisor work in tandem, guiding the overall organisational strategic direction. Ultimate authority lies with the Country Director.

To support the process of federalisation and respect the principle of subsidiarity, as many Helvetas-Nepal project staff as possible will be based outside Kathmandu. In this way they will be in a better position to interact with elected representatives and administrators in both *palika* and state governments, and to support and monitor project activities. The relocation process will begin during late 2018, but will take momentum in 2019, depending on project needs and donor demands. For staff remaining in Kathmandu, the aim will be to bring as many as possible within one compound, for reasons of effective knowledge sharing as well as cost savings. Three of the current five separate offices in Kathmandu - Food Security and Nutrition; EF-SR II/Governance/SSCU/IWRM; and CCDRM – will be downsized, with the aim of moving some staff out of Kathmandu and locating others within one Country Office compound. If possible, many Kathmandu based offices and work stations will also be relocated to the same compound. ENSSURE however will remain based within the CTVET in Bhaktapur; TBSU will also remain as at present.

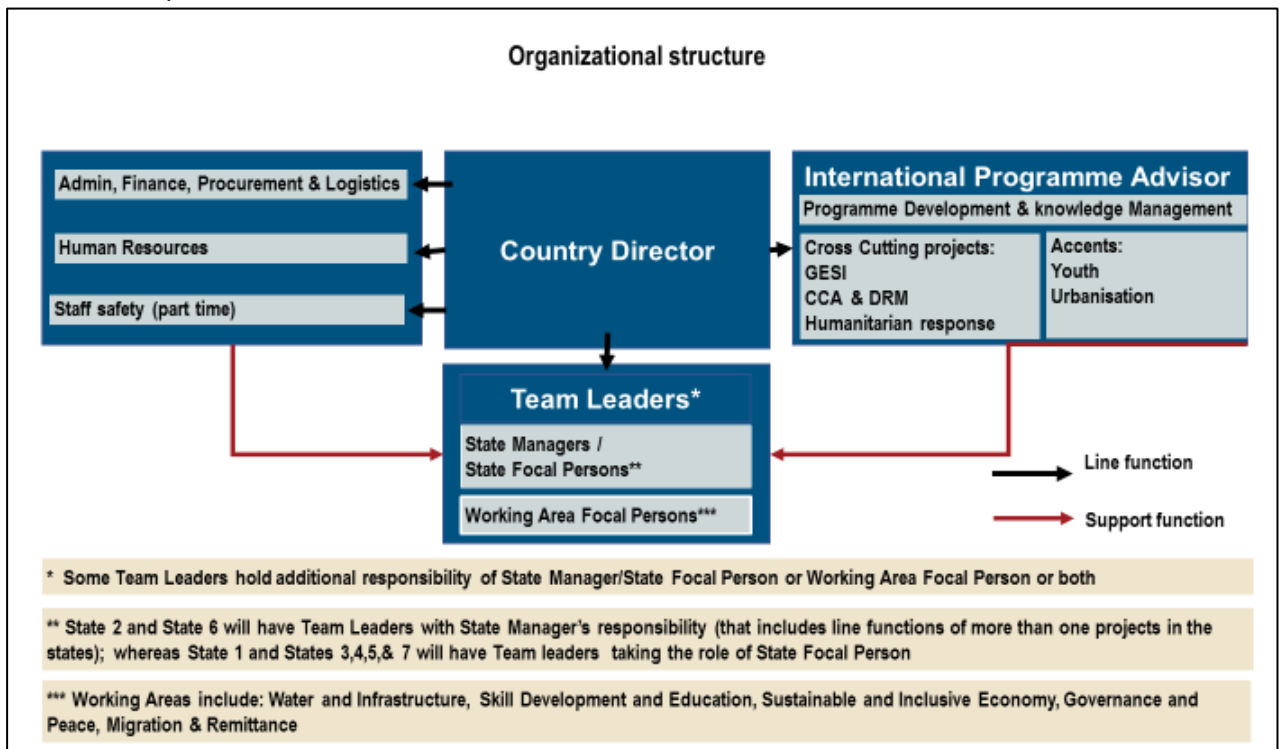


Figure 2: Management structure of Helvetas Nepal

One decentralised Helvetas office is envisaged in the state headquarters of state 6 and one in the state headquarters of state 2. The state offices are to be fully integrated with project offices; no separate state structures are envisioned other than project structure. Some of the Team Leaders will have to take additional responsibilities of State Managers or State Focal Persons and even the focal person for Working Areas or themes. For mandated projects, there will be several smaller field offices serving *palika* clusters in accordance with need. In all cases, synergies with other Helvetas projects, and where possible other Swiss-supported projects, will be maximised through office sharing – both to reduce costs and to promote knowledge exchange and learning.

