



Government of Nepal  
Water Energy Commission Secretariat

# SDG 6.5.1 Stakeholder Consultation Report Nepal

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## Executive Summary

The Water and Energy Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal, is the focal agency responsible for assessing and reporting the progress on achieving the SDG 6.5 which is to “implement, by 2030, integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate”. This document describes the Stakeholder Consultation for SDG 6.5.1 indicator, the degree of IWRM implementation, for Nepal.

Focal Agency /Convening Organization	Water and Energy Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal.
Number of survey invitees/organizations	46 invitees/45 different organizations
Number of respondents filling the forms	15
Participants at the Verification workshops organizations	38 persons (12 Females) /24 organizations

A Core Team was formed consisting of the Focal Person, Technical Consultant, and two experts from the GWP-Nepal/JVS, A list of participating institutions and the participants were finalized by this team. The Core Team revisited IWRM data portal, studied the requirements and reviewed the procedures. The Technical Consultant facilitating the process took the mandatory, self-paced training course online and successfully completed it. An online meeting with the GWP also took place to understand the parameter evaluation survey. Previous filled-in survey reports were also obtained and reviewed to better understand the evaluation procedure and to establish the benchmark.

The 6.5.1 monitoring guide was revisited and the procedure for consultation defined. The participants were identified and built upon the previous list of invitees for response reviewing list to exclude those who were currently not relevant or transferred to different roles/offices. These included the government sector (ministries, departments and provincial governments), the private sector, INGOs including the UN agencies, NGOs, academia, corporations, individual experts/consultants in the sector and user’s federations. There were altogether 46 organizations and individuals, excluding the focal agency, facilitators and the GWP Nepal /JVS, who were invitees to the survey.

An invitation package was prepared which contained (i) a letter explaining the background, purpose, approach and the expected input from the invitee, (ii) the complete survey instrument, including the instructions and the guidelines with link to the online survey form, (iii) the 2020 Baseline Data for reference.

The invitees or their institutions were emailed with the complete package on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, asking them to fill in the survey by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. A reminder email was also sent on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023. The invitation to survey letter explained the background, purpose, approach and inputs expected from the participants. Contact details were given for inquiry, if necessary. Follow up on telephones were also done to request the invitees to submit their responses. Some respondents filled in the online survey, some sent scanned filled in forms. There were about 15 participants who submitted online, filled in or telephonic discussions. Others expressed their wish to be included in the consultative process in an in-person workshop.

Each filled-in form, online and offline all, was scrutinized first for consistency between the score assigned and the status descriptions. Clarifications were made, when necessary, through telephone. Data in all the forms were compiled and analyzed. Final scores were assigned based on the participant’s input and synchronized with the threshold descriptions

adding in value judgements of the information from related areas. A draft report was prepared and shared among the Core Team members.

The draft report, after consent from the Team, was submitted to GWP and comments received. The report was further updated and shared with stakeholders in a verification workshop carried out on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2023. There were altogether 38 persons present in the consultative workshop representing different types of organizations as given below in Table 1. The actual list of participants and their details are included in Annex 1 of this report.

Almost a third of the participants at the validation workshop were female participants, 12 out of 38. The workshop started off with an introduction of the SDG reporting requirements, the procedures and went into the survey questionnaires and responses. Power point presentations were made describing the rationale in scoring and the filling in the descriptive part of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to comment on the scoring and text in the survey report. The agenda of the consultative workshop is presented in Annex 2 to this report.

*Table 1: Participants distribution in the verification workshop*

SN	Organization Type	Number of Participants
1	Government Sector	12
2	Private sector/individuals	7
5	Academia	5
3	INGOs including UN agencies	4
8	Consultants	3
4	NGOs	2
6	Corporations (semi government)	2
7	User's Federation	2
8	Facilitator Consultant	1
	Total	38

Detailed discussions on the scoring and the status/progress discussions were made. The facilitator consultant showed the updated survey response, including the distribution of individual scoring made by respondents for each question. Though the individual scores were shown the respondents identity was kept hidden. Participants also voiced their opinions on the updated scores, suggested some revisions and updates to the texts. There was unanimity in general that there still remains a lot to be done in IWRM implementation in Nepal.

