A Pilot Study on Improving Aid Transparency
May 2012

Prepared by:
NGO Federation of Nepal
Buddhanagar, Kathmandu
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAMN</td>
<td>Alliance for Aid Monitor Nepal</td>
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<td>AMP</td>
<td>Aid Management Platform</td>
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<td>CAHURAST</td>
<td>Campaign for Human Right and Social Transformation</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>DDC</td>
<td>District Development Committee</td>
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<td>DP</td>
<td>Development Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Council</td>
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<td>FACD</td>
<td>Foreign Aid Coordination Division</td>
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<td>FY</td>
<td>Fiscal Year</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GoN</td>
<td>Government of Nepal</td>
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<td>IATI</td>
<td>International Aid Transparency Initiative</td>
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<td>IDS</td>
<td>International Development Statistics</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MoF</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
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<td>NFN</td>
<td>NGO Federation of Nepal</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PDE</td>
<td>Paris Declaration Evaluation</td>
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<td>SWC</td>
<td>Social Welfare Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>The United Nations</td>
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<td>VDC</td>
<td>Village Development Committee</td>
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Acknowledgement

Foreign aid has remained an integral part of the overall development of the country since the beginning of planned development in Nepal in the 1950s. Despite billions of rupees received in the country as foreign aid over the past decades in the form of grants, donations, charity and loans, the effectiveness of foreign aid in terms of producing intended results has remained far from satisfactory. Foreign aid and its governance has been one of the highly debated issues in development in recent times and particularly, the discourse on foreign aid transparency in the changed context. The issue requires comprehensive study not only for the assessment of its fundamental flaws but also to identify solutions to ensure that aid reaches its target groups in an effective manner. NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) carried out a survey with the support of the aidinfo program at Development Initiatives Poverty Research UK on aid transparency with the objective to find the obstructions posed in aid effectiveness and transparency and offer solutions to overcome them. This study focuses on the access to information by local NGOs about foreign aid and also captures their perceptions on aid and seeks to explore the possibilities for them to be transparent about their own funds and activities.

Special thank is due to Mr. Deepak Pokhrel for his contributions to the survey, who worked as research assistant throughout this study. Similarly, NFN highly appreciates the role of Central Board members of NFN who have made the study possible by engaging themselves in many ways. NFN acknowledges Mr. Daya Sagar Shrestha, Executive Director of NFN, for his contribution in facilitating the process and providing technical inputs to the research team. NFN acknowledges the efforts of Mr. Hum Bhandari, Mr. Bishnu Pahkarel and Mrs. Pramila Kasaju to this study from the very beginning. Thanks are due to Ms. Sabhyata Timsina for her contribution to editing the report. All relevant NFN district and regional committees have coordinated to this study and have provided very useful information. NFN is also grateful to other partner organizations such as Alliance for Aid Monitor Nepal, Young Innovations Pvt. Ltd., Freedom Forum, and CAHURAST Nepal for frequent sharing of ideas, experiences and findings coming from other research which helped to sharpen the finding of this survey. Thanks are due to Victoria Room, Policy Advisor of aidinfo, who has consistently
provided the support to NFN by engaging in interactions with the survey team that helped in refining the research questions and methodology, linking the research team to other on-going processes and forums related to the studies on aid transparency and providing feedback to the draft report. Last but not least, NFN would like to thank Development Initiatives Poverty Research Pvt. Ltd., for providing the required financial support to conduct this study.

**NGO Federation of Nepal,**
Kathmandu, Nepal
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Executive Summary

Development effectiveness has been a major issue in development discourse, strongly linked to foreign aid governance and its transparency and accountability. Despite the influx of foreign aid in Nepal’s development sectors, little has been achieved in producing intended results. The governance of foreign aid and its transparency has been much debated in recent years. Moreover, the lack of transparency and access to aid information and their traceability on part of the local NGOs/CSOs has also been an issue highly scrutinized but unattended.

Taking this issue into consideration, this study was carried out to assess the situation of aid information and its accessibility to Nepali NGOs/CSOs working at grassroots level. Five districts Kavre, Kaski, Parvat, Makawanpur and Morang were selected as the study sites. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected from NGOs via structured questionnaires and consultative workshops that were organized at the regional and national level. In each event, the concerned stakeholders put forth their invaluable opinion about issues concerning foreign aid. They not only identified the flaws in aid effectiveness but also pointed out measures to make foreign aid more transparent.

Foreign aid has been perceived differently by NGOs concerned with different development issues. However, the commonly held perception of foreign aid is that of a kind of assistance provided by developed countries to developing countries for the purpose of developmental activities. Foreign aid is seen to be necessary when the internal resources are insufficient. Many NGOs are aware that bilateral and multilateral donors provide aid in Nepal. Most NGOs consider aid providers as lacking transparency and believe that aid is not benefitting the target groups. Of the presently available information on aid, the type of information NGOs consider useful include call for proposal, funding criteria and areas and sectors in which fund is received. Newspaper and websites are the major mediums through which information on aid is gathered. NGOs perceive INGOs, UN Agencies and Social Welfare Council (SWC) as chief aid information providers. Still, many NGOs expressed the available information as not very reliable. Access to information is not easy. Funding agencies do not make the information public, which is the prime reason behind the inaccessibility. Similarly, the available information is not adequate though useful to some extent. Information on the types of support, amount of aid available, organizations
eligible to receive support, medium the aid is available, objective of support, time of availability, reporting system; results produced by aid would be valuable to NGOs and invariably beneficial. NGOs prefer the information be made available directly by the concerned agencies. The need for a separate mechanism to carry out this responsibility was also emphasized in the responses of the NGOs.