The responsibilities are in many cases overlapping, with one member of staff undertaking several roles. The post of State Focal Person for example will be held in all cases by a Team Leader; it denotes a role of representation (especially towards state authorities) and of coordination (of Helvetas activities within the state). All project Team Leaders – who may also be Working Area/Thematic Coordinators - report to the Country Director.

### Coordination among Helvetas working areas and projects

The quarterly **Country Programme Meeting** will be held with the Country Programme Management Team - comprising the Country Director, International Programme Advisor, senior Country Office team members (see diagram), State Managers/ State Focal Persons, Team Leaders/ Project Managers and Working Area Focal Persons. During this meeting, administrative and programmatic issues will be shared and discussed. Changes in policies, procedures, regulations, guidelines and approaches will be endorsed by this meeting. Knowledge sharing workshops will be organised at least once annually in states 2 and 6 each and in Kathmandu to foster knowledge exchange and learning through a mix of formal and informal interactions – including a field visit.

### Financial resources

The annual budget of Helvetas Nepal is expected to be between CHF 10 to 12 million for the Country Strategy period 2019 to 2022 (see Table 1). This is an indicative value and may be surpassed in case of successful acquisition of mandates fitting to the overall programme. About 12% of this budget is expected from the Programme Credit, while mandates are expected to account for about 88% over the four-year period.

**Table 1: Helvetas Nepal tentative budget overview, 2019 to 2022**

| Year                            | 2019              | 2020              | 2021              | 2022              |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Total Swiss Francs (CHF)</b> | <b>13,000,000</b> | <b>12,000,000</b> | <b>11,000,000</b> | <b>10,000,000</b> |
| Programme credit (per cent)     | 15.2              | 15.8              | 15.2              | 16.2              |
| Mandates (per cent)             | 84.8              | 84.2              | 84.8              | 83.8              |

It is expected that the current level of mandates from current major donors will be maintained in terms of number of projects. However, overall budget is expected to be lower in the context of the gradual shift in nature of our interventions - from implementation to technical assistance. SDC has contributed an average of slightly over half of the total resources mobilized during the previous two strategy periods. In the current three-year period of 2016-2018, the contribution of SDC is expected to be approximately 51%. This contribution is expected to increase to 60% for the new strategy period. The total share of The Department for International Development/UKAid funds is expected to be at around 6% and that of the European Union to be at 2%. Possibilities for future expansion to at least one additional bi-/multilateral donor will be explored.

In addition to funding from these bi-/multilateral agencies, efforts will be made to expand the collaboration with development partners such as Alliance 2015 members, ICCO Collaboration and

German Agency for International Collaboration. Co-funding from the private sector to scale up various programme interventions will be another priority for the new strategy period.

The programme development team will continue its strong efforts, actively engaging with the donor community and building on existing relationships with various development partners as well as government stakeholders. Visibility, publicity and dissemination of information on the effectiveness of Helvetas interventions will be used to aid these efforts.

A total fund of CHF 46 million is estimated to be required for the entire strategy period.

### Monitoring and reporting

**Monitoring** will be conducted with a set of indicators presented in the logical framework in Annex 2. The values for the indicators defined here will be collected by the projects as part of their annual and half annual progress reporting on outcomes. They have been streamlined as far as possible with the organisational performance indicators set by Helvetas in Switzerland, to avoid double reporting. Qualitative monitoring will be fostered through participatory assessment methods, case studies and stories. To assess the internal working environment and staff satisfaction, working environment surveys will be implemented, complementing feedback gained in annual performance reviews.

For **reporting**, projects prepare Yearly Plans of Operations and Half-annual as well as Annual Progress Reports, based on which the Programme Coordination Office prepares the overall Yearly Plan of Operations and the Annual Progress Report for the Helvetas Nepal country programme. Outcome monitoring, quarterly review and planning will be continued by all projects with the attendance of the Programme Coordination Office. Reviews or evaluations will be implemented as outlined in each project document or as agreed with the respective donors.