The overall possible targets for 2030 were also discussed for “business as usual case” as well as the possible targets if the bottlenecks were addressed and the hurdles overcome. It was still agreed that the targets would still be short of the original 2030 targets set by the UN body. The government focal person and the program facilitator summarized the discussions, replied to the questions and stated the further steps in finalizing the report.

The Secretary of Water and Energy Commission Secretariat commended the efforts made by all the participants and highlighted the government's commitments in implementing IWRM. The government had adopted IWRM in its policy and plan instruments from the Water Resources Strategy (2002) and the Water Plan (2005). Since then there have been

shortcomings in implementing it with suitable Acts and other enabling instruments. Various policies, regulations and river basin plans are now being finalized and this should show our progress and commitments. It was suggested that we describe our progress and obstacles clearly in the reporting formats and the WECS would review the report before submitting it to the reporting agency.

The Secretary thanked the stakeholders for their valuable inputs and the GWP, JVS and the Consultants for supporting the government in preparing the parameter implementation report. She further stated that the country looks forward to continuous support in the future days in reporting this SDG implementation parameter, as well as in other programs accelerating implementation in Nepal.

The report has been updated to reflect the discussions and information obtained in the consultative workshop, including a few adjustments of the scores as was agreed in the workshop. The assessment further draws from the Consultant's continued engagement in the water sector drawing opinions and suggestions from a wider community from farmers, water users' communities, project and government officials to elected representatives and policy makers.

For further information, please see Nepal's SDG 6.5.1 Stakeholder Consultation Report for 2023, available from <https://www.gwp.org/en/sdg6support/sdgmap/>.

This assessment survey finds that there has been substantial progress in preparing for achieving tangible targets, but no measurable progress in indicators in whole are evident since the last assessment survey of 2020. It was stated that the policy formulation and preparation for implementation has been quite strong at the national level, but is lagging behind at the provincial or local levels of governance. The overall parameter progress remains stagnant at 37%, while the achievements differ amongst the four pillars that the parameter measures.

Some national level policies include National Water Resources Policy (2020) National Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy (2023). National Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy (2023), National Irrigation Policy (2023), National Comprehensive Watershed Management Strategy (2023), etc., which all have main IWRM principles or some elements embodied within them. The enactment of the much-anticipated revision of the National Water Resources Act (1992) and realigning it with the National Water Plan (2005) has still not been realized for almost two decades and it also needs to conform the new Constitution (2015). There has been a 10% increase in the enabling environment from 27% in 2020 to 37% in 2023.

Institutions and participation too have not been as accelerated as envisaged as the new Constitutional mandated institutions at the provincial levels and local levels are still maturing and confusion of roles and responsibilities still prevail. Meaningful participation of vulnerable communities and gender integration is slow to take off and show results. Institutions and participation show an overall decline of 11% from 51% to 40%, and the consultative workshop defined this primarily due to over reporting in Gender aspects in the previous reporting.

Management instruments are still much to be desired for the anticipated river basin plans, user oriented hydrometeorological data, pollution control measures, surface water and groundwater management instruments are all in various levels of development, if at all, and are not fully operational. There has been marginal increase from 36% to 40% this year.

The nation suffers from scarcity of funds to energize its overall growth and lots of priorities exist for the government such that the desired financing of IWRM supporting activities are difficult to be realized and far from satisfactory. The progress has been downgraded from 32% last time to 30% this time. There exist definite gaps in funding to meet the overall SDG targets, not only SDG6.5. Opportunities to tap into climate funding and loss and damage funds need to be tapped in and help address resilient and sustainable solutions in the water sector.

The previous conclusion, 2020, that the IWRM is yet to receive due priority at the cross - political level still holds true for the reporting period. At the current rate, achieving the goal in this indicator by 2030 will not be possible. It will require significant intervention for acceleration to achieve a modest improvement. Support for acceleration in IWRM implementation is required in demonstrating its effectiveness in addressing water security, sustainability and supporting the overall development path of Nepal.