The survey revealed that availability of actual information could be a challenge in acquiring information. Daily newspapers are the easiest way to acquire aid information, followed by related websites. Information should be disseminated both in English and Nepali language. NGOs prefer information to be made available regularly on a quarterly basis. The outcome of the survey highlighted the role of the government that it should take the responsibility of developing policy for aid transparency and monitor its implementation while donor partners and INGOs should comply with international commitments including Paris Principles, Accra Agenda of Action and Busan Outcomes. The Aid Management Platform under Ministry of Finance and SWC could be appropriate mechanism to deliver the information on aid while District Information and Documentation Centers under the DDCs could be developed as information hubs at the local level. Moreover, NGO Federation of Nepal could play an active role in capacity development of NGOs for public budget analysis and advocacy for aid effectiveness. Similarly, it can be an appropriate platform for the implementation of the Istanbul Principles of CSO development effectiveness.
1. Background Information

Foreign aid plays an important role in Nepal’s overall development process. Nepal has been receiving the foreign aid since late 1950s. The main sectors receiving foreign aid are education, local development, health and roads, followed by drinking water, energy, agriculture and peace and rehabilitation. Various economic and financial reform programs also receive significant external support.

Nepal receives official development assistance from over 40 donors, including 35 resident agencies. In the fiscal year 2010-11, by disbursement, United Kingdom is Nepal’s largest bilateral aid donor, and the World Bank and Asian Development Bank are the largest multilateral donors respectively. World Bank committed over US$ 660 million in new projects, followed by Asian Development Bank with US$ 302 million and China with US$ 115 million. New commitments focused on health (US$ 290 million), electricity and energy (US$ 240 million), education (US$ 208 million), road transportation (US$ 168 million), local development (US$ 120 million) and urban development (US$ 110 million) (Development Cooperation Report, 2010-11, Ministry of Finance)

While the influx of foreign aid has increased considerably in the recent past, the efficiency and efficacy of the support has been questioned from various angles. Despite the constant flow of foreign aid and decades of aid-financed development efforts, Nepal remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with per capita income of about US$ 473 (as of July, 2009). Foreign aid plays an important role in Nepal’s socio-economic development, representing 26 percent of the national budget. (Development Cooperation Report, 2010-11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<td>603.29</td>
<td>696.56</td>
<td>855.31</td>
<td>820.50</td>
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Source: OECD DAC online database

1.1 Aid Management Platform

The Ministry of Finance is mandated for the overall coordination of foreign aid in Nepal, including its allocation in line with national priorities. The Foreign Aid Coordination Division (FACD) of the Ministry of Finance is empowered, among others, to oversee the
Government’s activities in the area of aid coordination, harmonization and alignment. For the purpose of aid transparency and aid predictability, the Aid Management Platform (AMP), an online web-based information system, has been set up in the Ministry of Finance. All development partners have been given access to this and requested to report regularly. In addition, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Population and Ministry of Local Development have been given pilot access to this system, which will be extended in 2012 to all ministries receiving foreign aid. Ministry of Finance is planning to make key aid information available to the public through its website in 2012 with the help of AMP, and to conduct a number of outreach activities with all concerned stakeholders, including Parliament, civil society and Government officials.

1.2 Aid effectiveness: International commitments and instruments

The Paris Declaration Established Principles for Monitoring Aid Transparency

Paris Declaration, 2005 has set up five principles on aid effectiveness:

i. **Ownership:** Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction and meeting other development goals. They should own the policies and programs that receive development assistance.

ii. **Alignment:** Donors should align their aid with the systems and processes that exist in recipient countries, including those countries’ planning, and administrative and budget systems. In addition, aid should be aligned with recipient countries’ development priorities and national strategic plans.

iii. **Harmonization:** Donors should co-ordinate their aid, simplify their procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

iv. **Managing for results:** Aid should be structured in such a way as to focus on desired results. Information should enable the measurement of results and improving decision-making in this respect.

v. **Mutual accountability:** Donors and recipient countries should hold each other accountable for their mutual commitments and the results achieved with development aid.
The delegates at the Paris high level forum also agreed to a set of 10 indicators for monitoring progress in implementing the five principles. After 2005, progress in meeting these principles was slow. According to a 2008 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration, only two of the five principles were met three years later.

**Accra Agenda for Action Recognizes Aid Transparency and Civil Society Role as Vital**

The Accra meeting was different in the sense that it had much more prominent representation from civil society, besides donors and government leaders. At this meeting, delegates reviewed progress in implementing the Paris Declaration and agreed to the Accra Agenda for Action: a set of strategies to deepen the principles and accelerate their implementation.

The Accra meeting saw a growing recognition of the vital role that information plays in the aid arena, and that better access to better information is key to implementing the Paris Declaration and improving aid effectiveness. For example, without accurate and timely aid information, it is impossible for recipient countries to plan effectively and really exercise ownership. Likewise, it is impossible to monitor and improve the results of aid allocations with sound information on the flows and outputs of aid expenditure.

Therefore the need for greater aid transparency was an important theme that emerged as part of the Accra Agenda. Delegates agreed to specific aims and agreements on aid transparency – these are contained in the Accra International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) statement.

IATI is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative that includes donors, partner countries and CSOs. The main purpose of IATI is to set the necessary conditions and systems in place to make aid more transparent. This includes the adoption of a common standard for the publication of information about aid. The idea is not to create another international database, but rather to make sure that existing databases and information sources work in ways that make data more reliable, timely, accessible, open and comparable. IATI also seeks to expand the availability of aid information by including data from a wider range of actors including NGOs.
The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action: Engagement of Nepal

The Government of Nepal (GoN) is an active participant in regional and international forums addressing aid effectiveness. A delegation participated in the 2nd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and endorsed the Paris Declaration in March 2005. Nepal also participated in the 3rd and 4th High Level Forum in Accra in 2008 and in Busan in 2011 respectively, committing to the Accra Agenda for Action and Busan Development Partnership. This is part of a long-standing interest in aid effectiveness that predates Paris and Accra.

GoN volunteered to take part in the 2nd Monitoring Survey on the Implementation of the Paris Declaration in 2008. The survey was coordinated by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) with the assistance of UNDP and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The findings of the survey have been crucial in informing the emerging baseline scenario of the aid management landscape of Nepal. The process, as well as the findings, facilitated dialogue among primary aid management stakeholders. Encouragingly, GoN, its development partners (DPs) and civil societies have used the results which emerged from the monitoring survey widely in support of applying best practice principles to the aid relationship. This has strengthened and extended the interest in aid effectiveness.