### Review of the country programme

The country programme will be revisited in late 2020 or early 2021 as part of a **mid-term review** of the programme achievements, the country situation, and the understanding with the main funding partners. As preparation for the eventual development of a new CS 2023 – 2026, a **peer-review** by other HELVETAS country programmes is envisaged in early 2022. External involvement in this review exercise may also be considered.

### Audit

All financial transactions of Helvetas Nepal will be audited on an annual basis by a class 'A' auditing firm appointed by Helvetas in Zurich. The same will be recognized as statutory audit by the Government of Nepal. In addition, its finance section will conduct internal audits of all its programmes and projects at least once a year with the purpose to ensure compliance with organizational policy and procedure and effective utilization of funds. Helvetas Nepal will conduct or facilitate additional audits as required by any specific donor funding.

For the clear understanding of the security and risk management context, monitoring will be conducted every three months, in addition to the monthly local risk assessments in the Swiss cluster areas. Programme adaptations may follow in consequence.

## Risks

Various risks and possible mitigation measures are set out below, but for more information, please refer to Annex 4.

| Risks emanating from the context  | Mitigation measures  |
|---|--|
| Transition to federalization is likely to be long. Local governments are to be further capacitated to function effectively due to continuing inadequate human resources leading to inability to implement activities with project funds channelled through conditional grants/budgets; internal political discord; and/or limited fund allocation and internal revenue generation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong capacity building inputs through TA to local governments</li> <li>• Focus on local governments that are open to collaboration and democratic decision-making and have a shared development vision</li> <li>• Adaptation of the working modalities as far as possible to support interested local governments</li> <li>• Advocate for funding to local governments in appropriate fora at national level</li> </ul> |
| Lack of awareness of rights and responsibilities of local governments and citizens may lead to resources being captured by powerful elites and bureaucrats  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing citizen's knowledge of their rights, strengthening capacities to speak out in organised groups</li> <li>• Enhancing a constructive interface between local governments and citizens</li> <li>• Close partnership with civil society organisations and the media</li> </ul>  |
| Uncertainties on the roles and the working space for NGOs and INGOs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local governments, civil society organisations and the media in demonstrating the added value and achievements of NGOs and INGOs</li> <li>• Build up a critical mass of political leaders and senior staff who can enter into effective dialogue</li> </ul>   |
| High competition in acquisition due to reduced donor funds and out-sourcing of projects to private fund managers  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on acquisition opportunities with donors that recognise the value of INGO services</li> <li>• Ensure quality of implementation</li> <li>• Ensure wide dissemination of achievements and lessons learned</li> <li>• Build international capacities amongst staff</li> </ul>  |
| Low availability of funds for TA from usual donor partners (SDC and others)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate opportunities to provide TA inputs to major donors and increase donor intelligence and rapport</li> </ul>   |
| Out migration of young men resulting in labour shortage and feminisation of agriculture and other sectors   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse women's work burden in all projects and support initiatives that reduce work drudgery</li> <li>• Support information dissemination and employment creation for more informed choices</li> </ul>   |
| Another earthquake or major disaster occurs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on disaster preparedness</li> <li>• Emergency response measures in place</li> <li>• Implementation of drills and training</li> </ul>  |
| Growing dissatisfaction of citizens due to the expectations of federalisation being unfulfilled   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict sensitive programme management</li> <li>• Constitution sensitive programme management</li> <li>• Implementation of staff safety guidelines</li> </ul>  |

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## Annex 1: ToRs for mid-term review

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### Background

In 2018, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal will be mid-way through the implementation of the country strategy for 2016 to 2020. It is time to take stock of the achievements so far in order to confirm and/or reorient some strategic choices made back in 2015. This is particularly needed given that the process of federalization, foreseen under Nepal's 2015 constitution, is now being implemented. The overall political and administrative landscape of the country is now significantly changed, with newly elected representatives at municipal, provincial and federal level – and a decentralised structure of fiscal and legal power in place.

The review will consider the achievements of the current country strategy 2016 to 2020 so far, and provide a forward looking perspective in terms of strategic elements. It will be conducted in a participatory manner, led by the International Programme Adviser for Nepal and the Programme Coordinator Himalayas (based in Head Office). They will be assisted by two other core team members and 2 resource persons, with specific inputs from a number of peer reviewers. The review will take into account key relevant documents, but will be based primarily on meetings and informal discussions among programme staff and selected partners, and pertinent field visits. It will culminate in a mid-term review workshop scheduled for March 2018.