### 1. **Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 1: 'Enabling Environment'**

The discussions on enabling environment primarily revolved on updating the data on policies and Acts related to WASH, watershed management strategy and the irrigation policy. These are the progress in the pillar relevant to enabling environment. All of which support or state IWRM principles. The legal scene is also improving with the Water Supply and Sanitation Act (2022) and the promising developments in getting the draft ready of the national Water Resources Act.

However, the local and provincial legal scenario remains stagnant, waiting for the federal laws to be enacted, while the policy scenario at the subnational level has marginally improved with the provinces attempting to form their policies and programmatic strategy. Draft river basin plans are ready, while some participants raised the question on the Irrigation Master Plan whose draft had been long finalized yet has not been tabled for government's adoption.

The costed plans of the WASH at 420 local municipalities and the setting up of N-Wash has certainly helped in management plans. The arrangements for transboundary arrangements have been in existence for quite some time, yet the meaningful engagement to realize the aspirations set forth in the agreements are yet to be felt by Nepal. Agreements and forums for discussion are nonetheless in place, and Nepal has been seeking solutions to reduce flooding instances in the southern Terai as well as contentions on quantifying benefits of multipurpose projects. This requires Nepal to be more proactive and skillful in negotiations supported by the highest level of political dialogue.

All these of these newer developments and updates on status do marginally raise the score under this pillar to 37%, and a lot remains to reach a level of 90% for meaningfully achieving the SDG target.

- (a) Main Challenges:** The main challenge in the enabling environment was unanimously stated to be the lack of political will and priority to address the water resource management issue head on. The legal framework and policy articulations at the various levels of government need to be univocal or complimentary in managing water resources, addressing shocks of overabundance (floods) as well as dry season low flows. The legal framework and regulations supporting it to implement the policies have been rather dismal over the years. It is unlikely that these can be expedited to enable meeting SDG targets in the next 6 years! Federated governance

system is very new to this country and therefore, clear demarcation of power, authority and responsibilities in principle and in operation in water resource management is yet to be fully recognized, institutionalized, and practiced at different levels of government. As a result, the plans, policies, acts and vision documents, which have already been prepared at national level, are neither gaining sufficient traction in implementation nor supported by adequate resources.

The policies, laws and plans, neither at the national level nor at the sub-national levels, have been successfully rolled out in practice due to issues in implementability.

The water resources are still largely viewed as a free resource for exploitation rather than management. No regulatory provisions with authority to sanction mis-users, or defining in legal terms what constitutes a mis-use is in practice. The River Basin Authorities are still not in place, due to the slow actions taken in reviewing the existing but dated Water Resources Act.

Widespread extraction of the groundwater is practiced, at places where it is available, with no regulation, inventory or even effective monitoring. Critical drinking water sources in the hill and mountain regions have been drying up impacting water availability and livelihoods. Climate change impacts have further exacerbated these issues and a concerted effort guided by laws, regulations and plans is much to be desired.

**(b) Addressing the Main Challenges:** Addressing the main challenge in the ‘enabling environment’ pillar - lack of political will and priority to address the water resource management issues head on – will have to include an approach of advocacy, sensitizing and demonstrating that this is going to work. Often the IWRM concept is termed to be vague and a pilot demonstration is desired. The legal framework and policy articulations at the various levels of government need to be made univocal or complimentary in managing water resources, addressing the extreme temporal and spatial availability of water resources, addressing water security - in quantity as well as quality- and furthering an integrated approach. Enable and translate the policy to practice prescribing suitable operational procedures and guidelines obtaining full political support. Sensitize and educate at all levels to break the traditional siloed institutional set up that is attuned to sectoral approach. Utilize the current opportunity of transitioning into the federal system and operationalize IWRM at all levels of governance.

Expedite approval of draft National Water Resources Bill. The Provincial and Local governments legal instruments also need to be formed or explicitly stated to devolve water governance to the local users’ level, gain meaningful participation including gender and marginalized communities in the decision-making process. This opportunity of the developing legal scenario of the local municipal and provincial governments (sub-national) need to be capitalized to be integrated approach to water resource management.