The findings of the monitoring survey from all participating countries influenced the Accra Agenda for Action. The GoN representatives and the Secretariat circulated the Nepal Country Report amongst participants at the 3rd High-Level Forum in Accra. A poster was displayed at the "Marketplace of Ideas" session containing three success cases of aid effectiveness in Nepal, (Nepal Peace Trust Fund, the Sector Wide Approach - SWAp - in the education sector, and the SWAp in the health sector).

GoN has also been actively participating in the IATI, initiated by a group of DPs during the Accra High Level Forum. Nepal is represented on the Steering Committee and in the Technical Advisory Group, playing an active role in both. The Finance Secretary participated in and delivered closing remarks at the IATI conference held in the Netherlands in October 2009.
Paris Declaration Evaluation Phase II Nepal.

In support of its drive for more transparent and accountable aid, GoN is in the process of developing an aid management information system. Involvement of Nepal Government in PDE II is a further indication of its commitment to aid effectiveness and it expects the evaluation to provide recommendations that will strengthen GoN’s efforts towards aid effectiveness. In addition to PDE II, the Government has participated in the 3rd Monitoring Survey held in early 2011.

Fourth High Level Forum in Busan, Korea in 2011

Fourth high level forum followed the High Level Forums held in Rome (2003), Paris (2005) and Accra (2008) and concluded the OECD/DAC-led process on aid effectiveness that was launched by the Paris Declaration in 2005. As such, the Busan High Level Forum appeared to be a major milestone and turning point for the global aid effectiveness agenda. The conference assessed the achievement of the Paris Declaration and targets and the commitments of the Accra Agenda for Action. Significantly, the event has also charted out future direction for more effective development aid and contributes towards new international aid architecture as follow up to the Paris process. The 2015 MDG deadline and the biennial ECOSOC development Cooperation Forum will be of particular relevance in this regard and are likely to put the UN system in the limelight during the negotiation.

The Busan delegates have focused their discussion on new partnership for development while the global progress is seen improving the impact and value for money of development aid. The forum has focused on the results of the survey that defines the roles and responsibilities of both donors and partners. It has assessed whether they are following their mutual commitment to ensure effective development. Similarly, it also assessed the global progress in improving the quality of aid.

As Nepal is undergoing tremendous changes in the political front, the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness has been viewed as crucial for economic development and prosperity of Nepal. The agreement reached at Busan on first December is intended to
expand the commitments of the 'Paris Declaration 2005' to accommodate new actors and contexts. In particular:

- It attempts to broaden the application of Paris Principles beyond aid to “development cooperation”;
- It defines how Paris Principles are intended to apply to new actors and contexts, such as emerging donors, fragile states, and the private sector; and
- For the first time, civil society organizations have been included in formal negotiations as development stakeholders in their own right.

1.3 Civil society organizations/NGOs and foreign aid in Nepal

Up until the early 1990s, the Government used to run nearly all public social service programs. If the government did not run a program, it controlled all of the money that came from donor countries that was meant to go to and encourage small grassroots movements and local nonprofit agencies. Hence, there were few incentives for individual Nepalese to establish organizations and services that could meet the social needs of their communities. In addition, the bureaucratic process to obtain funds was daunting and often did not lead anywhere.

After the people’s movement and subsequent democratic reforms that took place in 1990, the Nepalese government made a provision that local NGOs could now directly contact international INGOs and donor governments for "technical, material and financial assistance" to meet their organizational goals.

Social Welfare Council (SWC) is the only institution responsible for coordinating the work of INGOs in Nepal and for lending approval of foreign aid to local NGOs. Since the early nineties, the number of NGOs and INGOs in Nepal has grown dramatically. The diversity of NGOs in terms of size, thematic areas and locality results issues of access to aid information amongst NGOs.

In this context, NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN), an umbrella organization of the NGOs in Nepal, commenced a study on Improving Availability of Aid Information to NGOs in Nepal. This study was entirely a pilot study on aid transparency that was put
2. Objectives of the study
With assessment of the situation of aid effectiveness in Nepal being the prime objective of the study, the specific objectives under it were as follows:

- To find out and document the information needs of NFN members, and the best ways for NFN members to access such information.
- To find out and document the incentives and challenges for them to provide information on their own activities.
- To document the best practices on aid transparency for NGOs.

3. Limitations
The limitations of the survey were as follows:

- NGOs were targeted for the purpose of survey. In this case, the observations of the NGO representatives may not make an exact reflection of the general public. The aid information need, accessibility and understanding of the NGOs have limited application elsewhere.
- Analysis of data is based on opinions of the respondents hence the reliability of the analysis depends on the reliability of the opinions.

4. Methodology
   Location of Survey
Five districts were selected at random for the study, which included Kavre, Kaski, Parvat, Makwanpur and Morang. While choosing the survey locations, the districts with high number of active NGOs were given due consideration. NFN worked together with district based chapters and other concerned stakeholders during the district identification process.

   Types of Data
Altogether 29 relevant questions were designed to obtain primary data – both qualitative and quantitative. However, relevant websites, reports articles and presentation were reviewed to obtain secondary information.

   Population and Sample Design
Survey was conducted in five districts of the country. The respondents of the survey covered 15 percent of NFN member NGOs in the identified districts. They were selected on a random basis.
**Data Collection Technique**

Structured questionnaires were prepared to reflect the various issues related with foreign aid. The questionnaires were administered to the concerned stakeholders to gauge their perception about foreign aid related issues, and identify measures to make it more transparent and effective.