### Deliverables

- Synthesis of the whole review process including guidance on adaptations to the improvement/revision in the current strategy;
- Recommendations on future thematic, functional<sup>2</sup> and geographical focus to ensure optimal contribution to the federalisation process – giving orientation for the next strategic phase (2021-2025)
- Recommendations on the future organisational structure and functions of key positions of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in Nepal, and a road map for achieving the necessary changes foreseen
- Revised Country Strategy logframe (if applicable).

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<sup>2</sup> See section 5

## Proposed Schedule

| Date          | Task/activity   | Responsibility/ Participants                                 |
|---------------|---|--|
| 18.12.2017    | Final draft Terms of Reference  | CAJ/LGI  |
| 19.12.2017    | Sharing ToRs for review with Country directorate  | CAJ/LGI  |
| 26.01.2018    | Validation of the TORs  | BKP  |
| 06.02.2018    | Definition of the specific TORs of peer review teams  | MS (see section 7)   |
| 16.02.2018    | Preparation of detailed work-plan of core team members  | Core team  |
| 19.02.2018    | Preparation of brief review of each programme including its structure and functions of key positions and projects' 2 year achievements against logframe | Programme / Project Managers                                 |
| 09.03.2018    | Summary results of peer reviews (including field visits if any)   | Peer reviewers, supported by core team                       |
| 12-16.03.2018 | <i>Field visit of PC to state 6, including mini-workshop in Surkhet</i>   | <i>PC, others as appropriate</i>                             |
| 19-20.03.2018 | Mid-term review workshop in KTM   | Core team, CPMM <sup>3</sup> participants and peer reviewers |
| 21-23.03.2018 | Small group work on adaptation of the country strategy as necessary   | Core team, BKP and MS.                                       |

### Review structure (extracts from the guidance note)

The country strategy midterm review will be largely structured according to the guidance note produced by the Head Office K&L team. This review will look at the 7 fields described below:

- **CONTEXT:** Analysis of the changing **context** and embedment of the Country Strategy into it (relevance: is the ToC still valid?). This will particularly take into consideration
  - o Federalisation
  - o The space for INGOs to operate within the changing donor and government framework (including new acts, bills and plans that mean to guide and affect INGOs and their legal placement/status in Nepal).
- **COHERENCE:** Analysis of the implementation of the strategy and verification of strategic and thematic **coherence** with Donor and National Strategies (alignment: is the Country Strategy still in line with the most relevant overarching strategies?)
- **IMPACT & EFFECTIVENESS:** Assessment of the **portfolio's impact** and **effectiveness** (progress towards the set Results Framework: achievement of strategic objectives/milestones and evolution of Performance Indicators), organisational structure of the programmes and projects and the functions of key positions, location of offices and their outreach area.
- **EFFICIENCY:** Assessment of the Country Programme's **efficiency** (use of resources against obtained results, structure and functions of the Country Office portfolios) including the efficiency of projects and programmes' structure, and functions of key positions, line management, communication chain, decision making process including shared functions, shared offices etc

<sup>3</sup> Country Programme Management Meeting

- **CAPACITIES & SUSTAINABILITY:**
  - o Assessment of the internal HR capacities, chain of communication and line management of the Helvetas Nepal Programme (to be conducted in collaboration with the CO HR Coordinator)
  - o Assessment of the **capacities** of Strategic Partners, especially in local government, and **sustainability** (will achievements be maintained?)
- **MANAGEMENT:** Analysis of main **management** and strategic steering tools (MIS, M&E and HRD, learning, reflecting and sharing platforms and internal processes and procedures including control system: do instruments assure quality of programme interventions?)
- **NETWORKING & LEARNING: Networking and learning**, among programmes, projects, organization-wide and through regional collaborations and synergy (do synergy and collaborations enhance learning and strengthen teams?), assessment of potential strategic partners for joint acquisition, main competitors for the resources from key donors.