These plans need to be suitably empowered by the government with related changes in the water resources acts, developing institutions to implement the plan, monitor usage and ensure that the water resource development is sustainable and contributing towards national development goals and targets of prosperity.

The Nepal side in negotiations with riparian and international organizations need to be adept, trained and enabled with information to sit across the table to negotiate a just deal. Political understanding and cooperation are at the forefront in ensuring better arrangements for transboundary water management, so we need to foster high-level political understanding and commitments to build cooperation, collaboration and trust.

- (c) Perceived Rate of Progress:** The participants were unanimous in that the perceived rate of progress is very slow and the SDG targets needs to be revised in view of the current level of engagement. The likelihood of reaching a ‘High’ or a ‘Very High’ level of achievement is quite difficult. It was noted by some participants and agreed that the overall SDG targets are in general not attainable by Nepal as there was a large shortfall in resources as well as the government’s attention to more pressing and regular issues of governance.

Some important progress in setting up policies and regulations, especially in the WASH sector, has been made. Preparations for the revisions of the Water Resources Act have been ramping up recently with public consultations and updating the drafts. The targets need to be reset with a thorough assessment of capabilities and sustainable rate of progress. Interim target setting or revisiting the SDG goals in this respect is definitely required.

- (d) Major points of Difference amongst Stakeholders:** The stakeholders’ discussions did not reveal any major differences. Apportioning the challenge to the political will was, to some extent, stated to be reflected upon the civil servants’ capability to impart the importance to the leadership or the possibility of sticking to traditional siloed authority and not letting go. Also, the question of the IWRM applicability and the capability of the national and sub-national levels was a point for some discussions as some felt that the IWRM implementation should be a bottoms-up approach, the lower levels of governance units are the structures where all development efforts merge providing avenues for integration leading to better water resource management, better livelihood and sustainability. Some local level units are proactive in addressing IWRM approaches in programmatic ways in practice and not articulating them in policy documents.

Some discussions were also made on and supplemented the survey response in terms of including WASH related policy instruments, regulations and standards that were recently approved by the government. This was a welcome progress. A few questions were also raised on the Irrigation Master Plan (2019) and the new Irrigation Policy (2023), which were publicly perceived as finalized but were not legally in force as it was not approved by the government and published in the gazette. This was stated as an example in not following through on policy commitments or activities initiated. Timely completion of the started enabling activities such as Irrigation Master Plan, River Basin Management Plans were also stressed.

## **2. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 2: ‘Institutions and Participation’**

The discussions on this Section on ‘Institutions and Participation’ focused on discussing the IWRM roles of institutions and society at the national (federal) and local levels, participation

issues and the gender mainstreaming. There were some contentions on whether the developments since last reporting was a progress or did we go into regression, especially with regards to GESI mainstreaming. It was concluded that the roles and responsibilities of all three levels of governance levels must be clarified as per the Constitution, clear up duplicity in work mandates of institutions by restructuring or realigning them ensuring proper protocols for participation, GESI integration and inclusivity. It was also further stressed that the capacity needs of institutions need to be assessed and prioritized to enable them to function to fulfil their mandates.

It was also suggested to practice IWRM as a functional tool by requiring institutions to collaborate collectively. It was stated that the absence of a lead agency to implement WRM in the country was a critical factor and enabling environment for strengthening WECS as an agency leading IWRM efforts is still not achieved. The scoring has decreased from the previous score due to re-evaluation of the response to the questions, especially 'Question 2.2 d' related to status of "Gender mainstreaming in water resources management" which was reported in 2020 as being mostly achieved (activities adequately monitored and funded) – with a value of 80 suggesting that gender mainstreaming in WRM in Nepal has achieved a high level. This has been refuted by the stakeholders and the score has been revised to 50 (Medium-medium).

All these of these newer developments and correction on the status has decreased the overall score of this second pillar to 40 from the earlier score of 51. A lot remains to be done to reach a level of 90% or more for meaningfully achieving the SDG target.