As a part of the survey, regional level consultation meetings were held in all five Development Regions of the country. In each event, the concerned stakeholders including government line agencies, DDC, INGOs, CSO federations and alliances, local NGOs, media persons and local representatives from political parties put forth their opinion about the issues concerning foreign aid. They not only attempted to identify the flaws that affected the aid effectiveness but also suggested measures to make the foreign aid more transparent.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Regions and Locations</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Far-western Development Region: Dhangadhi</td>
<td>23 March 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mid-western Development Region: Nepalgunj</td>
<td>27 March 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Western Development Region: Pokhara</td>
<td>26 March 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Central Development Region: Hetauda</td>
<td>13 March 2012</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Eastern Development Region: Biratnagar</td>
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Similarly, a national level consultation meeting was held in Kathmandu on 9 May 2012 to bring the concerned stakeholders together to discuss the situation regarding the availability and accessibility of information on aid and problems on aid information and measures to overcome those obstacles to make aid transparent. Both the events focused on debatable issues surrounding foreign aid.

**Data Analysis**

The collected data was analyzed at length by experts with adequate knowledge on relevant themes and issues. The statistical tools such as frequency and central tendency were applied while analyzing the data and information. Interpretation of the findings is based on the numerical and qualitative data obtained during the survey.
5. Analysis of key findings

The understanding of aid
In the Panchayat era (1960-1990), there were legal restrictions for establishing independent organizations and hence only a few NGOs existed in Nepal during the period. However, after the restoration of democracy in 1990, citizens took initiatives to get organized under various CSOs because they were encouraged by the new constitution which guaranteed the rights of the people to get organized, right to assemble and freedom of expression. According to the survey, it can be estimated that more than 50 percent of the NGOs in Nepal were formed between 2000-2009.

Table 3: Formation of NGOs

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<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-1989</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000-2009</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>2010 and after</td>
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In the course of study, the stakeholders reemphasized the common opinion about aid and its significance in developing countries like Nepal. They identified that foreign aid is the assistance to carry out developmental activities by the recipient country. Likewise, during the consultative meetings, participants from state and non-state agencies have also put forth similar views with regard to foreign aid in Nepal. The survey data revealed that about one-third of NGOs started their work with support from foreign aid channeled through various sources, and more than 50 percent NGOs received their first foreign aid after 2000.

Table 4: NGOs receive first foreign aid

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>1989 and before</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2009</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 and after</td>
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The UN agencies, bilateral donors, international banks, embassies, and INGOs have been identified as the major funding agencies by NGOs. Aid transparency is a precondition for aid effectiveness and which leads to development effectiveness. This has remained an issue of high concern for countries receiving aid. In Nepal, over
65 percent of the NGO respondents said that they were very little aware about issues regarding the transparency of funding agencies. Possible reasons for this could be the hidden interests of the funding agencies, that target groups do not have access to relevant information, funding agencies do not abide by the law of the land, financial irregularities within the funding agencies and so on.

Figure 1: Awareness on transparency of aid

The key objective of any kind of aid in the country is for it to contribute to the reduction of poverty and inequalities in the country, whether it is channeled through government or non-government agencies. But most NGOs seem to perceive aid money as not really benefitting the target groups. In this regard, the leakage of the aid could be one of the major issues in terms of aid management in the country. When asked whether aid really reaches the target groups benefitting them, over two-third of the respondents chose to say 'partially yes'. It can be assumed that there is a lot to be done for the effectiveness of the aid money so as to bring about tangible results at the grassroots level. Thus the transparency and traceability of aid seems more important to find out the inherent problems that hinder the deliveries of development programs.

Figure 2: Is aid benefitting the target groups?
Initially and when external financing was not much available, some NGOs carried out their activities without any support from donors. Funds were raised within local communities and from well-wishers. They functioned well and worked with the spirit of true volunteerism and non-profit making. However, along with the dramatic rise in the number of NGOs with their significant role in social development, they started seeking more resources. At the same time, there came along the increasing trend and availability of external aid, making the NGOs largely dependent on external support. In the course of study it was found that the lack of internal resources was the major causal factor behind seeking foreign aid. This was followed by lack of access to government resources. The Call for Proposals announced by various donor partners are encouraging the NGOs to seek funds for implementing various project activities.

Figure 3: Why NGOs seek foreign aid

In fact, NGOs emerged in Nepal as national development partners after the revival of multiparty democracy in 1990. They are seeking and receiving foreign aid for the implementation of development programs. Likewise, the on-budget aid makes 26% of the national budget. However, very few NGOs agreed that the results so far are satisfactory. It raises the questions of development effectiveness and transparency of aid. But, the issues of aid transparency are still unheard of for many NGOs.

Information on aid
The majority of NGOs preferred newspapers as the key medium to access information related to foreign aid. Primarily, the information being obtained is related to call for proposal, funding criteria, funding priorities, limitations and requirements for funding and areas and sectors that funding agencies want to invest in. Also, a few respondents suggested that such information could also be accessed through publications and reports and participation in the programs organized by the concerned organizations. Moreover, websites were viewed as a major source of information, albeit
access to and practice of using internet is still not wide enough among the NGOs. In addition, it was suggested that information could be acquired through the concerned agencies and from networking with other NGOs which may already have the required information.

**Figure 4: Ways to get information on aid**

According to the perception of NGOs, INGOs and UN Agencies are the chief aid information providers. This indicates that the roles of INGOs and UN Agencies are more visible or familiar among the NGOs at local level. Diverse views on reliability and availability of information related with foreign aid were forwarded by NGOs. As shown in Figure 5, majority of the NGOs seem doubtful of the available information probably because the validity, transparency and accountability of the information circulating agencies are not well-monitored.

**Figure 5: Is the available information reliable?**
Accessibility and Availability

In both activities--survey and consultative programs--the majority opined that foreign aid related information is beyond their access due to various reasons. Most of them highlighted that it is a daunting task to have access to genuine information while others expressed that such information was rarely available and thus difficult to access. Language, Kathmandu centric structures, nepotism and favoritism were seen to be the major constraints in the process of accessing such information. Hence, the NGOs find a number of hindrances in the accessibility of information. The major reason behind this is that funding agencies do not sufficiently make the information public. Whatever information is available in the newspapers is insufficient, so it is observed that NGOs will ultimately have to search the websites of the concerned organizations or look for other sources. On the other hand, lack of knowledge about useful medium of acquiring information, reluctance on the part of organization to provide information, and lack of interest in acquiring such information are other factors that do not allow access to information. NGOs do receive some information on aid but is inadequate.