### Approach / Methodology

This may be summarised as follows:

- Documentation of the observation and reflection of the core team members and key staff
- Desk review of the key documents
- Oversee the compilation of the major results and achievements per programme/project over the first 2 years of the strategic period against the country strategy logframe. The programme managers will facilitate the production of thematic or contextual inputs within their teams, which will later be shared with the review team. As far as possible, they should structure their conclusions according to the seven fields outlined above.
- Organise a short peer review (through interviews with project/programmes teams, and if needed field visits) to shed light upon programme activities and ensure that the findings of these peer reviews are fed into the review workshop.
- Present the review findings at a review workshop, attended by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal staff working at both project and programme level (essentially CPMM participants and peer reviewers)
- Produce a review document in line with the deliverables, above.

The final review document should reflect the joint analyses of the core team members, as well as having the ownership of the country management team, the programme managers, and certain specific topic holders. Where any differences of opinion are held, these should be clearly noted.

### Functions within the country, programme and project offices

The review provides an opportunity to both analyse the functioning of the country office, the six programmes within the country programme and projects, and to review the functional mechanisms required for overall effective implementation. The topics below will be scrutinised in particular.

- o Security – past and present arrangements; future needs
- o Finance/admin/procurement/fiduciary risk – especially in the provision of TA
- o HR – staff turnover, time spent in recruitment, donor demands, capacity building...
- o MEL (KM & M&E) - website, number & quality of published products, corporate identity, feedback loops, monitoring & learning beyond reporting on performance indicators
- o Management structures and designation of authority – core management triangle; extended CO management team; fortnightly programme managers meeting; CPMM (Country Programme Management Meeting)
- o System of Focal Persons for GESI, KM, Security, HR....
- o Communication lines (programmes - projects; programmes - transversal themes; inside CO; CO – programme and project offices, etc.
- o Humanitarian assistance: how far does the NPL programme wants to go on this? What are the organizational issues?

Thematic accents will be addressed in the review workshop as a plenary discussion.

### **Peer review**

In order to nourish the analysis of synergies and collaboration between the different programmes and projects, peer reviews will be conducted. These should be organised immediately after the compilation of the major results and achievements per programme/project over the last 2 years – this information serving as the basis for the analysis.

The peer reviews should be conducted by 2<sup>nd</sup> line managers, if possible with a core team member, and may include field visits as/if necessary. The following pairings are suggested:

- TBSU & IWRM review CCDRM
- CCDRM & FSN review IWRM
- GESI & GG review EGDE
- IWRM & FSN review GG
- GESI/Elam & EF review FSN
- ENSSURE & SaMi review GESI
- GG & CCDRM review TBSU

Having gone through the relevant programme/project documents, the peer reviewers should decide whether and where a field visit would add significant insights. Geographically, field visits should focus on provinces 1,2 or 6; they should be coordinated by the core team to ensure that a contextual analysis of all three is obtained. The peer reviewers should announce latest by 23.02.2018 whether they deem a field visit necessary - and if yes, propose a programme to the core team. This will need to be completed and written up by 07.03.2018, latest.

### **Strategy review core team members**

The overall review process will be steered by Jane Carter and Lionel Giron, assisted by Ansu Tumbahangfe (Programme Office TBSU) and Dharani Ghimire (Finance Controller, CO). These four persons with two resource persons (Niraj Acharya and Om Khadka) will form the core team. Bharat Pokharel and Mona Sherpa will be regularly consulted throughout.

### **Reference material**

- Nepal Country Programme Strategy 2016 - 2020
- Programme strategy documents of each of the six current programmes (Food Security and Nutrition; Economic Growth and Decent Employment; Integrated Water Resource Management; Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management; Good Governance; and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion); responsibility for their timely delivery lies with the Programme Managers
- Project documents and the organogram of the key mandated projects (mainly SDC mandates)
- Local Governance Act 2015
- Local Government Operations Act 2017 and if other provincial level and other acts, national plans, strategies and donor strategies



## **TORs of peer reviewers**

As per section 5.2, the following will be the responsibilities of the peer reviewers:

- Review the major documents (Strategy, semi or annual reports, briefs, info sheet, fact sheet) of the respective programmes and projects within it to get the picture or understanding of programme's objective, strategy and alignment.
- Identify key issues to review with regard to the practical implementation of the programme – along with team structure, communication lines, responsibilities, etc
- Align the review with the current socio-political and economic context of the country i.e. federalization process.
- Develop a schedule along with methodology of the review process being innovative. If needed field trips can also be planned.
- Develop a brief observation report, share and consult with the respective programme team before finalizing it.
- Present the findings of the peer review along with the recommendation in the Mid-term review workshop in March (19<sup>th</sup>).