**(a) Main Challenges:** The main challenge in the institution and participation pillar of IWRM was the weak institutional set up that has not been able to translate the policies, laws or plans into actions. Sectoral institutions exist practicing protectionism of their domains and the efforts to instill traction such as prescribed by the Water Resources Policy and the Climate Change Policy has been ineffective. The Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) is recognized as the lead agency for policy and planning in water and energy sectors. However, it does not have the required authority to enforce cross-sectoral integration, neither does it have it for executing field level projects implementing IWRM.

No government agency exists for taking the lead in implementing integrated water resources management. Several ministries are involved in water resources development, utilization, management and protection. Current feedback from provincial governments and local bodies, and endorsed by the stakeholders is that, there is no clear mandate for leading IWRM implementation. There exists no explicit mechanism for coordination between national government authorities in policy planning and management.

In terms of participation, the practice has fared a little better, as formulation of most policies and regulations are generally carried out through a process of public consultation and discussions at various fora, however limited it may be. Stakeholder mapping, prioritizing and identifying for consultations has been a standard practice in most of the development fields in Nepal as well as in the water resources sector. Adequate sample size, prior information and identifying the correct stakeholders are often criticized as being mere communication rather than meaningful consultation.

Participation issues are well accepted and endorsed by policy and institutional mechanisms from access to information, practices of consultation, promoting the involvement of vulnerable groups all exist in Nepal. Some procedures are in place, but it is with limited budget and human capacity for implementation. The Constitution has provisions of positive discrimination including affirmative action to address historical disadvantage, however the actual implementation and adoption in the institutions are slow and more effort is needed.

Gender mainstreaming and capacity building at the various levels remains much to be improved upon, including the organizational framework for transboundary water management.

- (b) Addressing the Main Challenges:** The situation is gradually improving. A well thought out institutional set up across the water and non-water sectors with matching mechanism for implementing IWRM needs to be developed and established with vertical and horizontal linkages (across all levels of governance). Implementation of integrated river basin development and management plan, which is under preparation, with effective institution at all levels to implement it, is the right way forward. Capacity building to institutionalize is the key to the success of the reformed institutional arrangement.

Policy and legislative instruments are already in place for mainstreaming GESI. However, capacity to implement it needs to be enhanced, particularly in the sub-national governments level. The river basin plans are being finalized with information to stakeholders, including related agencies and public consultations throughout the nation.

Sensitize and strengthen gender mainstreaming procedures. Develop indicators of mainstreaming first and define targets. Re-introduce the practice of setting up Gender Officer at each major office. Establish zero tolerance policies in gender-based discrimination, violence and offenses. Capacity building is to be made mandatory required for mainstreaming GESI at all three levels of government.

The way ahead should be to clearly define roles and responsibilities; mandates and authority; and allocate resources (skills and financial) to adopt IWRM principles in development and management of water resources and related spheres at both provincial and local governments. Basin organizations and authorities would be a good place to start.

Nonetheless, at lower levels of governance, the people's problems, demands and aspirations more or less become intertwined and integrated which intrinsically warrants integrated solutions and approaches. The local governments are gradually realizing the importance of water sector in their development efforts and sustainability requirements, and traction for IWRM or its principles are certainly taking roots.

- (c) Perceived Rate of Progress:** The participants were unanimous that the assessment score for GESI integration needs to be more realistic and downgraded to 'Medium-medium' status. This has brought down the aggregate score under the 'institution and participation' pillar to a more realistic 40% lower than the earlier reported value of above 50%.

**(d) Major points of Difference amongst Stakeholders:** The stakeholders' discussions did reveal strong objection to the previously scored value of 80% in the question related to 2.2 d. Furthermore, it was also brought to the notice that the participation has been better at local levels, with inputs from NGOs and INGOs. Their partnership needs to be recognized. One participant stated that the legacy of public participation in Nepal is historically rather high, whether in contribution in kind or simply integration in policy, programmes and projects formulation and implementation. The presence of new age procedures and government interventions have to some extent pushed the participation back and built a culture of dependency, e.g. in irrigation development.