Figure 6: Is available information adequate?

When information was accessible, the information seemed to widen their knowledge about report writing and funding agency identification process, call for proposal and working modality with the objective and nature of the program. The available information was deemed useful to some extent, but more than 50 percent NGOs responded that the available information was only partially useful. The main kind of information used by NGOs of Nepal are
information related to call for proposal, information related to their working areas/sectors, program objective and budget, comprehensive information on funding agencies and details of donor’s priorities and resources.

It was predominantly raised in the regional and national consultation meetings that aid transparency is essential for aid effectiveness. When aid information is more transparent and easily accessible in an integrated, open and comparable form, it increases possibilities of an active engagement of civil society on aid, development and advocacy. Besides, adoption of international standards like IATI in publication of aid information is necessary so as to have more consistency, clarity and usefulness of the available information. It will need some mechanism and motivation on the part of stakeholders.

![Figure 7: How useful the available information is](image)

**Information Need**
The comprehensive information of funding agencies, including type and amount of support, duration, and objective were identified as the major information benefiting Nepalese NGOs.
Other findings illustrated daily newspapers as an effective medium to gather foreign aid related information. Furthermore, they pointed out that websites and email were other effective ways to gather information. Interestingly, about 48 percent of the NGOs expressed preference to obtain this information in two languages--English and Nepali--for many people are not well-conversant with English.

Again, about 73 percent of the NGOs opined that there was no access to actual information. With regard to accessible information, NGOs expressed that the available information was too difficult to understand.
Figure 10: Easiest ways to acquire aid information to NGOs

Time interval and frequency are other important factors that determine effective delivery of aid information from the funding sources. About 78 percent NGOs expressed that it would be better if the information is available in quarterly basis. It can be derived that they are seeking more regular updates of information which is not systematically managed at present.

Figure 11: Basis of time of information availability that NGOs prefer

Regarding the role and responsibilities, the respondents said the government should act as a facilitator while funding agencies should clearly disseminate the objective and nature of their support. On the other hand, NGOs should play an active role in channeling the
resources among the target beneficiaries to bring about substantial change. Additionally, NGOs are more readily able to receive the accessible information on aid and take up their roles by contributing to deliver the information to the public and using it for their advocacy. Thus the vibrant NGOs can contribute to holding the donors and governments accountable to their actions and obligations.

**Information Dissemination by NGOs**
The major medium of information dissemination by most NGOs is the publication of bulletins and social audits. Disclosure of information was identified as the key way to increase the credibility of the NGOs. It could help in eliminating the general misconceptions held about NGOs in Nepal. However, some NGOs, although nominal in number, who did practice disclosure, expressed that doing so had no such advantage. Few NGOs said there is a possibility of political interference. For instance maybe they demand jobs for their nearest and dearest. The survey illustrates the NGOs’ need for appropriate mediums of information dissemination at the central and local level.

**6. Conclusions**
Aid transparency in Nepal has been the major discourse in aid governance as in other parts of the world. The major concerns surrounding aid governance are the perceptions of people regarding its access to information about aid and effectiveness of aid in terms of achieving development goals. People perceive foreign aid to be a source of assistance from developed countries to carry out development activities in developing countries like Nepal.

During this survey, the respondents have expressed the common opinion about the importance of aid in Nepal as the crucial resource to alleviate poverty and ensure social justice. Local NGOs identify the UN Agencies, bilateral donors, international banks, embassies, and INGOs as the major funding agencies. The lack of access to aid information has been considered one of the causes that obstruct aid transparency.

NGOs active in the local areas acquire information about aid through national newspapers and websites. However, there are some NGOs which lack the capacity to access aid related information through these mediums. Moreover, the survey revealed the hindrances in gaining such information as being the barrier caused by language
and the ambiguity in the format of available information, sometimes too complex to comprehend.

SWC and the Ministry of Finance have been considered by the respondents as some of the institutions that can expansively disseminate information on aid. The information would be required in both English and Nepali, keeping in mind the proficiency of local level NGOs in the Nepali language.

On the part of the NGOs, transparency of aid, programs and budgets appear to be crucial in increasing their credibility and these are directly linked to the aid transparency with the donors, INGOs and government. It helps to improve the misconception of people about NGOs.

7. Recommendation and future direction

Information required
The minimum information regarding aid that can be made available and which could benefit NGOs is listed below. It is important that funding agencies consider the IATI standard before deciding on information that is made accessible.

1) Name and address of the funding agencies
2) Types of support (Cash, kind or technical support)
3) Amount of aid available
4) Kind of organizations eligible to get support
5) Medium that the aid is made available in
6) Objectives of support
7) Date on which aid was received
8) Duration of support
9) Installment amount of aid
10) Report on aid/support
11) Accountability to aid
12) Achievements of aid money

Mechanisms
In order to improve the availability of information to the NGOs, there should be two types of mechanisms: first, the mechanisms at the national and local level, which would disseminate the information in an integrated manner according to one window system and second, the concerned agencies which provide aid in the country.
Since SWC is the only government institution to facilitate the NGOs’ activities, it should be developed as a mechanism to disseminate information in an integrated way, specifically aid being channeled from INGOs. The existing database system of SWC should be consolidated in such a way that it is able to accomplish this.

The Aid Management Platform under the Ministry of Finance could work as the best mechanism on behalf of the Government in disseminating information on aid related issues along with donors or development partners including bilateral and multi-lateral agencies.

District Information and Documentation Centers (DIDC) under the DDCs in the district could be built up as information hubs on aid at the local level. Funds available in the district, whatever the sources, should be made available in DIDC and should be published every three months in local newspapers. However, DIDCs do require proper guidance and support to pick up this new responsibility. Capacity development package including policies, system, human resource, some funds, training are significant for progress and development.

Language
Information should be disseminated both in the English and Nepali language so that local NGOs can easily comprehend information and hence access available resources.

Interval of information dissemination
Funding agencies, MoF and SWC should disseminate updated information at least on a quarterly basis. The NGOs could benefit from this as their task of comparing, analyzing and monitoring the aid flow and its utilization would be much easier.