Some members were that there were institutional developments and participation approaches that were already set in procedures and practices therefore the scoring value must be at par with the previous, if not better.

### **3. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 3: 'Management Instruments'**

It was agreed that the tools for integrated water resource management are gradually being developed and integrated while currently these are not in place. The geographic coverage by hydro-meteorological stations and upgrading capability for real time data acquisition needs to be improved while the performance of the DHM in terms of data collection, verification and release has been much improved. The groundwater data monitoring has recently received a setback with the dissolution of the Groundwater Resource Development Board. The monitoring and availability of groundwater near population centers as well as the declining spring yields in the mountain regions need to be studied in detail to prescribe solutions or mitigate water scarcity.

Pollution control is rather under-performing with limited management instruments. Some water quality standards for different usages are established but are not effectively enforced and gross pollution of water bodies persist. Recent enactments of Effluent Water Standard (2023), National Water Quality Standard (2023) since the last reporting is a positive trend. Regulation of prescribed Acts, laws and enforcement mechanisms need to be built further.

In terms of management of water related ecosystems and bio-diversity at the national level, some management instruments are implemented on a long-term basis, with adequate coverage across different ecosystem types and the country, such as the National Conservation Areas and Wildlife Parks. It was reported that the need is adopt pragmatic environmental flow requirements in due consultation with the wider community.

Early warning systems, weather and flood forecasts have greatly improved recently with a wider coverage, but the lead time of the forecasts need to be increased to meaningfully inform agricultural practices to prevent losses as was the case in October rainfalls in 2021 when the agricultural losses exceeded 0.6% of the national GDP.

**(a) Main Challenges:** The main challenge in the 'Management Instruments' has been in the setting up of data and monitoring system to enforce management instruments and science-based decisions. Often the capacity to develop the management systems are severely restricted and the instruments are not available at all domains and levels of enforcement. The challenges in management instruments span from developing operational policies, standards and monitoring and evaluation systems to promote

learning in all integrating sectors, developing capacities to roll out those instruments, aided by technology and innovation.

The government has limited capacity and resources to implement demand management measures, such as technical interventions, fiscal incentives, sensitizing, educating and raising awareness to reduce water use and/or improve water-use efficiency, conservation, recycling and re-use; water production and monitoring uses across different sectors, seasonal and annual availability of water resources in ungauged yet important river basins, inventory of water sources and uses (both current and future) are not available to enable a wholistic planning.

For example, no aquifer management instruments exist in the nation. Some monitoring of levels does exist in the Terai region, Kathmandu Valley and is picking up recently with groundwater monitoring wells. Limited water quality data is available and some sparing locations have monthly monitoring set up. These are hardly adequate to monitor and enforce regulations to control defaulters.

Challenges also exist in data standards, storage domains and server integrity. Who is going to be custodian of the data and ensure standards are maintained and compatibility ensured?

Migration and greater pressures on almost non-existing resources at urban and peri-urban centers are becoming critical. This has made water supply and sanitation, drainage and public access to services severely over-stretched with negative impact on watersheds, ecosystems and biodiversity. The current policy of 10% of minimum mean monthly discharge for downstream release is not compatible with aquatic ecosystem conservation goal.

- (b) Addressing the Main Challenges:** Challenges need to be prioritized with consultation with stakeholders to improve service delivery and identify doable and far-reaching activities. Investment need to be increased in enhancing the institutional capacity to increase geographic coverage and investment in infrastructures in data coverage and collection improvements, developing decisions support systems to inform best interventions, adopt better downstream release requirements in water projects, promote sustainable nature-based solutions in building resiliency and the above mentioned. Implementation of the existing management instruments should be improved. The existing policy on downstream release requirement should be revisited while recognizing multiple uses of water that are equally important for present and future generations.

Multi-level groundwater monitoring system and studies need to be enhanced to understand future responses of critical aquifers and mountain groundwater which sustain most the rivers in the winter time when rainfall is sparse.

A National Framework for Climate Services is desired to improve climate services information delivery and customizing into the end users. Develop protocols and procedures for data generation, verifications, storage, retrieval and archiving.

- (c) Perceived Rate of Progress:** The participants were allotted various scores, some optimistic and some too pessimistic. The score finalized is 41% only a marginal improvement over the previous reporting.

**(d) Major points of Difference amongst Stakeholders:** It was stated in the discussions and stressed in individual consultations that the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology's forecasts, observations and data are increasingly used for flood forecasting, anticipatory actions for floods and other uses - both locally and internationally. These are promising signs that must be recognized and promoted. This appeared to be contradicting the earlier status of questions on hydro-met data reliability and difficulty in accessing data.

#### 4. **Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 4: 'Financing'**

There is no specific budget allocation for IWRM elements in general. Budget allocation is mainly for infrastructure building and some allocation for recurrent costs in irrigation and water supply schemes. The common accepted view is that the financing in water sector has been rather low and is not adequate to address the policy directed interventions to enhance service delivery, improve resilience and meet SDG targets.

Budget allocation is not sufficient for meeting the targets set in the National Water Plan 2005, neither for capital investment nor recurrent cost. The newer investment needs identified by the National Adaptation Plan 2023 and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are also large and only partially met. The nation seeks international aid and grants to meet its commitments stated in NDCs.

There is no arrangement set for investment in IWRM elements although some investments are made on project or program basis. The sub-national governments have low capacity to invest in water sector.

New avenues for funding the water sector, especially tying it up with the climate change lenses, needs to be explored and the capacity to apply for such funds developed.

**(a) Main Challenges:** The main challenge in the 'Financing' in IWRM has been the paucity of funds. The demands of a developing nation are vast with unlimited areas for investment and getting an adequate amount of funds to inject in the water sector to promote IWRM is rather difficult. Budget allocation is not sufficient for meeting the targets set in the National Water Plan 2005, neither for capital investment nor recurrent cost. The newer investment needs identified by the National Adaptation Plan 2023 and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are also large and only partially met. The nation needs international aid and grants to meet its commitments stated in NDCs.

The actual disbursements in the water, energy and irrigation sector (under the Ministry) has decreased over the last two years by 10% and is expected to decrease further this year. Budget allocations is also lower in the current year than the previous years. In the drinking water and sanitation sector, the disbursements have been increasing though a lower allocation is made in the current fiscal year. Therefore, some budget has been allocated and it only partly meets the planned investments. Some budget allocated but partly covers planned investments, a lot of projects are not funded to be completed in time so that the anticipated benefits are accrued timely.

International funds, including climate related funds are extremely competitive and complex in processes. Cost recovery, whether capital costs or recurrent costs, both

remain predominantly issues, though the hydropower and water supply sector fare better than the irrigation sector.

- (b) Addressing the Main Challenges:** Finance is a major hurdle in meeting SDG goals, and various different approaches in terms of accessing funds, increasing efficacy and effectiveness of investments, mechanisms to monitor return on investment, whether direct or indirect benefits, all need to be sought to demonstrate the need and efficiency of investments.

Government needs to prepare for, develop capacity and skills for applying for and accessing international funds including climate funds, loss and damage funds, adaptation funds as well as the regular funding baskets from multilateral and bilateral agencies.

Procedures to improve accountability and transparency of expenditures and investments need to be demonstrated including integrating supporting area such as building resilience, targeting minorities and women, improving equity in development portfolios are also essential.

- (c) Perceived Rate of Progress:** The participants were allotted various scores, some optimistic and some too pessimistic. The score finalized and submitted in the assessment is 30% similar to the previous reporting.
- (d) Major points of Difference amongst Stakeholders:** Some discussions on whether the issues are weak implementation capacity and fiscal management in implementing projects. The low disbursement rates, delayed acceleration in disbursements at the end of fiscal year were cited by some as the sectors not being short of funds in investment but being slow in investments, failing to meet targets so that the allocated funds go unutilized.