Roles of government agency
Appropriate policies should be formulated by the Ministry of Finance to enhance the transparency of aid information. Further, MoF can adopt the role of a facilitator and coordinator, monitoring closely the activities of concerned agencies and ensuring their compliance to government policies. Similarly, at the local level DDCs should partner NGO Federation’s district chapters and play the role of coordinator and monitor.
Roles of Funding Agencies
Donor partners including bilateral and multilateral organizations should respect the laws of the land and work for national priorities, maintaining institutional good governance. They should take responsibility to disseminate basic information as repeatedly discussed in this report. They should act in coherence with international commitments such as Paris Declaration, Accra Agendas of Action and Busan Partnership document and the IATI standard. They should follow the Foreign Aid policy of the government and supply aid that contributes to National Development Plans and policies.

INGOs should improve their governance by making their activities more transparent and accountable. They should disclose their information about their budgets through daily newspapers, publications and websites on a regular basis. AIN is the appropriate organization with the responsibility of facilitating this task. Although many INGOs claim to have made their information publicly available—which is actually through some corners of their websites, annual reports or other publication—it is imperative that they follow some standards like IATI so that the available data make more sense and are easy for processing and interpretation. The information of aid related to INGOS should also come to AMP of the Ministry of Finance.

Roles of NGO Federation of Nepal
NFN could be an appropriate platform to facilitate in establishing mechanisms for information dissemination at both the central and local levels. It could take on the responsibility of advocacy, lobbying and monitoring on behalf of the civil society. Moreover, it could mediate dialogues; interactions etc. with development partners, government agencies and INGOs at the central level and with local authorities and line agency offices at the local level. The NFN district chapters and regional committees could play an effective role by organizing information dissemination programs on aid as practiced by the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal in recent years.

Various trainings could be organized by NFN at the local level targeting NGOs to help strengthen their capacity in the areas of budget analysis, monitoring and public advocacy in keeping the government agencies accountable. Further, NFN could take the task of developing tools and techniques to acquire aid related information, specifically in the areas of aid effectiveness. NFN could take upon
the task of knowledge management regarding aid transparency, done in collaboration with state as well as non-state actors. Basically, those NGOs working towards building accountability and transparency of budgets and aid could be well-coordinated by NFN. Several research and studies could be carried by NFN regarding aid, which will support in policy advocacies.

NFN could be an appropriate platform which could implement programs on CSO development effectiveness in accordance with the Istanbul principles to increase aid transparency and thereby development effectiveness. A basket fund can be created at the center, where donors/development partners, the Government and INGOs can keep their funds to carry out the programs, putting the Istanbul Principles and Siem Reap consensus in practice, responding to the increasing demands of CSOs’ accountability. If the CSOs/NGOs proactively start making their information public in the IATI framework, it will ultimately result in the transparency of the NGOs making them more effective and trusted development partners.
Annexes
## Annex-I

### Survey Team

1) Dr. Netra Timsina  
   Team Leader

2) Ms. Krishna Kumari Waiba  
   Team Member

3) Ms. Durga Karki  
   Team Member

4) Mr. Gopal Lamsal  
   Team Member

5) Mr. Dala Rawal  
   Team Member

6) Mr. Sushil BK  
   Team Member

7) Mr. Daya Sagar Shrestha  
   Team Member

8) Mr. Hum Bhandari  
   Team Member

9) Mr. Bishnu Pokhrel  
   Team Member

10) Mr. Deepak Pokhrel  
    Team Member/Research Assistant
Annex-II

References


Foreign Aid Government’s Fiscal Behavior in Nepal: An Empirical Analysis. Badri Prasad Bhattarai, School of Economics and Finance, University of Western Sydney, Paramatta Australia
Annex-III

Information Collection on Foreign Aid वैदेशिक सहायता सम्बन्धी सूचना संकलन

Questionnaire प्रश्नावली

To be remembered by the respondents (उत्तरदाताले खान पर्ने कृपया)

• Please read the questions carefully; you may ask questions in case of confusions. कृपया प्रश्नहरू राखीएका पहन्तो। नसकेकी संदर्भ साक्ष्य पर्ने!

• Please answer all the questions. सबै प्रश्नहरूलाई निर्धारित जवाब दिन सक्नुहोस्।

• Tick (Õ) for the correct answer for objective type questions where multiple answers are possible. वहाँ उत्तरहरूलाई विभिन्न जवाबको लागि चिह्न लाङ्नु हो।

• Write brief answer for subjective questions. विषयहरूलाई विभिन्न जवाबको लागि बिचन्ता जवाब लेख्न सक्नुहोस्।

Write your name, name of your organization and address. Your personal details will remain confidential. आपल्ले व्यक्तिगत तथा संस्थाको नाम र ठेकाणालाई नत्याङ्क राखिन्छ।

Name of the respondent उत्तरदाताले संस्थाको नाम...

Name of the organization संस्थाको नाम...

Address ठेकाणाले: धेरै व्यवस्था VDC गाउँबिबिा District जिल्ला...

Section A: Understanding युभाई

1. Since when has your organization been working in the development sector? तपाईंले संलग्न विकासको क्षेत्रमा कृपालिन्य का गरी आएका?

2. Did you start your work with foreign aid (Assistance from the international agencies)? (Tick one of the options) ब्राह्मण, युनीसेफ तथा अन्य आर्थिक सहायता (आन्तरराष्ट्रीय नियोजकहरूको सहयोग) लागि हो? (फूली एक उत्तरमा चिह्न लाङ्नु हुनेछ)

(a) Yes हो (b) No (if no go to 5) होइन (होइन भने विन नल्ला प्रश्न र मा जानन्तहो)

3. If yes, when did you start taking foreign aid (Assistance from the international agencies)? हो भने वैदेशिक सहायता (आन्तरराष्ट्रीय नियोजकहरूको सहयोग) लागि निलेको हो?