## 5. Next steps

The following lists points suggesting the next steps in improving IWRM in Nepal. These are not necessarily in the order of importance.

- (a)** Advocacy must be carried out to promote IWRM at the highest decision-making level raising political awareness and commitment. This is to ensure their buy-in and enact the new Water Resources Bill as law as soon as possible.
- (b)** Promote policy auditing and making them more practical and doable. Incorporate multi-stakeholder consultation processes and utilize their support towards addressing national needs and priorities.
- (c)** Promote evidence-based water resource planning and management based on laws and regulations to make investment easier and targeted.
- (d)** Develop policy coherent laws, regulations and procedures.
- (e)** Clarify roles and responsibilities of all three levels of governance
- (f)** Develop legislative and policy instruments for implementing RBMPs and IWRM at all levels (enact laws and regulations)
- (g)** Clear up duplicity in work mandates of institutions by restructuring or realigning them

- (h) Ensure proper protocols for participation, GESI integration and inclusivity.
- (i) Assess and priorities capacity needs of institutions to fulfil their mandates, set realistic targets.
- (j) Practice IWRM as a functional tool by requiring institutions to collaborate collectively
- (k) Institutional Coordination and Capacity Building
- (l) Data and Technical capacity building
- (m) Formulate policies on data management, archiving and standards
- (n) Develop data sharing guidelines, standards and protocols identifying needs and uses
- (o) Prepare and update technological innovations, adopt new proven technologies and reduce chores and duplicity
- (p) Develop capacity and fund data management including improving disbursements.
- (q) Develop capabilities to access international funds and resources
- (r) Prioritize actions and projects to optimize returns from investments
- (s) Adopt transparency and accountability procedures in fiscal management.

## 6. Annexes

Annex 1: List of Participants

Annex 2: Agenda

Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments

Annex 4: Photos

## Annex 1: List of participants

### Workshop participants

SN	Name	Organization	Position	Email
1	Ms. Sarita Dawadi	WECS	Secretary	dawadisaritadoi@gmail.com
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3	Mr. Som Nath Poudel	JVS	Chair	poudelsn@gmail.com
4	Mr. Bal Krishna Prasai	JVS	Vice Chair	kulman1ghising@gmail.com
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### Other stakeholders engaged (invited to participate in survey)

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**Annex 2: Agenda**

**Government of Nepal  
 Water and Energy Commission Secretariat**

**Programme:** SDG 6.5.1 Survey (Degree of IWRM Implementation) 2023

**Validation Workshop of the SDG 6.5.1 Survey (Degree of IWRM Implementation)  
 2023**

Venue: Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, Kathmandu  
 Date: 22 December 2023 (06 Poush 2080), Friday  
 Time: 10:00 – 13:00

**Proposed Agenda**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
10:00 – 10: 15	Arrival of the participants (Tea/coffee/cookies)
<b>Chair: Ms Sarita Dawadi, Secretary, Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS)</b>	
10:15 – 10:20	Welcome: Dr. Kapil Gnawali, Senior Divisional Hydrologist, WECS
10:20 – 11:00	<b>Presentation:</b> Draft Report on SDG 6.5.1 Survey (Degree of IWRM Implementation) Dr. Laxman Sharma, Consultant, JVS/GWP Nepal
11:00 – 12:50	Discussions
12:50 – 13:00	Chair's Remarks Ms Sarita Dawadi, Secretary, WECS
	Lunch

End of the meeting

### **Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments**

The stakeholder consultation was carried out extensively, incorporating their feedback at multiple venues. Some of the participants stated that the questionnaire was too complex and required assistance in understanding and filling it. That may be the reason why the number of filled-in surveys were smaller than expected despite the repeated follow up.

Attempts were made to include organizations and users that were inclusive and diverse. The extent of survey was limited by resources.

Instructions were clear and a few respondents reached out to clarify the content. It must be noted that there was a very wide variation in the scoring system when the surveys were individually filled in. Collective consultation on the process and clarifications allowed us to reach a consensus after better defining the question and the existing scenario.

**Annex 4: Photos** (showing various participants and moments of the consultation)