(a) .......... onwards सालदेखि

4. Why did your organization need foreign aid? (Tick one of the options) तपाईंले संलग्न विकासको क्षेत्रमा कृपालिन्य का गरी क्यूँ प्यारो? (फूली एक उत्तरमा चिह्न लाङ्नु हुनेछ)

(a) Due to inadequate internal resources आन्तरिक श्रेणि कम भएको
(b) Due to Lack of access to government resources सरकार के साथ साझा नहीं किया जा सकता।
(c) Due to proposal calls by international funding agencies वैश्विक सहायता विना संबंधित प्रस्ताव आवाजा गर्ने
(d) Others (please specify) अन्य (कृपया उल्लिखित करें)

5. Do you think that the international funding agencies are transparent? (Tick one of the options) के लागर तथ्यों वैश्विक सहायता प्रदान गति निकायहरू पारदर्शी छन् जस्तो लाग्दै? (कृपया एक उत्तर दिन।)
   (a) Yes (go to 7) लाग्दै (समस्त प्रवेश ७ मा जानुहोस्)
   (b) Yes partially (go to 7) आशको रूपमा लाग्दै। (समस्त प्रवेश ७ मा जानुहोस्)
   (c) No ना लाग्दै

6. If no, what may be the reasons behind this? (Please write briefly) पारदर्शी लाग्दैन भने, त्यसोै उनको प्रकाश सुस्मित कारण के होला? (संक्षेप में लिखिए)

7. Do you think the aid money has really benefited the target groups? के सहायता रक्षमायेन संबंधित वर्ग लाभापन वही सङ्केत जस्ता प्राप्त भए भन्ने लाग्दै? (कृपया एक उत्तर दिन।)
   (a) Yes लाग्दै, (b) Yes Partially आशको रूपमा मात्र (c) No ना लाग्दै

8. Which do you think are the agencies that provide foreign aids in Nepal? (You may tick more than one) नेपालमा वैश्विक सहायता प्रदान गति निकायहरू कुनै कुनै हुन् भन्ने लाग्दै? (एक भन्दा वही उत्तरहरू चिन्न लाग्न सक्नेछ।)
   (a) UN Agencies संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघीय निकायहरू
   (b) Bilateral Agencies द्विपक्षीय निकायहरू
   (c) International Banks अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बैंकहरू
   (d) Embassies राजवासस्थल
e) NGOs अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संस्थाहरू
   (f) Foreign individual/organization विदेशी जाता
   (g) Others (Please Specify) अन्य (निर्देशित करें)

Section B: Information जानकारी

9. What information do you obtain related to foreign aid? (Please write briefly) वैश्विक सहायता सम्बन्धी के सुचनाहरू पाउने गति निकायहरू का सबैलाई जाने? (संक्षेप में लिखिए)

10. How do you mainly get the information? (Tick one of the options) ती सुचनाहरू प्रस्तुत रूपमा कस्तो पाउने गति निकायहरू का? (कृपया एक उत्तर दिन।)
    (a) By reading newspapers पत्रपत्रिकामा पढ्दै
    (b) Browsing Websites वेबसाइट हर्स
    (c) By reading publications/reports by the concerned agencies सम्बन्धित निकायहरूको प्रकाशन / पत्रिका पढ्दै
(d) By asking about it with the concerned authorities of the organizations सम्बन्धित निकायोंका व्यक्तिसंग सीविधान गरेर
(e) As told by the persons in those agencies सम्बन्धित निकायको व्यक्तिद्वारा भनेर
(f) After participation in the programmes of the agencies सम्बन्धित निकायको कार्यक्रममा सहभागी भए
g) Having been aware of the related information with Nepali NGOs नेपाली गैस्सलले लिएको खाता पाउने र
(h) Other (Please specify) अन्य (सुचारुतम) …………………

11. Which are the organizations providing such information? (You may tick more than one) ती सुचना प्रदान गर्ने निकायहरूको कै पने नै एक भन्दा बढी सामर्थ्य रूपमा दिनेप्का छ?
(a) UN Agencies संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघीय निकायहरू
(b) Bilateral agencies द्विपक्षीय निकायहरू
(c) International banks अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय बैंकहरू
(d) Embassies राजदूतावासहरू
(e) INGOs अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय गैस्सलले
(f) Government agencies सरकारी निकाय
g) NGOs गैस्सले
h) Social Welfare Council समाज कल्याण विभाग

12. Do you think the available information is reliable? (Tick any one) क्यो ती सुचना सहयोगी भएको छ र सहयोगी जस्तो लाग्छ?
(a) Yes लाग्छ
(b) No नलाग्न
(c) Yes, partially अशिकर्षक सामा सहिष्णु होला

Section C: Access and achievements पहुँच र उपलब्धता

13. Is the access to the information easy? (Tick any one) क्यो ती सुचनाहरूले पहुँच सहज छ?
(a) Yes (If yes go to 15) सहज छ (यदि एक उपर्युक्त मा भन्दा औपचार्य छ)
(b) No नलाग्न

14. If no, why? (Tick any one) नलाग्न, भने किने?
(a) Due to lack of knowledge about useful medium उपयुक्त माध्यमले जानकारी किएको नभए
(b) Because the funding agencies do not disseminate the information publicly सहयोगी निकायहरूले सार्वजनिक रूपमा सुचना दिने नभएर
c) Reluctance on the part of the funding agencies to provide information सम्बन्धित निकायले सुचना दिन इच्छित पार्ने
(d) Lack of interest on oneself in acquiring such information आफूले खात्मक उपयोगी दिन इच्छिको नभए
c) Others (Please specify) अन्य (सुचारुतम) …………………

15. Is the information adequate (tick any one) क्यो ती सुचना प्राप्त छ?
(a) Yes लाग्न
(b) No नलाग्न
(c) Do not know खाता छ्नेन

16. Is the information useful? (Tick any one) क्यो ती सुचना उपयोगी छ?
(a) Yes लाग्न
(b) No नलाग्न
(c) Do not know खाता छ्नेन
Section D: Information Need

17. What information have you actually used? (Write in brief)

(a) Yes
(b) Yes, partially
(c) No

18. What kinds of information on foreign aid, if available, can your organization benefit from? (You may tick more than one)

1) Name and address of the funding agencies
2) Types of support (Cash, kind or technical support)
3) Amount of aid available
4) Organizations eligible to get support
5) Medium the aid is made available in
6) Objectives of support
7) The date when aid was made available
8) Duration of support
9) Information about the installments in which aid is provided
10) Report on aid/support
11) Accountability to aid
12) Achievements of aid money

19. What institutions do you prefer the information to be available from? (Tick any one)

(a) From concerned agencies
(b) From some government agencies in an integrated form
(c) From some NGOs in an integrated form
(d) Social Welfare Council
(e) Others (please specify)

20. What do you think are the challenges and problems in acquiring the information? (Tick any one)

(a) No access to actual information
(b) Available information is too difficult to understand

21. What could be the easiest way to acquire such information? (Tick any one)

(a) Yes
(b) No
22. Which language would you prefer to receive the information in? (Tick any one)

(a) Nepali नेपाली  
(b) English अङ्ग्रेजी  
(c) Both of the above मात्र दोनों  
(d) Others (Please specify) अन्य (सत्यापित) .....

23. When and in what intervals would you like the information to be available? (Tick any one)

(a) Annually वार्षिक रूपमा  
(b) Biannually दोनों वर्षान्तरकालिक रूपमा  
(c) Quarterly चौमासारिक रूपमा

24. What roles and responsibilities should there be of the following agencies to ease the access to information on foreign aid? (Write in brief) वैदेशिक सहयोगसम्बन्धी सूचना प्रवाहित गर्ने देशहरूको क्षमता र जिम्मेदारी गर्ने वैविध्यको निर्देशनमा?

(a) Government सरकारको  
(b) Funding agencies वित्तीय निवेशकहरूको  
(c) INGOs अन्तरराष्ट्रीय आयोजकहरूको  
(d) NGOs नैसर्गिक हरूको

Section D: Information dissemination सूचना संप्रेषण

25. What benefits does your organization reap following the disclosure of information related with financial support received from international agencies? (Tick any one)

(a) Adds to the credibility of the organizationसम्मानितता विषयमा अन्तरराष्ट्रीय लागरित्समूह धारण गरेको अधिकृतता सम्बन्धी सूचना वाहिनी उच्चतम गर्नुहोस् तपाईंको सम्बन्धमा कार्यरत र कार्यरत अन्तरराष्ट्रीय सम्बन्धी सूचना वाहिनी उच्चतम गर्नुहोस्। (कुनै एक उन्नतता मात्र अविद्यको चिन्ह लागू गरिएको)

(b) Makes positive attitude of the others towards the organization सम्बन्धमा सम्मानितता विषयमा अन्तरराष्ट्रीय लागरित्समूह धारण गरेको अधिकृतता सम्बन्धी सूचना वाहिनी उच्चतम गर्नुहोस्। दूरी दूरी यस्तो सम्बन्धमा सम्मानितता विषयमा अन्तरराष्ट्रीय लागरित्समूह धारण गरेको अधिकृतता सम्बन्धी सूचना वाहिनी उच्चतम गर्नुहोस्। (कुनै एक उन्नतता मात्र अविद्यको चिन्ह लागू गरिएको)

(c) It will be of no advantage केही पत्रि फाइल हुनेको)

26. Has your organization made available to the public, target group and stakeholders, the information about the financial support it has received? (Tick any one)

(a) Tapai ko सम्बन्धमा प्राप्त गरेको आर्थिक सहयोग र सभी सदस्यहरूको संप्रेषण गरी गर्नु भएको हुनेछ। (कुनै एक उन्नतता मात्र अविद्यको चिन्ह लागू गरिएको)

(b) Tapai ko सम्बन्धमा प्राप्त गरेको आर्थिक सहयोग र सभी सदस्यहरूको संप्रेषण गरी गर्नु भएको हुनेछ। (कुनै एक उन्नतता मात्र अविद्यको चिन्ह लागू गरिएको)
(a) Yes चूह
(b) No (If no, go to 28) द्वारा ये संदेश देने वाले नहीं 28 में जानें।
(c) Is it necessary to? (Go to 28) संदेश देने की आवश्यकता है कि 28 में जानें।

27. If yes, which method or practice have you adopted to disseminate such information? (Tick any one) यदि है, तो आपने कैसे संदेश देने की संचारण की तरीका या प्रक्रिया कैसे अनुसरित की?
(a) Regular bulletins नियमित ब्लूलिटिंग
(b) Publication of reports प्रतिवेदन प्रकाशन
(c) Website वेब साइट
(d) Social audit सामाजिक परीक्षण
(e) Orientation programmes अभ्यास की प्रक्रियाएं
(f) Review meetings समीक्षा बैठक
(g) Others (Please specify) अन्य (खालियाँ)

28. What are the challenges you are likely to face while making the information on financial support available? (Tick any one) आप ये सूचना संलग्न रामचंद्र संचारण के अनुसार उपलब्ध कराने के दौरान उठा सकते हैं कौन से चुनौतियां?
(a) The funding agency may not like वित्तीय संगठन नहीं मना सकता है।
(b) Breaks the confidentiality गोपनीयता तब तक है।
(c) People may create trouble जनता तब तक दिक्कत तैयार है।
(d) Burdensome समस्याहीत है।
(e) Costly खराब है।
(f) Others (Please specify) अन्य (खालियाँ)

29. What suggestions do you have to make the information on foreign aid more transparent? (Write in brief) वारसाक जानकारी संलग्न रामचंद्र संचारण के अनुसार उपलब्ध कराने के दौरान जानकारी की आवश्यकता है कि अभी तक उपलब्ध कराने के दौरान जानकारी की आवश्यकता है कि.

Thank you! धन्यवाद।

Your information will be instrumental in ensuring good governance in the country.
तपाईको यी सूचना र नेपालका सुधारन सार्वजनिक व्यवस्थाको लागि ठूलो महत्त्वपूर्ण हुँदै।